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# Brookdale's lodge was world-famed

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**T**ODAY'S motorists on their busy way north to Boulder Creek or Big Basin must cut their speed a little as they cruise through it. They glimpse a sleepy settlement in the shade of towering redwood trees ... a store or two ... old summer cabins ... and a newer motel.

"What was that?"

"The sign said Brookdale."

"Hmm. Never heard of it. Not much there, is there."

And they zoom on to more lively activities. They would be surprised to learn that once — not too many years ago — Brookdale was world-famous. From the early 20s into the 1950s, Brookdale enjoyed the reputation of "Hospitality Town."

Diners came from many parts of the world to have dinner in Brookdale Lodge. Its rustic dining room was widely known for the brook which ran through its length, dividing the room into two sections which were joined by a rustic bridge.

Rustic was the magic word. Rustic and natural. Woodwardia and sword ferns edged the bubbling waters, a small waterfall sparkled below the curved bridge, and other native plants and shrubs enhanced the setting. Trout was a speciality of the house.

It all began with simpler things, back in the late 1870s when Grover lumber interests moved a mill from Soquel to the Brookdale area and began cutting the redwoods. However, strangely enough, many of the finest trees were spared. Perhaps due to inaccessibility. In 1883 the Grovers sold out to the Santa Clara Valley Mill and Lumber Company which had its headquarters in Ben Lomond. And a year later, the railroad from Santa Cruz to Boulder Creek was hauling ever larger loads of redwood down to ships anchored at the Santa Cruz wharf.

## A glance at history

When Judge John H. Logan of Santa Cruz visited the Brookdale area, he was struck with its beauty. Logan was superior court judge and president of Santa Cruz Bank. In 1903 he purchased the Grovers' interest. They still owned property there.

The area then was known as Reed's Spur. A town had been laid out by Grover and a depot built. In 1902, the town was re-named Brookdale and acquired a post office.

Logan immediately built a small hotel and sold off lots to families who wanted to build summer cottages. He also built a small furniture factory which operated for several years, and through his influence the State Fish Hatchery was established in Brookdale. A general merchandise store went in and someone named Peter Pundt opened a saloon and pool hall.

After the South Pacific Coast railroad constructed its line from Los Gatos through the mountains, it joined the small local line which ran from Santa Cruz to Boulder Creek. Entire families began to come by railroad to spend their summer vacations at Logan's hotel or in the cottages under the redwoods.

Later, in 1923-24, Brookdale's famed Lodge with its creek-dining room was built on the site of Logan's small hotel and Pundt's saloon. Developers were Dr. and Mrs. F.K. Camp who were determined to retain the natural beauty of the area and include Clear Creek in their plan.

The creek entered the dining room with a small waterfall under the arched bridge and ran down the hillside in a cleverly constructed waterway which looked as if it had been there always. Rocks, ferns and

were placed to look as natural as possible. Redwood log pillars held up the roof.

A Santa Cruz brick and stone mason, Grant Mosher, helped Camp plan and create his "dream lodge." Mosher and his crew took a personal interest in every stone and log, and in building the tile and brick terraces on which the dining tables and chairs were arranged.

Even the windows were rustic. Gnarled branches were split and used to frame the glass the same way lead seams are used in stained glass windows. The lodge lobby had as focal point a huge stone fireplace, and the gardens outside centered about a wishing well. Coins from the well went to a fund for crippled children.

The lodge register was a who's who of national and international celebrities and dignitaries, including presidents of the United States and foreign diplomats.

In 1930, the Brookdale Inn was built by R.H. Hartman, and the town could boast a soda fountain and short-order

eatery, a candy store owned and operated by Belle Pappas, three real estate offices and a weaving studio in addition to its post office, general store and Lodge. The Brookdale Club had built its hall in the late 1920s and it was used as a community center.

But Brookdale's heyday was not to last.

The auto began to supplant the railroad and tourism changed drastically. In 1935 the depot was torn down. In 1945, Camp sold his lodge and moved to Pasadena where he died a few months later.

Brookdale Lodge began a series of changes in ownership and unsuccessful revivals which ended in bankruptcy.

The old days of world fame are gone but not forgotten. Old timers remember well the tables set with white linen on the terraces among the ferns and shrubs with the creek bubbling merrily at their feet.