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# This Bridge<sup>s</sup> is 100 Years Old

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A mere handful of the covered bridges of yesterday remain in California. . .

Santa Cruz County is lucky enough to have three.

They are to be found at Felton, DeLaveaga Park and at Paradise Park.

One of the three is 100 years old this year. The exact date is lost in the mists of antiquity, but the year is firm.

Paradise Park's famous covered bridge which spans the San Lorenzo River, was built in 1872 by the Pacific Bridge Company of San Francisco, for the California Powder Works. In the 100 years of the bridge's existence, only the floor decking and roof have been replaced, according to Kramer Adams who wrote COVERED BRIDGES OF THE WEST. The Paradise Park bridge is featured in a colored photograph on the front of Adams' book.

The bridge was built entirely of Santa Cruz County lumber and except for nuts and bolts no metal was used

in its construction. It features the type of truss known as the Warren Truss, which is a series of kingposts that form the letter "W."

The Paradise Park bridge also contains the only remaining examples of the diamond windows, once very popular in covered bridges. Another unique feature is its observation platform high above the river.

When great-grandfather clopped across the bridge with his horse and buggy, if he wasn't in a hurry, he could get out and stretch his legs and look for trout in the San Lorenzo. . .

That is, if the Powder Works wasn't blasting or shooting. The works, which later moved away and became the Hercules Powder Company, did a lot of testing.

It was incorporated in 1861 and started making powder in 1864, employing from 150 to 275 workmen. The San Lorenzo furnished water for operating machinery, a narrow gauge railroad track went from one end of the park to the other, where cannons were

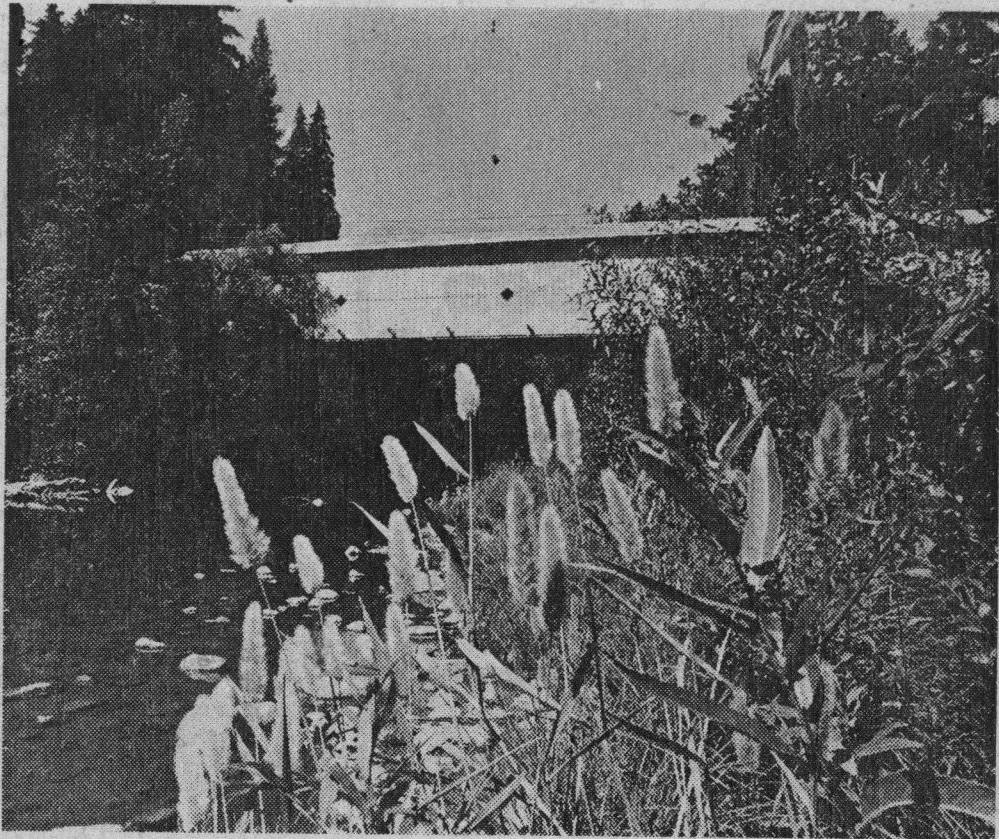
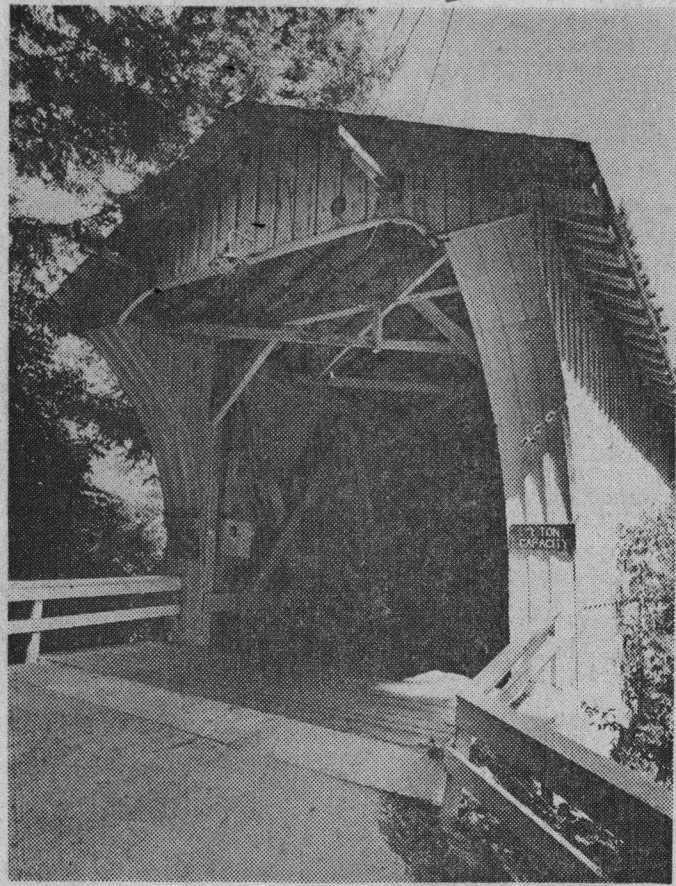
mounted for testing the famous smokeless powder.

The California Powder Works was the first west coast company to produce the smokeless powder, and had two cannons in which it was tested. The powder was used during the Spanish-American War.

In those days the powder workers labored for about \$2 per day, nine hours per day and six days per week. There were no fringe benefits. And according to a history of the park, in several cases the dead workman's lodge was asked to foot the burial expenses.

Much of the information in the history comes from Edward T. Rountree, who is perhaps the only surviving person who was employed at the powder works when it was located at Paradise Park. Rountree, member of a pioneer Santa Cruz County family, still makes his home here.

Only the old bridge remains the way it was, and where it was built, 100 years ago.



Above, rare diamond windows can be seen in this summer shot of the beautiful old bridge by Pete Amos, Sentinel Photographer