

**MILL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS  
FORTIETH ANNUAL WALK INTO HISTORY  
GUIDEBOOK  
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2017  
Co-hosted with the Outdoor Art Club**

**~ Meet You at the Clock ~  
Mill Valley Days: Small Town Heroes**

**TIPS FOR GUIDES**

**Preparation for the Walk**

1. Read the guidebook several times. Repetition will increase your familiarity and comfort.
2. Practice the walk several times. Each guide is required to go on two practice walks that are conducted by a guide trainer. You should also do one or more practice walks with a friend who can give you feedback on your presentation.
3. Use the Guidebook as your resource, not your script. There is more information than you will be able to cover. Choose the information that is most interesting then tell the story. Strive for the group's participation at each stop. Make this a fun experience.

Guides have enjoyed leading the annual History Walk for over three decades. Good luck, have fun and enjoy the experience of leading a group of participants interested in the history of Mill Valley.

**Day of the Walk**

1. Store the number for the Mill Valley Fire Department in your phone. Call them first in any emergency; then call the Walk Chair.  
Fire Dept. on Corte Madera Ave.: (415) 389-4130  
Loral: (415) 717-4825  
Stella: (415) 259-8326  
Debra: (415) 279-1280
2. Ask your group members to let you know if they leave before the end of the Walk.
3. Your group members may be more likely to stroll than walk. Maintain a comfortable pace, while remembering the need to stay within the time frame.
4. Bear in mind that your descriptions and explanations may be longer or shorter depending on the questions and comments your group participants have.
5. Keep your group together, speeding up and slowing down to avoid the groups ahead and behind you.
6. Keep your group on the sidewalk whenever possible, and always use crosswalks.
7. At each stop, face the group with your back to what you are describing.
8. Make eye contact.
9. Don't forget to smile, your enthusiasm is contagious.

**Exit Outdoor Art Club side gate.**

*Stand with your back to the street and look at the group.*

*Introduce yourself. Ask others to introduce themselves.*

*Icebreaker questions for the group:*

- 1) Is this your first history walk? (show of hands)*
- 2) Do you live in Mill Valley? If so, for how long?*

**Moment of appreciation: (PHOTO OF LUCRETIA HANSON LITTLE)**

*Before we get started we want to thank Lucretia Hanson Little, former secretary to the Mill Valley City Council from 1951-1973. Lucretia was legendary for her preservation efforts; dumpster diving in the City Hall parking lot to retrieve valuable historical documents that were considered disposable by staff bent on cleaning out files. At one point the mayor found her rummaging through his waste paper basket and asked what she doing. She answered “Mayor, you throwing away some very important papers.”*

*Her salvaged materials are now stored in Mill Valley Public Library history room, which is named after her. The History Room was dedicated in 1977 (40 years ago this June!)*

**Introduction:**

Today’s Back into History Walk is an opportunity to appreciate the long history of community action that has “fueled” this town’s development from its earliest settlement in 1890.

We’ll visit historic buildings, recognize the significance of local art and trees, and appreciate some of the amazing people who helped make Mill Valley what it is today.

We’ll say hi to local merchants as they share refreshment.

And we’ll meet our town’s fire crew at the Fire Station and learn the history of the fire department, including the disastrous 1929 fire which burned from July 2 to July 5.

We’ll end our history walk at the clock in Depot Plaza; a beautiful clock whose history embodies what it means to live in a town that appreciates the importance of community involvement.

**Walk to the right of the Outdoor Art Club entrance (don't block the entrance).**

**Stop 1: OUTDOOR ART CLUB and Laura Lyon White (PHOTO)**



- There's no way to talk about Laura White without seeming to gush. She was a woman of great spirit and generosity. A wild child at first, but later tempered by experience and determination, she was a forward thinking woman and a suffragette, and the progressive civic actions that she and other women of her time were often responsible for real change to public policy. The accolades for their efforts often went to men, who simply stepped in to push through laws and policy after the heavy lifting had been done.
- Laura and Lovell White and their son Ralston were prominent Mill Valley citizens. Laura founded the California Club of San Francisco in 1897, one of the most successful women's associations of the day, with a membership of 500 women. She defended the need for art and open space as a necessity for health and mental well-being. In 1902, angered by wanton tree cutting, Laura decided Mill Valley needed an Outdoor Art League much like the one that became part of the California Club in SF.
- Much of what makes Mill Valley really special: the art, the natural beauty, the cleanliness and the culture, were put into place by Laura White and other women like her, during Mill Valley's early years.

