Marin History Museum

2025

Bulletin



Celebrating 90 Years of Preserving and Sharing the History of Marin County

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 aspires to honor the past, understand the present and imagine the future.

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The Boyd Gate House - Research Library and Exhibit Center



The Boyd Gate House is the Marin History Museum's research and exhibit space. It features changing exhibits related to Marin history and houses the Museum's Research Library where visitors 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.

Collections Center

At the Craemer Family Collections Facility 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 over 200,000 photographs. Objects in the collection are conserved for their historical and educational relevance and serve as the cornerstone of the Museum's mission.

From Lori Deibel, Editor

The Marin History Museum is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, and to commemorate the occasion we chose for this years Bulletin to highlight a story from each of the past nine decades that you may not have remembered as being historical. History is being made every day, and we take seriously our responsibility to collect and share that with you.

We hope you enjoy the journey!

1930s — Our Beginnings
1940s — Marin City
1950s — Big Growth
1060s — West Marin
1970s — Lucasfilm
1980s — Homegrown Music
1990s — Inverness Fire
2000s — Oil Spill
2010s — One Tam
2020s — COVID-19

1930s

Marin County Historical Society: Keeping Local History Alive for 90 Years

By Lori Deibel



Miss Belle Brown

At the first Marin Old Settlers' Day in 1910, Congressman-elect William Kent expressed the hope that Marin's original pioneers would keep old California's history and hospitality alive. In early 1935 at the twenty-fifth Annual Old Settlers' Day, Kent's wish became reality when Miss Belle Brown, Historian and Landmarks Chairwoman of the State of California, spoke of a Marin County Museum planned for the basement in the San Rafael library.

The first meeting was held on May 23, 1935 at San Rafael City Hall. The *San Anselmo Herald* called the Society "off to a flying start" and remarked about the meeting: "The enthusiasm shown at the meeting was sufficient evidence that the ambition of a large group of history minded citizens to band themselves together in a strong organization for the purpose of preserving records, objects and places of historical interest was soon to be realized."



Historical Society Formed Tonight at Meeting in City Hall

Representatives of county and city bodies, and civic organizations attended the organization meeting of the Marin County Historical Society Thursday night at the city hall.

Mrs. Theodore Hoover, who after extensive research, has written "Historical Spots in California," was a speaker.

Preceding the meeting, there was a dinner at the Marin Golf and Country Club in honor of the distinguished visitors. Among them were Linnie Marsh Wolfe, who formed the John Muir pilgrimmage which has grown to national importance.

After the meeting, there was a dinner at the Marin County Golf and Country Club (currently the Marin Yacht Club in San Rafael) honoring special visitors, including Mildred Brooks Hoover, the sister-in-law of Herbert Hoover.

In June 1935, several resolutions were passed, including the adoption of the official name "Marin County Historical Society (MCHS)." Another laid out the purpose of the new organization:

To collect, preserve and arrange for public access, the tradition, history, progressive development and pertinent pioneer relics of Marin county … and to properly safeguard the material possessed or offered.

On November 27, 1935, the Marin County Historical Society submitted Articles of Incorporation that expanded on the purpose of the organization:

To encourage study and research into the history of the County of Marin, and to perpetuate the relics, records and authentic references to the early discoveries, settlement and organization of Marin County, the activities and sacrifices of its discoverers, pioneers, organizers, and developers, and the progressive development of said Marin County through the years.

Here's what else happened in Marin

August 15, 1930 - The Mount Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railway was sold and scrapped after 34 years of service as the "crookedest railroad in the world"

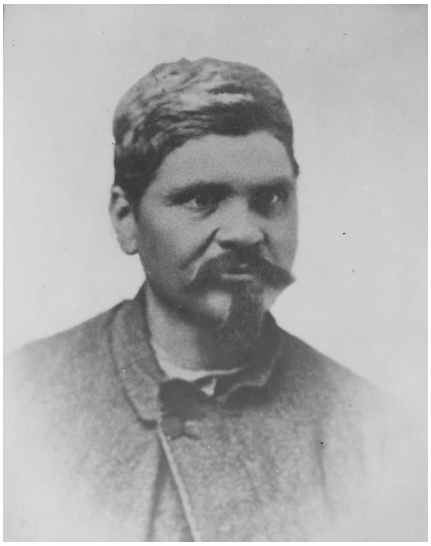
March 17, 1932 - Marin County transfers ownership of Marin Meadows to the U.S. Army for $1 to be used as an airfield at Hamilton

October 1933 - Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) arrive in Muir Woods and the surrounding Tamalpais State Park to begin work that includes the construction of the Sidney B. Cushing Memorial Amphitheater (the "Mountain Theater")

November 29, 1937 - Fire guts the Orpheus Theater on Fourth Street in San Rafael. It was replaced by the Rafael Theater in 1938

The document also established Miss Belle Brown as the President of the Marin County Historical Society, and its first slate of directors consisted of Marin luminaries Thomas T. Kent (son of William Kent), Robert H. Menzies (one of the donors of land for the Carnegie Library), Margaret Kittle Boyd (author of Reminiscences of early Marin County Gardens), Henry S. Foote (local banker), and George H. Harlan (first Board President of the College of Marin).

On June 17, 1936, the MCHS opened the doors to its first museum exhibit of donated and shared artifacts at the offices of the San Rafael Independent on Fifth Ave. According to the *San Anselmo Herald,* the evening was "designated as Museum Night, and donors and exhibitors are invited to give five-minute accounts of the historic value of the article." They were also invited to donate to the society.



Jose' Calisto

Beginning in September 1936, the first acquisitions were recorded, including a copy of a photograph of José Calisto, the last chief of the Coast Miwok tribe, an official Map of Marin County by George M. Dodge from 1892, and an iron link from a chain used on the Muir Woods Toll Road, all still in the collection nine decades later.

Throughout the 1930s, the MCHS made good on its promise to educate, and invited speakers on various topics in Marin history at quarterly meetings, including the origin of the county's name, early transportation by ox-teams, schooners, and rail, and the founding of the San Francisco Theological Seminary at San Anselmo.

Today, 90 years later, the Marin History Museum carries on the mission of the Marin County Historical Society, to "collect, preserve, and arrange" the hundreds of thousands of artifacts, photographs, archives, and library materials donated by the people of Marin for safekeeping, and to educate the children and adults of Marin about the events and people of our past.

Lori Deibel is the Research Librarian at the Marin History Museum.



The Boyd Gate House, current home of the Marin History Museum

1940s

One Suitcase, Shoebox Lunches, and a National Model of Unity

By Felecia Gaston

On August 13, 1942, the first Black families arrived in Marin City. Carrying one-way tickets and one suitcase. Their journeys were long and unjust, in the segregated Southern Pacific trains and Greyhound buses.

Because they weren't allowed in train dining cars and couldn't eat at restaurants along the way, they packed shoebox lunches — fried chicken, boiled eggs, biscuits, and pound cake — homemade meals that carried both nourishment and dignity. In their suitcase were sacred items: a Bible, a photograph, a journal, pressed clothing — precious symbols of a life left behind but not forgotten.



Most came from Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi, escaping low-wage labor in cotton fields, domestic service, and factories. When they arrived in Marin City, they were stepping into a new world — one where, for the first time, people of different races worked side by side in the shipyards. It had to be a scary time. Many had spent their entire lives in segregated communities, and now they were living in federal housing next door to white families. Integration was new to all, it was emotional, experimental, and deeply personal. Yet despite the fear, they built bridges. They built ships. And they built community.

