

Mill Valley Historical Society
TWENTY- EIGHTH ANNUAL WALK INTO HISTORY

BOYLE PARK, BONES & BASEBALL

Guidebook

SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2005

Co-hosted with The Outdoor Art Club

TO THE GUIDES:

This is the 28th year that the Mill Valley Historical Society has organized a Walk-Into-History thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers working throughout the year as well as on the day of the Walk.

Guides are special volunteers with a responsibility to provide a group of walkers with an interesting, informative, enjoyable and safe experience.

Several guides have been leading these walks for many years. The fact that they continue to volunteer to be a guide is an indication of their enjoyment.

If this is your first year as a guide, we welcome you and hope you will find as much pleasure in learning and sharing the history of Mill Valley as the “old timers” do.

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TIPS AND TRICKS FOR GUIDES

Thank you for being a Walk-Into-History guide. Welcome to those who are leading a walk for the first time. We hope you enjoy the experience as much as the returning guides who tell us they look forward to the experience.

To be a successful guide requires a commitment of time, energy and preparation. The objective is to provide good leadership and well-presented historical information. It is essential that you have the desire and devotion to offer your group an informative and enjoyable Walk-Into-History. The following instructions can make your job easier:

1. Read the guidebook several times to familiarize your self with its contents. You will be better able to energize your presentation and connect with your audience if you impart the information in your own words.
2. Practice the walk several times. Each guide is required to go on two 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. Be a strong leader. Keep your group together. At each stop, face the group with your back to what you are describing. Make eye contact.
4. Dont try to cover everything in the guidebook. Focus on what you believe is particularly interesting at each stop.
5. Do not read from the guidebook. Use it for reference only. Tell the story, show pertinent photos and encourage comments and questions. When appropriate, resort to, "Wait a minute - Ill check the Guidebook."
6. Welcome any information that walkers may wish to contribute. Make a note of it and pass it on to the guide leader, Barbara Ford., after the walk.

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

Lead the group outside the Outdoor Art Club side gate onto

West Blithedale where you can start the Walk Into History with an

introduction and safety instructions

INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 28th Walk Into History sponsored by the Mill Valley Historical Society. Lucretia Hansen Little had been Mill Valleys Town Clerk and official historian. In 1977, illness forced her to retire and move away. A group of interested people established a Historical Society. Their primary goal was to make available all historical material relating to Mill Valley, including the invaluable collection of books, pictures and documents collected by Mrs. Little. Other goals established at the outset were:

1. Work for the library in all matters relating to the History Room
2. Take responsibility for the popular First Wednesday Programs
3. Continue the Oral History Program.

Today we will walk from the Outdoor Art Club through the Sunnyside and Boyle Tracts to Boyle Park, Manor Terrace and the Tennis Club. We will make 27 stops of historical interest. The time required is about two hours. The total distance is 1.9 miles.

For the most part the walk is on level or slightly sloping streets. The high point will be on top of Cypress Knoll, site of the historic Boyle house. Last year workers discovered the remains of three bodies buried under the house. They had been buried there before the house was built.

SAFETY

Most of the walk will be on sidewalks, although a few streets have none. The appropriate side of the street is identified for each sidewalk as are crosswalks at required street crossings. Please stay together and be alert for cars and bicycles.

SUNNYSIDE TRACT

Our walk begins with stops at homes in the Sunnyside Tract. In the 19th century, there had been a long legal battle over the ownership of the tracts 46 acres. Finally, in 1901 San Francisco real estate developers Lyon & Hoag bought the land, subdivided it into 180 lots and came up with the name. The standard lot size was 50x25 feet. Prices were in the \$500 to \$750 range.

Cross West Blithedale at cross walk in front of OAC, turn right onto East Blithedale and proceed to Sunnyside. Go behind the old post office at 55 Sunnyside where it is quiet.

