

*In Honor of the Felton Old Covered Bridge*

— This Year Celebrating Its 75th Birthday —

**THE FELTON VOLUNTEER FIREMEN**

Present This. . . .

# COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

PRICE PER COPY: 15¢

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1892

1967

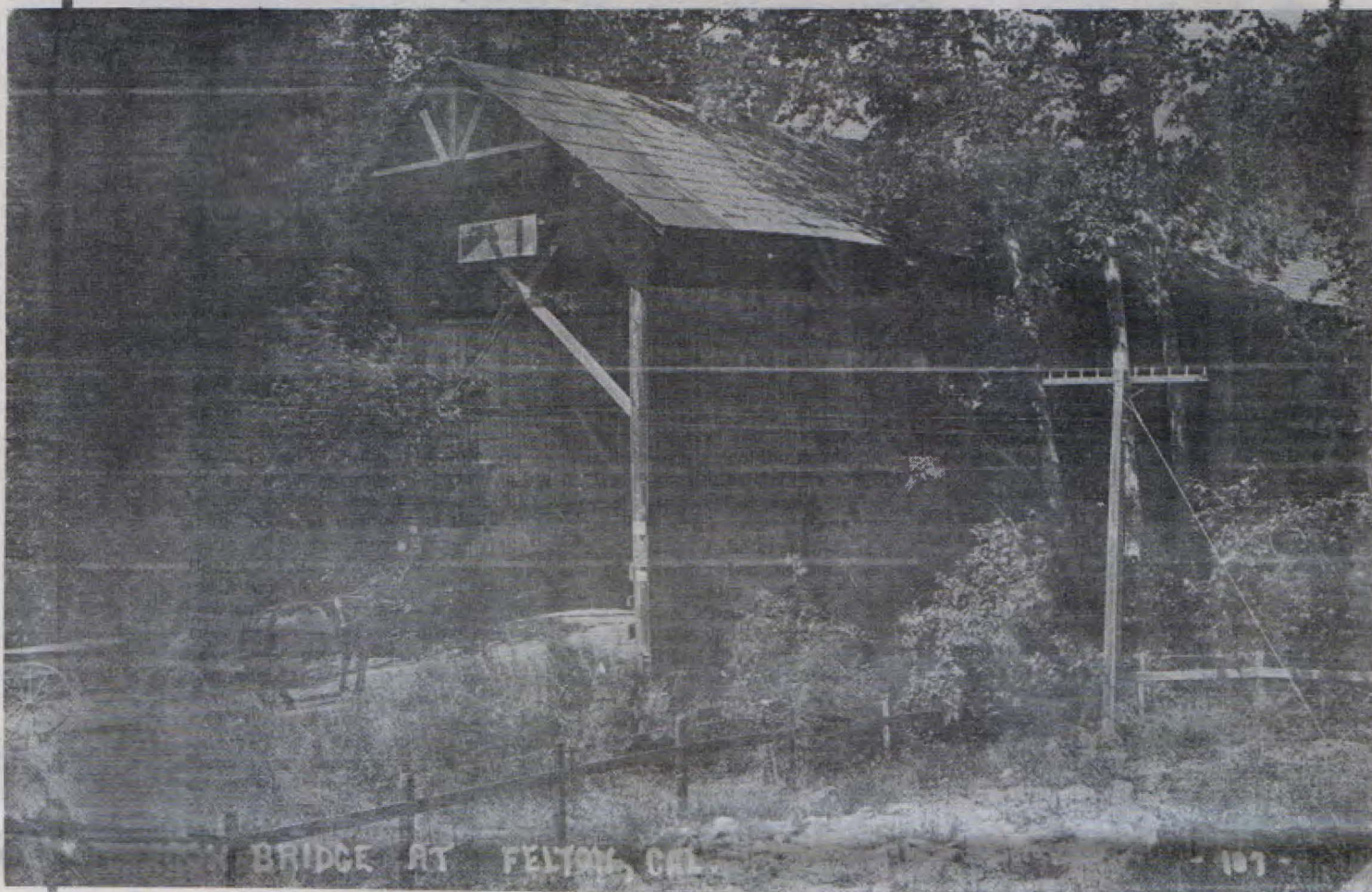


**8th Annual Covered Bridge Benefit Breakfast**

**SUNDAY, JULY 9, 1967**

Sponsored by

***Felton Volunteer Fire Dept., Inc.***



The photo is loaned through the courtesy of the Wm. F. Sinnott family of Felton. It shows the Felton Covered Bridge about the turn of the century. Unfortunately, the photo is somewhat discolored and doesn't properly show the man at the reins. He is Nick Sinnott, a prominent San Lorenzo Valley citizen who was a member of the Board of Supervisors (1914-1927) and served also as Santa Cruz County Sheriff (1927-1931). He continued to be honored until his death in 1935.

Congratulations to the Felton Fire Department  
for its own special brand of service to the families of the area.

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22 Years Before the  
Felton Covered Bridge Was Built

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### Most of the men on Felton Volunteer Firemen roster

Left to right are George Huchcroft, Bud Wright, Bob Bowen, president of the Volunteers, Bill Wright, Conde Poulson, Bill Avilla, Douglas Kiss, Bob Miller, assistant fire chief and a fire commissioner, Bob Brown, Herman Sahlman and Forrest Edwards, clerk.

The Felton Volunteer Firemen are more than a group of men who fight fires (even though this really is all they're asked to do), they also demonstrate their love for community in a number of other ways. The rescue truck in the photo is one such community project they have undertaken. Their task is to raise money to purchase the truck and its expensive gear. Profits from the sale of advertising and copy sales of this Commemorative Issue will be put to this end.