***Just in case people ask:***

- *The Outdoor Art Club was built in 1904 and designed by the famous architect Bernard Maybeck (His fee was a mere \$165.37). The total cost to build, including the \$3,000 cost of the lot was: \$6,315.67. It took only 3 months to build.*

***Cross street to El Paseo/ Position group near the Francis of Assisi mosaic so they can look at the stairs and into the walkway.***

## STOP 2: EL PASEO / Edna Foster (PHOTO)



- **Edna Foster** was a dreamer and community activist. Like Laura White, Edna served on committees and boards, attended meetings at the Mill Valley Planning Commission and was one of the founders of MV Community Church. She was a member of the Marin Art and Garden Club, the Marin Historical Society, the Outdoor Art Club, the Mill Valley Book Club and the San Francisco Tea Club. She shared her husband Henry's love of music and her father's fascination with the occult.
- In 1936, Edna described the three-story Holtum building at 15 Throckmorton as an eyesore. After leaving meetings at the Outdoor Art Club she would see the broken down building across the street and it annoyed her. She said, "My, I wish somebody would buy that ugly old building and do something with it!" Finally, in 1938 that "somebody" would become Edna and her husband who purchased the apartment complex and the property around it.
- Edna conceived that El Paseo could be a place where artists and craftsmen could live, create and show their work. There were shops, two courtyards and professional offices along El Paseo Lane and apartments upstairs.
- In 1940, renovation began under the direction of Augustus Costigan, who shared Edna's vision of an Old World passageway of shops and art galleries like the pathways of Spanish towns, which had, according to Edna, "charm and interest enough for the señores to take their señoritas out for a stroll."
- The complex was built in stages over 8 years. Part of that time Gus was in Italy, building bridges and other war-related structures with the Army Combat Engineers. At nights, in foxholes or basements of bombed-out buildings, Gus often worked by candlelight on plans for El Paseo. The influence of the Italian architecture in which Gus found himself at that time is evident here today.
- Edna and Gus designed a complex of buildings to stretch from Throckmorton to Sunnyside.
- They used huge beams from an old building at Fort Cronkhite; rail ties from the Scenic railway; wrought iron fixtures from the Guatemala Building at the World Fair on Treasure Island. Gus ornamented doors with wine bottle bottoms to create a stained-glass image.

- Wooden signs were carved by Henry Foster. Henry carved many of the beams and the balustrades, as well. Not to be left out, Edna's 87-year-old uncle carved the circular supports for the second-floor railings.
- Perhaps the most interesting feature was the pathway itself, designed with a natural slope toward its center to suggest years of foot traffic by sandal-shod padres. And in case you're wondering, in Spanish the name El Paseo, means "walk" or "stroll".
- Construction was completed in 1948. The grand opening was an important and celebratory Mill Valley event. Edna wore a specially crafted peasant dress (photo) and Gus Costigan and those who had worked with him, presented a shrine with a **mosaic of St. Francis, made by Alyn Stretter**, to El Paseo.
- Edna was a lively spirit and much loved in Mill Valley. She was an indulgent landlord who regarded her tenants as family. She said about building El Paseo: "So many people were involved, that actually, it was a community project."

**FUN FACT:** El Paseo restaurant has been continuously open since 1948. (~70 years)

**Sammy Hagar moved to Mill Valley from SF after hearing Rita Abrams Mill Valley song. He bought El Paseo approximately 7 years ago** because he wanted a hometown restaurant. He loved the building but it had gone downhill. Retrofitting and renovation cost over \$1 million dollars with many unforeseen costs due to upgrades that hadn't been done for many years, far more expensive than he'd planned and wanted, but Sammy said, "I'm happy with the outcome of the business. I love the place."

*After exiting El Paseo, stop a few feet to the right on Sunnyside, stand near the water pipes.*

### **STOP 3: TALK ABOUT PAST FIRES (PHOTO)**

**Our next stop will be in front of the homes of two of Mill Valley's former fire chiefs.**

**Before we go on to our next stop, let's talk about a very important event in Mill Valley history, the 1929 fire.**

- We live on and near Mt Tam and fire is a constant concern. Where there is a threat of fire there must be firefighters. In our town's early development our fire dept consisted mostly of volunteers. In 1929 there was only a paid Fire chief and 3 paid firefighters, augmented by a volunteer coalition. If you're a volunteer firefighter, you have to get to the station quickly, which is why many of the houses positioned close to downtown MV once housed firemen and their families.
- There have been several major fires on Mt Tamalpais, the most destructive being in 1913 and 1929.

- In 1929 what began as a “thin gray wisp of smoke” quickly “galloped” into a firestorm that spread like fingers of fog, some houses burned while the houses next door were saved. The fire closed the town. It burnt 117 houses, scorched others and turned over 2,400 acres of land into white-hot ash. And would have burned much more if the wind hadn’t shifted direction turning the fire away from the business district, just 2 blocks from the railway station.
- Mill Valley Fire Chief Clinton Thoney (whose house we’re about to visit) brought in help from local firefighting agencies from all over Marin and San Francisco. The SF Fire Dept sent 2 engines and 2 chemical wagons but their couplings didn’t match Mill Valley’s equipment. This problem instigated an effort to universalize all fire fighting coupling equipment.
- Civilians volunteered and occasionally were drafted into service. This “volunteer” force fought with forestry shovels and hand tools, because the water system was limited and fire equipment could not create sufficient water pressure to compensate for elevation increases and friction due to long hoses.
- High school boys and older students were the most persistent workers throughout the day and into the night, taking on difficult tasks and “enduring like mature men.”
- Mill Valley banded together to fight the fire and to feed and administer to the army of volunteers. The Outdoor Art Club became a hospital and refreshment station. Scout Hall became a mess hall. Over 4,000 residents, soldiers and professionals fought the fire.

