

Volume XXXIV Issue II

Winter 2018

MARIN
HISTORY
MUSEUM

Bulletin

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A Sampling of
MARIN'S PARKS

The Marin History Museum

Founded in 1935, the Marin History Museum celebrates the traditions of innovation and creativity of the people of Marin County. Through exhibitions and educational programs, the Museum inspires honor for the past, an understanding of the present, and an imagination of the future.

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Cover Photo: Phyllis Ellman on Ring Mountain

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Please join us at one of the following levels and you will receive the benefits listed below. Your membership has a huge impact on our ability to grow and fulfill the Museum's mission. Visit our website marinhistory.org

MHM is 100% supported by individual contributions and membership; we do not received funding from the city, county or state.	Individual \$50	Supporter \$100	Contributor \$200	Patron \$300
One year membership	✓	✓	✓	✓
MHM Bi-annual Bulletin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free admittance to Lectures with Membership card		✓	✓	✓
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Collections & Research Center, Novato

The Marin History Museum collects and preserves a wide range of artifacts, photographs, and archival materials chronicling Marin County's rich and diverse history. In total, the Museum cares for over 25,000 artifacts and 200,000 photographs in the Craemer Family Collections & Research Facility in Novato. Objects in the collection are conserved for their historical and educational relevance and serve as the cornerstone of the Museum's exhibitions.

This facility also houses the Museum's research library where visitors, by making an appointment, may research any aspect of Marin's history.

The Research Library contains rare manuscripts, maps, newspapers, directories, ephemera and a reference collection of over 1,000 books.



To make an appointment, email research@marinhistory.org or call 415-382-1182



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2018 has been a strong year for the Marin History Museum. We set out ambitious goals for the Museum and, thanks to you, we met them!

In October, our *Community Celebration* Fundraiser at the Sweetwater Music Hall exceeded our goals for attendance and in fundraising dollars thanks to our current supporters, new supporters and with 100% participation from our generous board;

Our 1st Annual *Marin History Summer Awards Celebration* at Pacheco Winery honored **Laurie Thompson**, Librarian of the Anne T. Kent California Room, and featured Pacheco's delightful wine;

Our Speakers Series completed a second season! It featured ten of Marin's great, local historians and topped our 2017 season by averaging 80 attendees per lecture, thanks to **Marcie Miller's** expert coordination;

Just a year into her tenure, our part-time Collections Manager, **Heather Powell**, has organized the Museum's artifacts, photographs and research library. With her careful and meticulous nature, professional stewardship has returned to the archives!

And so much more!

Your support **makes history!** We believe our community benefits by having a context for the world around it. We are better citizens when we understand what came before so we can make sense of today and, because of this, make informed decisions tomorrow. Now, **you have the power to influence tomorrow.** Here is what we plan to bring you in 2019:

The Marin History Museum will be an anchor presence at all of the County's history events. You will see us at Kentfield-Greenbrae Historical Society's Community Heritage & History Day in May, Kule Loklo's annual Big Time Festival in July, China Camp Heritage Day in September, and many more.

Our *Spring Appraisal Day* will be back! This is your chance to appraise your family heirlooms.

We are looking forward to honoring another fabulous historian at our *2nd Annual Marin History Summer Awards Celebration* next summer;

And, of course, we are already looking forward to next year's *Community Celebration* next October.

2019 begins our search for a gallery space in downtown San Rafael. We are excited to bring exhibitions back to the community!

If you want more information about these events and others, go to: marinhistory.org/events.

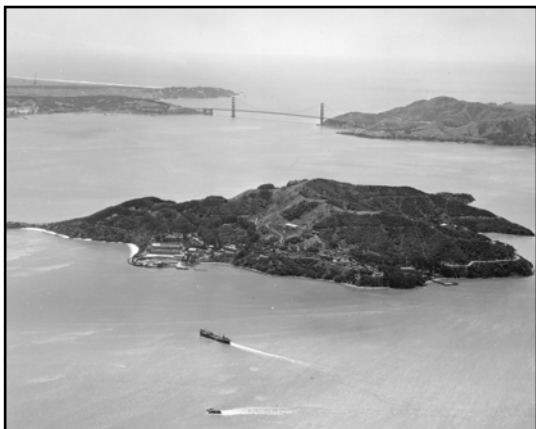
**YOU ARE A PIVOTAL PART OF MAKING HISTORY
WE CAN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**

Sincerely,

Al Boro, President

Angel Island, a Treasure of California History

By Robert L. Harrison



Angel Island 1950
Source: MHM Ed Brady Collection

Angel Island State Park is known for its fantastic scenery and magnificent vistas. Perhaps of equal significance, the island offers settings and structures from many of the important eras in California history. As written by John Soennichsen in his book *Miwoks to Missiles*, “If history were measured by the square mile, Angel Island would rank near the top of any list of California’s most historic places. The history of the island is completely out of proportion to its [1.2 square-mile] size.”

The first people on the island were the Coast Miwok Native Americans. It is believed the Miwoks were not residents of the island but visited to hunt and fish. The native animals sought by them were primarily deer and raccoon, both excellent swimmers and still occupants of the island.

The Spanish were the first Europeans to sail into San Francisco Bay and first to visit Angel Island. It was 1775 when Captain Juan Manuel de Ayala docked his ship, the *San Carlos*, in the cove that now bears his name. Ayala named the island Isla de los Angeles [Angels’ Island].

Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and attempted to settle northern California by granting large tracts of land known as ranchos. Don Antonio Maria Osio was granted Angel Island in 1839, though he never lived on the island. He fled in 1846, when the California Bear Flag Republic was declared and the American navy took control of the island. By defeating Mexico in 1848, the United States gained vast areas including California. The U. S. Supreme Court rejected Osio’s claims of ownership in 1860 and Angel Island was declared a possession of the American government. Ten years prior to the court’s ruling, President Millard Fillmore declared the island to be a federal reserve.

