

An Island That's Not...

By MARGARET KOCH
Sentinel Staff Writer

Huckleberry Island, up at Brookdale, is not a true island. It is surrounded by water only on three sides.

But huckleberries grow there in the green and gold light under a canopy of trees. Grandfather-size redwoods lift their arms to the sky. There are deer and birds, beauty and peace and the soothing sound of water.

Above all, Huckleberry Island is a state of mind.

And to be absolutely accurate, there is one time of year, winter, when a certain spring is flowing, that Huckleberry Island becomes a true island. This information comes from Herman Irwin who came to Brookdale from San Francisco in 1903. His property bounds the island on its north side where the peripatetic spring ebbs and flows.

"No one knows who named the island," he said.

Mr. Irwin may not know that, but he has gathered other information over the years, because the island is the sort of place that excites curiosity. Its story also is woven inextricably into that of Brookdale, where it is located.

In Early Days

The island was owned by the pioneer Grover Mill interests in the 1870's, then by Santa Clara Valley Lumber Company, the McKoy and Duffey Company and finally was cut over by I. T. Bloom Mill. Most of the virgin redwoods around Brookdale were logged out. The lumber mill stood just back of the present Brookdale Lodge dining room. And in those days, Brookdale was known as Reed's Spur.

Those early-day loggers looked at the island redwoods with dollar signs in both eyes. But they had to

leave them standing; it was impossible to get logs of that size across the San Lorenzo River. And so, by the grace of God and inadequate early-day logging equipment, the patriarch trees were saved.

The great natural beauty of the Brookdale and Huckleberry Island was recognized by Judge John H. Logan of loganberry fame. What was the judge doing up there? Who knows... per-

Party Plans

Reservations are still being taken for the Children's Home Society Tahitian party July 20 at Huckleberry Island.

They may be made by mailing checks to Mrs. Richard Kincade at 328 Martin Drive, Aptos, by Wednesday. Donations are \$10 per person. Tahitian food and entertainment will be provided by Turia Nunes, a native of Tahiti. Mrs. John Marlo is general chairman for the party. Proceeds will benefit the adoption services of Children's Home Society, of which Sandpiper Chapter is the local group.

haps investigating the huckleberry crop. He had a green thumb and a lifelong interest in berries. The judge later bought out Grover's interests and established a small hotel and furniture factory at Brookdale.

A Town Is Born

A town was laid out there by Stephen Freeland Grover about 1890, the name "Clear Creek" was selected and a depot was built on the railroad line. In 1902 the place was named for the third and last time as Brookdale, and

a post office was established.

By 1905, Brookdale was the second most popular resort in the State of California, according to Irwin.

They Swam

"On June 1 the train would roll into Brookdale loaded with kids and dogs. There were 700 families down here all summer — they came from the San Francisco and Oakland bay areas," he recalled.

These early vacationers weren't long in discovering the island with its secluded river beauty. It was purchased by a Dr. Hunkin from San Francisco who built a summer home there. First house on the island, it is still owned by his daughter, Meva Hunkin, according to Irwin.

Senator Arthur Breed came to the island about the same time and bought a large hunk of it in order to get the famed redwood grove. He also built a large summer home — some believe it was built before Dr. Hunkin's home. Today the Breed home is owned and cherished by Dr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Schnoor. It and its adjoining redwood grove will serve as the locale for the Children's Home Society Tahitian party July 20.

They Built Homes

Senator Breed's enthusiasm for the mountain retreat attracted prominent friends such as the H. C. Capwells of Oakland, the Bancrofts of UC Bancroft Library fame, and Dr. Warren Wakefield, first physician to use scopalmine or "twilight sleep" for women in childbirth.