The community was so successful that Congressman John H. Bates selected Marin City as the most effectively integrated housing project in the United States during World War II. But the ideal was short-lived. By 1943, white families began leaving, aided by FHA loans with mortgage rates as low as 4%, settling in Sausalito, Tiburon, and Mill Valley. Black families were denied those same opportunities, not because they lacked income or employment, but because of redlining.

Black families had arrived from the Jim Crow South with skills, strength, and quiet conviction. And though the unspoken hope of officials was that they'd return home after the war, many made a powerful decision: *We're not going back!*

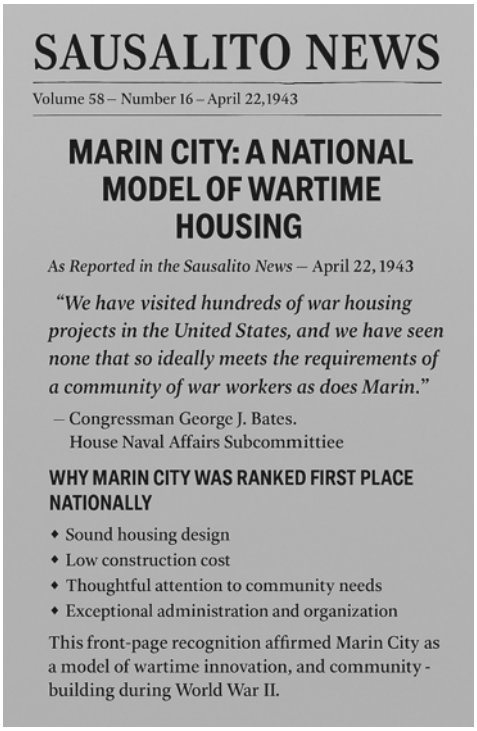
Here's what else happened in Marin

February 28, 1941 - The Northwestern Pacific interurban lines and ferry service from Marin to San Francisco is discontinued

July 17, 1945 - The Governor of California signs into law an act to acquire the 2,332-acre Camp Taylor for a state park

October 31, 1948 - The Marin Jewish Community Center is dedicated and begins operating in a house on Mission and Forbes Streets in San Rafael

Nov. 30, 1948 - The *San Rafael Independent* and *Marin Journal* merge, forming the *Independent Journal*



SAUSALITO NEWS

Volume 58 – Number 16 – April 22,1943

MARIN CITY: A NATIONAL MODEL OF WARTIME HOUSING

As Reported in the Sausalito News – April 22, 1943

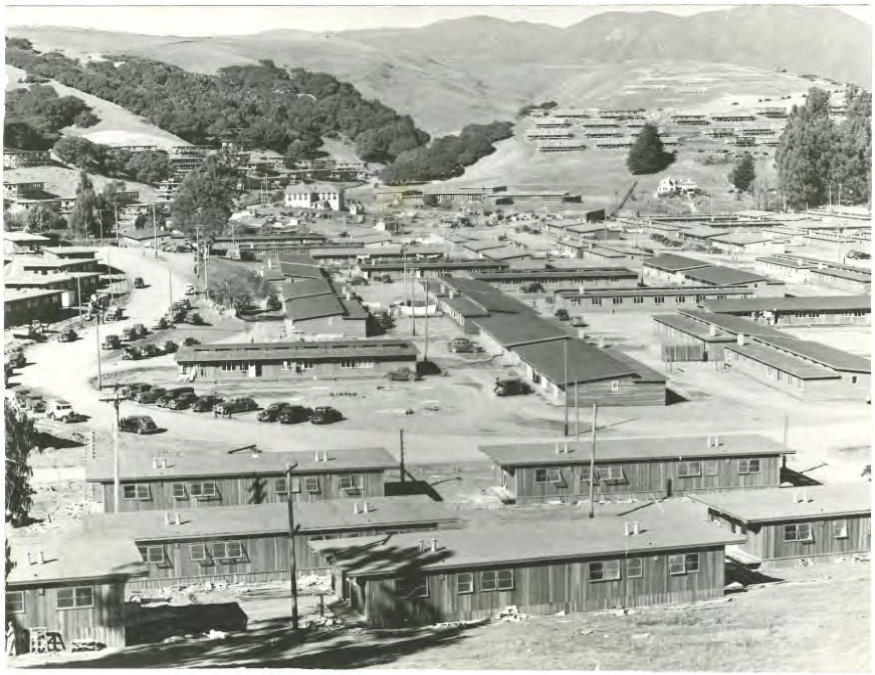
"We have visited hundreds of war housing projects in the United States, and we have seen none that so ideally meets the requirements of a community of war workers as does Marin."

– Congressman George J. Bates.
House Naval Affairs Subcommittiee

WHY MARIN CITY WAS RANKED FIRST PLACE NATIONALLY

- Sound housing design
- Low construction cost
- Thoughtful attention to community needs
- Exceptional administration and organization

This front-page recognition affirmed Marin City as a model of wartime innovation, and community-building during World War II.



They had escaped segregation, brutality, and second-class citizenship. Here in Marin City, they found work, planted roots, and began anew.

Their homes were never meant to last. Built hastily for wartime laborers, their foundations weakened with each passing year. The roofs sagged and leaked whenever it rained, sending water cascading through thin ceilings and pooling in corners. Kerosene stoves, used for cooking and warmth, sometimes sparked fires that tore through already fragile walls. There were no sidewalks, only patches of dirt that turned to mud in winter and dust in summer.

But the families stayed.

Because beneath the dilapidated structures, something stronger was being built: *community*. The forced impermanence of their housing could not match the permanence of their spirit.

The unspoken hope of officials was that the Black families, once useful in wartime industry, would pack up and leave, maybe return South. But the families knew: they had already left that behind. Marin City was a beginning.

They endured and they stayed.

They understood that Marin City sits on valuable land, bordered by waterfront enclaves like Sausalito and Tiburon. And since the war ended, residents have fought to protect it. Decade after decade, they've pushed back against outside developers, refusing to be erased or displaced.

They turned survival into stewardship. Marin City became more than a footnote — it became a living testament to resilience, unity, and the enduring power of those who arrived with very little but built something unforgettable.



Felecia Gaston, founder of the Marin City Historical & Preservation Society captures the legacy of her collection of artifacts and oral histories. Her work has evolved into a living archive where past and present voices shape how Black resilience is remembered.

1950s Development & Conservation

By Carol Acquaviva

The 1950s was a transformative decade for Marin. Significant expansion and demographic shifts following World War II caused the county to transition from a rural haven to a burgeoning suburban enclave, embracing both the promise and pressures of the post-war boom. In a pattern we still see today, Marin sought to balance planned development with the preservation of its natural landscape.

Like much of America, Marin experienced a rapid population increase in the mid-century. The county's population was about 86,000 in 1950, and by 1960, it had reached nearly 147,000, an increase of over 70%. With economic growth and rising demand for new housing, people flocked to Marin in search of the "American Dream" – a nice home with a backyard, a sense of community, and access to nature. Once-rural areas began to resemble the "ideal" suburban model advertised across 1950s America – affordable, convenient, and peaceful. As a result, Marin's rural charm was increasingly overshadowed by the steady march of suburban development.



Changes in community dynamics and a growing emphasis on privacy were reflected in home designs that included driveways and private lots. New developments sprang up to accommodate the influx of middle-class professionals and young families, which included veterans utilizing the GI Bill to purchase homes. In 1950, the median home price in Marin was approximately $10,000, a figure that would double by the decade's end. Entirely new neighborhoods emerged in Corte Madera, Greenbrae, Novato, Tamalpais Valley, and other areas. While modern conveniences were part of the suburban package, families wanted to remain connected to nature. Architect Joseph Eichler, who built thousands of homes in Terra Linda, Lucas Valley, and Marinwood, emphasized indoor-outdoor living and allowed for appreciation of the area's natural beauty. Developer John Kenney's "Kenney-built" homes in Terra Linda likewise offered private yards and open floorplans, and proximity to schools and outdoor recreation like hiking trails, playgrounds, and sports fields.