STOP # 1 In back of 55 Sunnyside

55 Sunnyside

In 1939, the federal government purchased this site for \$16,500. There were three houses on the site. One house was demolished. It belonged to the Costas, owners of a local creamery. The other two were moved to other sites in the Sunnyside Tract, one to 11 Grove and the other to 34 Mountain View where we will soon see it. A post office was constructed in the Spanish Mission revival architecture typical of a government building at that time. The post office opened in 1940.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, in January 1942 an emergency receiving hospital was established in the basement. The reinforced concrete below-surface station was considered to be the best place for safety in Mill Valley in case of bombing or other enemy action. Ten beds were set up. Additional beds and supplies were held in reserve at Park School. It was expected that this casualty station would not be used as such unless in an emergency, regular hospitals were not available. All cases would be taken to hospitals if possible.

In 1982, the present larger post office opened on Lomita Drive in the Alto Shopping area. This building was sold to Smith & Hawken which remodeled it for their use as offices. Since then a variety of companies has occupied the office space. The present occupant is Kantola Productions which produces training videos for businesses.

Return to front of building to note eagle over doorway. Turn left onto Sunnyside. Walk on sidewalk on left. Cross Hill. Cross Sunnyside. Walk on sidewalk on left side of Hill.

STOP # 2 In front of 46 Hill

46 Hill Street

This house was built in the 1930's for Ann and Ralph Tieman, who with his brother-in-law, Bill Dux (pronounced Dukes), owned Tamalpais Hardware. We will see the Dux house at 92 Buena Vista near the end of the walk. Ralph Tieman was mayor of Mill Valley from 1941 to 1944. At that time, the term of the mayor was four years - today it is one year.

Turn left on Mountain View. Walk on sidewalk on left.

STOP # 3 In front of 19 Mountain View

19 Mountain View

This house is on Lot no. 17 of the Sunnyside Tract. Emma Lackewandt and Russell Symes were married June 14 1922. On November 8, 1922, they borrowed \$1400 from T. J. Sewell and S. F. Elkins of the Mill Valley Lumber Company at 1% interest. They used the cash to buy the lot from A. E. Anderson.

At the age of 19, Russell Symes started working as a plumber. He then went to sea for 18 months. When he returned, he worked for Walter Muntz and then for Tony Varneys Plumbing. In 1922, he opened his own plumbing business. At that time, he and his wife lived on East Blithedale. In 1924, he built a plumbing shop at the back of this property - total cost was \$1807.

[Look for the shop building at the end of the driveway]

A contractor, Benjamin B. Nelson, built the house in 1925. Mr. and Mrs. Symes raised their daughter, Carlma, here.

Russell retired from Russell Symes Plumbing and Tinning in January 1939. Ralph Brott took over the business in 1940, and named it Ralph Brott Plumbing. Mrs. Symes continued to rent the plumbing shop to Ralph Brott until 1990 when she sold the property.

(proceed to Stop #4 next page)

STOP # 4 In front of 35 Mountain View

35 Mountain View

Robert A. Gerrish, Sr. built this house in the 1930s. He was the owner of Gerrish Electric which is still in business at 257 Miller. In 1937, Roque Moraes and his wife Virginia bought it. They lived here until he died in 1963 and she moved away in 1984. Their daughter Marie (now Filippi) grew up here. The house is still owned by a member of the family.

Roque Moraes had emigrated from the Azores to Mill Valley in 1903. Beginning in 1910, he and three partners leased grazing land from the Deffenbachs in today's Scott Valley. The ranch was called the Alto Dairy. Moraes bought out the partners in 1921. Prior to 1937, the Moraes family lived in the ranch house on what is now Azalea Drive. Products were sent to, and in turn marketed by, San Francisco-based Marin Dell Milk Co. of which Moraes was a director. At first, the milk went to San Francisco by train from Alto station to Sausalito and then by ferry to San Francisco. Later on, trucks provided the transportation.

After leasing land for 36 years, Moraes fulfilled his long time dream to own land. In 1940, he bought the Wilkins Ranch on the hill that is now Enchanted Knolls. In 1953, he sold the property to a southern California builder, Talcott Seaver, who named the developments main entry street Roque Moraes.

STOP # 5 Across the street from 34 Mountain View

34 Mountain View

This house was originally located on the corner of Sunnyside and East Blithedale, site of the post office we saw earlier. The house had been constructed in 1907 for the Reiman family that moved to Mill Valley after the 1906 earthquake. Their daughter Emma gained fame as the most successful competitor in the Womens Dipsea race. In 1940, the Reiman house was moved to this site. Amazingly enough, the chimney remained in place during the move.