**FUN FACT:** Today smoking is legally prohibited on Mt Tam.

*Walk down Sunnyside, stopping in front of 15 Sunnyside*

**STOP 4: THOMAS AND JANE BAGSHAW HOUSE / 12 SUNNYSIDE ( PHOTO)**



- The Bagshaw family has an interesting history. Around 1902, Thomas and Jane Bagshaw and their two older sons, Fred and Sam, emigrated from Cardiff Wales and settled in Mill Valley. Two other sons, Sydney and Jack were born here in MV.
- Tom," as the father was known, was arrested in 1907 for operating a "blind pig" on Miller Avenue. “Blind Pig” was the term used for sometimes-illegal bars that opened

outside Mill Valley town limits to circumvent the town's "dry" law. At the time they lived adjacent to "Jagtown". The district earned the name "Jagtown" or "Jagville", "jag" being a term for intoxication. Most blind pigs were in an area near what is now Sunnyside.

- 12 Sunnyside Avenue was the Bagshaw family home from 1914-1946.
- Tom volunteered as Mill Valley Fire Chief for only one year (1912) and was active in the fire department for many years, as were other members of the Bagshaw family.
- Tom and Jane's son, Thomas Frederick "Fred" Bagshaw became Mayor of Mill Valley later in the 1930's and led the drive to acquire the golf course.
- Bagshaw descendants still live in Mill Valley and you can access their oral history's online (MV Library website) and in the Lucretia Little History room.

**FUN FACT:** Article in a Feb 6, 1907, SF Newspaper: "Blind Pig" Man Fined Heavily.

Justice Renner exacts \$300 from Tom Bagshaw of Mill Valley Town. A "Blind Pig" (speakeasy, also called a blind pig) run by Tom Bagshaw offended the sacred precincts of quiet Mill Valley town. Bagshaw kept a refreshment parlor within a stone's throw of the licensed Sequoia saloon. When thirsty customers wanted whisky at Bagshaw's, they called for "Hardware." Steam beer was called "ginger ale".

### **STOP 5: THONEY HOUSE / 15 SUNNYSIDE (PHOTO)**



- Here is another house occupied by some of our town's early firefighters. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Thoney and their growing family enjoyed visiting Mill Valley for their nature outings. And in 1904 purchased this lot, which was vacant, and built on it a platform for their tent.
- After the 1906 earthquake, they built this house and moved to Mill Valley permanently with their 8 sons and a daughter. Three wells supplied the family with their water.
- Charley, formerly a fireman in San Francisco, served as a Mill Valley volunteer fireman and later became full time when the position paid.
- When the "Iron Horse" engine made its appearance in the Mill Valley Fire Dept., there was no place immediately to stable all the horses needed to pull the engine, and a

stable was temporarily built in the backyard of this house. In time the stable became a cottage where some of the boys lived for a while.

- The Thoney's son, Clinton, was appointed Mill Valley Fire Chief in 1929, the year of the disastrous fire. He'd only been chief one day before the 1929 fire broke out.
- Three of the Thoney's sons, Franklin, Emmanuel and Vollmar, all worked on the railroad.
- Grandson Noel Thoney was a Walk into History Guide for 30 years, prior to his death in 2010.

***Continue down Sunnyside, cross at crosswalk to the Shopping Center and go on to the bus stop on Miller Ave. Stand to the right of the mosaic.***

### **STOP 6: THE MOSAIC WHEEL, near bus stop. A TRUE MILL VALLEY TREASURE! (PHOTOS)**



#### **Japanese in Mill Valley:**

- A Japanese family, who were relocated during WW2 to an internment camp in Southern California, first owned this land. As a result of their internment they lost the rights to their property.
- Census records indicate that in *just one day* over 37 Mill Valleyians of Japanese decent were bussed out of Mill Valley and relocated. Sadly, this kind of thing occurred up and down California and other coastal areas.

#### **Manny Gomez:**

- The property was then acquired by Manual (Manny) Gomez who moved to Mill Valley in 1926. **Manny built this mini shopping center in 1956.** He constructed two buildings instead of one in order to preserve redwood trees.
- Unfortunately, the trees were cut down anyway.
- As an artistic touch, Manny commissioned artist **Alfonso Pardin**as of Mexico and Mill Valley (Panoramic Hwy), to create this mosaic wheel.