Another of the firemen's community projects is sponsorship of the Bridge Breakfast each year. Proceeds from this are used to restore this interesting and historic span, which is a delightful link with Felton's early days. Nearly \$5,000 has already been spent for this purpose.

These are only two of many dozens of projects undertaken by these men, many completed, many continuing, that make the community of Felton a better place to live.

THIS ISSUE PREPARED BY THE VALLEY PRESS

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# Valley's Volunteer Firemen exemplify community spirit

In the early 1900's Felton's only piece of fire fighting equipment was a hand-drawn cart and hose that could be hooked up to four hydrants in town.

The vehicle was purchased by business men in the community, but its effectiveness depended upon the citizens' response when someone hollered "fire!"

There was no chief or organized department to fight the enemy to any community's life--fire.

The old cart was stored on the river bank underneath the livery stable, and high waters of the river swept it away one winter.

A great many changes have been made since those days.

Today, the Felton Fire District is protected by a modern, well organized and equipped Volunteer Fire Department.

It all began in 1939, again with interested citizens.

The California State Division of Forestry wanted to locate in Santa Cruz County and a survey determined that Felton was the best place.

However, there was no money to purchase the land for the headquarter, and other communities were offering free land as an enticement.

A group of citizens, led by Ted Toft and William Featherstone, State Fire Wardens at the time; and William Rubottom, Superintendent of Big Trees County Park, met and formed the first Felton Voluntary Fire Department.

An arrangement was set up with Featherstone's father, a real estate developer, for land to be leased by the State Forestry Division and eventually to be bought by the Volunteer Fire Department. The land was later bought by the department for \$2,000, raised by donations and benefits.

The presence of the forestry headquarters in the area provided a greater fire protection, and the initial spirit of cooperation between the volunteer department and forestry officials has continued through the years.

William Featherstone became the first chief of the volunteers, and the department bought its first piece of equipment. It was a portable pump with a 300-gallon tank with a 250 foot, 1-1/2 inch hose. It was assembled on skids; so it could be shoved onto a truck bed.

In 1946, a disastrous fire destroyed three buildings in the center of Felton, and citizens, aware that greater fire

protection was needed, formed the Felton Fire Protection District in 1948.

Ted Toft became the first Fire Chief of the district that year and has been ever since.

In the ensuing years, the district purchased land and built and dedicated the present fire house at Kirby and Gushee Streets, in 1954.

All of the equipment from the first fire department went to the district, and new equipment was added. Today the district has three pumper trucks, a jeep and a portable power plant, and a fully equipped rescue squad truck.

The first pumper truck acquired, a four-wheel drive Dodge, was bought in 1948 and is still in service.

It was used in the 1959 Pine Mountain Fire, which burned thousands of acres from Big Basin to the Bonny Doon area, and proved to be the only truck which could navigate the rough terrain. State forestry officials were so impressed with its performance, that 33 trucks like it were purchased by the state the next year.

While most of the equipment is purchased now with money from the tax-supported district, the Volunteers have contributed many extras with funds raised by their benefit activities.

Many of the comforts of the fire house, which is used for social activities, as well, have been bought with such money.

This year the volunteers put nearly \$2000 worth of equipment into the new rescue truck, which is manned by three men who are specially trained to serve as a life-saving unit.

As a special community project the Volunteers have sponsored the restoration of the Felton Old Covered Bridge, and have spent nearly \$5,000 over the last seven years on it.

The department has 20 volunteers on its Roster at present, and they meet for weekly drills on Tuesdays. They receive a small compensation for their drills and responses to fire calls.

There is also a Ladies Auxiliary, whose members assist in fund raising activities.

The Volunteer fire fighters today exemplify the traditional spirit of a community's most valued citizens; they are instantly prepared to protect the welfare of others.

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## Felton Fire Chief Ted Toft

The Old Covered Bridge and Ted Toft go together. Ted is a pioneer of Felton and he grew up knowing well this historic span over the San Lorenzo River. It was he who conceived the idea of the Annual Bridge Breakfasts in order to raise funds to restore the old structure. Ted supplied most of the material (words and pictures) for this Commemorative Issue. He has served as Felton Fire Chief since 1945, but his efforts on behalf of the community go far beyond this area.