In the 1850s, the gold rush stimulated the rapid growth of the new State of California. With the formation of the Angel Island Mining District in October 1864, gold fever had spread to the island. The November 5, 1864 edition of the *Marin Journal* reported that five tons of island ore was crushed yielding what was said to be a “highly satisfactory” \$29 to the ton in gold. The report was apparently optimistic as none of the diggings on the island ultimately produced any gold. In December of the same year, the military ordered all prospecting on the island to be abandoned.

For many years the military was an important occupant. The Civil War retains a strong presence on the island at Camp Reynolds. An Army post was established there in 1863. Today visitors can view the best example to be found anywhere in America of wooden military barracks from that era.



Camp Reynolds - Civil War Era Army Base - Refurbished Officer's Quarters on the left - 1863 Wooden NCO Quarters on the right
Source: www.shapingsf.org Chris Carlsson

Buildings from nearly all of America's 20th century wars can be seen at Fort McDowell. On display are large structures begun in the early 1900s including the "1,000-man" barracks and mess hall with seating for 1,400 soldiers. Up to three shifts per meal were served there, yet the mess hall food was said to be very good.

The last military installation on Angel Island was a battery of Nike missiles intended to bring down inter-continental bombers, most likely coming from Russia. These missiles were installed in 1954 near Point Blunt. The missiles were removed in 1962 ending nearly 100 years of military occupation.



Fort McDowell - 1,000 Man Barracks Left - Hospital Right

Source: www.shapingsf.org Chris Carlsson

Immigration has been part of the Angel Island story starting in 1891 with the opening of a Quarantine Station. Ships from foreign ports were fumigated and immigrants suspected of carrying disease were kept in isolation. The State Park Visitor Center now occupies one of the few buildings remaining from the Quarantine Station.



Angel Island Quarantine Station 1893 —
USN Omaha generated steam for fumigation
Source: Belvedere Tiburon Landmarks Society

The barracks and segments of this poetry are part of the visitor experience at the Immigration Station.

A portion of the island was established as Angel Island State Park in 1954. The entire island became a State Park in 1963. Since the island's designation as a State Park many changes have been completed. Among the most significant are the demolition of most buildings of the Quarantine Station, reconstruction of the summit of Mt. Livermore to repair the excavation left by the army, refurbishment of the barracks at the Immigration Station and restoration of the officers' quarters at Camp Reynolds.

Today, most visitors make their way to the Immigration Station, a National Historic Landmark. Refugees seeking a home in America were processed through this station. The process for Europeans or the wealthy was only an inspection aboard ship. Asians, and particularly those from China, were extensively interrogated and many were detained. The anguish of the detainees is documented in the poetry carved on the walls of the wooden barracks.



Angel Island Hospital (Ayala) Cove from Tiburon, 1956
Source: Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society

Tomales Bay State Park

By Jean Mansen

The bay we know as Tomales was first inhabited by the Coast Miwok people who made their homes on sheltered coves, beaches, tidal marshes and in the forest of Bishop pines. Although numerous tribes existed on Tomales Bay, they fished in harmony for salmon, herring, bass and rock cod. Hunting with bows and arrows, the seals and otters they took provided meat and fur while waterfowl gave them food and feather.



Miwok Hut

Source: Wikimedia

The Coast Miwok lived, and occasionally skirmished, in isolation until adventurers, game hunters and land-hungry explorers came to their fertile bay. Sir Francis Drake was the first explorer to land in the vicinity in 1579, stopping for supplies at the eponymously named Drake's Bay. The Spanish followed in 1595. Russian otter expeditions came to Bodega Bay in 1808, building Fort Ross four years later. Conversion to Christianity by the Spanish missionaries started in 1817, forever destroying the Indians' world.

In 1863, the *Marin County Journal* reported how brown bears around Olema were "quite annoying." Sauntering through yards and farms, the ursine marauders purloined geese, several quarters of beef, at least three hogs, and a little red calf. "Irate citizens" quickly dispatched the bears.

One Point Reyes hunter reported shooting or poisoning 112 bears.

When the North Pacific Coast Railroad's narrow-gauge steam railroad came to Tomales in 1875, city sportsmen arrived in herds. Although the carnage they inflicted — 126 snipe shot in one day — didn't seem sporting. Some of the original right-of-way can be seen at the Samuel P. Taylor State Park near Fairfax, along the shore of Tomales Bay.

On April 18, 1906, the San Andreas Fault slipped up to twenty feet underneath Tomales Bay and into Olema Valley. A train fell from its track. A grocery store "hobbled to its knees." Houses tumbled from their foundations and water mains broke. Residents took to camping in the open, like the Miwok before them.

In the 1940s, real estate developers began to purchase large areas of beachfront land. Fortunately, the Marin Conservation League, other civic

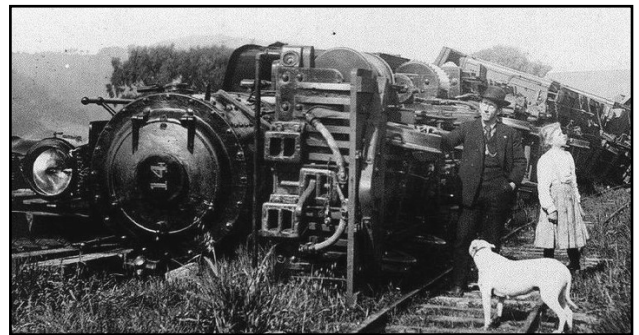


Tomales Bay

Source: Wikimedia

organizations, and the state gathered to save the area. In 1952, Tomales Bay State Park was formally dedicated and opened to the public.

