

Old Santa Cruz

● ● By Ernest Otto

(Editor's Note: The late Ernest Otto, famed and beloved waterfront correspondent for The Sentinel and writer of the "Old Santa Cruz" column, left a number of columns written before his death. They will be published weekly by The Sentinel.)

There was a time in the history of Santa Cruz when streets were added to the city in great numbers. Many of them bore the names of those who were connected with the subdivisions through which the streets ran.

At about the time Garfield Park was opened, in that section there were only a few farm homes, almost a mile from the rest of the population.

In the early eighties, there was only one street going off Mission street. That ran to the entrance of the race track between Bay street and Moore gulch.

A number of the local citizens of the day took over the race track property and the circular area with the mile track was subdivided. That meant the razing of the 20-foot fence which surrounded the oval, and left standing only the great circle of eucalyptus trees which ringed the property.

The surveyor came out and maps were made. Then came replicas of the maps and the lots in the subdivision were put on sale.

Many bought the lots for investment although the area was far from the center of population in those days.

Fair street, which had been the race track street, was named for James D. Fair, who had achieved fame in connection with the Comstock lode in Nevada.

The Fair family had been coming to Santa Cruz for many years.

Another of the streets which extended to the bay was Swift street.

It was named for E. J. Swift who had operated the Pacific Ocean house during its palmyest days. Those were the times when the more prominent people of California always visited Santa Cruz for some time each summer.

Swift was the father of Percy Swift.

Dimond, Miles and Sherman streets, all on the other side of King street, owe their names to army officers. The lines of these three streets run through what was the regular army camp grounds in Santa Cruz.

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