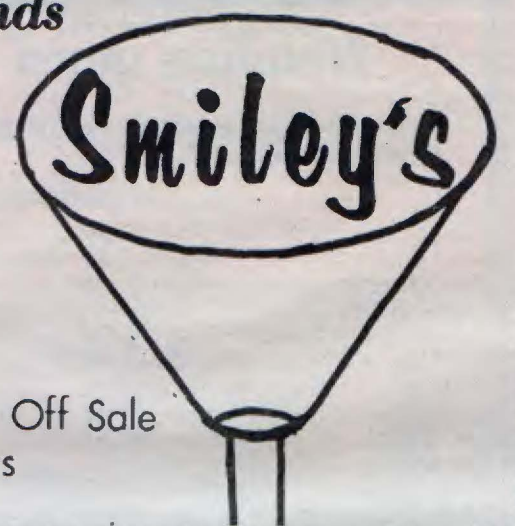
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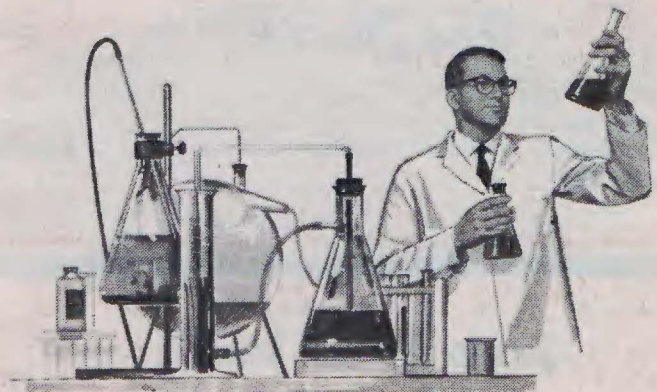
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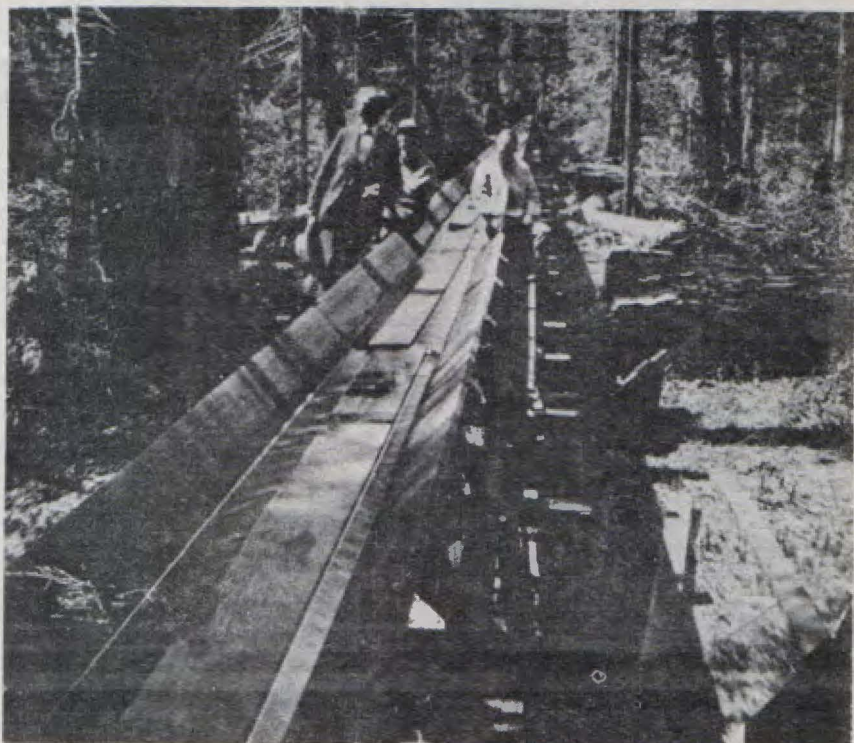
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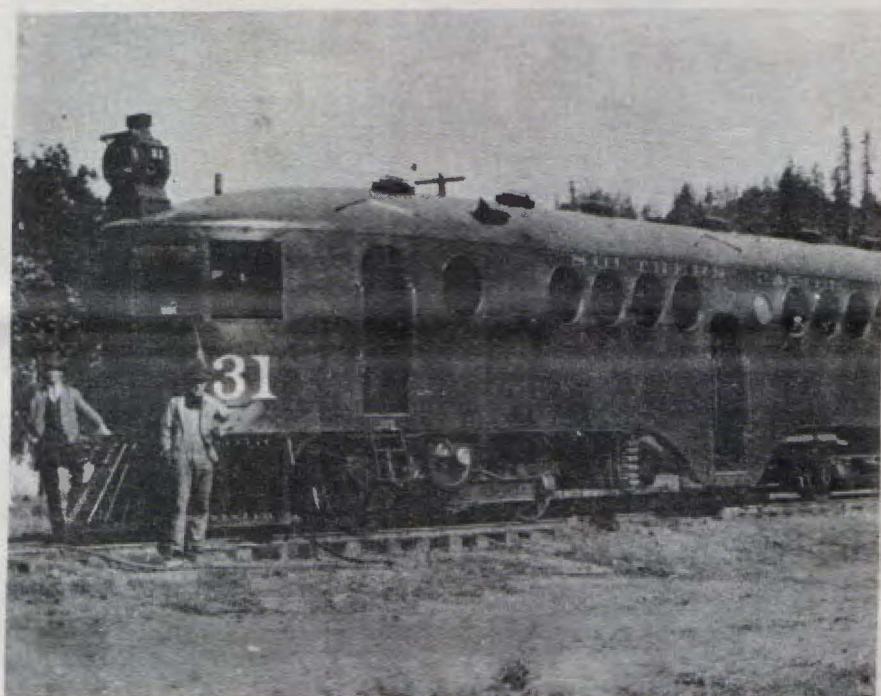
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Dial 335-5121

Hwy 9 & Plateau  
Felton



## Heading down to Felton

The old flume carried lumber from Boulder Creek to Felton until the railroad replaced it.



## 'The Skunk'

"The Skunk," as it was affectionately called, was a gasoline powered rig that operated between Felton and Santa Cruz in 1911-12. It didn't have the necessary power as passengers had to get out and push at the Rincon grade.

