

Live Oak

Live Oak area didn't share in post-depression tourist boom

(Third of a series)

By CAROLYN SWIFT

After the Spanish American War and the end of the depression of the 1890s, a tourist boom began in most parts of Santa Cruz County.

Fred Swanton led efforts to establish the resort and amusement industry that became the Boardwalk. Conservation became an issue when business leaders realized the worth of redwood forests as a scenic amenity. Countywide bicycle tours were popular, and tug-of-war competitions between fire department teams were an entertainment fad.

In Live Oak, there were to redwoods to preserve. The lagoons and giant oaks were attractive, but destined to remain minor resort areas with limited appeal. Villa Maria del Mar was largely frequented by Catholics, and it was mostly Baptists who spent summers at Twin Lakes. Residents depended on community watertanks and wet blankets to fight fires — there was no hose team from Live Oak.

By 1903, the "Santa Cruz-Capitola and Watsonville Railway," successor to the original horse-car line to Twin Lakes, was extended to Opal Cliffs. A year later, both horse-car and trolley lines were consolidated at the Union Traction Company, which reached no further than Capitola.

In 1905, the road leading to East Cliff Drive was called

"Dashaway." At Twin Lakes, the streets surrounding the Baptist Church were called "First, Second and Third," and "Avenue A, Avenue B..." At Corcoran Lagoon, the subdivisions around Villa Maria del Mar were called "Brighton," and "Monte Vista."

While Twin Lakes and Del Mar were a part of the Live Oak School District, they were separated from the farming community that surrounded the school. Since nearby rail and trolley depots provided easy access to the services and amenities of Santa Cruz City, the resort subdivisions tended to act more as enclaves rather than a part of the Live Oak community centered across the Southern Pacific tracks.

The preference of Live Oak residents to see themselves as tied to "Twin Lakes," or later, "Pleasure Point," and "Opal Cliffs," has continued to the present. These names now identify three of the seven neighborhood groups of the Live Oak General Plan Advisory Committee (LOGPAC.)

In 1905, there were 721 books in the Live Oak School Library. One of several purchased that year was "Reynard the Fox." One of the characters in that book was a rooster, and his name was "Chanticleer" — which means, "to sing more clearly."

Chanticleer Avenue today runs from Soquel Avenue to East Cliff Drive, but in the early 1900s it stopped across the road from Live Oak School. In the next few decades, this avenue was to become a multiple-symbol of that rooster in "Reynard the Fox."

In 1910, Santa Cruz Hatchery was established near the Santa Cruz-Watsonville Road, and specialized in the sale of white leghorns. This enterprise continues now as Cal-Cruz Hatchery on Rodriguez St.

Between 1910 and 1913, Wilson Bros. Associates subdivided a large part of Live Oak north of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks into 13 tracts for development as residences and chicken ranches — with the

average lot size ranging from 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres.

According to Tanner Wilson, many of the streets in the subdivisions were named after employees of the Wilson Bros. firm.

The years of 1910-1913 were also years of transition for the school district. County Surveyor Arnold Baldwin calculated alterations to district boundaries in 1912, which brought lines closer to present boundaries. Trustees also attempted a bond election that year, but it failed.

On July 29, 1913, trustees passed a resolution for another bond appeal, asking residents to approve \$5,000 in bonds for acquisition of property and construction of a new school building.

By law, notice of the election was to be published in local papers and the three most public places in the school district. In 1913, these frequented spots were a location on Paul Minnie Avenue; the bridge over Schwan Lagoon, and the school itself.

The election was held from 1 to 5 p.m. Aug. 22 at the school, and the bond issue passed by a vote of 164-40. Although the measure was successful, there was a protest from parents who felt the proposed school rooms failed to provide space for the community's needs.

A petition was circulated in opposition to the new school because it lacked electricity, "according to modern practice," and it contained two small classrooms, with no space for large community assemblies. The petition was signed by 31 Live Oak residents.

In the fall of 1913, trustees accepted the plans of Santa Cruz architect William Bray for a building "to be a beautiful structure representing a modification of Mission and Spanish renaissance styles of architecture."

In the spring of 1914, trustees H. J. Kinsley, Adolph L. Felt and Sanford Tefertiller accepted a bid of \$50 from A. Pimentel of Live Oak to move the original

school house to the east side of school property, at the present corner of Chanticleer Avenue and Capitola Road. The first school then became Live Oak's first community hall.

In 1914-15, the school and its clubhouse were transformed along with increased construction districtwide. Developments were built on tracts at 17th, 7th, Chanticleer and Maciel Avenues.

One road shown sketched on the county map of 1915 is now a part of the Live Oak School boundary near 41st Ave. It is Brown Ranch Road, site of the bulb ranch and dairy herd established in 1914 by James A. Brown. Both enterprises became successful and were eventually expanded to more than 100 acres in the area bounded by 41st Ave., Capitola Road and Rodeo Gulch.

With a membership of 42 residents, Live Oak Parent-Teacher Association was established at the old school in 1914. A "Mrs. Endersby," was the first president, and from the beginning, club activity was geared to both school and community — an orientation that at times gave the PTA more decision-making power and influence than the board of trustees.

Among the organization's early school contributions were a clubhouse stage, electric lights, seats, an oil stove and piano. Members installed playground equipment, laid pipe for a water line and organized a community library. In 1916, they built a shelter along the electric car line at 17th Ave., which provided Live Oak with a stop outside a resort area.

The PTA represented an acceptance of responsibility for community support of the schools. Whatever the PTA decided Live Oak School needed — from hot soup at noon to plant cuttings in the front yard — it expected residents to meet the demand.

By 1916, the PTA began referring to itself as "Live Oak PTA and Improvement Club,"