(proceed to Stop #6 next page)

STOP # 6 Across the street from 38 Mountain View

38 Mountain View - on the corner of Dell

In the 1930's Captain Jenson, a ferry captain, and his family lived here. As the story goes, his wife could see Sausalito from the top story of the house. When she saw that her husbands ferry had arrived, she would start dinner. It is difficult to tell what the original house looked like, but note the third story window that seems to be facing Sausalito.

One of their sons, Bob Jenson, was a professional baseball player who pitched for the San Francisco Seals and the New York Yankees.

It is said that during the Hippie era, Chris Christopherson and Janis Joplin lived in this house.

STOP # 7 In front of 45 Mountain View

45 Mountain View

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Stanton of Stanton's Insurance lived in this house. Later on, their daughter Dorothy and her husband Joe Canet lived there. Joe had retired from the Mill Valley police department with the rank of captain. He was a volunteer chef for the Lions annual barbecues at Boyle Park. Dorothy was called "The West Coast Betty Crocker" owing to her highly regarded culinary art. Articles appeared in both the San Francisco Chronicle and the Marin Independent Journal about the "Cooking Canets of Mill Valley." Joe had learned how to cook at the age of 12 by helping his father, Vincente Canet, who cooked at Spanish and Portuguese fiestas in San Luis Obispo. Dorothy worked for many years at General Mills, Sperry Division in San Francisco, and later for the California Food Research Institute. Both Dorothy and Joe contributed articles to Sunset magazine. They even did a barbecue for Sunset.

Cross to sidewalk on right. Look back in the opposite direction to see a beautiful view of Mount Tamalpais, thus Mountain View Ave. Walk on sidewalk on right.

(proceed to Stop #8 next page)

STOP # 8 Across the street from # 71 Mountain View

71 Mountain View

At first, George and Mary Kahler rented this house from Anastasia Regan, but they later bought it from her. Mary Kahler was an avid gardener who had a beautiful garden here. She belonged to the Outdoor Art Club. She was a member of the garden section which maintained the garden at the club.

One day, George Kahler walked to the post office for his mail. He died on the way. Since he had no identification with him, it wasn't until an acquaintance, Mr. Uhrig, came along that he was identified.

[Moral of this story: Always carry ID]

STOP # 9 In front of 74 Mountain View

74 Mountain View

Carlos (Charles) Varney was a baker who went to Sonora during the California gold rush. He later went to Alaska for its gold rush. In 1896, Carlos and Teresa Varney moved to Mill Valley with their family. Carlos opened a vegetable stand on Miller Ave. Later on, the Varney family lived in this house. Some folks called them "Boss and Ma" Varney. They had a small vineyard in the back yard which went all the way to East Blithedale opposite Sycamore. "Boss" Varney reportedly did not trust banks. It is said that he buried money in the back yard. An apartment building was later constructed on the site of the vineyard.

STOP # 10 Across the street from 75-77 Mountain View

75-77 Mountain View

Ross and Helen Benson owned this house after World War 2. Before the war, Henry Regan and his wife lived here for many years. Mrs. Regan was known as "Reggie." She was the cook for the James Thompson family who lived at 40 Wildomar (formerly 123 Molino) which the 1997 Walk-Into-History visited. The famous author, Kathleen Norris, was the daughter of James Thompson.

*Cross Carmelita [caution, no crosswalk and a busy street]
Turn left, walk on right sidewalk and turn right onto Euterpe.*

STOP #11 In front of 16 Euterpe

16 Euterpe

At one time this house was owned by the Ezekiel family. They sold it to E. Larry and Norma Egger who lived here for 26 years. They had moved to Mill Valley in 1921. In 1928 after 7 years in real estate, Mr. Egger opened a nursery. The garden at their home was beautifully landscaped - both he and his wife were very artistic.

Note that on the corner of the property at Thalia and Euterpe there is a large Oregon Spruce. Strange as it may seem, the top of the tree is seriously deformed. The explanation is as follows: In 1930, Eggers nursery received a shipment in which one of the trees had had its top broken off during shipment. Mr. Egger brought it home and grafted a branch onto the top.