It is important to note that Black residents, many of whom came to Marin during the war to work in the Marinship shipyards, faced housing discrimination and limited opportunities for advancement. Informal racial covenants – written or unwritten agreements that restricted African Americans from buying homes in certain neighborhoods – were not uncommon. Black families established strong roots and a sense of community in Marin City, although persistent racism meant isolation and challenges due to lack of sufficient funding in schools, services, and housing opportunities.



Crest Marin, Mill Valley, c. 1950

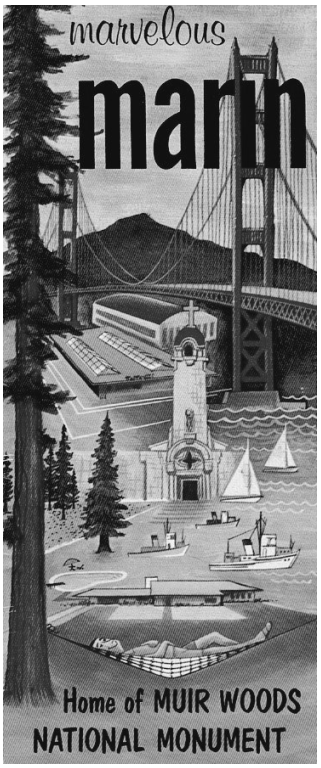
Here's what else happened in Marin

June 1951- $62 million in state bonds approved for construction of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. It opened in 1956

1952 - Vera Schultz is first woman elected to Marin's Board of Supervisors

March 1958 - Frank Lloyd Wright unveils his preliminary drawings of the future Marin County Civic Center, predicting it would become "a cornerstone in the culture of the nation"

The post-war economic recovery and suburban boom fueled growth beyond residential construction. Local and state governments made significant investments in infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and public transit. The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, completed in 1956, marked the end of ferry service between these two cities, but provided efficiency for commuters. The modern, 104-bed Marin General Hospital opened its doors in 1952. California's County Service Area Law, passed in 1953, allowed communities in unincorporated areas to pay for and receive specific services, such as water, sewer, police, and fire protection, which were previously provided by the County. The structures were neatly in place for families to settle, and the economy to continue its upward swing.



Surging school enrollments prompted widespread construction. Marin saw three new public high schools: Sir Francis Drake High School (now Archie Williams High School) in 1951, Novato High in 1957, and Redwood High in 1958. A slew of new elementary and middle schools were established, including Edna Maguire, Davidson Junior High, Sun Valley Elementary, Sleepy Hollow Elementary, Hidden Valley Elementary, Hartzell School, McPhail School, Gallinas School, Santa Venetia Middle School, and Strawberry Point School.

Marin saw change and development, it also witnessed conservation efforts aimed at protecting open space and promoting sustainable growth through the creation of parks and reserves. At the end of the 1940s, Marin was still largely agricultural, dotted with small towns and idyllic countryside. Upon the close of the next decade, the *Independent Journal* reflected on the "crowded, hectic years" and asserted that, "The major problem was people – lots of them."

And so, conservation efforts were spurred by the desire to protect the land and wildlife to both offset and complement Marin's growth. The Marin Audubon Society was founded in 1956 to oppose proposed housing on Richardson Bay. Two years later, the Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary was established. Tomales Bay State Park was secured in 1951 with help from the Marin Conservation League, which also played a key role in acquiring Angel Island as a state park, beginning in 1954. Its highest peak, Mount Livermore, was named in honor of the League's founder, Caroline Livermore, who led the campaign. The North Marin Water District completed the Stafford Dam in 1951, and in 1954 the Marin Municipal Water District built Kent Lake, the largest reservoir in volume in the county, to ensure a reliable water source for an expanding population.

Anti-development efforts in the 1950s laid the groundwork to oppose future plans that might fundamentally alter the county's iconic landscape and agricultural heritage. Major infrastructure projects and high-density population centers began to be discussed, such as Marincello, a community for 20,000-30,000 residents in the Marin Headlands, featuring apartments, homes, a mall, and a hotel. Alternately, momentum was building to protect 53,000 acres of Point Reyes Peninsula, eventually leading to the creation of the Point Reyes National Seashore in 1962. Previously established groups like the Marin Conservation League, the Marin Art and Garden Center, and the Tamalpais Conservation Club played active roles in raising funds, showcasing the area's diverse scenery, and demonstrating a growing presence to put pressure on legislators to save our coastlines, parks, and open space.

The 1950s in Marin County marked a period of rapid change shaped by post-war prosperity, suburban expansion, shifting demographics, and a growing commitment to balancing development with the preservation of natural beauty. It was a decade of growth and optimism, yet also one of foundational transitions that continue to influence Marin today.

Carol Acquaviva is a professional librarian, archivist, and local historian in Marin.

1960s

The 1960s in West Marin

By Dewey Livingston

As the post-war housing boom advanced through Marin County and the hillsides and flatlands adjacent to Highway 101 filled with subdivisions, developers looked to the western side of the county and its vast open spaces. However, by 1960 the federal government was already preparing to create a large national park unit at Point Reyes, and by the end of the decade a nascent Bay Area-wide environmental movement was looking askance at the concept of transforming farmland and open space into neighborhoods.

West Marin's towns—Point Reyes Station, Nicasio, San Geronimo, Marshall, Tomales, Bolinas and others—were largely rural, agriculture-based villages. Dairy farming dominated the scene, and those dairies provided the economic engine for the entire county. But the "progress" to the east would have major effects on the Point Reyes area, and the decisions made in the 1960s would radically influence its future.



Here's what else happened in Marin

Jan. 12, 1960 - Novato residents vote to incorporate as Marin's 10th city

1960 - Terra Linda High School opens and San Marin High School opens in 1968.

Oct. 13, 1962 - Dedication of the newly completed Marin County Civic Center. The Hall of Justice was completed in 1969.

June 2, 1964 - Tiburon residents vote 780-679 to incorporate as Marin's 11th city.

November 16, 1968 - New Novato campus of the Marin Humane Society opens

There were few public parks in 1960. The growing Bay Area needed recreational spaces, and Point Reyes offered the best option with its beaches, mountains, and misty moors. President Kennedy signed legislation authorizing Point Reyes National Seashore in 1962, and while it would preserve up to 70,000 acres for public enjoyment, it also brought the eyes of developers to the ranchlands adjacent to the new park.



TODAY'S EDITORIAL

Birth Of Pt. Reyes Seashore Stirs Glow Of Anticipation

It was a peculiar feeling that came over us when we received word that President Kennedy had signed the Point Reyes National Seashore Bill.

It wasn't exactly jubilation, and we're glad it wasn't, for jubilation soon wears off.

It wasn't excitement, for we had known from his statements the President intended to sign it.

It wasn't pride, for our part in it had been quite small.

It seemed slightly more than satisfaction and in the days elapsed since Thursday, this satisfaction has developed into what we can only describe as an inner glow.

It's a glow based on a real love for Point Reyes. It's a glow of anticipation. It's a glow based on the realization that the beautiful beaches, the wooded hills, the rolling interior and the towering cliffsides will become more and more accessable to people for their enjoyment, rather than less and less.

The bill establishing the seashore, as finally signed by the President, is a much better bill than the one introduced. It is fairer to the people who live and own land there. It is fairer to residents of other parts of Marin County. In short, it is a true example of the democratic process in action.