Composed of roughly 2,000 acres, Tomales Bay Park is dwarfed by the surrounding parklands of Point Reyes National Seashore. Trails traverse gently sloping wooded hillsides to access four surf-free beaches protected from the winds by Inverness Ridge: Shell, Pebble, Heart's Desire and Indian Beach.



1906 earthquake train

Source: Wikimedia

Ring Mountain

By Alice Tanner

Ring Mountain, named for former Marin County Supervisor (1895-1903) George E. Ring, is a 603-foot uprising on the northeastern Tiburon Peninsula. In spite of its modest height, Ring Mountain boasts jaw-dropping, almost unimpeded 360-degree views over San Francisco Bay and the northern Bay Area including Richardson Bay, Tiburon, Corte Madera, Larkspur and San Francisco.

Few remember that this hidden treasure, surrounded by Highway 101 and suburbs, was once a place cattle, cannons and captains called home.

Ring Mountain, part of the first Mexican Land Grant north of the Golden Gate, was given to John Reed in 1843. Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio encompassed the Tiburon Peninsula, Corte Madera and Larkspur and extended up to what is now Miller Avenue in Mill Valley.

Ownership remained in the Reed Family – the Deffebach descendants – and was used for cattle grazing until 1965 . . . but for one little known interruption. In 1951, at the beginning of the Korean War, the US Army leased Ring Mountain from the Deffebach family and shaved off its top to accommodate an anti-aircraft installation. They leveled the site and imported chert rock for surfacing. Four 90-mm anti-aircraft long barrel cannons were installed and army barracks were constructed for soldiers from the Presidio. The cannons were never fired and the buildings and cannons were dismantled in the late 1950s and early 1960s when Nike air bases replaced the outdated cannon-based defense. Remnants of roads and building foundations still exist, along with the non-native chert. Surprisingly, several “vernal pools” persist. These are areas underlain by impermeable clay where rainwater collects in the winter and, as it evaporates in the spring, leaves rings of small wildflowers whose seeds dry and germinate during the next winter rains. These specialized plants



Phyllis Ellman on Ring Mountain
Source: MHM



Richmond Bridge from Ring Mt.

Source: MHM



Source: Wikipedia

are generally rare species, including the Tiburon Mariposa Lily.

After the US Army moved on, the Deffenbach's resumed their cattle grazing business until 1965. Once the cattle operation ceased, most people assumed the mountain would remain undeveloped forever; countywide and community general plans in the early 1970s showed it as “open space,” colored green on the maps. Few thought it could be developed. When informal concepts were transformed into formal plans for development in the mid-1970s, citizens, led by Phyllis Ellman, were galvanized into action.

In 1983, California Nature Conservancy dedicated the 389-acre Ring Mountain Open Space to Marin County.



Source: Bing.com/images

Today, Ring Mountain is a popular hiking spot and a geologist, botanist and wild-life-lovers paradise. From the Corte Madera side, you can see a huge cut into the serpentine and the remains of a massive slide. The landscape is strewn with sizable boulders, which exhibit



Coast Miwok petro graphs

Source:

a variety of lithologies including high-pressure metamorphic rocks of amphibolite and eclogite grade. Coast Miwok created pecked curvilinear nucleated petroglyphs that also can be found here.

This preserved ecosystem is also home to rare and endangered flora and a variety of wildlife, including deer, skunks and many birds and reptiles. When next you wander the rolling terrain of Ring Mountain, consider you walk the historic paths of milk cows and military.



To all our Loyal, Talented Volunteers

Thank You!

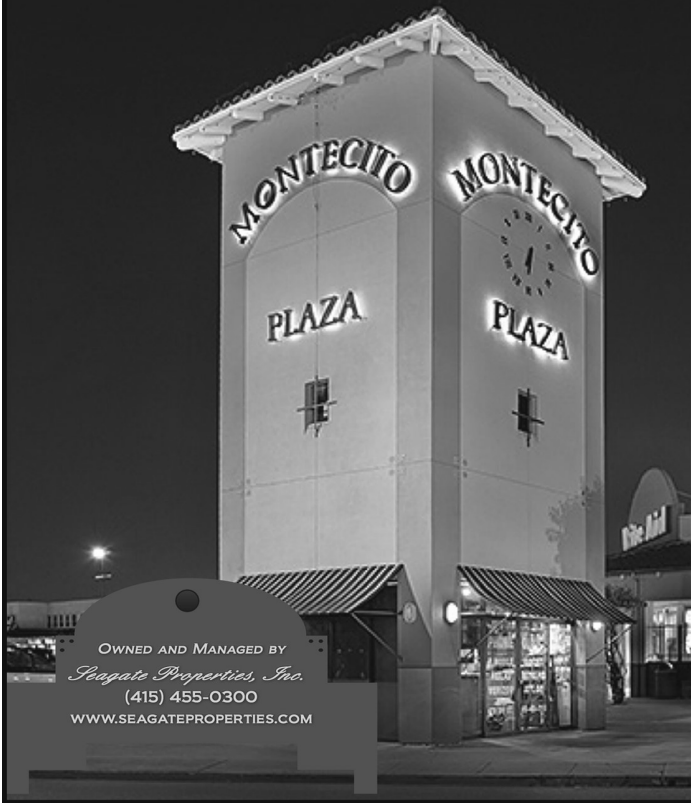
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Talks and Walks

It's going to be an exciting 2019 season!

Follow us on the last Thursday of each Month for informative history talks. Pending speakers to look for are Dewey Livingston (West Marin), Richard Torney and Fran Cappelletti (Ross), John Martini (Lands End) and Jeff Burkhardt, *IJ Barfly*.