In 1934, the house partially burned. During reconstruction, the family lived in a cottage at Stinson Beach. Every day, Mr. Egger brought their sons, Donald and James, over the hill to school in Mill Valley.

In 1952, their son Jim took over the business, renamed Egger & Son Nurseries, with stores in Mill Valley and Kentfield. The business was later acquired by Sloat Nurseries which has 2 stores in Mill Valley, 3 more in Marin and several others in the bay area. But the Egger name did not disappear. The shopping center near the corner of Miller and La Goma is called Egger Plaza. It was so named before Sloat bought the Egger & Son Nursery there.

Ruth and George Gustafson later owned the house. Ruth was very civic minded and became chairman of the Planning Commission in 1959.

George, affectionately known as Gus, was an athletic instructor at Tam High. He was also required to teach algebra, and was able to keep one step ahead of the class only because Mrs. Muriel McCrum was tutoring him.

In 1978, George Gustafson, who had retired after 37 years of active coaching, received the California Coaches Association Hall of Fame Award. Recipients are nominated by fellow coaches throughout the state. As noted in the January 12, 1978 issue of the Marin Independent Journal, "Coaches must have served a minimum of 25 years in athletics, be dedicated to athletes and athletics and have made an outstanding

contribution to their coaching profession." Swimming was his favorite sport, although he also played a lot of tennis on the municipal courts which we will soon see.

Note that this corner property has two addresses, one at 16 Euterpe and the other with its entrance at 17 Thalia.

Note Cypress Knoll in the distance.

Turn left onto Thalia and proceed to the footbridge in Boyle Park on the right and then to the large bay tree near the baseball field.

STOP # 12 At the large bay tree

The two streets that we have just followed take their names from Greek Mythology: Thalia, the muse of comedy and idyllic poetry; and Euterpe, the muse of music and lyric poetry. A third street in between those two also originally took its name from a muse. In 1930, Melpomene St. became Crown Court. This name change is not surprising - Melpomene is the muse of tragedy.

Note the hollow burned out trunk of the large bay tree. In the fall of 2000, vandals set this tree on fire. Tree experts have stated that this bay tree had been through several fires and that it is in no immediate danger.

Some folks believe that this beloved tree was planted when Boyle Park was created early in the 20th century. Others believe it was one of a trio of pre-Civil War-era trees that held a place of prominence in the park. One of the three, an oak, died and was removed several years ago. The other, a very large and ancient looking oak can be seen across the creek from the bay tree.

Note the foundations of the old footbridge across the creek. We will now cross the footbridge that replaced it.

Return to the footbridge and cross to the other end.

STOP # 13 At the east end of the footbridge

Note the plaque dedicated to Robert W. Graver 1918-1994.

In 1994, the Mill Valley Rotary Club dedicated this new footbridge bridge to Robert W. Graver. Bob was a traffic engineer and executive with the California State Automobile Association and a longtime, active member of Rotary. He lived in Mill Valley from 1950 until his death in 1994. He was a member of the Mill Valley Planning Commission. He participated in the controversial vote to split the baseball field into two diamonds. He was a founder of Bay Area Rides and active in other transportation organizations.

The nearby benches are dedicated to Bobs wife, Lucille Graver, also a community activist, who could often be seen riding a bicycle alongside her good friend, Elizabeth Terwilliger. Mrs. Terwilliger, a world renowned teacher of nature to children still lives in Mill Valley. Lucille was a “typical housewife of the 1950s” who was active in hot dog day at Park School, the PTA, Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts and the Outdoor Art Club. She was later active in helping stop a proposed nuclear power plant in Bodega Bay.

Lucille was known to have picked up a perfectly good dead skunk so that it could be used as a stuffed model for Elizabeth Terwilliger to use in teaching Marin school children about local wildlife. Lucilles children were mortified to have friends ride in their station wagon, as the odor never really ever dissipated.

Efforts of both Lucille and Bob helped pave the way for environmental activism in the San Francisco Bay Area and Mill Valley.

