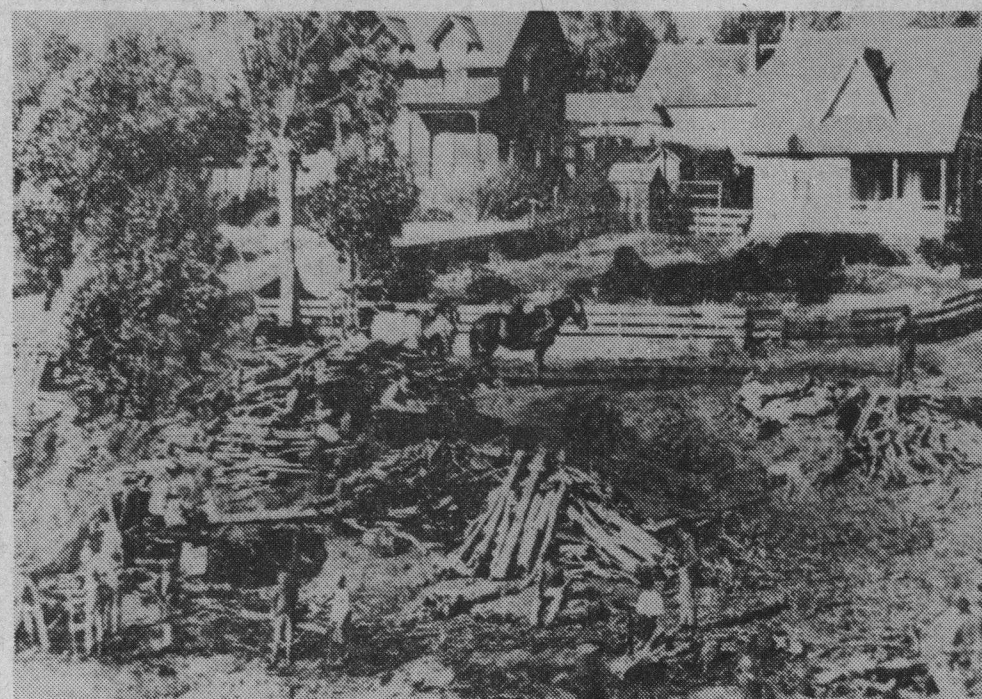


Seabright Beach had a bathhouse and store that looked like this for a few years. Later it was remodeled to resemble a castle, and served meals briefly, also served as an art gallery. Below, Leo and a friend "comb" the sands at Twin Lakes Beach for gold. It was there in minute amounts, following storms. They ran the sand through a washer-arrangement, then returned it to the beach.



Driftwood washed up at Seabright Beach like this in the horse and buggy days, and the citizens went there via horse and wagon to load it up and take it home to burn in their fireplaces and stoves. Note houses in background.

Driftwood, Gold, Powdermill Blowup — Leo Was There

Bio-1c

By MARGARET KOCH
Sentinel Staff Writer

Leo Kincannon has memories of old Santa Cruz that won't stop.

Gathering driftwood at Seabright Beach after storms...

Mining gold on Twin Lakes Beach — after storms...

Getting his first job in the Powdermill (which is now Paradise Park) before the entire operation was moved from Santa Cruz to Pinole.

"My first job was polishing the brass spittoons," he recalls. "Everybody chewed tobacco in those days."

Leo was born in Wisconsin and came to Santa Cruz in 1890. He went to Gault School — two rooms with Annie McSweeney as teacher. When he was 15 years old his uncle, Leo Trumbley, who was a jeweler here, offered him a job at \$1 a day — with a chance to learn the watch repair business. Leo says that at the time he really wanted to be a machinist.

He had to be 15 before he could work at the Powdermill, where he got the job cleaning spittoons — he also swept out the bunkhouses. It wasn't long before he was working on the machines — shotgun shell loaders, and very dan-

gerous, although Leo doesn't dwell on that.

He worked for only a year, when the powder plant was moved to Pinole. Leo went along and it was there in 1903 that Leo survived a blast that killed a girl working just 30 feet away from him at another cartridge loader.