As usual, Walking Tours with Marcie Miller will begin after our first rains (February?) with a walk up to Pacheco Falls in the Pacheco Canyon, then monthly on the third Saturday of the month (pending weather). This year we will walk Fairfax, Dominican University neighborhood, San Rafael Fourth St, San Rafael Hill via Boyd Park and the Boyd Estate. Planning is in the works for a destination tour to the Point Reyes Vineyard Inn & Winery.

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Trivia Questions

Here are some fun questions to pass the time on a rainy day. The answers can be found in the Bulletin articles.

1. What year was the first military post established on Angel Island?
2. What Chinese family last fished for shrimp at China Camp?
3. What is served at a “bullhead breakfast”?
4. What was manufactured at Paradise Beach during WWII?
5. Who was Ring Mountain named after?
6. Where did George Lucas first create his Star Wars characters?
7. What does the blue E on Mill Valley’s paths and streets mean?

Answers on p. 22

THROUGH THE BARS

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China Camp State Park

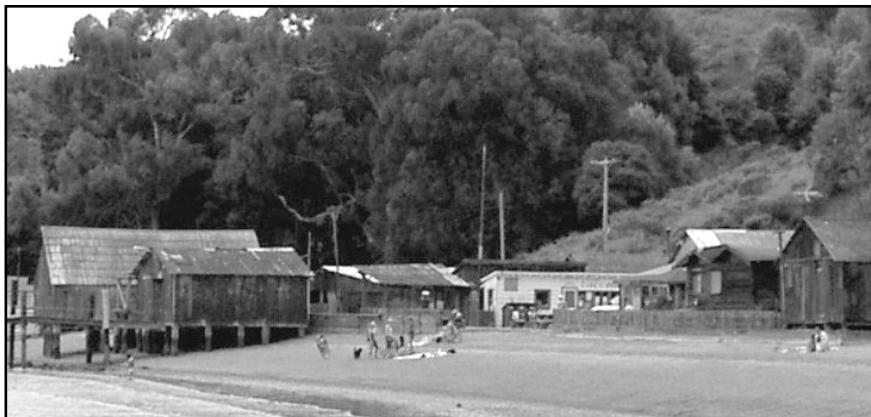
By Patricia L. Keats

Today's China Camp plays host to hikers, mountain bikers, and picnicking families. But this scenic spot has a long, and sometimes cruel, history.

The area's first inhabitants included the Coast Miwok people, who had dozens of small villages throughout Marin and Sonoma counties. They hunted game, harvested acorns and fished the waters for clams, oysters and abalone. The population of several

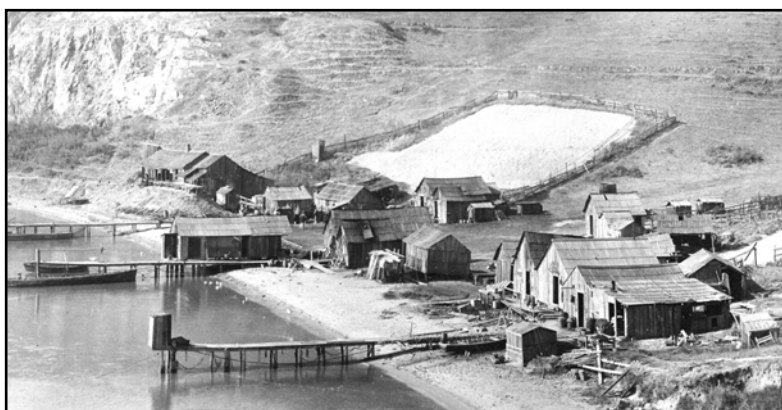
thousand, at the time of the arrival of Spanish soldiers in 1775, was nearly wiped out within one hundred years.

After Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821, the land was supposed to be returned to the Miwoks — but was not. Instead, the land was taken by the new arrivals to pre-Gold Rush California. In 1844, Mexican Governor Manuel Micheltoarena gave Timothy Murphy a 21,679-acre land grant called the Rancho San Pedro, Santa Margarita y las Galinas, (many of these names are still in evidence today) which, in general, made up what is now China Camp. After Murphy's death in 1853, his land was divided up and sold to cover some of his debts.



China Camp 2010

Source: Stepheng3/Wikipedia



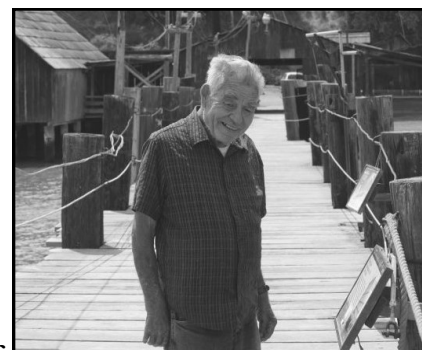
China Camp 1889

Source: U.S National Archives

hind their camps. At its high point during the 1880s, five hundred people lived in the fishing village that included three general stores, a marine supply and a barbershop.

After the 1880s, a series of restrictive laws crippled the fishing community. In 1911, a law was passed to ban the use of bag nets — the only method the fishermen knew. Another law banned the export of shrimp. The Quan family was the last to fish for shrimp — with a trawl net, invented in 1914 by Frank Spengler, owner of the Berkeley seafood restaurant of the same name. Frank Quan, the last remaining member of the Quan family, lived in a small wooden home on the shore until he died in 2015.

Starting in 1855, Chinese immigrants, many of whom were from Canton, came to California to mine gold, and later, to build the transcontinental railroad. In the late 1800s, China Camp's fishermen caught three million pounds of shrimp per year — most exported to China, Hawaii and Chinese communities through the US. The shrimp were dried on the hillsides behind their camps.



