

OLD SANTA CRUZ .. By Ernest Otto

Last Sunday's article, dealing with the properties which 60 years ago were farms within the city limits, told of the T. J. Weeks place, which stretched along the crest of the hill from Walnut avenue to Laurel street.

Beginning at Laurel, on both sides of the street, was the Feliz ranch, held by one of the early California families. The family home was a long, low frame dwelling of early California architecture. Across from it at one time stood a picturesque adobe.

Here were, above the Laurel hill, a lot of mission grapes and plums. Here also was some of the fruit-bearing prickly pear. In the home lived, during the writer's time, Mrs. Feliz, her daughter, Clara, and her son, Antone Miguel, who is remembered for riding a white horse and delivering groceries for Cooper brothers. A granddaughter, Mrs. Isabel Poile Thompson, lived close by in a house which is still owned by one of the family, Mrs. Sophie Daniel.

SILVEY DAIRY

Beyond the Feliz farm was the homesite and dairy of J. M. Silvey, the father of Ed Silvey. The old home stood on the east side of the street on the brow of the hill. Flower bordered walks reached it from California street. It gave way to a newer residence. Beyond it was the dairy proper; along the east side was a big board fence. In this section were the large cow barns and sheds where the cows were milked.

Property below and across the street bordered by Case's lane, now Laurent street, and California street, was the pasture. That lot today is almost as it was in the seventies.

The writer remembers when the Feliz house at the corner was

the only residence on the west side for the entire distance to Bay street, at least a half mile.

The first new house was built by L. F. Littlefield and for many years about the finest strawberries in the city were produced there.

NEARY RANCH

Quite a stretch beyond the Silvey dairy was the Neary ranch. Down a gulch ran a road, bordered with oaks and other native trees. At the bottom of the gulch was the ranch house. Not a great many years ago the barn and silo were razed. A part of the home remains. It was built in the late forties. It was then owned by the Case family and in this home one of the first private schools in the state was conducted by Mrs. Case. Mr. and Mrs. Case were members of the class of what became the First Methodist church of Santa Cruz. It is said that this class was the first Protestant religious organization in California. A stream of water started at a spring not far from the house. It is still there and empties into the Neary lagoon. Practically all of the large section of bottom land known as the Neary lagoon and land bordering it reaching to Laurel St. was a part of the Neary holdings. A section of it was cultivated for years as a truck garden by Chinese who produced the best of vegetables and berries.

About the Neary-home was an orchard and some of the tall trees remaining are of the same variety of numbers which were in the old Mission orchard. Those in the Mission orchard were planted by the padres.

THE NEWELL FARM

Another farm along California street, beyond the Neary ranch,

was the Newell farm. It was always attractively kept and the home still stands close to the brow of the hill. The daughter of the home, Mrs. Carrie Belle Newell Kent, still lives on the old home place.

"CRAZY" WRIGHT

The "Crazy" Wright farm, described in one of the writer's first old time stories, now has running through it, Otis street, Rigg street, Laurel street and Cleveland avenue. It extended from Mission to King and to Laurel. This section with paved street did not even have a dirt sidewalk at any place around the property and a stretch of green grass was between the picket fences and the center given over to travel. It had two creeks running through it, one coming into Mission about where Otis street is now located. It gave a turn and flowed along the west side of Mission and emptied into the creek which now runs through a concrete culvert across Mission street.

The unfinished house stood for years; its last owner was Joe Enright.

BOSTON HOLDINGS

Mrs. E. Boston has large holdings reaching from High street across King and ended at Mission. Her properties then faced High, Mission, King and St. Lawrence. Now running through parts of her holdings are also Peyton, Jordan, Storey and Kirby streets. The Bostons did not farm but on the property, along High street, was the large tannery, a leading industry of those days. They had a family home at Mission and Walnut and for many years lived in a long adobe along what is now Davis street. It had originally been built by Rafael Castro of Aptos as a "town house" and was bought by

the Bostons in the late forties. It was a fine home, with large rooms and deeply recessed windows, and with wisteria and roses clambering over the front. The writer, as a lad, after school spent many of his happiest boyhood days in that adobe home.

CHINESE TRUCK GARDENS

Although the Bostons did not farm the place, it nevertheless was the most intensely farmed acreage within the city limits. Acreage was leased to Chinese, the best truck gardeners of the day. It was a beautiful sight to look down from High street on these gardens on the sloping ground below, acres after acre of varied greens. The stream which runs through the C. C. Moore place was used for irrigation and stream after stream could be seen going down between the rows of vegetables. They were planted straight as an arrow. No garden spot could be prettier, and from sunrise to sunset the industrious Chinese continued their work on the land almost from High to King street.

Some peddled their garden truck driving a single horse but most of them had the vegetables piled high in large bamboo woven baskets hanging from each end of a long pole over their shoulders. They were liked by the customers at whose homes they called and in turn they liked their customers. No one could ever forget those kindly China boys. No matter how old they were they were always China boys.

Along King street on one of the large vacant lots was a baseball diamond and as far back as the late seventies a cracking good baseball nine composed of girls played on that diamond. The Mission Hill junior high now occupies part of that lot.