



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

The bridge over San Leandro Creek on East 14th Street was built in 1901 to replace a wooden covered bridge. Below, a plaque on the bridge is inscribed with the names of the country supervisors.

By Jim Knowles

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Thousands of cars a day cross a bridge in the heart of San Leandro and hardly anyone gives it a thought.

The bridge on East 14th Street over San Leandro Creek is so reliable that it's taken for granted. It has no toll booths, no publicity, no fuss.

The bridge has been doing its job 24/7 for over a century – for 111 years to be exact. And it's rock solid. The massive concrete arch can be more clearly seen from the stairway leading down to the creek.

The country board of supervisors decided to build the concrete bridge to replace the old wooden covered bridge in 1901 where Oakland Road (as it was called) crossed San Leandro Creek, according to "A Garden Grows in Eden" by Harry E. Shaffer. Work began immediately and the bridge was finished in November of that year.

E.B. Stone's company had the winning design and was given the contract to build the bridge. At the time, the main road from Oakland to Hayward was lighted by lamps that burned coal oil or gasoline. In 1903, the first electric street lights were installed, according to Shaffer's book.

A railway bridge once stood next the the concrete bridge for an electric streetcar line that ran between Oakland and Haywards (as it was called at the time), the Oakland, San Leandro & Haywards Electric Railway.