And now, the National Park Service has selected as its Point Reyes project manager, a Marin County man who has been working closely with Point Reyes for many years.

He is James E. Cole, of Marinwood, the man to whom the acquisition of property and initial development of the park has been entrusted.

We've known Jim Cole for many years and his selection is welcome. We're glad the park service didn't send some "expert" out from the East for the job. Cole has a real feeling for Point Reyes and a wide acquaintance with the people with whom he will be working.

We're only sorry that George Collins of San Anselmo has retired, for he, probably more than any other one individual is responsible for the new seashore and should have a say in its development.

With authorization of the seashore now complete, we hope that Congress acts quickly, before adjournment, to appropriate at least $5,000,000 for purchase of initial acreage to bring the Point Reyes National Seashore, now a paper park, into solid reality.



Limantour, c. 1960s

Soon, a handful of ranches on Tomales Bay and in the Olema Valley were sold to speculators. Most of these lands were zoned for housing tracts, and the county and state had plans to extend freeways and parkways to Point Reyes Station and beyond. Shopping centers, new schools, even airstrips loomed as the future of West Marin. As the 1960s progressed, residents became aware of the threats and took action.



The Marin Conservation League, the Inverness Improvement Association, and other groups and individuals sounded alarms, and when it was revealed that even the National Park Service was considering shaving down the size of the National Seashore and selling to developers, the people spoke—no, they shouted. Nearing the end of the decade, Save Our Seashore (SOS) was the call of the day, and so the park service completed the purchase of land and thereby cemented Point Reyes National Seashore into the landscape. Following the conservation momentum, the county cancelled the freeways and, in 1972, created A-60 zoning that saved the adjacent hillsides from commercial development.

A lot more happened in the 1960s, about which a whole book could be written. Synanon arrived in Marshall and developed into a notorious cult, to be vanquished by the intrepid local newspaper, the *Point Reyes Light.* Hippies arrived in large numbers and settled in, had their babies at home, created new institutions, bringing a new cultural scene to the area. The popularity of West Marin took off starting at the end of the decade, and today prices are high, roads are sometimes crowded, but one can still find peace and quiet if they know where to look—thanks to the work started and done in the 1960s.

Dewey Livingston is an historian and author for the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History.

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1970s

How Lucasfilm Made its Home in Marin

By Lucas O. Seastrom



In the spring of 1971, George Lucas had just released his debut feature film, THX 1138. Filmed on locations across the Bay Area, including at the Marin County Civic Center, the story of a futuristic, underground civilization demonstrated the filmmaker's audacious vision, but failed to gain financial success at the box office. American Zoetrope – the San Francisco company Lucas had co-founded with Francis Ford Coppola – faced an uncertain future. Lucas needed his own company to carry his next projects.

Lucasfilm, Ltd. was established that April of '71 in Mill Valley, where Lucas was then a resident. THX had been edited there, as would be Lucasfilm's first production, American Graffiti (1973), a story inspired by Lucas's adolescence in the Central Valley town of Modesto. Filmed primarily in Petaluma in Sonoma County, additional scenes of cruising automobiles were shot on San Rafael's 4th Street. The gymnasium of Mill Valley's Mount Tamalpais High School was utilized for the freshman sock hop, where among the local students recruited as extras was a teenaged Kathleen Quinlan.





Lucasfilm soon relocated to San Anselmo, and after the phenomenal commercial success of American Graffiti, an historic, Victorian home became the company's creative headquarters. Star Wars: A New Hope (1977) was written, sound-designed, and edited in San Anselmo (the latter two of which earned Academy Awards). Decades later, Lucas would dedicate Imagination Park downtown, paying tribute to the origins of both Star Wars and Indiana Jones in the community.

By the production of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (1980), the majority of Lucasfilm's creative efforts were centered in Marin. Visual effects company Industrial Light & Magic relocated to a warehouse on Kerner Boulevard in San Rafael's Canal District, where they'd remain for 27 years.

Here's what else happened in Marin

Aug. 7, 1970 - Judge Harold Haley and three black militants are killed in a violent courthouse shootout and hostage situation at Marin Civic Center

October 1972 - President Nixon signs bill creating a 34,000-acre Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

September 1976 - Christo's "Running Fence" installed, snaking 24.5 miles through Marin and Sonoma ranchlands to the Pacific. It stayed up for two weeks.

1977 - Lack of rain prompts stricter water rationing, allowing only 49 gallons a day for a single resident.

1979 - The *Point Reyes Light* and publisher Dave Mitchell win the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for investigative reporting on Synanon.

Post-production team Sprocket Systems operated sound and editing crews out of San Anselmo, and in 1979 established a computer research group, in effect the start of what later became Pixar Animation Studios.

The global box-office success of Lucasfilm's productions allowed the company to develop a unique creative home: Skywalker Ranch. The former Bulltail Ranch property occupied a small valley between the communities of Nicasio and Marinwood, and along the appropriately named Lucas Valley Road (a name that was, in fact, a total coincidence, derived from an early ranching family in the area). Purchased in 1978, the early phases of construction weren't complete until the 1980s. But as early as '78, Lucasfilm began hosting its annual employee picnic at the Ranch, a beloved summer tradition that continues to this day.

Since its founding, Lucasfilm has been a Marin-rooted company, and its Skywalker Sound division continues to operate within the county lines. A number of Lucasfilm employees continue to live and raise their families here. Many of the company's stories took inspiration from the beautiful settings of the Marin countryside, each fostered within the creative shelter of a place far removed from Hollywood.

Lucas O. Seastrom is a contributing Writer & Historian, Lucas Film.

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JEFF CRAEMER

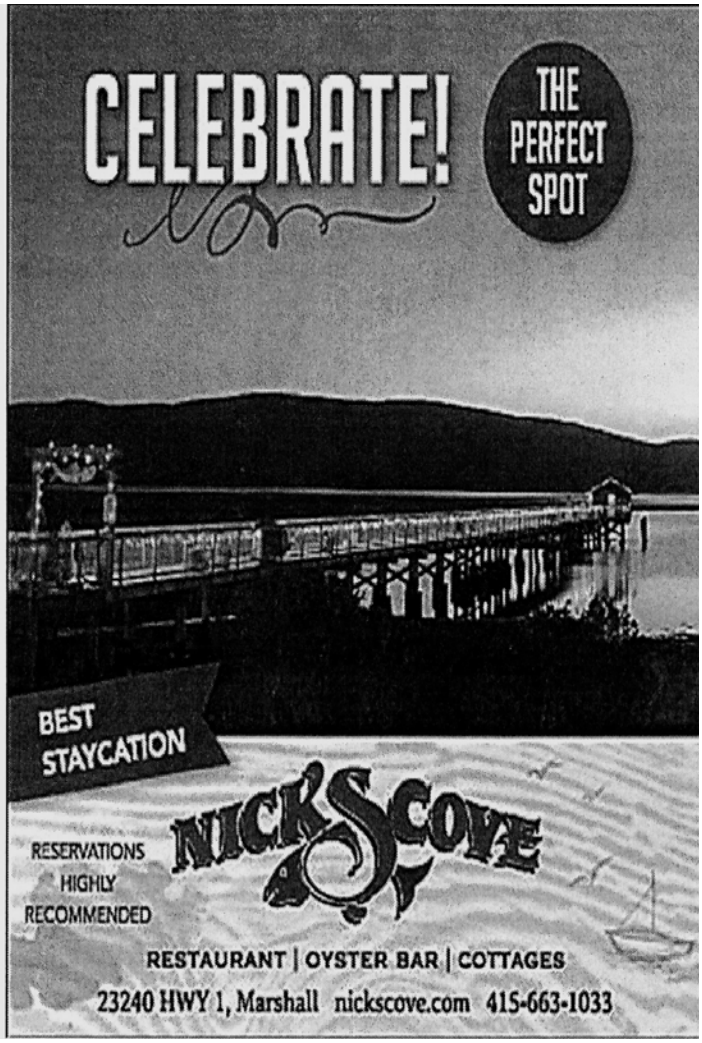
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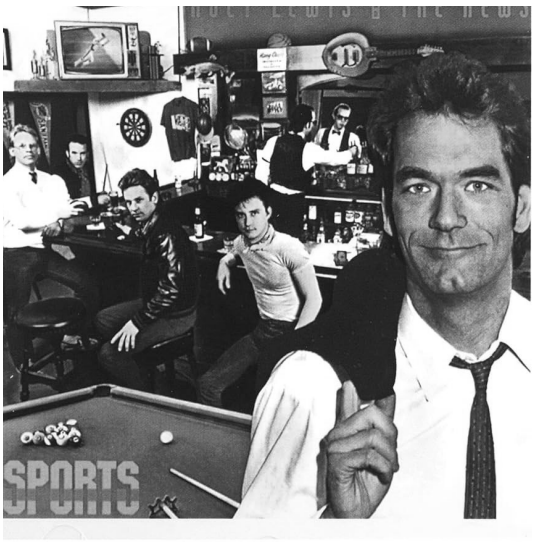
1980s