Frank Quan Source: *Marin IJ*

Continued on p.14

Marin's Steps, Lanes and Paths

By Jean Mansen

Mill Valley There are over 175 original steps, lanes and paths in Mill Valley. These historic paths were first noted in an 1880s Tamalpais Land and Water Company map surveyed in anticipation of the developer's May 31, 1890 land auction. It is reported that engineer Michael O'Shaughnessy built them in the late 1800s. As each new Mill Valley sub-division was mapped, planners added more paths to the town's travel routes. Initially, most paths were unnamed or given unofficial names; it wasn't until 1931 when the Board adopted its "Official Street Naming and Numbering Map" that many of the paths received names and numbers. Because the path network was created parcel-by-parcel as land was sold and developed, some paths benefited from more strategic planning and placement than others.

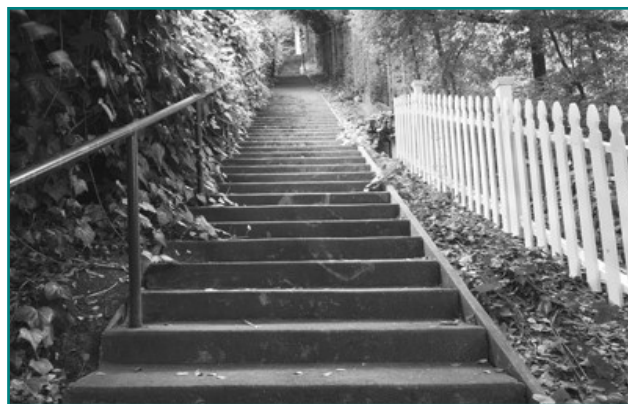


Source: City of Mill Valley

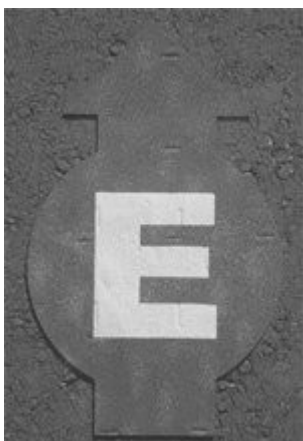
Mill Valley grew up during the horse and buggy days, before automobiles, before the Golden Gate Bridge, and just as the Mt. Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railroad was completed. The narrow paths were shortcuts for those on horseback or foot. The roads down Mt. Tam were switchbacks that meandered to Mill Valley's main arteries along Blithedale and Cascade Canyons, while the paths took a more direct route. For many years, these historic lanes served Mill Valley's residents well as they commuted via train and ferry to San Francisco, walked to school, visited neighbors, shopped downtown and attended town meetings.

Once the Golden Gate Bridge opened in 1937 and more residents began to drive cars, paths were less frequented and a number fell into disrepair, covered by brambles or rocks, while others succumbed to the elements and were worn away. Periodic attempts were made to preserve the paths over the next 63 years, though due to a variety of circumstances, very few paths remained in passable condition.

Since 2000, efforts have been ongoing to reclaim and promote Mill Valley's extraordinary network of paths. With the effort and support of Mill Valley's residents, city council, parks and recreation staff, emergency preparedness committee, fire department and many other agencies and charitable organizations, restoration of most paths has been completed or is underway. The most famous of Mill Valley's stairs to have been rebuilt are the Dipsea steps near the start of the century-old Dipsea Race.



Source: Bing.com/images



E for evacuation
Source: City of Mill Valley

The fire department has marked certain streets with a blue "E" symbol as emergency escape routes, many of which can be accessed via a set of steps, a lane or a path.

Belvedere Belvedere has its own “secret stairways,” or what the locals call lanes; a rambling network of stairs, lanes and paths (SLP) that connect the narrow roadways winding to the top of the island. In the early 1900s, San Franciscans would arrive by boat and ferry and walk to their summer cottages via these lanes. These days the SLP provide hikers with a safer travel route, as the roads are exceptionally narrow, and residents with a means of escape in emergencies such as earthquakes or fire.

Most of the original lanes have been improved and kept up over time. A different hand-painted wooden sign marks each lane. The charming signs were the brainchild of artist and long-time Belvedere resident Diana Bradley. Other local artists contributed their own signs at painting parties held for that purpose.



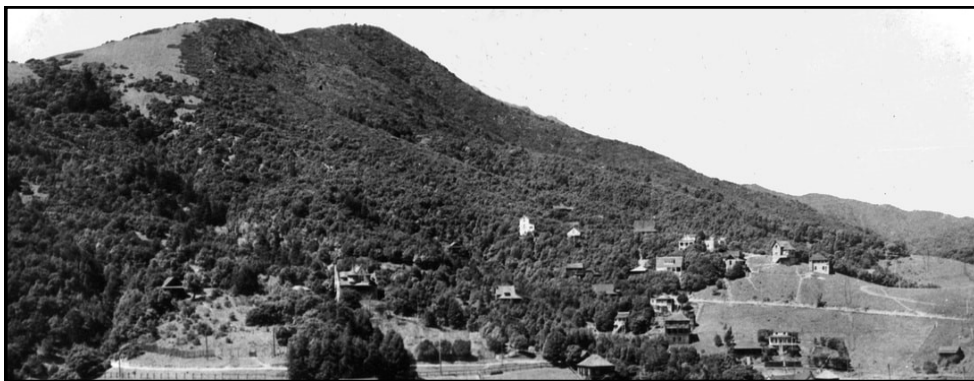
Source: David S., Yelp

Corte Madera Many of the pathways (dating back to the early 1900s) on Christmas Tree Hill are much older than the roads, and there were several more public paths and stairs heading up the Hill that have been lost to time and decay.

