



FROM THE COLLECTION OF ERIC GIBSON

The cars are a clue to the era when this photo was taken of Brookdale Lodge's rustic lobby, remodeled from an 1870 log building.

Historical memories haunt Brookdale

BY ROSS ERIC GIBSON
 Special to the Mercury News

A girl in a formal dress runs across the lobby, then disappears into thin air. In an empty Mermaid Room, voices and music are softly heard. Hidden rooms and secret passages are mysterious vestiges of Brookdale Lodge's rich past.

Brookdale, two miles south of Boulder Creek, opened in 1900 when the Grover lumber mill was purchased by Judge H.J. Logan, originator of the loganberry. The extensive acreage became campgrounds and summer cabins, with the mill's log-lodge headquarters from 1870 converted into a hotel. A bridge over nearby Clear Creek led to the small dining hall, which overlooked Minnehaha Falls.



SANTA CRUZ
Historic Perspective

After Dr. F.K. Camp purchased the site, the river changed course in 1922, cutting a channel through the hotel grounds. Embankments were needed to keep the creek in its place, but Camp felt they shouldn't detract from the stream bed's natural appearance. The resulting terraces lined with granite boulders suggested a marvelous setting for dining, and Camp envisioned a dining hall straddling the fern-lined creek.

This vision was carried out by architect and landscaper Horace Cotton, whose de-

sign gained critical acclaim among architects for so deftly integrating a rustic structure into the very fabric of the forest. It was ranked with Yosemite's Ahwahnee Lodge as that rare example of serious "rustic style" architecture.

The large barnlike structure resembled a redwood log cabin, with whole-log verandas decorated in sticks of "tanglewood gingerbread." Inside, the terraces were supposed to protect the lodge from rising water. For 70 feet, the creek passed through the dining room, under a large atrium skylight that allowed continued growth of the woodwardia and other ferns. Trees growing through the roof formed a natural canopy.

In a back wall above the rustic bridge over the falls was a round window, lit at night to look like moonlight through the trees. Here a woman sang "Indian Love Call" opening day, on what became known as the Honeymoon Bridge. Horseshoes from the old mill were welded together as lanterns. Even the stream was lit, with colored underwater lights (a device perfected by architect Cotton), and people could watch trout swimming by as they dined. And the kidney-shaped pool (lit from below) later had an underwater window behind the Mermaid Room bar.

Cotton also remodeled the 1870 lodge into a lobby and reading room. New entry doors went up, each four inches thick, 51 inches wide and weighing 300 pounds. Their ornamental hinges were cut out of the mill's



The moon window and Honeymoon Bridge were features of the famous dining room.

See **LODGE**, Page 4B