Marin Music—Hometown Pride

By Paul Liberatore

Marin music in the 1980s was all about hometown pride. That was the decade that a homegrown band, Huey Lewis and the News, released a phenomenal album that shot them out of Marin County into the rarified air of Reagan-era, 1980s rock stardom.

That multi-platinum album was "Sports," a 1983 record that delivered a grand slam of Top 10 hits — "The Heart of Rock & Roll," "I Want a New Drug," "Heart and Soul" and "If This Is It." A fifth single, "Walking on a Thin Line," cracked the Top 20.



If you were in Marin in the '80s, you probably remember how cool it was that Marin produced one of the biggest bands of the decade, their songs ubiquitous on the radio and on newly created MTV.

In today's digital music business, there are any number of ways for young musicians to make records and be heard. But in the '80s there was no Internet to speak of, no smartphones, no YouTube, no streaming, no Tik Tok.

Here's what else happened in Marin

January 1982 - Huge storms bring 12 inches of rain to Marin in 32 hours and cause flooding throughout the county

May 24, 1987 - On the Golden Gate Bridge's 50th anniversary, an estimated 500,000 people gather on the bridge, flattening the span

Oct. 17, 1989 - At 5:04 p.m., Loma Prieta earthquake rocks Marin and the Bay Area, killing 62, including three Marin residents on the Cypress Viaduct on Interstate 880.

The main avenue to success was getting a hit on Top 40 radio, so the band went into the studio with an ear toward crafting that invaluable hit single.

"We needed one hit," Lewis told me in an interview I did for the Marin Independent Journal on the album's 30th anniversary. "It turned out we had five. Who knew?"

For the album cover, Huey and his bandmates posed for a now iconic photo at the bar of the 2 A.M. Club, a landmark Mill Valley watering hole ("turn left at the 2 A.M. Club") with a blue-collar authenticity and lack of pretension that helped counter the "yuppie rock" label that some critics were trying to pin on the band.

"The place kind of looked like us and where we're from," Lewis said. "We're local characters anyway."

They certainly are. All the original band members -- Lewis, sax player/guitarist Johnny Colla, drummer Bill Gibson, keyboardist Sean Hopper, guitarist Chris Hayes and bassist Mario Cipollina – came out of the local bands Soundhole and Clover, getting together at a Monday night jam at the now defunct Uncle Charlie's in Corte Madera.

Because they were so comfortable working in their own home county, their manager, Bob Brown, now owner of Rancho Nicasio, was able to persuade their record label, Chrysalis, to let them make their records and videos on their home turf. "Sports" was recorded at the Record Plant in Sausalito and Fantasy Records in Berkeley.

"In 1982, there weren't any bands coming up that made records in their hometown," Lewis recalled. "You didn't do that. You went to L.A. and did it that way. The thing that we're proudest of is that we did it ourselves in Marin County."

Aside from their radio success, Huey and the News were also one of the first MTV bands, and as such they were on the vanguard of rock videos as vehicles into mainstream pop culture and worldwide fame.

Like "Sports," one of the band's earliest music videos, "Don't Ever Tell Me That You Love Me," was also locally produced, shot in the Cushing Memorial Amphitheater on Mount Tamalpais.



Huey Lewis and the News at the Sweetwater c. 1990. Photographed by John Goddard. Courtesy of Lucretia Little, History Room, Mill Valley Public Library.

"We dressed in our sharp clothes and went up to the amphitheater on the mountain and goofed around," Huey said, chuckling at the memory.

Led by their charismatic, energetic frontman, Huey and the News would go on to dominate the decade with hit after hit – "The Power of Love," a number one single featured in the 1985 movie "Back to the Future" that was nominated for an Academy Award for best original song; "Stuck with You," "Jacob's Ladder," "Do You Believe in Love," "Hip to Be Square," "I Know What I Like," "Doing it All for My Baby" and "Perfect World."

Even when the hits stopped coming in the next decade, Huey Lewis and the News continued to be a top touring act until 2018, when Lewis was diagnosed with Meniere's disease, an inner ear disorder that ended the band's career. But their music lives on in the annals of classic rock and in the memories of fans of the band in its '80s heyday.



Sound engineers for Huey Lewis and the News, Studio D, Sausalito, 1985

Paul Liberatore is a Marin IJ contributor, Lib at Large.

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1990s

Devastation at Inverness Ridge

By Dewey Livingston and Lori Deibel

Some of us remember the 1990s as — kind of blah? Marin County's home prices were rising, our mountain bikes became a bigger thing nationally, and the Spice Girls dominated the radio. Not all that spicy. Barbara Boxer was elected to the United States Senate, and Dr. Martin Griffin published his landmark *Saving the Marin and Sonoma Coast.* One of the big local stories was a devastating conflagration in and around Point Reyes National Seashore.

One afternoon in October 1995, a puff of smoke appeared on Inverness's Mount Vision. Some teenagers' campfire had not been entirely extinguished and eventually exploded into flame. The picturesque forest of bishop pines, dry and pitchy, burned fast as the fire headed south and west. The flames barreled down towards the Murphy family's historic Home Ranch and Limantour Estero, leaving barely a patch of vegetation on the two-mile-long sandspit and exposing ancient shell mounds and modern garbage dumps. Even the dunes at Limantour Beach were blackened to the water line.



The fire also raced along the top of Inverness Ridge into the upper neighborhoods of Paradise Ranch Estates, whose residents had only one escape route: the narrow and horribly designed Drakes View Drive. Home after home disappeared, despite valiant efforts of fire crews and aerial drops. Fire watchers in Point Reyes Station heard propane tanks exploding, and bursts of flame indicating another home being devoured. In Point Reyes National Seashore, new superintendent Don Neubacher made difficult decisions to save his park, allowing bulldozer crews into the designated wilderness area, halting the flames' march towards Bolinas.

A veritable city of fire crew support sprouted at Bear Valley, replacing the wide meadows and picnic grounds, while residents of the area gathered to watch the fire and its progress. Along with crews from the Marin County Fire Department, the National Park Service, and every agency

Here is what else happened in Marin

October 1991 - Rock impresario Bill Graham, 60, of Corte Madera dies in a helicopter crash near Highway 37 on a stormy night.

