

22, 1942

waterwheels

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Old Santa Cruz By Ernest Otto

Flumes and Water Wheels Were Prominent Adjuncts Of Enterprise In Old Santa Cruz

San Lorenzo river and tributaries and other streams about the city in the early days had much to do in making it the industrial center it then was.

From the San Lorenzo river came the water into the flume which started a couple of miles beyond Boulder Creek and this V shape flume sometimes crossing a gulch over 50 feet above the ground and sometimes below the surface of the ground, carried by swift stream the lumber and split stuff and emptied at Felton.

This was not the only large flume but the powder mill flume was a big one and the water was for the California powder works. The dam was below Rincon and the flume ran through the mountain into the upper part of the powder mill flat, or what is now the upper part of Paradise park. It went through the upper section and at places it was quite high above ground. It followed to the east of the village which was skirted by the railroad track (the car being drawn by horse power), followed where is now the road from the lower to the upper end which was then the railroad track, and back of the glaze mill at the lower end. The water fell in a beautiful fall and again joined the San Lorenzo. The San Lorenzo and tributaries were dammed at numbers of places for the log ponds for the numbers of powder mills, the Dougherty mill above Boulder Creek, the Peery mill at Boulder Creek, the Longley mill above Boulder Creek, Pierce's mill at Ben Lomond, the Cenniel mill along the Zayante and numbers of other mills in the early days.

Paper Mill Dam

While it was before the days of the writer he remembers hearing time and again when a flood, either in the late sixties or early seventies, "look out for paper mill dam," the paper mill being at the lower end of what is now Paradise park. Once the writer saw a picture of the paper mill dam in the Byrne Bros. store at the time of one of the Old Timers celebrations.

Near Crossing street at one time was a pumping plant and water was pumped from the San Lorenzo for the Santa Cruz Water company to the reservoirs above where Piedmont Court is now located. This system was later sold to the city of Santa Cruz.

Water Wheels

In the early days where are now located the Pedemonte cherry orchards was given over to truck gardens. Water was at the upper end lifted by water wheel to the flume which furnished water from the San Lorenzo river for irrigation of the vegetables.

Where is now a section of the Righetti gardens water was lifted from the river and was used to irrigate the truck garden there.

Another small stream, the Pogonip, has its source a short distance above the Pogonip road, where it gushes forth from the lime rock and the stream was used for irrigation of two berry patches and some gardening and orchards—the well known Runge and the Heller places adjoining. Eugene Runge for years by wagon peddled from the Runge and the senior Heller from his place. He specialized in strawberries. It was along this creek in early days Indians had their village and they had their sweat houses and would leave them and jump into the waters of the creek, according to stories of old timers.

Dam On Pogonip

The creek was dammed further down and it furnished water for vats for both the tannery of the Kron Tanning company, now the

Salz Tanning company, and the Fischer Tannery which adjoined. In later years Henry Kron formed from the waters of the creek a good sized pond back of his home and planted crawfish which got into the outlet and from this pond the San Lorenzo tributaries were stocked with this delicious fresh water shell fish.

Another stream which furnished power and waters for vats was the stream which had its source in the Louis Doderro place at the upper end of Spring street, now Fred Johnson's Calrock products place. The Boston tannery was a landmark for years just below High street, beyond what is now Storey street. Daughters of the family reside here at present, Mrs. Bessie Boston Lymbery and Mrs. Agnes Boston Burge. At the end of School street this stream emptied into one of the earliest reservoirs, on the Elihu Anthony place. The overflow went over the bank, a waterfall of about 50 feet and finally emptied into the San Lorenzo close to the Water street bridge. Close to the very source, Louis Doderro had two lovely bodies of water, both fish ponds, one almost dug from the limerock. In this pure pond of water he had many steelhead trout and on the banks were lovely growing five finger ferns.

Carp Pond

Some distance from this a dam a short distance from Spring St., backed the water so that it spread over a good section of the lot. This was for years a carp pond and finally these were let out as the fish commercially were of no value.

The stream which has its source at Allegro Heights furnished the power for the Majors flour mill, one of the earliest in California. The large water wheel was to the east end of the picturesque structure and it furnished power.

This was the stream which furnished water and power for the Kirby tannery on Laurel street. The upper section was between Mission and California streets and the water was held by a couple of dams.

Another pond was below California street with quite a high dam and it operated a picturesque water mill which stood opposite what is the Log Cabin, for many years.

Boston Gardens

The first of the streams irrigated the several Boston vegetable and berry gardens and the other gardens on the Blackburn property near the Southern Pacific station and on the Neary place. These gardens were cultivated by Chinese.

Water from one of the streams was used by the Santa Cruz Brewing company.

Water from Branciforte creek and tributaries was used by many of those who lived along its banks for irrigation purposes, especially the Judge Rice gardens in Blackburn Gulch and gardens in a section along the stream not far from Ocean street. A dam impounded water and it came down a flume to a Hihn reservoir at the upper end of North Branciforte avenue.

Another dam was across the Carbonero creek in Scotts Valley