#### **Alphonso Pardin**as: (show photos)

- Pardinas was described as a “very arty, very original, very 60s.”



- He was at the center of the San Francisco Bohemian scene, collaborating with many local artists—(Beni Bufano and Jean Varda, as well as Eichler architects, Bob Anshen and Steve Allen.)
- From the mid-1950s until his sudden and mysterious death in 1975, his firm, Byzantine Mosaics, installed glass tiles in intricate patterns in BART stations, banks, office lobbies, restaurants, and homes throughout the Bay Area and in Southern California.
- Pardinias was the most prolific of the BART artists in the 1960s, creating work in at least six stations. Yet nowhere within the BART system does Pardinias get credit for his artwork. (Lake Merritt, El Cerrito Plaza, El Cerrito Del Norte, Union City, Lafayette, and MacArthur.)
- Pardinias often collaborated with other artists. **The pattern of this modern art treasure was designed by Carlos Merida**, a Guatemalan, whose studio was in Mexico. It was designed to require very little upkeep and to last “5,000 years!”.
- Architect and building contractor Leonard Cahn installed the artwork on the stone studded concrete slab.

*Use crosswalk to go across Miller Avenue to Ravencourt. Stop in the parking lot near the entrance.*

## STOP 7: RAVENCOURT / 42 MILLER



- George Dillman originally purchased the lot for \$800 in the auction of May 31, 1890. Eventually, the property was enlarged to include the lot next door. The house, Ravencourt, was built in 1902 for George Paul Dillman, his wife Eliza Dillman and their daughter, Millie.
- **The Black family owned Ravencourt from 1930's-1973.** Mrs. Myrte Black was a schoolteacher and her husband, James, a draftsman. Mrs. Black said Ravencourt was so named because of the ravens that nested there.
- Mrs. Black loved trees. A 1956 document described how she asked City Council to pass a resolution of policy with regard to any future development of her property. The document states that in the future should she and Mr. Black develop their property commercially, “they do not wish any of the redwood grove destroyed to make room for off-street parking of customer cars”. (Obviously she had reason to

worry since she'd probably seen the trees across the street on Manny Gomez's property removed.)

- In 1967 a city plan for downtown, called the "701 Plan," proposed using much of the Black property for a city parking lot. Mrs. Black, then a frail old lady, appeared at the City Council meeting on a cold rainy night to "speak for the trees," as she said.
- In November of 1971 Mrs. Black was raking leaves on the roof of her garage and suffered a fatal heart attack and fell off the roof. She was 82 years old.
- Ravencourt was purchased and turned into offices in the 1970s. It is much the same as it was originally, but there has been extensive renovation inside, although it definitely retains its old charm.
- Lucretia Little had hoped that the new **Mill Valley Library** could go on the site, as it was central and offered parking in the curve of the street. (We'll talk more about the Mill Valley Libraries later in this walk.)
- Ravencourt is now the law office for Attorneys Mark Chavez and Jon Gertler, who purchased the property under the very specific stipulation that the trees would never be cut. *(A good time to add about how cool and quiet it is under the trees!)*

### ***Walk to Stairs at the back of the parking lot behind Ravencourt.***

#### **STOP 8: TALKINGTON STAIRS**

***Mill Valley was once known as 10,000 steps hung on the side of Mt Tamalpais.***

- In 1889 The Tamalpais Land & Water Co. hired engineer Michael O'Shaughnessy to lay out roads, lots, pedestrian paths, and step-systems for what the developers hoped would become a new city.
- Rather than build our city in a grid-like fashion, as was common in that day, O'Shaughnessy designed our town in accordance with the topography of the area.
- Part of his design was a network of stairs and lanes that have been named "Steps, Lanes and Paths" or "SLPs." They occur all over the city and were used by citizens to easily move up and down the hillsides and between streets, **and these became evacuation routes in case of fire.** These stairs are included in the original map of the first SLPs.
- In 2002, Victoria Talkington began a revitalization of the steps, lanes and paths, which had become largely ignored and forgotten. The initial vision was simple: *"Mill Valley's extensive network of public paths will be restored for public use and enjoyment."*
- Victoria and a team of volunteers archived, logged, and registered with the City of Mill Valley more than a hundred of the original SLPs. The city agreed to maintain, rebuild, and re-open many of the paths. Simultaneously, a map was drawn and sold to the public, highlighting the open paths, and paths for future re-opening and rebuilding.

- Although these stairs are in our town's first map (1889) in 2002 they were named Talkington Stairs in honor of Victoria's efforts.
- However, over time, some of the paths had been obstructed by private property owners, whether knowingly or not or fallen again into disrepair. Fortunately, through the determined activism of Victoria accompanied by a groundswell of support from the community at large the City of Mill Valley adopted new policies and actions to ensure that such existing encroachments are addressed, and future ones prevented.
- **It was Attorney Mark Chavez, the attorney who owns Ravencourt** who represented Victoria in the lawsuit against the city, which was settled with resolutions and actions by the city in March 2017.
- We are fortunate to live in a community where, for many decades, activists have worked tirelessly to preserve our city's unique qualities, and where the city government listens and supports these efforts.