January 1993 - Marin's Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, who owns a home in West Marin, are sworn in as U.S. senators.

Aug. 9, 1995 - Jerry Garcia, 53, of the Grateful Dead dies of a heart attack at a drug treatment facility in Forest Knolls.

1998 - Novato acquires last piece of 1,600-acre Hamilton Field, making it the first decommissioned base in the country to be transferred back to a community.





Chris Deibel, Marin County Fire Department (Ret.)





from Marin County, firefighters from across the Bay Area joined the fight, including those from Contra Costa, Napa, Sonoma, and San Mateo Counties. Years of fire suppression created an abundance of dry fuel, and strong, erratic winds from the ocean helped the fire spread quickly and made containment difficult. It took crews 14 days to finally declare the Vision Fire controlled.

When it was over, forty-five houses had been lost in the Vision Fire, more than 12,000 acres scorched. Families rebuilt their homes or left, and in a surprisingly short time, vegetation sprouted and the whole place greened up over the winter and spring. Before long, most remnants of the fire had disappeared, except for the memories of smoke and destruction. According to a retrospective article in the October 6, 2020 issue of the San Francisco Chronicle, "The forest is actually healthier than before the fire," said Tom Anderson, a retired filmmaker who lost everything in the Vision Fire. "There's more sunlight, more bird life, more variety, more biodiversity."

Devey Livingston is an historian at the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History and Lori Deibel is Research Librarian at the Marin History Museum.

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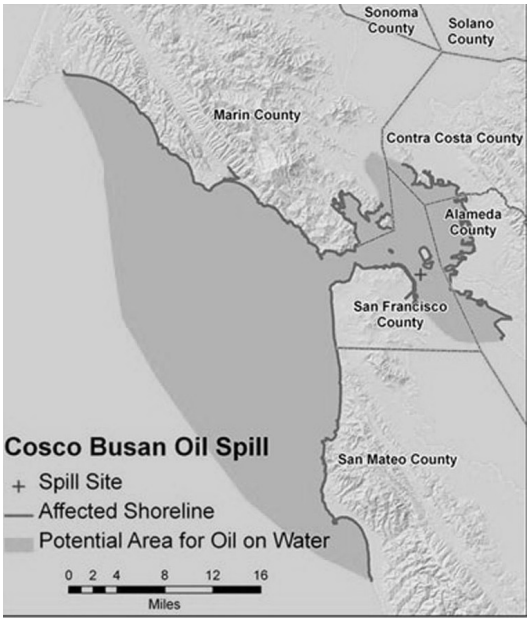
2000s Environmental Disaster

By Lori Deibel



Damaged Cosco Busan vessel. Photo credit: US Coast Guard

At about 8:00 AM on Wednesday, November 7, 2007, the 936-foot container ship Cosco Busan headed out into the heavy fog from the Port of Oakland, bound for South Korea. Although Coast Guard monitors warned the pilot that they were deviating from their intended route under the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, minutes later the vessel struck the corner of the base of one of the bridge's towers, creating a 212-foot-long gash that breached two full fuel tanks. Immediately, heavy bunker fuel oil began pouring out, creating one of the worst environmental disasters in the San Francisco Bay. On the first day, over 53,000 gallons of oil were released, which quickly spread out to the southern shores of Marin County, and soon was taken out the Golden Gate by the strong tidal currents.



Far reaching oil spill Map from California Department of fish and Wildlife

It took 90 minutes for the Marin County Office of Emergency Services (OES) to be notified of the crash and the subsequent oil spill, which was initially reported to be about 400 gallons. It wasn't until 8 PM that the county learned of the full extent of the disaster. By the next morning, oil had reached the bay shores of Richardson Bay and Angel Island. Booms were ordered for Richardson Bay, the San Rafael Canal, and the mouth of Bolinas Lagoon. On Saturday, huge globs of oil were found on Muir Beach and Stinson. By Sunday, oil bypassed the booms and entered the Bolinas Lagoon. Eventually, the toxic spill spread across 70 miles of Marin and San Mateo County coastline. For Marin County, the effected ocean shorelines stretched from Kirby Cove to Limantour.

As the oil mixed with sea water, it formed tar balls and paddies that soon littered the beaches. The shipping company responsible for the Cosco Busan hired hundreds of workers to comb the beaches along with certified volunteers to pick up the debris. Locals frustrated with the slow work of the crews ignored the signs prohibiting beach access, and began cleaning Muir Beach and Brighton Beach. According to the November 15, 2007 *Point Reyes Light,* they were ordered to stop and threatened with arrest. "I walked away with two citations and have to appear in court, but it was worth it," said Sigmund Moser after working at Muir Beach. "We cleaned up half the beach."

Here's what else happened in Marin

September 11, 2001 - Marin residents Paul Sloan, Jeffrey Collman and John Keohane were killed when planes struck the World Trade Center in New York. San Rafael resident Lauren Grandcolas died aboard Flight 93 near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

2005 - Lucasfilm Ltd. announced its plans to move and take some 1,500 jobs to the Presidio starting in July 2005.

April 2008 - A new Highway 101 connector to eastbound Interstate 580 in San Rafael opened in April, part of a larger $128 million freeway widening project that started in 2002.

November 4, 2008 - Voters in Marin and Sonoma passed Measure Q, after four tries since the late 1990s, to impose a quarter-cent sales tax to finance the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit passenger train. Service would begin August 25, 2017.

The worst damage was to marine wildlife. Thick bunker oil fuel is especially toxic to birds, causing damage to the natural insulation in their feathers and resulting in hypothermia and death. Inability to feed in an oil spill leads to starvation, and ingestion of the oil can kill them. According to a report from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), "an estimated 6,849 birds of 65 species were killed, an estimated 14 - 29 percent of the winter 2008 herring spawn were lost due to impacts on eggs and young fish, and more than 3,000 acres of shoreline habitat were oiled."



Oil spill cleanup workers on Rodeo Beach during Cosco Busan oil spill in 2007. Photo credit: CAFish&Game/S Hampton

Local agencies, including WildCare, the Humane Society, the Golden Gate Bird Alliance, and International Bird Rescue were joined by volunteers and began collecting dead and oiled birds found in the coastal cleanup. Birds deemed savable were sent to Oiled Wildlife Care Network in Cordelia for cleaning and rehabilitation. Although thousands of birds were collected, only 295 birds were recorded to be released after the spill.

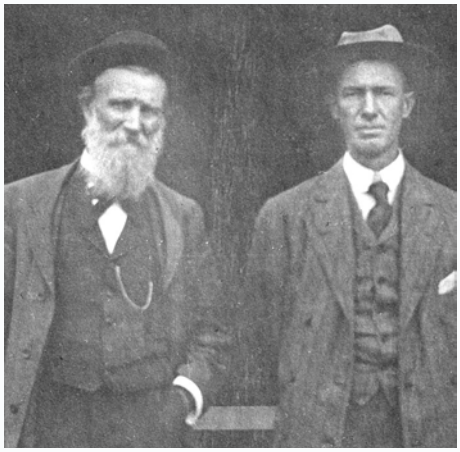
In the aftermath, restoration efforts continued for many years, funded by a $36.8 million settlement to restore natural resources damaged by the spill. Total cleanup costs were estimated to be $70 million. The local bar pilot of the Cosco Busan at the time of the collision was sentenced to 10 months in prison, and lost his pilot's license.

Lori Deibel is the Research Librarian at the Marin History Museum.