Walk through the play area to view the tennis courts below.

STOP # 14 Overlooking the tennis courts

Boyle Park Tennis Courts

In 1938, the city awarded a contract for the construction of municipal tennis courts and handball courts. Dedication of the three new tennis courts occurred on Sunday, June 19,1938. A temporary grandstand was erected for the public to witness singles, doubles and mixed doubles play by six outstanding bay area tennis players.

After the matches, the courts were permanently opened for public use. The special advanced feature of the tennis courts was metered lighting for night play which cost 25 cents for 30 minutes. At the handball courts, the charge for lighting was 10 cents for 30 minutes.

The tennis courts were immediately very popular. Many good players got their start here. The courts continue to be popular today.

The wooden handball courts were demolished and a new tennis court constructed in there place.

Turn left to the parking lot and go through the parking lot to Sidney.

STOP # 15 In front of #7 Sidney

7 Sidney Street

This was the home of Pete Casagrande, one of the gardeners at Tamalpais High School. In 1949, the high school yearbook known as the "PAI" was dedicated to him. When Mr. Casagrande worked at Tam High, students were not allowed to walk or sit on the grass. The grounds were a garden showcase.

Follow Sidney to Elm. Cross Sidney and Elm, turn right and walk on sidewalk on left. Turn right at 99 Elm onto Manor Terrace. Walk to the end of Manor Terrace.

STOP # 16 In back of 10 Manor Terrace

10 Manor Terrace - Cypress Knoll

We have now arrived at the high point of our Walk Into History. This is the oldest house in Mill Valley. It was remodeled in 1912 and later divided into apartments. In March 2004, Sean and Jocelyn Connelly purchased the house and began the process of converting it back into a single family dwelling.

The house has an interesting history which starts with John Thomas Reed, recipient of a Mexican land grant, Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio, which includes much of Mill Valley, Corte Madera and the

Tiburon peninsula. In 1836, he married Hilaria Sanchez. In 1843, he died at the age of 38. He was buried at the mission cemetery in San Rafael, then reinterred at the nearby Catholic cemetery, Mt Olivet. However, his exact burial site is now unknown.

In 1845, his widow, Hilaria married her first cousin, Bernardino Garcia. They had a daughter named Carmelita Natividad Garcia. In 1865 Carmelita married Hugh Aloysius Boyle. In 1868, her mother, Hilaria Sanchez Reed Garcia, died. Carmelita inherited a 325-acre parcel of land which borders on the Sunnyside Tract to the west. It was choice pasture land with no fences where branded cattle roamed freely.

The parcel was dominated by this knoll where we are now. Carmelita and Hugh Boyle, built this house and named it "Cypress Knoll." There is some confusion about when the house was built. A land survey indicates 1885 although other sources date it 1871.

Last year, the new owners of the house hired contractors to shore up the foundation. Note the new peripheral foundation. The workers also replaced several posts and piers under the house.

On April 24, 2004, the workers made an amazing discovery. Below a post and pier near the middle of the house they found a curious redwood box which turned out to be a coffin containing the remains of a gentleman. The house had been built with this pier set directly over the coffin. The county coroner immediately took over the investigation and consulted with archeologists and historians.

The coffin was well-crafted and made of straight grain redwood and square nails. Saw marks indicate that the boards were cut with an 8" to 10" circular saw. Such a tool was unavailable until 1855. Inside was the body of a Caucasian male in his late 30s or early 40s, between 58 and 510" tall. He was wearing finely woven wool pants and a matching silk-lined coat. Several glass buttons were also in the coffin.

Initial speculation was that the gentleman was John Thomas Reed. It was hoped that DNA analysis of the bones could be compared with the DNA of a living descendant. However, current DNA technology requires that a Y-chromosome line male descendant be found. John Reed has living descendants, but they all have a female in their ancestral line to him. Thus DNA analysis cannot presently tell whether the gentleman in the coffin is or is not John Reed. Perhaps someday DNA analysis

technology will advance to the point where this question can be answered.

In May 2004, workers found a second coffin about 30 ft. distant and not lined up with the first coffin. The second coffin contained a badly decomposed caucasian male, perhaps 18 to 22 years old and about 6 feet tall. He appeared to have been buried earlier. Nearby, they found partial remains of a native American.