Corte Madera had railroad service beginning in about 1875 along a route extending from Sausalito to Tomales, with a stop in what is now called Old Corte Madera Square. When a tunnel under Corte Madera Ridge in 1895 brought a faster train, the "Merry Colonists" and "Morningside" tracts were subdivided on the Hill, and 1,250 square-foot lots were sold for tents and cabins at the price of \$50 on terms of a dollar down and 50 cents a week. Most of the later year-round homes were built on combinations of several such lots. In 1912, the "Corte Madera Woods" tract was laid out at the top of the Hill. At that time, the entire Hill was known as either "Little Tam" or "Tank Hill."

In 1898, the first commercial structure was built in Corte Madera: The hotel and tavern on the south edge of the Square, near the (now removed) train station. Soon, campers, artists and others escaping San Francisco came to inhabit tent cabins and bungalows on the Hill, and more joined them after the 1906 earthquake. Paved streets came along in the 1920s. Until then, access to homes on the Hill was mostly limited to footpaths and steps.

As early as the 1920s, street lamps on the Hill were changed out at Christmas time



Source: Corte Madera Memories

with colorful bulbs, and people all over town recognized the shape of a Christmas tree made by the zigzag streets on the Hill. From then on, the neighborhood has been known as Christmas Tree Hill. It's been decades since utility poles had colored lights installed for the holidays, though.

Carrying on the steps, paths and lane tradition, or out of necessity, CTHA volunteers built the stairways on Jean Bean Path and Spring Trail in the mid-1970s.

In 1976, the land was sold to the California State Parks Foundation, which in turn sold it to the state, and China Camp State Park was created. In 1979, the shrimping village and a prehistoric shell midden, were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

There are no shrimp left in the bay and the fishermen have long disappeared. But, visitors today may see a replica of a 19th century Chinese shrimping junk, the *Grace Quan*, which was built largely by John C. Muir of the San Francisco Maritime Museum and The Friends of China Camp. The remains of China Camp's thriving community include a small store, the remnants of a pier, and the drying apparatus for shrimp. Along a trail to the north of the road are foundations where homes and other shops were located. When you visit today, stand on the shoreline and remember all the history the park has seen.

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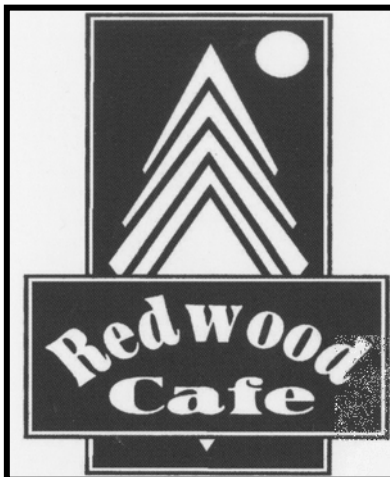
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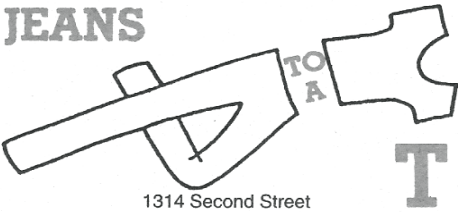
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McNear's Beach Park: Ranching, Bricks and Resorts

By Susan Cluff

McNear's Beach Park off Point San Pedro Road near San Rafael is in a lovely sheltered cove, has a sandy beach you can walk on, green lawns, a fishing pier, picnic areas, swimming pool, tennis courts and sports facilities. The long curving drive, lush gardens and tall waving palms give it a resort feel— there's history here, you can sense it. So what's the story?

It all started with brothers: John and George McNear, grain and produce merchants in Petaluma and San Francisco, dealing in machinery, equipment, ranching and shipping.

The property at San Pedro Point was a natural deep-water port with excellent grazing land for a dairy, so in 1869, the brothers purchased some 500 acres. In 1870, they created a concrete-lined reservoir and built a road to the point, later selling the road to the county for \$175. After the



Source: McNear's Beach Park Master Plan 2017

brothers split up, John increased his land holdings to 2,500 acres including the shrimping camps at China Beach.

In the 1880s, John and his oldest son, George, established a fashionable resort at McNear's Point with a fancy hotel, gardens, dance hall and stable that became known as "The Glen." Summer visitors could rent cottages, swim, play cards, build campfires and enjoy Friday night sweet potato bakes. On weekends, there were steamer trips, fishing contests and runs by the San Rafael Bicycle & Athletic Club followed by "bullhead breakfasts."



George McNear family at McNear's Point, 1922

Source: Sonoma Historical Collection

The McNears hoped to build a new town at the Point, as well. In 1895, the *San Francisco Call* reported new plans for a "West Coast Coney Island" with bandstands, bicycle paths, even a racetrack. Those plans, like the one to build a branch

rail line to Point San Pedro from San Rafael, were never realized.

In 1898, John and his son Erskine acquired the bankrupt Fortin brickyards near their ranchland and founded the McNear Brick Company. By 1913, McNear's Brickyards had ninety employees and two continuous "hard press" Hoffman kilns, each with a capacity of 10 million bricks a year. McNear family members still operate the firm today.

In 1955, Erskine McNear, co-founder the Bank of San Rafael and president of a milk company, sold 2,500 acres of his ranchland to developer John Stegge who developed the 300-acre Glenwood subdivision. Later, the property was sold to the Draper Company, developers of Northgate Mall, who built Peacock Gap.

After Erskine died in 1956, the fifty-five-acre waterfront property was sold to a developer who put in a swimming pool and coffee shop. In 1963, the Draper Company purchased it for a private club and then went bankrupt. The county bought the site, opening McNear's Beach County Park in June 1970.

The McNear Hotel, homes, and cottages are all gone now and the old stable is used as a ranger's office, but visitors can still feel like they're in an old-time resort— even for a day.