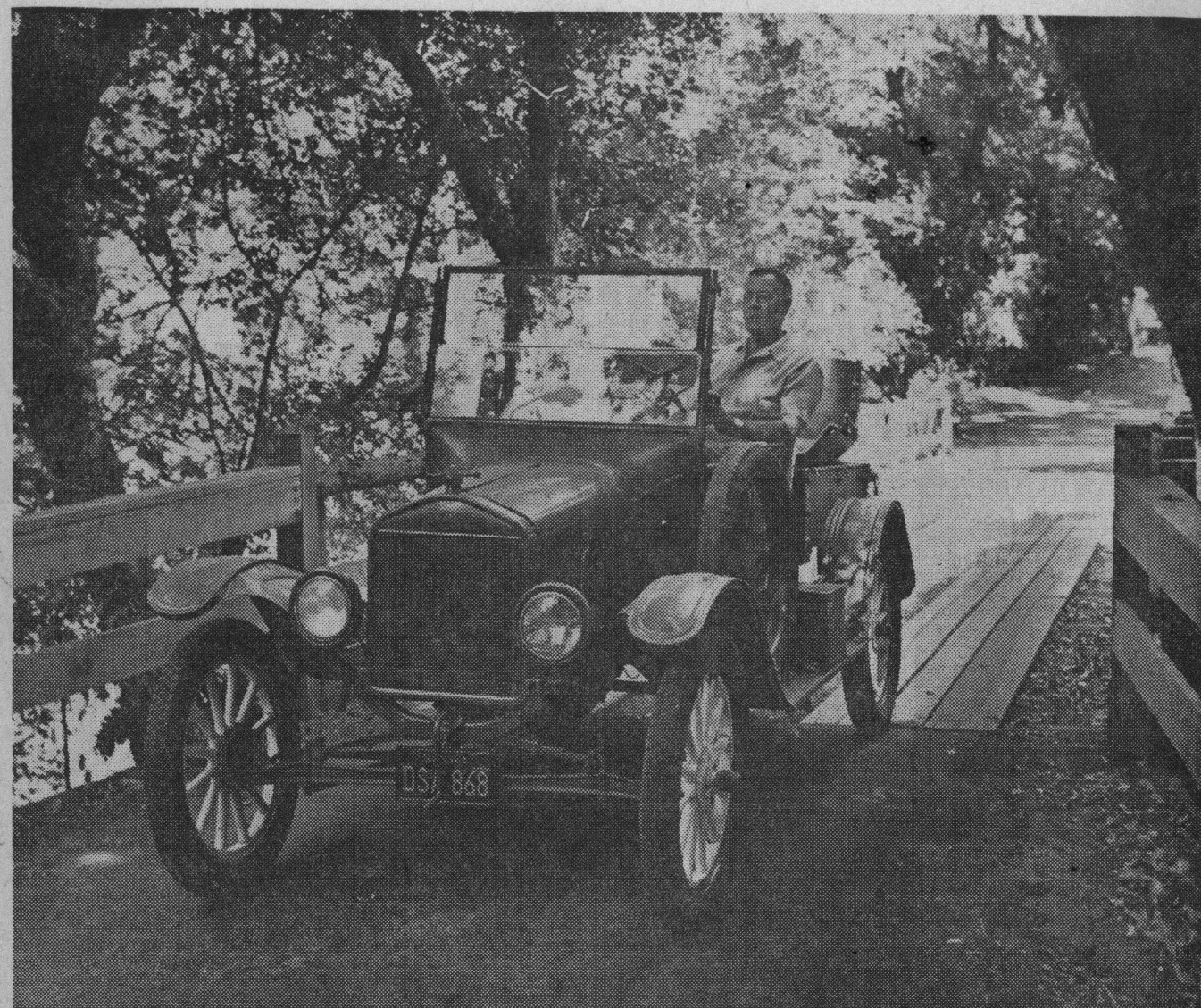
These people all came to visit, then returned to buy summer home sites on Huckleberry Island. "The Island" became a whole new way of summer life for those city dwellers. Eventually, 14 homes were built.

With the passing of the years, the turning of auto wheels and changes in family vacation patterns, many of the senior settlers sold out.

A Magic Place

The second wave of island settlers is now in command. Many live there all year 'round. They join forces occasionally for projects like replacing the worn-out bridge after a power company truck fell through it in 1965. (The bridge has been replaced three times since 1903.)

But mostly they just enjoy island living... its privacy, beauty and the charm of old houses.



Dr. Thomas G. Schnoor crosses the Huckleberry Island bridge in the 1923 Ford he uses for transporting guests from the "mainland."



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Patrick, the Schnoors' dog, delivers The Sentinel to Herman Irwin, "mayor" of Huckleberry Island at Brookdale. Dr. Schnoor looks on.

Halfway House, seventh to be built on island, now belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Cox of Piedmont. Guests in the foreground are Dr. and Mrs. Dudley Bell of Piedmont. This home was formerly owned by the late Santa Cruz Attorney Stanford Smith.

Getting Married Soon?

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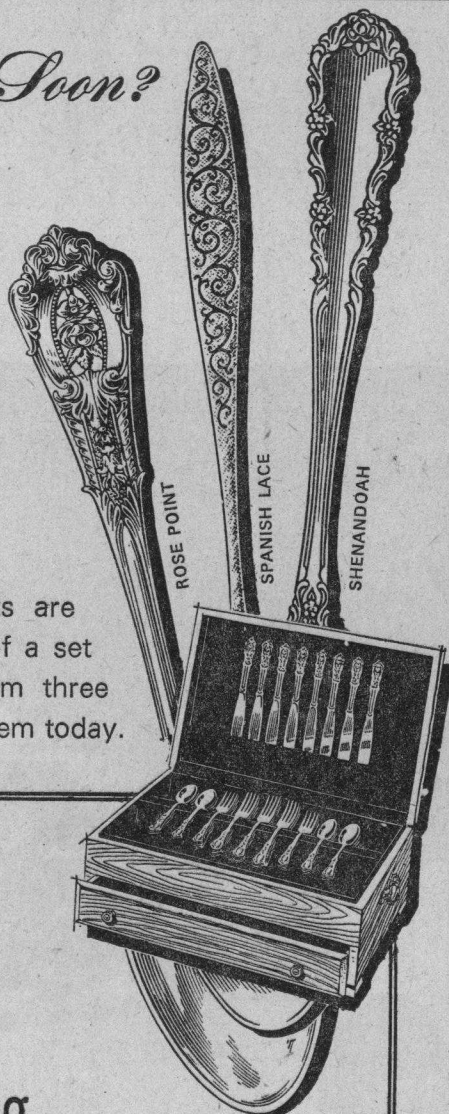
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Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Albert now own the house built by the Capwell family. They have completely renovated it. It was the third house to be built on the island.

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