Turn around and walk back down Manor Terrace

STOP # 17 In front of 7 Manor Terrace

Point out the house on the hill to the northeast that replaced Grace Slick's former residence . in October 1993, a Marin County maintenance crew was repairing the fire road gate down the hill from Grace Slicks house. A welding torch accidentally started a grass fire. Strong winds drove the flames rapidly up the hill. The fire destroyed Grace Slick's house with all of her memorabilia dating back to the 1960s. She moved to Los Angeles.

Return to Elm, cross Elm, turn left and walk on the sidewalk on the right. Continue on Elm past Sidney.

Point out the street sign indicating that Elm becomes Del Casa.

Note that the street is not paved - residents want it that way so as to minimize traffic.

Follow Del Casa to a break in the hedge on the left. Cut through the hedge to the Tennis Club parking lot.

STOP #18 In the parking lot of the Tennis Club

Mill Valley Tennis Club

Tennis has always been popular in Mill Valley. Early in the 1900s, there were nearly a dozen courts, all on private property. The towns first tennis club, the Eastland Tennis Club, held tournaments at Redwood Lodge.

In 1919, the Mill Valley Tennis Club was formed. It purchased one of the private courts and had the use of another. In the 1920s, members were experiencing increasingly long waits for a court. One of the members, Dr. Samuel Weiss, decided to purchase land for his own court. Others, including Stewart Bostwick, Charles Claudius, Thomas Nelson and Marvin Curtis (father of 1948 Olympic multi-gold medal swimmer Ann Curtis), developed plans to build courts adjacent to Weiss private one. Charles Brockhoff and Regan Connally joined the 4 organizers and were elected officers and directors. The first club meeting was held on May 9, 1929 at Old Mill School.

In June 1929, club members purchased this site and signed contracts for the construction of 3 tennis courts plus another court for Dr. Weiss (Weiss court became part of the club after his death). Funds for purchase of the land and construction of the courts came from sales of 50 memberships at \$150.00 each. The club house was financed by a long-term loan repaid through members' dues which were initially set at \$1.50 per month per playing member. Grading of the site was well underway when the great Mill Valley fire of June 1929 devastated the city. Homes of several club members were destroyed, and both the city and many club members sustained severe financial losses. Nevertheless, work continued, and the tennis courts were completed in August 1929. Claudius designed the locker building.

Even the stock market crash of October 1929 failed to deter the dedicated founders. In 1930, the Mill Valley Tennis club, with nearly 100 members, hosted a successful exhibition match featuring four nationally ranked players. The club house was built in 1931.

Enter the clubhouse at the entrance overlooking the courts. When inside the clubhouse, turn right and proceed to the wall of photos near the bar. After viewing the photos, exit the clubhouse via the rear door.

Walk to the right of the locker building to the swimming pool. After viewing the swimming pool, walk back to the locker building and go out through the gate on the right at the back corner.

Do not go onto the street (Buena Vista)

Turn left and go through a second gate to the deck on the back of the clubhouse. Keep to the right and exit via a third gate to the parking lot.

Proceed through the parking lot to the entrance to the baseball field. Keep to the left and head for the flagpole.

STOP # 19 At the flagpole

NOTE THERE ARE BENCHES NEARBY

Flagpole at Boyle Baseball Field:

On October 4, 1954, Walter Filippi, commander of Muir Woods Post 6741, Veterans of Foreign Wars of Mill Valley, dedicated the flagpole in the baseball field at Boyle Park to the memory of Arthur W. Fontes who lost his life in World War 2.

Art Fontes was a 1939 graduate of Tamalpais High School and an outstanding all-round athlete. He lived with his parents and sister Jacqueline at 27 Montford at the corner of Ethel in Homestead Valley. While at Tam High, Art excelled in football. He was given all-league mention as end. In his last game, before graduation he played with a broken wrist in a cast. His athletic abilities were not limited to football.