Leo was badly burned from the waist up — his shirt was on fire when he got out of the building and a hose was turned on him, he says.

"No insurance or anything like that in those days," he notes. "But the company put me in the hospital and hired a special nurse and paid the doctor."

Commercial duck hunters bought those shotgun shells "by the million" Leo says. In those days ducks were hunted almost year-round for the market.

Ecology was an unknown word: "Some fishermen put out nets and caught ducks and geese that way, too."

Leo lived dangerously. He was on a boat that delivered tons of dynamite to San Francisco following the big quake of 1906 — it was a floating bomb but they got there.

"The dynamite was to be used to blow up certain blocks of the city to stop the fires. The earthquake had broken the water lines."

After delivering the explosives to a location near the Fairmont Hotel, where the U.S. Army took over, Leo came home to Santa Cruz. That was a trip he'll never forget.

"The train only ran from San Jose part-way to Watsonville where a bridge was out and the tracks were knocked out of line by the quake."

He walked from that point into Watsonville.

When World War I came along, Leo was a sergeant in the airforce and worked on planes. He recalls the Hispano engine as a "beautiful engine." In those days he says, observation planes were made to fly "slow" — about 40 miles an hour, and the photographer stood up in the plane holding a huge camera, taking shots.

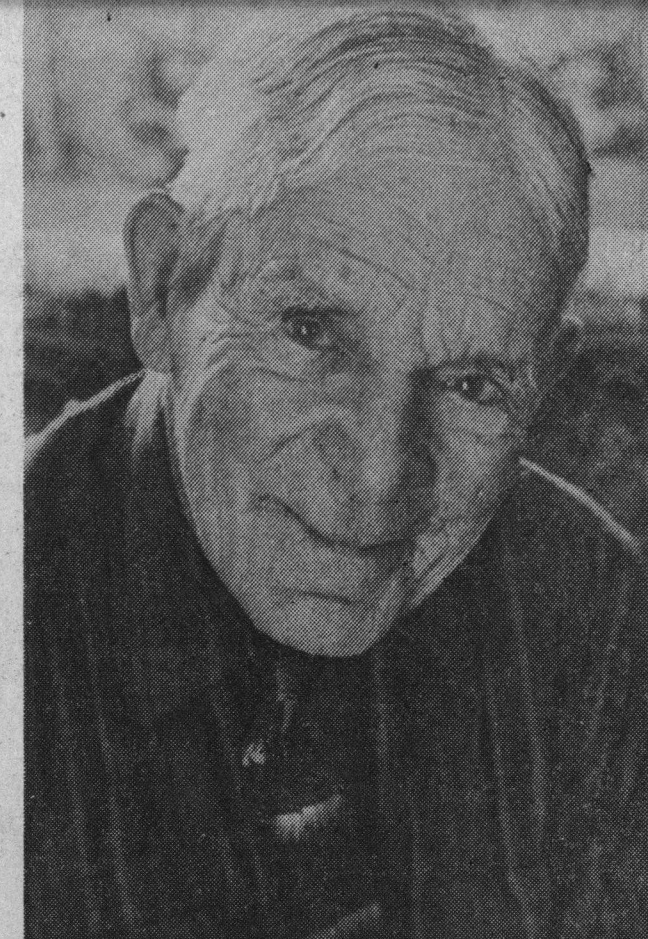
Things were very different in World War II with Leo operating steam turbine engines, studying at University of Santa Clara where he took courses in the College of Engineering, and being presented with the Medal of Merit — the highest wartime honor for a civilian.

He's typically vague on what he did to earn it, but it had to do with his work with machinery.

Leo has lived in Seabright most of his life — it's a state of mind rather than a geographical point on the map, today. In his later years he worked as a watch maker and repairman on Pacific Avenue, for Trumbley and Bender, Jewelers.

In his spare time, all his life, from boyhood up, he roamed the beaches for driftwood, and he processed the sand for gold. How much? "Oh maybe a couple of dollars a day, sometimes more."

Leo had fun growing up here and he feels the kids miss a lot today.



LEO KINCANNON