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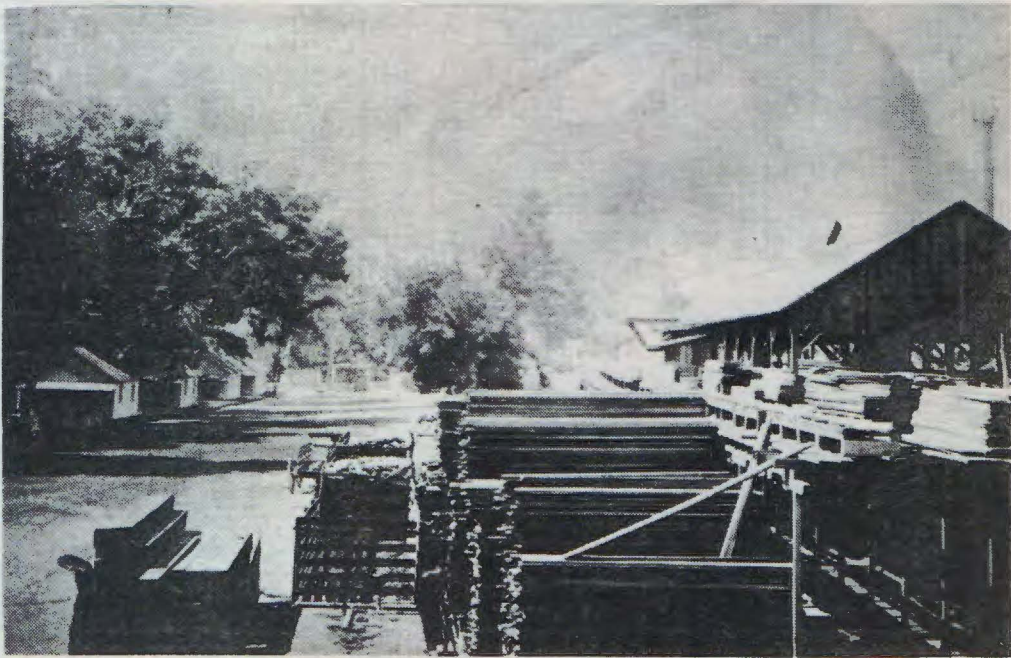
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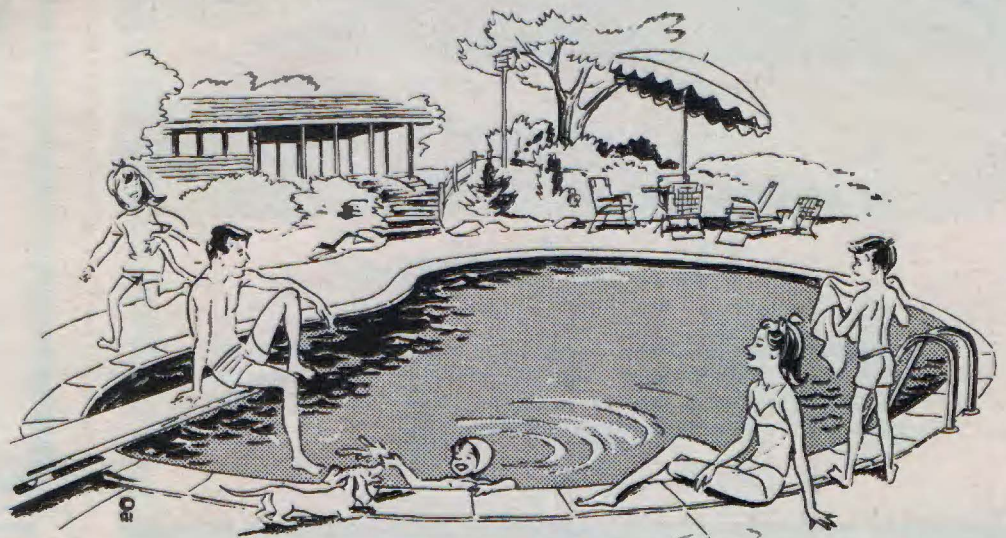
The Covered Bridge

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### Grease the skids

This shows how the oxen teams "snaked" the redwood logs down the greased skids. According to Ted Toft the bull driver is probably Chris Eifferts and the scene is possibly at Brookdale. PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK BELARDI.



### The main corner

Originally this was the Grand Central Hotel which was in full operation at the turn of the century. Later it became the Felton Hotel and belonged to Nick Belardi, who provided this photo. Smiley's and the Village Kitchen are now at this corner location.

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## Once there was a pair

This reproduction from an old postcard shows a scene prior to May 9, 1908. About that date Mrs. Ted (Mae) Toft was sent the postcard from her mother to remember her birthday. The Southern Pacific railroad bridge on the right shows that the grade to it is not finished. While the Old Covered Bridge still stands and gets better looking each year (thanks to the efforts of the Felton Volunteer Firemen), the twin bridge is now gone with only its two piers left to remind us that it once was there.

While You're at breakfast,  
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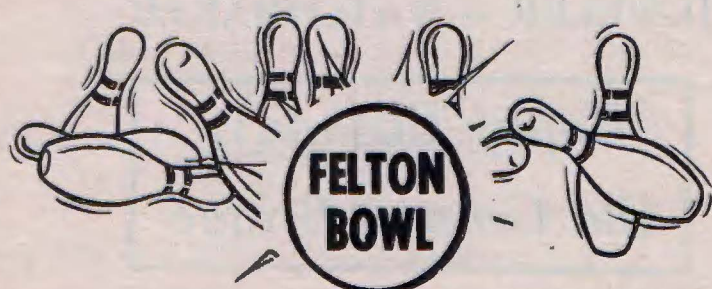
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# The bridge came to be in 1892—now 75 years young

Felton's Old Covered Bridge was built in 1892. It replaced an uncovered bridge that had stood in the same spot and had been used by pioneers and loggers as early as 1841.

The first bridge had been constructed lower over the San Lorenzo River, and the contour of its approach road is discernible under the covered bridge today.

The pioneers' bridge has been described as "a span of iron with wood abutments." It apparently served the area well, but the wet winter of 1889-90 raised the river water to high levels. Logs swept downstream in the turbulent river bombarded the bridge. Bark scraped off the logs as they hit underneath the bridge piled up on the bridge floor.