Hoffman Kilns near McNear Brickyard c. 1904

Source: John E. McNear



Phyllis Ellman WWII
Source: Facebook

Phyllis K. Ellman
February 1, 1923-
June 2, 2009

Phyllis K. Ellman,
environmental ac-
tivist and noted
botanist, passed
away at home in
Glen Ellen. Born in

Kansas, Phyllis served in the U.S. Army during World War II and got her BA in Biology at Kansas State University. She earned a master's degree in biochemistry at Washington State College, where she met her husband George.

Phyllis taught at Cal Tech in Pasadena while George completed his PhD.

Phyllis's passion was wildflowers and she became known as "Mother Botany" for her vast knowledge of plants. She was the catalyst for saving Marin County's Ring Mountain from development by creating a coalition leading to the acquisition by the Nature Conservancy. Walkers can now hike to the top of Ring Mountain on the Phyllis Ellman Trail, an honor given to her by the Land Trust.

The Ellmans moved to Sonoma County in 1980 where Phyllis became active with the Bouverie Preserve. She was a driving force behind the docent program and was a creator of the singing group Quercus Quire that teaches children about environmental issues.

Marin IJ June 16, 2009

Phyllis, on her beloved Ring Mountain, is featured on our cover.



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Paradise Beach Park: One-time Naval Training Base

By Susan Cluff



Source: Susan Cluff

You might never guess this peaceful shoreline park was once part of an active naval training base. Or that its long T-shaped pier harbored troop ships, cargo vessels and the *Delta King* — an old Sacramento paddleboat used as temporary barracks. Or, that old anti-submarine nets, floats and anchors were stored here.

During World War II, the Navy occupied much of this deep-water coastline. Just down the road from where the Romberg Center is now, the Tiburon Naval Net Depot produced over 100,000 tons of anti-submarine netting from 1940 to 1945. Sailors assembled, rigged, handled and maintained the nets along the Pacific Coast. They tested nets by floating them offshore and firing torpedoes into them. One of their biggest as-

signments was to assemble and install the seven miles of iron netting stretching from Sausalito to the St. Francis Yacht Club Marina to protect San Francisco Bay.

In 1942, the Navy opened the Tiburon Floating Dry Dock Training Center. Mobile dry docks came in three sizes, were built in sections then barged into combat areas and reassembled. About 4,000 officers and men trained here for ship repair duty in the Far Pacific, including 1,000 deep-sea divers.

In 1943, the Navy acquired the park's "Annex" site next to El Campo in Paradise Cove, constructing new barracks, storage and support buildings in about six weeks. Trainees moved in before the heating plant was completed so steam heat was provided by the *U.S.S. Crockett* from its mooring at the dock. Other seamen bunked onboard the *Delta King*, later using the stern-wheel paddleboat to ferry sailors on shore-leave to San Francisco.



Source: Landmarks Society Archive

In 1945-1946, the Annex property was used during "Operation Magic Carpet" to repatriate returning servicemen from the Pacific Theater. Then, after the war, it was used to store and recycle old nets, anchors and floats. The Navy decommissioned the base in 1946, reactivated it for the Korean War and closed it again in 1958. Plans to test explosives and later anti-aircraft missiles were announced. Due to public outcry, it was decided to turn the former naval training base into a marine research center.



US Navy Training Annex with the *Delta King*, 1973 Source: Landmarks Society Archive

The local chapter of the Association of University Women started a letter-writing campaign asking the state to develop the Annex property as a public park. Studies determined it too expensive. Letters and editorials in the *Marin IJ* urged the county to buy

it. In 1959, Marin County purchased the 19-acre parcel for Paradise Beach Park and started work. Two years later, the park opened. Building pads at the top of the site became parking lots and storage areas for net floats and anchors turned into picnic areas and the 330-foot pier was renovated for recreational fishing.

Today, there's still a rusty old net float by the waterfront, net anchors hold up the break-wall near the beach and the old Navy pier has again been rebuilt. Watching families picnic, children play and fishermen catch sturgeon, stripers, perch and herring, it's like it's always been like this. Green. Peaceful. Quiet. Paradise reclaimed!

San Anselmo Parks

By Brian K. Crawford



Source: Yelp.com

The town of San Anselmo has several parks with interesting histories. Filmmaker George Lucas donated **Imagination Park**, next to Town Hall, in 2013. The park includes a lovely fountain graced by statues of Indiana Jones and Yoda. Lucas created his beloved characters and his first Star Wars movie here in San Anselmo.

Robson-Harrington Park contains a historic mansion built in 1906 by lumber magnate Edwin Kleber Wood and his wife, Marian Thayer Wood. Kernan and Geraldine Robson purchased the mansion in 1923, later donating it to the



Source: Town of San Anselmo

town in 1968.



Source: Town of San Anselmo

Faudé Park is a fifteen-acre park on a rocky double hilltop. It was donated to the town in 1973 by C. Frederick Faudé, a prominent art and antiques dealer. In 1977 the then mayor proposed converting it into a nudist park, but the idea was not supported.

Red Hill is a prominent hill just north of The Hub, the intersection of Sir Francis Drake Blvd and Red Hill Avenue. Originating as a submarine volcano in the Jurassic Period, it served as the corner of three of the original Mexican land grants following the closing of the missions in 1833. In 1870, Union Civil War surgeon Dr. Henry Dubois purchased the western portion to provide access to his new Mount Tamalpais Cemetery. Dubois built a dirt road zigzagging up the hill that can still be seen, but the road was so steep it was used only once. The hilltop was the site of Easter sunrise services for many years early in the 20th century.

In a 1920 form of “fake news,” the *Marin Journal* published a series of articles describing ever more elaborate and fanciful plans for Red Hill, including a cogwheel railway, a canal for steamboats to be cut under it with an elevator running up the center of the hill, a barber shop, laundry, confectionary and cigar stand plus Turkish baths on the 29th floor. It is suspected the articles were jibes at some developer of the era.