**FUN FACT:** In 2010 Victoria Talkington was voted citizen of the year!

***Continue up Miller toward Throckmorton. Stand in front of "The Goods" store.***

**STOP 10: EQUATOR COFFEE/ 2 MILLER – Refreshment Station - coffee samples.**



- ***Point out outside tables and plaque. Plaque reads: "These railroad rails date back to 1915 and 1918. Excavated from an old track off highway 37, they serve as a reminder of the railroad's significance in downtown Mill Valley's history. The last passenger train rolled out of the Mill Valley Depot across the street in 1940."***

\*Notice stools designed like bike seats to honor the influence of mountain biking in Mill Valley's history.

***Cross Throckmorton Avenue toward Vascos; take left to Throckmorton Theater.***

## STOP 11: THROCKMORTON THEATER / 142 THROCKMORTON: (PHOTO)

*(Enter if possible)*



- This building was called the **Hub Theater when it was built in 1915** as a theater showing live vaudeville acts and even a performance by Charlie Chaplin. The musical accompaniment of silent movies shown at the theater was in the capable hands of Hattie Thompson at an electrically powered organ.
- Admission to a Saturday Matinee cost 5 cents. The showing included a Wild West Serial. It closed in 1929 when the Sequoia Theater opened with “talkies.”
- In 1952, the Odd Fellows Temple (IOOF Lodge #399) purchased this building. In 1976, the auditorium was used for Saturday Night Movies featuring foreign films. The Mill Valley Film Festival has its roots here.
- In 2003, Lucy Mercer opened the 142 Throckmorton Theatre as a multi-genre performing arts center under these founding principles. *(Point to list.)*
- Lucy’s eclectic, high quality programming today attracts over 50,000 people to the nonprofit theatre each year. It has become a favorite venue among performers of all stripes for artistic experimentation and collaboration.
- **Jules Mersfelder painted a scene of Mount Tamalpais in 1917.** The painting hung in City Hall for many years but was damaged either during the moving or storage of it before being placed here. Steve Coleman, the theatre’s set and scenic designer, restored it. It is visible from the Theater’s staircase.
- The lobby of the theatre is often open in the afternoon when other art is on display.

*Walk to the corner of Throckmorton and Madrone; turn right on Madrone*

***If people ask about the mural:***

The mural was painted by local artist, Zio Ziegler. He was born in 1988, the son of Banana Republic founders Mel and Patricia Ziegler. He studied art at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, and graduated with a BFA in Painting from RISD in 2010. His work is found throughout the US and internationally. Additional murals in Mill Valley can be found in Tam Junction and on the Sequoia Theater wall.

*Walk up to Lovell Avenue on the right side of Madrone; stop at the corner.*

**STOP 12: THE OLD CARNEGIE LIBRARY / 52 LOVELL**



- Mill Valley's first public library was based on a private collection of over 750 volumes belonging to the Outdoor Art Club, a woman's group dedicated to "preservation of the natural scenery of Mill Valley and the surrounding country" and other community inspired actions. The City's first librarian was Lillian Gardner, youngest daughter of Mill Valley pioneers Jacob and Annie Gardner.
- In 1908 the books were donated by the Outdoor Art Club to the City, which housed them in temporary location.
- A **Carnegie library** is a library built with money donated by Scottish-American businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. He started US Steel, the largest steel company in the US.
- A total of 2,509 Carnegie libraries were built between 1883 and 1929, including some belonging to public and university library systems. 1,689 were built in the United States, 660 in Britain and Ireland, 125 in Canada, and others in Australia, New Zealand, Serbia, the Caribbean, Mauritius , Malaysia and Fiji.
- By the time the last grant was made in 1919, there were 3,500 public libraries in the United States, nearly half of them built with construction grants paid by Carnegie.
- The Carnegie Library was contracted in August 1910. Architect C.H. Russell designed the building; Robert Tros was the builder.
- This library closed in 1966 after the "new" library was built next to Old Mill Park. The Carnegie cornerstone is on display in the History Room of the new library. You will find old bricks on the steps near this building that have the Carnegie stamp on them.
- Subsequently this was converted to a private home. The garage in front is an addition to the original structure.

## **FUN FACT:**

When steel magnate Andrew Carnegie began donating part of his fortunes to new libraries across the country, a new brick plant was being erected in Corral Hollow Canyon, about 10 miles southeast of Tracy, in San Joaquin County, California. Four miles west of the brick works were the Tesla coal mines, where owners John and James Treadwell had supplied the much needed fuel to Californians since 1896. Now they were to realize the economic value of clay abundantly adjacent to the steeply dipping coal beds. The Treadwells found the fire clay, gray clay, and kaolin to be excellent for making brick, sewer-pipe, and refractory products. This was fortunate for the Treadwells at a time when coal was losing the fuel market to oil. Carnegie bricks were used in this building and adjacent SLP. The Carnegie stamp appears on the distinctively light colored bricks.