The following year it was apparent the bridge had been weakened so seriously that a new one was needed.

So it was that the old covered bridge was built. The contractor was an Oakland firm, and the firm's sign, "Cotton Brothers," was affixed to the structure. It became as familiar to local travelers as the shake roof, the approach ramps and the ornate iron work braces used to support the interior upper trusses.

During its years of service, freight hauling horse-drawn wagons rumbled over it on their way to the steep and rough Graham Hill Road and Mt. Hermon Road.

The stage and mail carrier from the Felton railroad station carried the newly-arrived visitors across the bridge to the Felton hotels.

And eventually, the horseless carriage, with goggled drivers in their dusters became a part of the scene.

In later years, one Valley resident recalled, "Back there in the early 1920's the girls sure loved to cross that old bridge in the Maxwell I used to have."

The year before the first Felton Volun-

teer Fire Department was formed, the Old Covered Bridge was sentenced to retirement.

In 1938, the reinforced concrete bridge spanning the San Lorenzo River at Felton was completed, and the old bridge was bypassed.

The new bridge fed traffic more directly into Mt. Hermon and Graham Hill Roads.

The old bridge stood alone, a span with a portion of county road at each end, that led nowhere. Time and weather had ravaged it, and its continued existence, without repair, was doubtful.

Then Felton's Volunteer Firemen made the restoration of the bridge their project, under an agreement with the county.

For the last seven years, the firemen have raised funds to repair the bridge with their Old Covered Bridge Breakfasts.

One of these days, their work will be completed, and when that day arrives, they have another project in mind.

The county owns a strip of land between the bridge road and the river, north of the bridge. The firemen hope that the county will agree to establishing a small park on the land with a picnic area and restrooms.

The firemen would like to participate in the creation of such a spot, which would add to the enjoyment of the restored bridge.

They also have another goal, the installation of a State Marker to point out the bridge as one of California's spots of historical interest.

When the restoration work is completed, each end of the bridge will once again bear the same signs it wore in the days of use by horseback riders and teamsters, "\$5 fine for riding or driving over this bridge faster than a walk."

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## E. H. GRANSBURY

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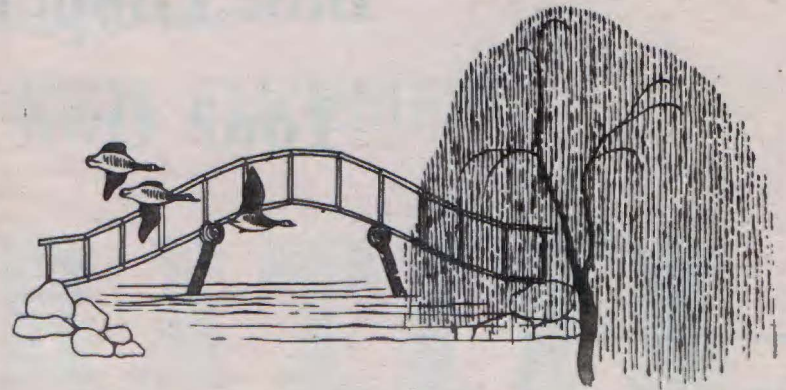


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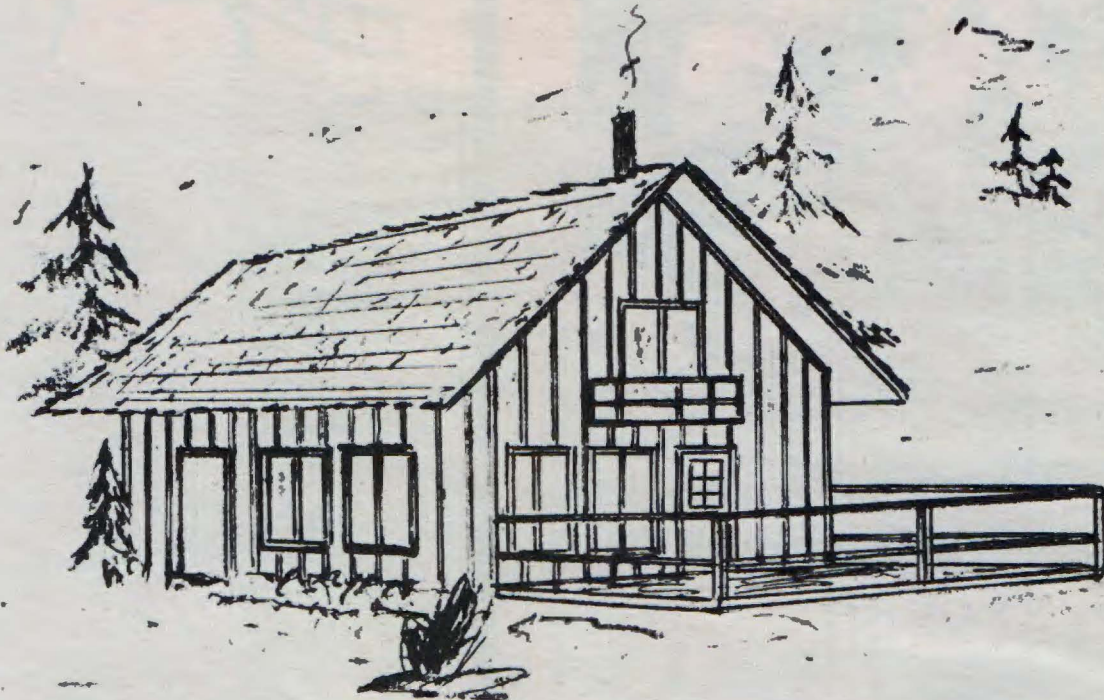
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JULY 9, 1967



