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# Old Santa Cruz

• • • By Ernest Otto

The flat, in Santa Cruz, had a number of low spots which required considerable filling to bring them to their present levels.

The deepest ran along the approximate line of what is today Center street, from Locust to Lincoln street and on through the Dreher farm. The deepest spot was about at Church street, where a sidewalk high above the ground ran along the north side, past the F. A. Hihn place.

The walk made a hill down which children coasted in their wagons. In the center of this dip the sidewalk was still above the street. The depth at Locust street was not so great but the slope of the land through the Hihn place caused currents of water during the rains which cut courses through the Hihn vegetable garden and orchard.

## Jumping On Floating Plank

Children would jump up and down on the floating sidewalk. One time Frank Burns, who later was long warden at DeLaveaga park, slipped off the walk into the water over his head and was pulled out after he had gone under twice.

A culvert for flood control started at a blind alley between the Charles Bern and A. H. Hinds residences. At the deepest point on Walnut avenue the sidewalk was about six feet above the ground, affording a place where boys made play tunnels and railroad tracks.

## Paddled Rafts On Pond

South of Walnut avenue, west of the present Christian church, was a low spot which was a pond for weeks at a time on which boys would paddle their rafts, hurling broomsticks at the frogs. The latter were not edible variety. The water covered over half the Fiester lot and would go under what is now the Alfred Bowman residence.

Across Lincoln street was a walk of two planks on a three-foot trestle. All this ground had to be filled when the Congregational church was built and the Dreher lots were sold.

From Pacific avenue through the Taintor property to Center street was a very low section, always flooded in winter highwater. Beyond Laurel street, about at Cedar, was another low spot. In flood times the water would enter some of the smaller houses, whose owners would have to use boats.

## Grove Had To Be Removed

Another place that took a long time to fill was the end of Center street, then a blind street south of Laurel. A maple and sycamore grove and a blackberry patch had to be removed also.

The biggest fill below the grove was the Blackburn lagoon which into the late seventies was bordered by tules, maples and sycamores. It took many loads of earth to fill this watery spot, which extended to where is now Owens storage house.

Another great fill was necessary to level the ground at the slough, eight or ten feet deep, at Rennie's swimming hole. Today the site is devoted to auto courts.