**The Treadwell company name honored the great industrialist and philanthropist who was greatly admired by the men.**

***Point out SLP to the right of the building. Carnegie bricks.***

***Walk back toward town on Lovell. Cross Bernard Street to the McInnes House***

## **STOP 13: MCINNES HOUSE / 21 LOVELL**



- This property was purchased at the 1890 auction, and John and Elizabeth (Eliza) McInnes built the house in 1891, likely as a duplex. House is a cruciform and originally faced downtown.
- John McInnes, also a Jagtown saloon owner as well as a local builder, purchased almost the entire block surrounded by Throckmorton, Bernard, Lovell and Corte Madera, as well as lots in Blithedale Canyon. In 1896 Construction of the Mt Tamalpais Scenic railway began.

***“Trouble in Mill Valley: The California Construction Company Is ordered to Spare a Tree- The McInneses Prepared to Protect their Property at Any Cost” (SF Call 1896 – March 12)***

***Faced with construction of the MV and Mt Tam Scenic Railway on a portion of his Canyon property, McInnes secured an armed band of men to halt construction and halt the removal of one of his trees. (Again with the trees!)***

***Superintendent Graves threatened to bring suit against McInnes for delaying the work. McInnes and his son, both carrying weapons stood their ground. O’Shaughnessy’s jumped into the debate in defense of McInnes and instructed the local constable, E.E Gray to arrest any man in the employ of the mountain road or California Construction who attempted to plow up or in any way interfere with the road in front of his property. Eventually a meeting of***

***Corte Madera Ave. property owners was held in O'Shaughnessy's SF office to create a local property owners coalition called the "Mill Valley Property Owner's Association".***

***Armed now with legal advice, the group challenged the Scenic Railroads right to occupy local streets without the consent of the people residing nearby.***

***All the while, the McInneses had been standing guard on their property.***

***When, again, workers attempted to plow the road in front of their property, Mrs. McInnis ordered the man away. Ignoring her he started up his horses intent on cutting through the street.***

***Mrs. McInnes grabbed the handles and overturned the plow.***

***If you were a man," said the fellow, "I would thrash you."***

***"Oh, no you wouldn't." replied the lady "If I was a man you would run away!"***

***The dispute was eventually settled, and McInnes accepted stock in the Railway Company in exchange for his property in Blithedale Canyon.***

***He also gave permission for the railroad to run through his "downtown" property (Throckmorton to Lovell at Corte Madera.) His attitude had changed so completely that he rode on the first car to take materials to a section of the track on the Cushing property in the canyon.***

- In 1903, the house was sold to Joseph Helen.
- In 1926, the heirs of Helen leased the property to the Andos, a Japanese family, who operated a laundry and catering business here, while living upstairs.
- The Andos were some of the Japanese people living in Mill Valley that were interned during WW2.
- New owners purchased the house in 1988, and began restoration in 1989 to preserve the style and charm of the Queen Anne cottage.

***Walk down Bernard to Throckmorton. Take a left at the Keystone Building (owned by the Kent family) and walk toward the Bank Of America. Look down to see the manhole cover. Point out Tony Brabo stamp on the at the corner.***

**STOP 14: N. C. W. Co WATER MANHOLE (OLDEST UTILITY COVER IN TOWN)**

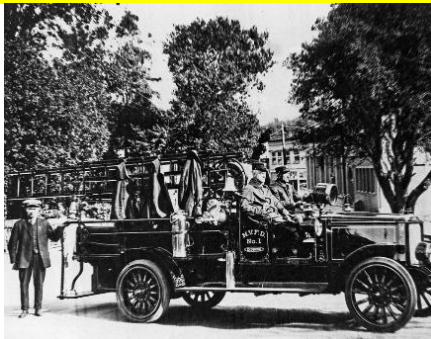


- In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the populations of Marin’s towns were growing, the struggle for an adequate water supply grew more intense. The Tamalpais Land and Water Company and its successor, the North Coast Water Company (1903) had developed a water supply for Mill Valley. Fierce competition grew between the towns of Sausalito and Belvedere for a limited water supply.
- Both towns made bids for water from an expanded system to be provided by the North Coast Water Company. In 1904 Belvedere out-maneuvered Sausalito when the Belvedere Land Company signed an agreement to receive water from the North Coast Water Company.
- William Kent effectively ended the water wars in 1912 with the development of the public Marin Municipal Water District. Much to its credit the MWWD adopted a policy of prohibiting development in favor of “fostering recreational use of its large property with the primary purpose of supplying uncontaminated water” and thus helping to preserve the natural beauty of the mountain.
- This utility cover likely was installed at the time the Bank of Mill Valley (now the BOA) building was constructed in 1911, and stands as the last vestige of the North Coast Water Company