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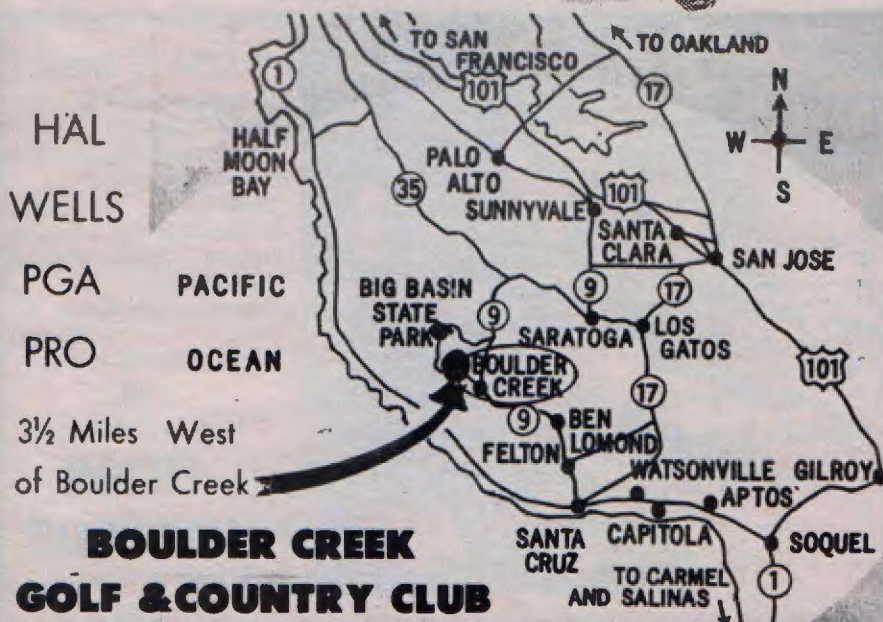


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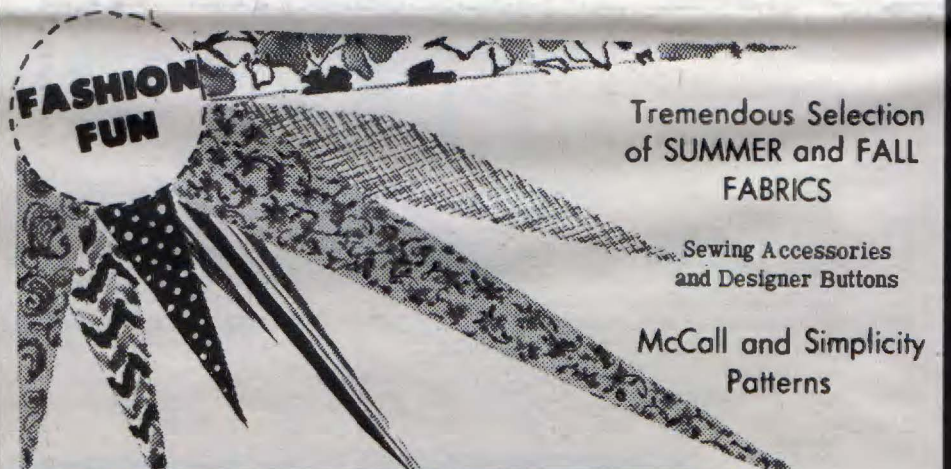


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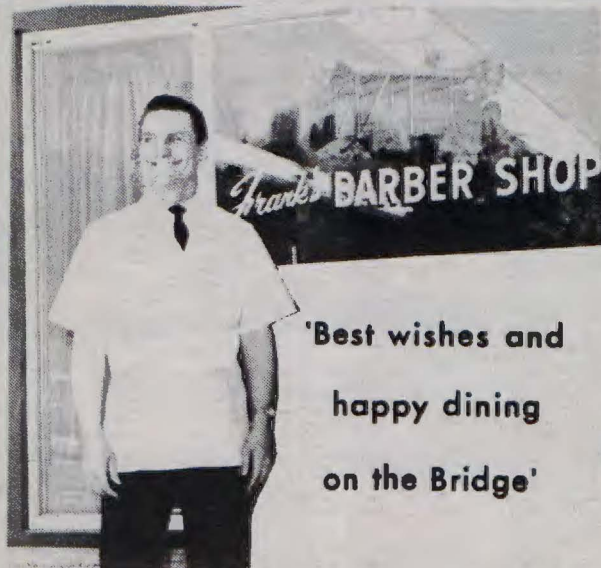
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**Frank's  
OLD  
COVERED  
BRIDGE  
BARBER SHOP**

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## Short stop-over

A South Pacific Coast passenger train takes a short respite at this lonely stop (possibly at Laurel or Glenwood) on the run from Alameda through Felton to Santa Cruz. Note the depot made by converting a passenger car and perching a roof over it. Note also that the narrow-gauge iron monster devours wood. One of the favorite trips for East Bay folks was the excursion to Big Trees where giant picnics were held.

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Closed Sunday

## Felton's history. . .next year 100 years old

Felton, laid out as a town in 1868 by Edward Stanley, had been a lumbering center since 1843 when Isaac Graham transferred his pioneer mill from the Zaynte to the San Lorenzo river opposite Fall Creek.

Stanley was disposing of land which had been taken by his uncle, John A. Stanley, a South Carolinian, on a mortgage from Graham. The name was that of Stanley's lawyer, Charles N. Felton, who 23 years later was elected senator from California.