The MacCormack-Tucker Lumber Company, located across Sir Francis Drake Boulevard where a small strip mall exists today, then acquired the parcel. In 1977, the lumber company sold the land to the town and moved to Fairfax, becoming Fairfax Lumber.

In April 2018, the San Anselmo Open Space Committee built a new trail up the hill to restore access to this lovely and historically important site.



Source: Town of San Anselmo

The Welch's "Ever-Shifting Line of Lights and Shadows"

By Claire Hendren

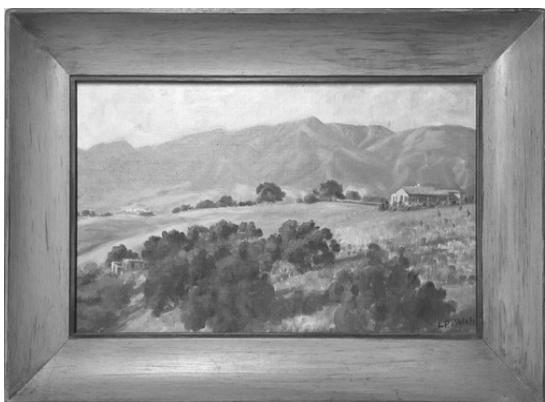
We have all wanted to capture California's at times bold, at times delicate sunlight when it hits Marin County's hills. Artists Thaddeus and Ludmilla Pilat Welch strived to record the special feeling one gets when faced with the beauty of the area's parks.

Thaddeus Welch, born in Indiana, worked as an apprentice for a printer in Portland before finding a job as a printer at the *San Francisco Call* and *San Francisco Bulletin* while painting on the side. In 1874, a patron who admired his work sponsored four years of training for him in Munich, a city then praised for the quality of its art schools.

After staying in Europe for almost ten years, Thaddeus returned to New York where he met and married Ludmilla Pilat in 1883, despite a twenty-year age difference. Although the couple lived apart for several years while Thaddeus traveled to the Southwest and Australia to paint, they reunited in California in 1892, first in Pasadena then in Marin County. Thaddeus' first sales to San Francisco's Bohemian Club represented hikers on Tamalpais and foreshadowed his interest in Marin County's parks.

The couple lived almost five years, beginning in 1896, in Willow Camp, the only settlement near Stinson Beach at the time. In fact, the cabin they worked and lived in was so hidden that Thaddeus needed to put up a sign for collectors looking to buy paintings. While living in this area, the couple painted majestic scenes of the region.

Ludmilla often grasped the charm of Marin County's land in her paintings.



Ludmilla Pilat Welch, *Houses in a Landscape*
Source: MHM

Land in her paintings. *A Study of Three Oaks on a Hillside's* asymmetrical composition translates the dynamism of the area's nature. Likewise, *Houses in a Landscape* uses

shadows to portray the magnitude and irregularity of local hills. Ludmilla and Thaddeus never shied from representing man-made structures in their paintings, such as the homes depicted

in Ludmilla's painting, yet the constructions never dominate the scenes – rather, they seem enveloped by the surrounding landscape.

Likewise, Thaddeus' *A Coastal Study, Marin* transcribes the breeziness so often present near the Pacific Ocean. The artist used uneven and apparent brushwork to represent the wind's effect on the brown grass in the foreground. In contrast, serenity derives from the calm body of water that lays before the beach. It becomes clear in his paintings of Marin County that Thaddeus abandoned the finished, polished brushwork he learned in Germany in favor of Barbizon and Impressionist-inspired technique that suggests outdoor execution. Such artistry was a better fit to record the effects of sunlight, wind and atmosphere that one experiences in Marin County.



Ludmilla Pilat Welch, *A Study of Three Oaks on a Hillside*
Source: MHM




Attributed to Thaddeus Welch, *A Coastal Study, Marin*
Source: MHM

Continued on p.22

Continued from p. 21

Thaddeus Welch's paintings of Marin County sold well at San Francisco's Bohemian Club and elsewhere. The couple began renting a studio in San Francisco in 1902, in part because their quiet Marin County retreat became busier with Willow Camp and Camp Upton settlements. They then moved to Santa Barbara in 1905, attempting to capture yet another aspect of California's sunlight.




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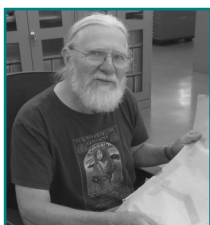
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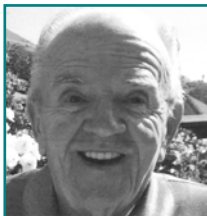
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Susan Cluff is a freelance writer and speech coach who's lived in Marin since 1980. She also writes historical mysteries and flash fiction.



Brian K. Crawford is a retired computer programmer who spends his time doing historical and genealogical research, writing books, and building trails.



Robert L. Harrison has been writing articles on Marin history for the past two years. He enjoys relating local history as a docent in the Tiburon Railroad and Ferry Depot Museum.



Claire Hendren graduated with a M.A. in Art and Museum Studies from Georgetown University in 2015 and is currently a PhD candidate in Paris.



Pat Keats, with degrees in history, art history, and library science, has worked at libraries since 1974. Currently the Library Director at The Society of California Pioneers, she curates exhibitions for the Pioneers and the California Historical Society.

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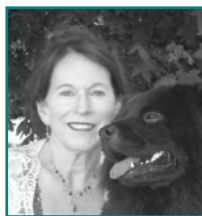
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Jean Mansen is an editor and writer who, when not at her desk, can be found hiking Marin's trails with her dog and listening to audio-books.



Alice Tanner, born in Tiburon, has witnessed Marin's transformation over several decades. An addiction consultant in private practice, she works with families locally and nationwide.

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