

# An Old Bridge Fades Away



By Wallace Wood  
Sentinel Staff Writer

It was just a bridge to some, but, for most Huckleberry Island residents, having it torn down was like losing part of their past.

There was hardly a dry eye among persons on this isolated peninsula in the San Lorenzo river near Brookdale when work crews started ripping out the planks this morning. Many had their cameras to record its last hours. Of course, a power company truck had fallen right through the old 1903 span a month ago, and the Boulder Creek fire department flatly warned it would not cross the structure under any circumstances. So a new \$10,000, 10-foot wide bridge spanning the 80-foot gap will be built by Lou Jones Construction.

For the children, it was

a grand idea: For the next three days they have to cross the river by jumping from steppingstone to steppingstone. They might even get wet and have to wade. Even after that, only pedestrian traffic will cross the new bridge for two weeks.

The Huckleberry Island Homeowners association, which includes 12 out of 14 residents, actually voted to build a new bridge a year ago. However, there was a feeling the new bridge should look much like the old one, and the county public works department wanted a larger bridge for two-way traffic. A compromise was reached on a two-foot wider bridge, but one-way.

Once, the 38-acre peninsula was the summer spa for the elite of Oakland society. State

Senator Arthur Breed, now deceased, purchased the land first and gave parcels to such friends as the Bancrofts, of the Bancroft library at Berkeley; H. S. Capwell, department store owner; Dr. Warren Wakefield, the first physician to administer the "twilight sleep" drug scopolamine to women in childbirth; the designer of the Alameda "tube" or tunnel to Oakland, and so forth.

Long-time resident Flo Schnoor says that the once-famed Athenian Nile club used to give plays, hold performances, and generally cut up for their distinguished audiences around the turn of the century.

"So you can see why we miss it," says association President Joe Martino. "Besides, I'm not so good at this steppingstone business anyway."