Sawmills had spread up and down the river, all of which hauled to ford the San Lorenzo and Zayante and go down the Graham Grade. The road down the west side of the San Lorenzo had been pushed south to Gold Gulch, where in 1868 Page, Donnell & Lee put up a big mill which was bought in 1870 by George Treat and became famous as the first steam mill in the San Lorenzo Valley.

The road north from Santa Cruz had been built past Rincon. Stanley and Eben Bennett took a \$6,000 county contract to unite the two. The joined route operated as a toll road until 1872 when its cost had been met.

Mills multiplied around Felton in the fifties and sixties. Otis Ashley, New York state veteran of the Mexican war, worked briefly for Graham and then put in his own mill. Ben Whipple bought the Sainsevain mill at what is now Paradise Park and moved it up.

Stanley named as his agent for sale of Felton lots, Horace Gushee, who had nearly a year earlier begun discussing with other Santa Cruzans the feasibility of a railroad up the San Lorenzo. Plans were to run it twenty miles to Kings Creek, but it was never built past Felton, to which the first train ran October 9, 1875. A year after the Santa Cruz and the Felton, the line's two locomotives, began hauling trains over the narrow gauge track along the west bank of the river, a syndicate of San Jose men interested in lumbering built the 14-mile "V" flume which brought the lumber to Felton from near Waterman Gap.

The new Felton boomed. Walter Cooper and J.M. Merrill put up a store, saloon and hotel building. Hubbard W. McKoy, fifty year old Vermonter, came from El Dorado county, leased the hotel, opened a post office on agreement to haul mail for nothing on his "express" from Santa Cruz. A couple of years later he installed a blacksmith shop and hired Potter Paschall to run it.

Two young brothers, James F. and Jeremiah Cunningham, natives of New Brunswick who had fought through the Civil War in a Maine regiment, were leaders in the latter sixties. In 1871

J.F. Cunningham and McKoy opened a general store.

San Lorenzo school district, created in 1863 at Ashley's on the San Lorenzo river, changed its name in 1875 to Felton and a building was constructed there.

Since Felton was the population center of San Lorenzo township, the justice of the peace and constable were located there in the middle seventies. One of the first justices was ex-Sheriff A.L. Rountree who in 1878 came down from Davenport Landing, where he had been running a hotel, and took over the Big Tree House.

Stanley provided for a church by donating in 1869 a lot for an Episcopal parish, making Gushee and Joseph Boston of Santa Cruz trustees. The trust was dissolved many years later when Ben Lomond Episcopal parish was declared to include Felton, and the lot was sold. The Presbyterian church was built in 1893.

With the narrow gauge outlet to a shipping point in Santa Cruz and the flume funneling most of the lumber of the San Lorenzo Valley through Felton, the town continued to grow. The county bridged the old ford across the San Lorenzo in September, 1878.

The early nineties were the high point in the town's population and prosperity. Thomas Cramer erected the Central Hotel opposite Cunningham's Big Tree House. J.G. Tanner of Santa Cruz put in a branch of his drug store. James F. Cunningham was elected to the legislature. A year later, in 1883, a hose company organized with Wallace B. Drew, the livery man, as chief.

Construction of the Southern Pacific Coast Railroad branch up the valley to Boulder Creek in 1884 moved the lumber shipping center. The flume between Felton and Boulder Creek was torn down and its right of way used for most of the new rail route. The Southern Pacific Coast laid out the new town of Boulder Creek. Cunningham & Co. put up a store there and several mills moved up the valley.

An experimental corporation of Felton as a village began with the election on April 14, 1884 of D.L. Kent, C.H. Winter and E.J. Rubottom as trustees; Drew as marshal; and George Ley as treasurer. This lasted only a short time.

A fire on October 29, 1888, took Cunningham's Big Tree House, Drew's livery stable, the town hall and post office - a total of five stores and four other buildings. Another blaze on September 17, 1896, destroyed the Kent buildings and several other cottages. A fire in 1907 burned the school house.

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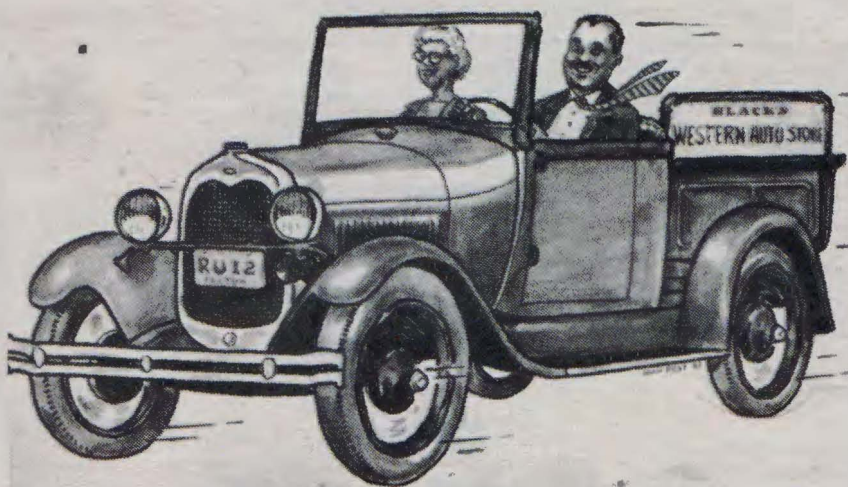
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Brookdale

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## Road sprinkling in Felton

Here Ed Dollar waters down Felton's main street in an earlier time in the town's history. The building behind the wagon is the former Cramer House, owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Hendrick for four years beginning in 1898. At the time of photo, the old building was the Felton Hotel. Now rather different in appearance, the structure houses Heavenly Hamburger and A Villa of Beauty.

