

HIGHLAND PARK'S LOST RIVER

By CHAS. A. ELDER

Fifty years ago a beautiful little river wandered for about six miles through the heart of Highland Park. It was known as the North Branch of the Arroyo Seco.

Its source was in a great spring situated just west of North Figueroa street at Springvale drive, which street took its name from the spring.

WEST OF FIGUEROA

From this big spring the river followed along the west side of Figueroa street about a mile to the intersection of what is now Meridian street and Branch street. From there it followed Branch street (which got its name from the "branch") along its west side, and turning west crossed York boulevard at Aldama street; thence along Aldama street to what is now the intersection of Aldama street with the alley between Buchanan and Baltimore streets; thence west until it crossed North Avenue 51, from where it turned south along the east side of North Avenue 50. It crossed Avenue 50 just west of Aldama street, and emptied into the Arroyo Seco through Sycamore Grove park.

WATER FROM SPRINGS

During its wandering, the little river received the waters of several fine springs, of which the famous Glenn Rock spring, at the head of Milwaukee avenue, was the largest.

This little river had a good stream of water flowing down it even in the dryest seasons, and was full of mountain trout and cat fish even up as far as York boulevard. I myself have seen boys pull out fish weighing half a pound as far north as North Avenue 51 and Buchanan streets.

The North Branch from Springvale drive to Meridian street flowed through a beautiful little glen about 40 feet deep and 200 feet wide in places, which was full of most beautiful ferns.

Along the banks of the stream

were hundreds of fine old oak and sycamore trees.

What has become of this once beautiful little river?

Last Sunday I followed the former course of the stream and found no traces of it except just south of Springvale drive a hundred feet west of North Figueroa street. Here the great spring which once flowed a stream as big around as a water bucket, had dwindled down to about the size of my arm. The once beautiful glen had been almost filled, with rubbish and ashes. I found but one of the fine old trees which once filled the glen, and it was a dead one which had fallen across the gully, making a bridge.

FOR FIRE WOOD

The early settlers had cut down the rest and used them for fire wood.

The many wells which have been dug have tapped the underground flow of these springs, among which are the wells of the water companies around York boulevard and North Avenue 45.

Then the subdividers came and laid out streets across the river bed, put in pipes to carry the water, and filled the streets in. Then the lot owners laid pipes to carry the water and thousands of loads of dirt were placed on the lots, bringing them to the level of the surrounding ground, and houses were built on them.

NOW A STORM DRAIN

The great Aldama storm drain, which has been under way for many years, has just been completed, following the former bed of the stream and taking all the water left.

Newcomers will laugh at the idea of a river with fish in it wandering through Highland Park, but the old-timers of whom there are over 40 who have lived here over 50 years, will wipe away a tear and sorrowfully commence "I remember when—."