***Walk past Bank of America. Left on Corte Madera Ave. Walk past Sweetwater, take crosswalk to the Fire Station.***

**STOP 15: MILL VALLEY FIRE STATION and MEMORIAL ROCK**

**A ) Fire Station with viewing of antique fire engine.**



**Fire Station info provided by Fire Chief Tom Welch who will be stationed at the Firehouse.**

**B) Memorial Rock**



**Dedicated by the citizens of Mill Valley - 1953. “In memory of those who gave their lives in defense of their country.”**



**Where did the beautiful red chert rock, estimated to weigh nine tons, (18,000 lbs) come from and how did it get to its current site?**

- This chert rock came from Wolfback Ridge, above Sausalito.
- After a period of extended rain, the rock rolled down the hill, blocking Highway 101 near the Waldo Tunnel (now the Robin Williams Tunnel). Concrete contractor Tony Brabo of Mill Valley was hired by the California Highway Patrol to remove it and with considerable effort, managed to lift the rock on to a flat bed truck.
- To the delight of the CHP, Mill Valley City Manager Allen Almquist suggested that the rock be transported to Mill Valley's City Hall by volunteer fireman. Under the watchful eye of Mr. Almquist, Tony placed the rock in front of City Hall.
- And what about Tony? Tony and his wife Mary were both born in Mill Valley, and at the ages of 17 and 18, on July 3, 1929, they eloped and married in Alameda, where they then nervously watched the smoke from the Great Fire on Mt. Tamalpais which spread almost to the center of Downtown Mill Valley before the winds shifted.
- In 2011, a few weeks after celebrating their 82nd wedding anniversary, Tony Brabo passed away at the age of 99. His dear wife Mary passed away a few weeks later at the age of 100.

**FUN FACT:** The large bell standing outside of city hall is the bell that was used to call volunteers to a fire.

*Walk to Mill Valley Market. Stand or sit on benches under the sign.*

**STOP 16: MILL VALLEY MARKET / 12 CORTE MADERA AVE. - Refreshment Station.**



- **Mill Valley Market** has been family-owned and run for four generations. It is presently owned by brothers, David and Doug Canepa. Doug Canepa feels he is the caretaker of a Mill Valley institution (his family's store).
- There has been a "Mill Valley Market" in Mill Valley going back to 1907 or earlier. The market had been at two locations before moving to its present location in 1955. The first location was on Throckmorton west of Lytton Square (site of the Mill Valley Inn now) and in 1929, when Frank Canepa took over ownership, Mill Valley Market was located at 118 Throckmorton. (1929- 1955). **(Photo)**

## **Frank Canepa and the 1929 fire:**

**July 4<sup>th</sup> 1929**, Mill Valley Market opened when Franco (Frank) Canepa came from SF to his new MV store in a truck full of produce to open his store at 118 Throckmorton Avenue. Dressed in suit and tie, he was promptly drafted to fight the fire that threatened the town, dressed as he was. But he always said it was ok because he was fighting the fire next to another Italian man and they could converse in their native language.

## **FUN FACT:**

### **CANEPA ACTS OF KINDNESS:**

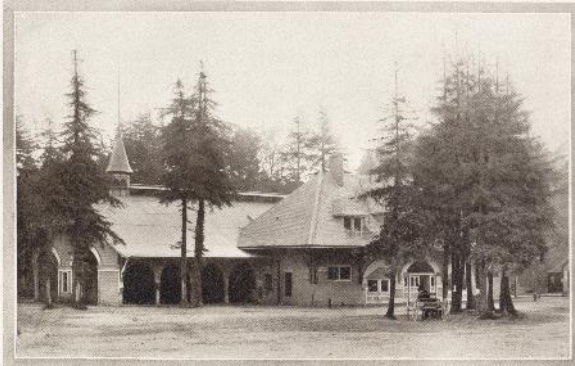
- The granddaughter of a woman who lived in Muir Beach During WW2 told Doug about how her grandmother would walk to the store, and Frank Canepa would save special handled bags for her to carry her groceries home (handled bags were very rare at this time.) The grandmother really loved the store for this special consideration extended to her and many others.
- In the early 60s, a local man deserted his wife and 10 children. MV Market provided free groceries to feed the woman and her children for years.