2010s

One Mountain, One Vision, One Tam

By Lori Deibel



John Muir & William Kent

For thousands of years, Mount Tamalpais has been a sacred sentinel, first for the Coast Miwok people, and later for the generations of newcomers that explored its wooded slopes or found their homes in Marin. In 1905, conservationist William Kent and his wife, Elizabeth Thacher Kent, purchased 295 acres along Redwood Creek and donated it to the U.S. Government, land later designated as Muir Woods National Monument. In 1912, Kent formed the Tamalpais Conservation Club and was instrumental in the creation of the Marin Municipal Water District, further protecting the land surrounding Mt. Tam. In 1928, Kent donated the area at Steep Ravine, and in 1930, Mt. Tamalpais State Park was established.



A family gathering in one of Marin's parks

Here's what else happened in Marin

Dec 10, 2010 - Opening of the revamped 1,100-foot Cal Park Hill, connecting bicyclists, pedestrians and eventually trains between San Rafael and Larkspur

June 4, 2012 - San Rafael Pacifics play their inaugural game at Albert Park in front of over 1,000 fans

August 11, 2014 - The body of Robin Williams is found in his Tiburon home in an apparent suicide at the age of 63. The Waldo Tunnel was renamed the Robin Williams Tunnel in 2016

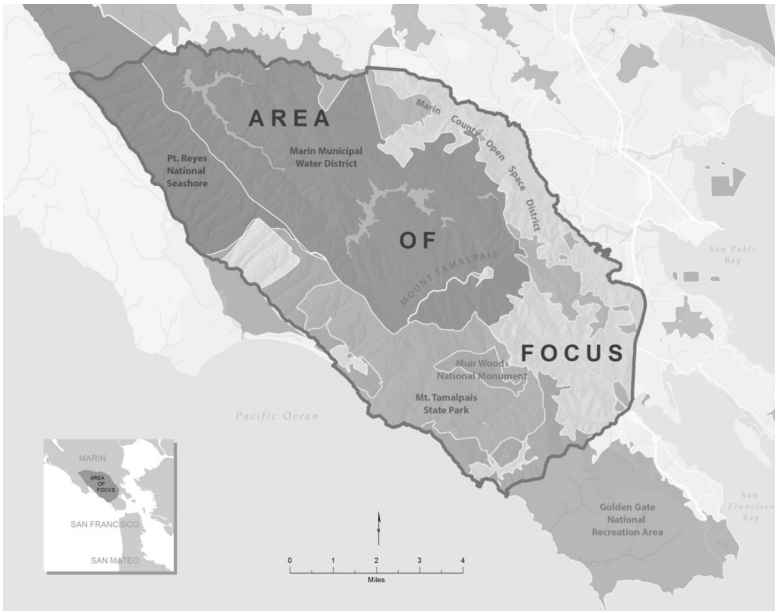
2017 - Hundreds of Sonoma County residents displaced by the North Bay fires find shelter at the Marin Civic Center. In 2018, the Park Fire sent thick smoke to cover Marin for two weeks.

Strong conservation efforts throughout the 1960s and 1970s led to the formation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Marin County Open Space District, and in 1981, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

For decades, these organizations acted as stewards of the land, providing fresh water and recreation to the surrounding population, preserving old-growth Redwood forests from logging, building and maintaining over 200 miles of hiking trails, and enhancing the quality of life in Marin County. With that custodianship came immense challenges, and by the turn of the 21st century, the problems were becoming more than one agency could handle: soil erosion, declining populations of native species, including coho salmon, the spread of invasive species such as Scotch broom, overcrowding in the parks and traffic congestion on roads, diversion of water from Redwood Creek, and increased fuel loading due to fire suppression.

Another challenge was that although boundaries of ownership of Mt. Tam exist, the ecosystems, trails, and wildlife are not confined by property lines. Land use and activities upstream have a direct influence on the quality of downstream habitats, and visitors on the mountain can cross several boundaries during one visit. After a decade of becoming increasingly aware that the public agencies shared these complex and costly concerns, the four organizations saw an opportunity to work in a strategic partnership, along with other local agencies, to pool resources across their jurisdictions.

There were obstacles, in particular the fact that few of these types of multi-jurisdictional partnership succeeded. In addition, in 2011, the California State Parks system announced a plan to close 70 of its 278 parks due to significant state budget cuts, and in 2013 the Federal Government experienced a 16-day shutdown, unable to reach a budget to fund operations for the following year.



One Tam area of focus

All of this fostered a pivotal opportunity for partnership, cross-agency collaboration, innovative thinking, and mutual support beyond traditional boundaries. They wanted to do something bold.

On March 21, 2014, the four agencies – the National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin Municipal Water District, and the County of Marin – along with the non-profit Golden Gate Parks Conservancy, signed an agreement forming the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative. As Frank Dean, the GGNRA general superintendent, told the San Francisco Chronicle, this group "can work seamlessly together .. rangers without borders." Within the first year, the collaborative launched a public awareness and engagement initiative, and called it One Tam. Its early goals were to promote the new collaborative, to educate the public about its work on Mt. Tam, and build a solid foundation for the collaboration's success.



As One Tam enters its second decade, the collaborative is charging into the future on the strength of its partnerships, sharpening focus on landscape-scale conservation and community engagement and honing in on core areas like science, conservation management, community science, youth engagement, community partnerships, and effective collaboration.

According to One Tam, their focus is clear: "deepen impact, build climate resilience, and grow a more connected, inclusive movement to protect Mount Tamalpais and the people who call it home."

Go to www.onetam.org for more information.

Lori Deibel is Research Librarian at the Marin History Museum.

2020s History Continues to be Made

By Heather Powell



The Marin History Museum has exactly one item related to the "Spanish flu" outbreak of 1918. It's a black and white photograph of face-masked Red Cross nurses marching down Fourth Street in San Rafael in an unidentified parade. How I wished as a newish museum collections manager that we had more in our archives to point to, to reference, as we headed into the 2020 COVID -19 lockdown. How did people in Marin deal with this? How did we cope? All we have are the headlines, sanitized and impersonal.

Of course, the world is so different now, with an over-documentation of everything. How does one, with the awareness that history is being made *right now,* begin to collect or gather anything? My first instinct is to try to capture it all, but I know better. The hoarding of everything dilutes the significance of any singular, thoughtfully collected artifact. We exist to preserve and present Marin County history. We need objects to effectively share these stories. With this in mind, I started reaching out.





I solicited face masks from mostly vacant school offices. I walked my neighborhood, taking pictures of "keep away" signs and sidewalk chalk drawings. I documented closed movie theater marquees and their overflowing trash cans. I contacted local librarians to learn how to archive born-digital journal entries, poetry, and artwork. We received whole class projects from Marin Catholic and Davidson Middle School—photos of empty streets and empty paper towel holders, and drawings of the insides of bedrooms, their temporary classrooms.



I know our little collection of pandemic artifacts will continue to grow. Items will trickle in as they are found in the pages of books and among things left in drawers. As the documentation expands, we will continue to refine it and re-examine it. It's too soon, as they say, to pinpoint how we feel about this time in our history. My hope is that these artifacts will one day help future generations understand what it was really like in Marin when we locked down and sheltered-in-place.

Heather Powell is Director of Collections and Administration at the Marin History Museum.

Here's what else happened in Marin

2021 - The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission orders that all illegally anchored vessels and floating homes in Richardson Bay be removed by Oct. 15, 2026.

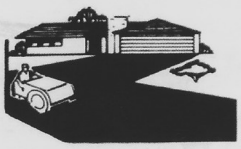
March 2023 - Gov. Gavin Newsom detailed a $380 million plan to transform San Quentin State Prison from a maximum security facility to a center for education and training,

2024 - After years of work on a lifesaving barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge, the $224 million project was completed.