## Wagon wheels. . . .

Wagon wheels rolling out of Felton before dawn, in the early part of the century, were symbolic of the town's strategic location in the Valley.

It was the hub of the area. The railroad had come into the Valley, but things produced here could not reach market without the wagons.

The teamsters with their helpers, "Swampers," as they were called, traversed the narrow-rutted mountain roads to carry the lumber products, lime, and produce to the railroad and other points.

The teamsters were men who owned their own horses and wagons, sometimes more than one outfit. They would haul by contract or by the day.

The teamsters, in a way, had a part in establishing the grape growing industry in San Joaquin valley. The thousands of grape stakes used in the original vineyards were hauled out of the woods by Valley teamsters.

They were also an essential part of a local grape growing enterprise. There were extensive vineyards in the Bonny Doon area, and the teamsters hauled the grapes to the winery at Glenwood.

It was a two day trip from Bonny Doon down the mountain, over Mt. Hermon and along the old Glenwood highway.

There were other men with wagons who delivered things to people in the isolated areas. A wagon used to go out from Felton's general store once or twice a week.

In addition to delivering merchandise, the driver was the bearer of the latest news.

He was also the shopping assistant and advisor to many of the women who only came to town two or three times a year, though they lived only a few miles away.

Often times he would be entrusted to pick out buttons suitable to a newly-made dress and would be given a swatch of goods to judge his selection by. He would be expected to describe the latest bolts of goods which had arrived at the store.

There were other wagons, bearing things to sell, such as the greengrocer's wagon from Santa Cruz, and the meat wagon, which came to Felton once or twice a week.

One of the most popular wagons in the era must have been the water wagon, though. The dirt road in summer was pulverized to thick layers of powdered dust by the iron wheels.

The water wagon, drawn by a team of four or five horses would make the trip once a day from Felton to Boulder Creek and down to Santa Cruz laying the dust with a sprinkler.

There were water tanks along the way for refilling the wagon, and troughs where the horses could drink. One of the troughs can still be seen along Highway 9 enroute to Santa Cruz.

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*'The train's in!'*

That must have been the cry each time the narrow gauge passenger train came up from Felton. This photo, taken before 1900, shows a scene that can never be re-enacted in this mountain town.

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VIEW OF SOUTH SIDE

### *Those earlier Hallowe'ens*

A few years ago, youngsters in the Valley used to gather on the main street in Felton and engage in good natured water balloon fights on Halloween night, but after a time the water balloons gave way to eggs and apples, and sheriff's deputies discouraged the exercise.

At the turn of the century, the main street was also frequently a focal point for evidence of Halloween spirit.

One old-time resident recalls that a lady of the town might awaken the next morning to find that other residents were inspecting her "wash" on her clothes

line, which had been "transplanted" from her yard to the middle of main street.

Not an uncommon occurrence, either, was the appearance of someone's private "reading room" with the catalogues still inside.

When Halloween rascals weren't busy on main street they were often engaging in a bit of "moonlight horsetrading." A teamster shuffling out to his barn before dawn to get his horses ready for the day's hauling, often found his neighbor's horses in his stalls, instead of his own.

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Trains leave Felton Depot every hour and  
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**A SCENIC TRIP  
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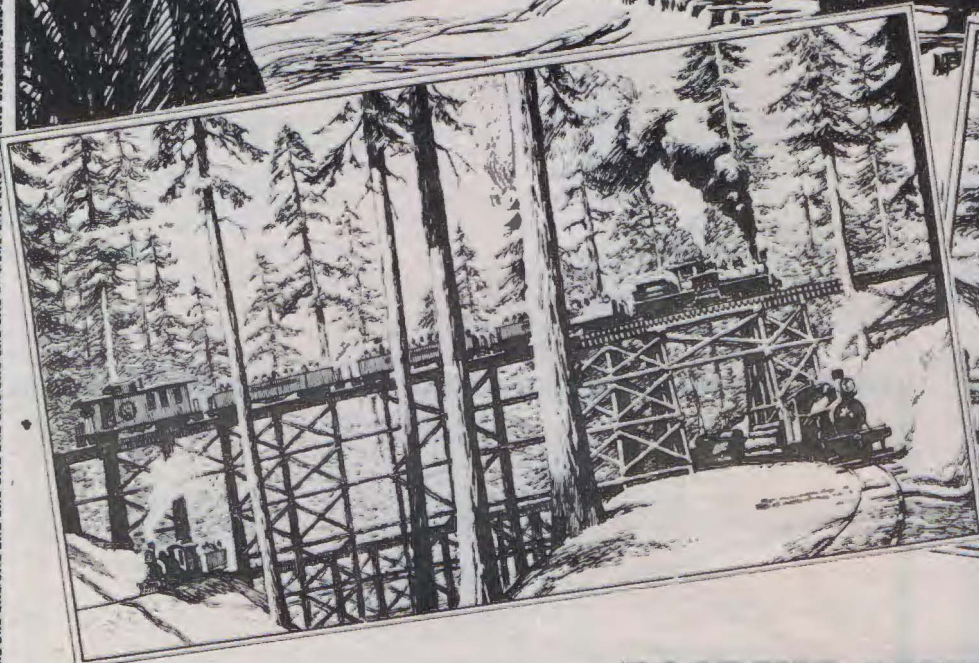
Stop over at one of several beautiful picnic  
spots. Enjoy the magnificent redwoods and  
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### •GENERAL STORE

Old Fashion Stick Candies!  
Licorice, horehound and sassafras candy!  
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Santa Cruz County  
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