**~~~~We've saved the best for last! ~~~~**

**In conclusion of this tour we're going to talk about the place that is truly the heart of Mill Valley.**

*Cross street at crosswalk near the MV Market benches and walk to the Plaza behind the Depot Cafe. There will be three stops in the Plaza. The first will be near the center of the plaza under the trees near the circular benches so people can sit down in the shade if they need to.*

## **STOP 17A: DEPOT PLAZA (PHOTO)**



- Completion of the branch railroad line into downtown in 1889 precipitated Mill Valley's birth. The 1890 land auction brought buyers who built houses and entrepreneurs who started businesses. The Mill Valley and Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway, which began service in 1896, gave Mill Valley worldwide fame and created a nexus point of gathering for locals and visitors, which has changed over time.
- Passenger railroad service ended in the early 1940s. Then this area was used as a bus depot and parking lot.
- **The Plaza as we know it today was transformed by the unique vision of Dick Jessup, architect, city council member and mayor.**
- Jessup was known for his ability to work as a team on his many building projects in Mill Valley. Originally downtown merchants opposed the idea of a plaza because they were fearful that with loss of parking, they would have fewer customers.
- Jessup spent a couple of years persuading the merchants that an attractive plaza would be an asset for them. **The plaza was completed in 1982.**

*Since then it's been known as "The Plaza", "Downtown Plaza", "Mill Valley Plaza", and the New Mill Valley Plaza".*

***Walk to game tables near the south end of Plaza.***

### **17B: GAMER TABLES**



- **Bill Graham**, a local the rock promoter for many famous Bay Area Rock bands, donated the tables to the plaza in the 1980s because the Plaza reminded him of Washington Square Park, in lower Manhattan, which was also a gaming Center. Graham had grown up in New York and had watched chess and backgammon players in parks, plazas and subway stations in the city.
- When MV leaders were beginning to discuss plaza designs in the late 1970-80s, "Graham (a Mill Valley resident)...walked in one day and said to Dick Jessup, "every plaza needs to have game minds." **Graham paid about \$20,000 for the design and installation of the game tables and benches.**

- After Bill Graham’s sudden death from a helicopter accident in 1991, the City installed a bronze plaque next to the tables in 1992, with an inscription that recognizes Graham for the gift, closing with **“Cheers”**, as he had closed a note to Jessup in 1991.
- We have an active gaming community in Mill Valley with regularly scheduled tournaments. To learn more about this eclectic group of gamers look for Gamer Ambassador Hugh Fullerton’s oral history online or in the Lucretia Little History Room.

***Walk to the Clock near the corner of Miller and Throckmorton. Point out the bench as you walk past.***

**DEPOT BENCH**



- Benches like this were used at railroad stations (Mt Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railroad and the Northwestern Pacific) throughout Marin from 1918 to 1940.
- This is where Rita Abrams sat and composed the "Mill Valley" song. It was Christmas day, but she was Jewish and had been just taking a stroll, feeling lonely, and she sat down, looked up at Mt. Tam, and realized what a fabulous place she lived in.

**STOP 17C: TOWN CLOCK - A matter of time! (PHOTOS)**



**Mill Valley's stately clock tower** stands in the center of town adjacent to the Depot Bookstore, at the corner of Throckmorton and Miller Ave. Historical landmarks such as this clock bring functional charm to our town, but they also hearken back to events that once loomed large in our town.

Recall when we first described the fire of 1929:

**What began as a “this gray wisp of smoke” quickly “galloped” into a firestorm that spread like fingers of fog, some houses burned while the houses next door were saved.”**

- The 1929 fire raged for 4 days (July 2-5) and destroyed over 117 homes. Local volunteer fireman, townspeople, and even out-of-town visitors were enlisted in the desperate fight to save Mill Valley.
- Here in Mill Valley able men were literally lifted off their feet and pulled into trucks heading to the fire.
- As mentioned in the beginning of our walk, Mill Valley came together as a nexus of support for the firefighters.
- A hospital was established at the Outdoor Art Club. Sandwiches and coffee were served at Scout Hall. **In all, over 4,000 civilians, soldiers, and professionals from all over the Bay fought the fire.**
- Ultimately it was hard work and a change in wind that saved the town. But 2,500 acres had burned.
- To mark the fire and honor all that fought it so bravely, in August, just one month after the fire, the Mill Valley Association of Volunteer Firemen donated to the town of Mill Valley this beautiful 4-sided clock. However, frequent power outages caused the clock to malfunction.
- In this Marin Independent Journal photo from 1957, E.W. Bullard Sr. & Jr. sat at the base of the downtown clock, with baseball bats in hand, to "save the clock" after the City's public works director had announced "it would be junked" because its four faces couldn't keep the same time.



- This clock was recently renovated through efforts by the Outdoor Art Club and Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce (and some help from the city) and for the first time in years keeps excellent time.
- **To truly appreciate Mill Valley's clock tower is to also have gratitude and appreciation for people and events that inspired its placement. *(To read the inscription, point to the side of the clock that faces Equator Coffee and Teas.)***

**We hope you have enjoyed learning about some of the amazing people of our town their efforts to protect and beautify it.**

**This concludes our tour. Thanks so much for joining us. We invite you to return to the Outdoor Art Club to enjoy historical material and free treats.**

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**with special thanks to "Mill Valley's history sleuth" Phil Rhodes**

**(Photos provided by Lucretia Little History room, online sources and Debra Schwartz)**