

# The bridges of Santa Cruz

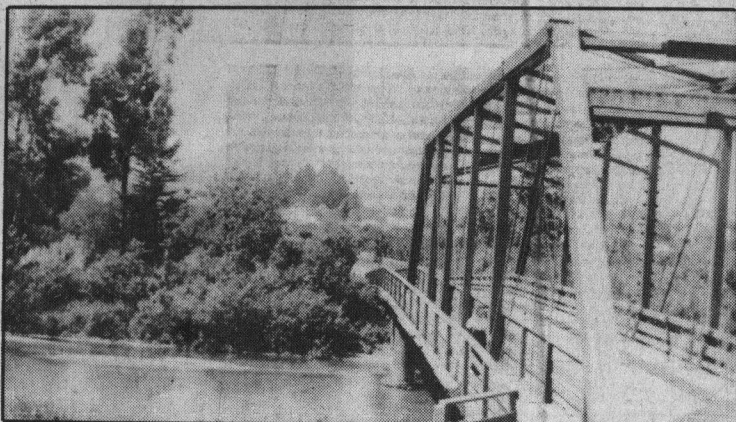
**Bridges**  
OK, IT'S quiz time. How many bridges and trestles span the San Lorenzo River within the city limits of Santa Cruz?

Before the first wagon bridge was built across the river in 1867, folks crossed the river at temporary fords that were washed away each winter when the river rose to fill its bed. Even after 1867, the river often ate the bridges and trestles, cutting Santa Cruz's land connection with the outside world for weeks at a time.

Well into the 20th century, the two primary bridge sites at Water Street and Soquel Avenue were supplemented with seasonal crossings at Crossing Street (opposite Vernon Street at the northern edge of the city), and at Kennan and Blaine streets upstream from Water Street. There were also seasonal footbridges at Short Street (near the present-day footbridge into San Lorenzo Park) and at the foot of Broadway.

The accompanying photograph shows a wagon bridge that began as a footbridge connecting Beach Hill with the flat across the river to the north. When the Barson family built the Riverside Hotel inside the curve of the river in the 1870s, it put a footbridge across the lagoon so guests could walk down through the gardens and orchard and cross over to the beach. Old-timers still remember the famous Comice pears grown in the orchard beside the river.

The footbridge was replaced in 1888 by the wagon bridge in the photograph. The bridge was known as the "cut bias" bridge because it not only crossed the

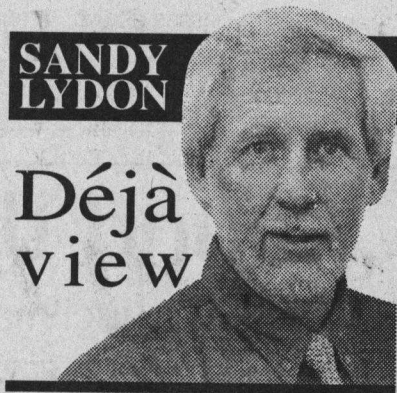


Barson Family collection

The 'cut bias' bridge looking toward hotel, circa 1915.

**SANDY LYDON**

**Déjà view**



river at an angle or "on the bias," but the boards that formed the bridge flooring were also cut at an angle. The Riverside Hotel is behind the screen of trees on the left side of the photograph.

The bridge continued to serve pedestrians, cyclists, wagons and automobiles until it was dismantled in 1930 and replaced with a concrete bridge. A second concrete bridge now connects the two sides of the river; and next time you cross it, note that it still is at an angle like the footbridge that

preceded it over a century ago.

OK, how many bridges or trestles did you come up with? Counting from the beach: 1) the railroad trestle, 2) Riverside Avenue, 3) Broadway, 4) Soquel Avenue, 5) San Lorenzo Park footbridge, 6) Water Street; 7) Highway 1. The Seven Bridges of Santa Cruz City. Has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

*Sandy Lydon will be giving a free lecture on "Santa Cruz as a Child of the San Lorenzo River" sponsored by the Sierra Club, at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, 420 Melrose Ave. (diagonally across from Branciforte Junior High School), Santa Cruz.*

*If you have a photograph you would like to see used in this column, or one that you would like some help identifying, send a good photocopy (color xeroxes are best) to Déjà View, Sandy Lydon, care of the Santa Cruz County Sentinel, 207 Church St., Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060. E-mail address: salydon@aol.com.*

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