

# Old *Otto Ernest* Santa Cruz

• • • By Ernest Otto

In the old days, the reporter never dared skip a daily check at the county recorder's office for fear he might miss the sale of a lot or the notice of planned improvements on one. Later, this work was done by the title offices and proved always a closely read section of the paper.

The offices of architects were visited frequently, since the readers were interested in construction and building progress throughout the city. The stories about such deals carried the names of the architect, the contractor and the estimated price of construction.

On major buildings, the building would be described fully, with the interior descriptions including particular mention for rooms finished in native woods and hardwoods. The tile of the present day was unheard of then.

The progress of work on public buildings was followed closely, with visits by the reporter every few days and reports made in the paper.

Some reports came only annually, but they were looked forward to with much interest. They also meant additional labor for the reporter.

What a day's work for the lone reporter was the opening of deer and trout seasons! He was aware that the deer hunters would call at the gunsmith's shop and would talk about deer which had been killed, and there he would learn the weight of the deer, the distance between the hunter and his quarry, just where the bullet hit, if the hunter had been accompanied by a deer hound and all about the chase.

The limit on trout, when first set, was 50, and how the anglers prided themselves on the number of fish they had caught. A lucky fisherman, holding a long piece of willow branch with trout strung on it, would walk up the avenue, offering his fish for sale.

The same fast market was available for men who got other game at the opening of seasons on quail, doves and wild pigeons. There always were plenty of buyers, either individuals or hotels and restaurants.

All reports of game shooting were readable, even such game as jackrabbits or cottontails or squirrels.

The shooting of a deer or a bear was always important news and was sure to be turned in by the lucky hunter.

In addition to the game stories making work for the lone reporter were the reports of the berry pickers—in pints or quarts, told to the reporter and by him to the public through the paper. The reporter even would tell about the catches of white crabs off the wharf.

Annual also were the regimental encampments and even sometime state militia encampments. They meant a trip every day for

10 days to the campgrounds where the headquarters would be visited. Always there was news from the guard mount in the morning until dress parade at night just before the dances and band concerts.

The first encampments were on the Boston tract below High street. The single regimental encampment with militia from all of northern California was first at the Potrero, taking up a great stretch of country and covering the Imus and Russell ranches to what became known to the militiamen as "Tripe Hill" when a regiment was fed a menu composed of tripe for several days.

When DeLaveaga park became the property of the city, it was used for years as the camp ground until the state acquired property in San Luis Obispo.

DeLaveaga park was the beautiful campground for the encampments which usually were visited by the governor and many other notables.

Each of the many annual parades had to be covered by the paper's one reporter. This parade of parades got started with the St. Patrick's day event, large and colorful with the striking emerald green decorations and always a "Maid of Erin."

Memorial day saw a long parade sponsored by the Grand Army of the Republic which marched up Pacific avenue and then out to the IOOF cemetery.

The Fourth of July meant two parades, one in the morning followed by a noon barbecue, and the Horribles, the children's joy, in the afternoon with fireworks following.

The last parade each year was sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Swiss club, always with a float of William Tell and Helvetia, and followed by fireworks.

For a number of years, there was a Labor day parade sponsored by the unions, and some of the grand lodges also featured a parade as part of their programs.

The annual fairs, including the Rose fair and the agricultural fair in the early fall, meant columns of copy for the reporter to write. In the agricultural fair there were fine exhibits of the products of the county, including fruits and flowers. The exhibits were of agricultural innovations, such as new types of plows and other farm implements; the handiwork of the woman and displays by the schools. In the rear of the large pavilion facing Soquel avenue were sheds for the showing of cattle, horses and other live stock from the farms.

There also was the annual Sisters' fair with booths and many other features.

The regatta, similar to the one sailed last week, was held annually for years. One dozen yachts was a large number of participants. In addition to the race from San Francisco, there also was a sprint across the bay to Monterey and back.

The black-hulled "Lurline," owned by the Spreckels family, usually was the winner.

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