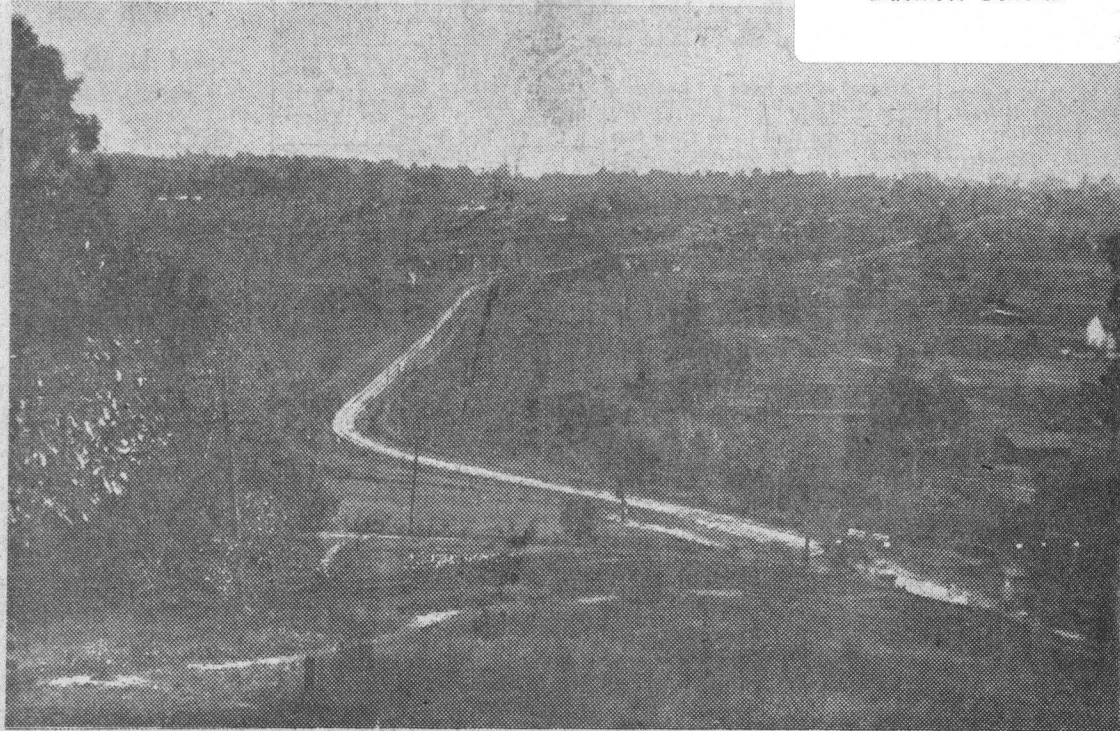


Santa Cruz Yesterdays

Business-General



POULTRY DISTRICT QUARTER CENTURY AGO (From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

Shrubs and trees have so covered the once nearly barren De Laveaga park hillside that drops away toward upper Pacheco avenue from the picture's foreground, today's visitor to the same spot would find himself surrounded and blocked from the corresponding viewpoint.

Something over 25 years ago this was the scene southward toward the bay for one standing approximately where the Rose pergola was built in 1912 through the efforts of ladies of the Civic Department of the Saturday Afternoon club, predecessor of the present Santa Cruz Woman's club. The beautiful pergola is gone, but the bronze tablet, dedicated on May 4, 1912, to Jose Vicente De Laveaga donor to the city of the park lands, is still there.

In 1912, Union Traction company electric cars were running every 20 minutes from Water and Pacific (post office corner) to Martin boulevard (now Morrissey) and Pacheco avenue, at the end of the straightaway below the curve in the center of the picture. By this time, as in the early twenties, when the picture was made, cars rode the last stretch up to the park gate, lower right, only on signal. Originally the end of the line was at Martin boulevard (1908), but was extended to the new "main gate" in 1910. Later regular runs from the lower terminus were discontinued except as when signalled by a semaphore device on a pole at the park gate.

Only a few months after the picture was made, car service on the park line ceased. Not long thereafter, Santa Cruz saw trolley service replaced by buses.

The Union Traction company had been a consolidation of earlier trolley lines here. The Santa Cruz Electric Railway and the Santa Cruz, Capitola & Watsonville company (the latter had tracks as far as Capitola only) had been consolidated in 1904 by F. S. Granger, with Warren Porter of Watsonville as president. A depression had put

a damper on development plans until progressive John Martin bought in and re-vitalized the roads, which thereafter continued in local operation for over 15 years.

"Chicken Town"

Much of the area shown was at the time given over to poultry raising, in fact so much so that many referred to the district as "chicken town". Important poultry ranches in the vicinity were drawing attention to Santa Cruz as a fine breeding center and record egg-producing hens were winning laurels. In the middle distance was erected an egg-laying contest plant where trap-nested hens set high production records. Entries were attracted from throughout the west and Hawaii and east to Michigan and Florida.

Once broad acres are now cut up for modern homes and real estate subdivisions. Building development has been active, a notable example being the Prospect Heights area to the left in the view.

And of course today the new freeway swings across from the left to meet Morrissey in the middle distance, just to the right of the far end of upper Pacheco avenue which dominates the picture.