November 5, 2024 - San Rafael, voters approved Measure P, a parcel tax to support construction of a new library and community center.

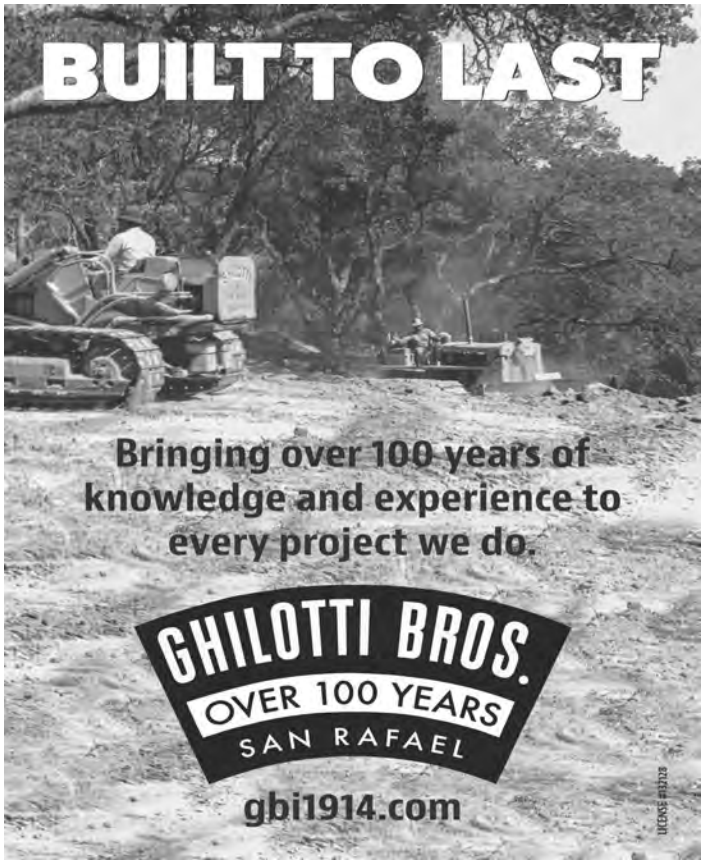
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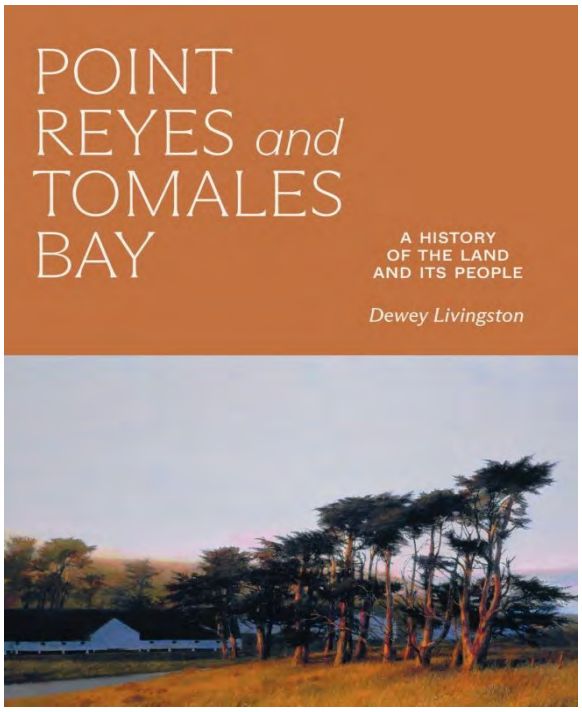
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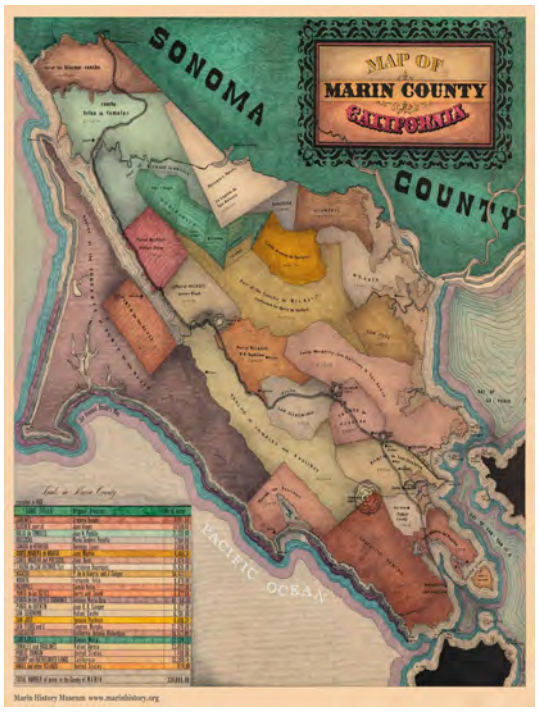
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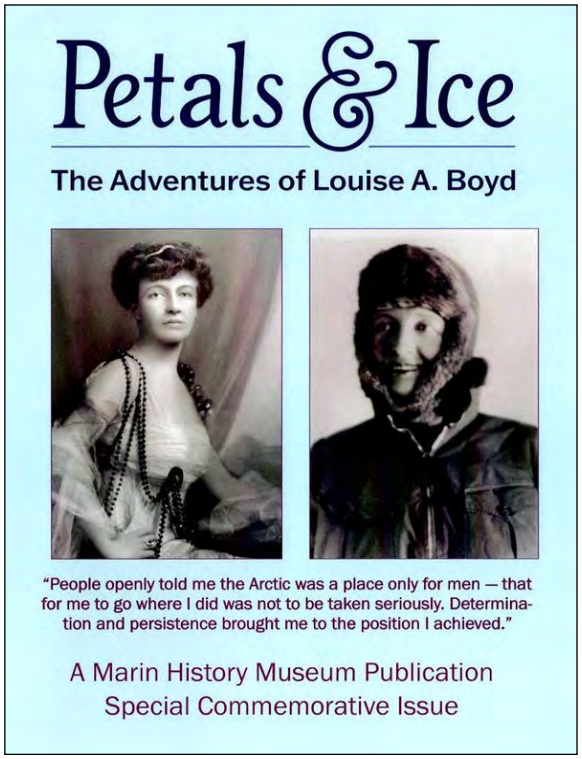
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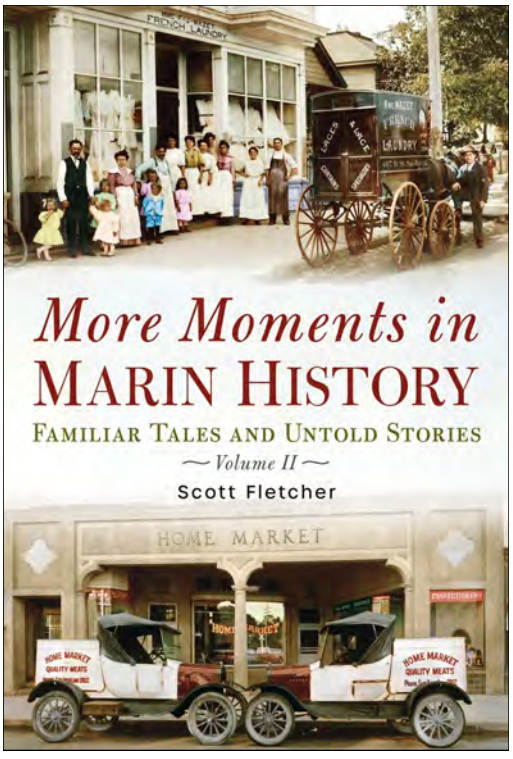


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