Art was captain of the baseball team. He held the all-time high school record for the highest batting average in the North Bay league, 0.765, in the 1939 season. He had 13 hits in a row in the final few games including five home runs. In fact, his baseball record was so outstanding that he received an offer to play professional baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He had to turn down the offer, because his mother felt he was not old enough.

Art Fontes later joined the navy. As part of his service, he was stationed in the Marianas in the mid-Pacific for 22 months. He was then transferred to a base near Chicago. He served as an aviation metal smith. It was on a routine training flight that he lost his life. He had been stationed at the Illinois base for seven months. Fontes was 24 years old when he died in 1945.

The VFW, in choosing Fontes for the honor, pointed out that he had been an outstanding athlete, with nearly two years of active overseas duty in a highly dangerous zone. He was one of the few Mill Valley servicemen who lost their lives in World War 2. The inscription on the plaque at the base of the flagpole reads, "To the memory of Arthur W. Fontes, athlete and airman."

Boyle Park Baseball Field

Baseball games between bay area teams started at Boyle Park some time between 1908 and 1910. The city signed a contract with Bass Heuter Paint Company of San Francisco whose team played every other Sunday from August 7 to October 31, 1910. Hueter owned a large home on Hueters Lane near Molino.

[In the 1990 Walk Into History, Ernst Heuters chalet style home was viewed from a distance.]

From 1910 to 1920, members of these early teams included Ralston White, Tommy Bickerstaff, Hugh Cavalli and Rudy Kaufman. Baseball was very popular until World War 2. Local merchants sponsored the teams that played at Boyle Park. Uniforms and equipment were paid for by the sponsors, but players were not paid. Coins from passing the hat during the 7th inning stretch helped pay expenses. The baseball field was small and extremely rough. There was neither sod nor fine infield dirt. Certain center fielders including Ed Reichmuth stood on Buena Vista Ave. and sometimes on the hill across the street when a heavy hitter was at bat. A ball hit over one part of the right field fence was a ground rule double. Managers during those years included Pop Byrne and Teddy Meyers.

During the 1920s and 1930s the baseball field was also used by the American Legion Jr. team (limited to boys under 17 years of age.) Their best performance was in 1929 when the team reached the National Semifinals in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They had beaten San Diego for the State title in Pasadena. They then beat Phoenix and Nevada in Salt Lake City, and Milwaukee in Colorado Springs. They lost to New Orleans in the semifinals. Buffalo beat New Orleans in the finals to take the national title. The Mill Valley team included Ed Stutz, who subsequently played pro-ball for ten years, Fred Martin, Tom Mori, Mickey

McGowan, Bill Franchini, Al Bedecarrax and Dick Wright. The team was coached by Tam High coach Jim Langdon. During this same period many Mill Valley men were playing "semipro baseball. These included Sid Boyle, Clay Budar, Lou Locati, Red Taylor, Ed Ashoff and Tom Tawns.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Mill Valley had four pitchers in the Pacific Coast League, and one in the Major League. Ed Stutz and Bob Jensen played for the San Francisco Seals, Tony Freitas for the Sacramento Senators, and Art Schallock for the Hollywood Stars as well as for the New York Yankees.

In the late 1950s, semipro play was moved to what is now Bay Front Park and Mill Valley Middle School. Boyle Park was converted to two Little League parks. The old grandstand was torn down, fill was added, and new dugouts and stands were built. The area was enlarged by moving home plate back from where it had been for the semipros.

Little League Baseball

In 1973, Jenny Fulle changed the future of little league, becoming the first girl to play after winning a groundbreaking lawsuit. Fulle went before the parks and recreation commissioner Ed Addeo and asked for permission to play on a Mill Valley little league team. Addeo thought "why not" and the Mill Valley City Council voted 4 to 3 in her favor. But, the Little League of America told Mill Valley it would lose its franchise if it let a girl play. Mill Valleys hands were tied. But Fulle didn't give up. She wrote a letter to President Richard Nixon, which made national headlines. She also gained the support of both the Marin Chapter of the National Organization for Women and the American Civil Liberties Union.

After a year of appearing before the Mill Valley City Council and Parks and Recreation Commission, Jenny decided to jump to another league to seek justice. Marin ACLU attorney Fred Hurvich a resident of Mill Valley filed a law suite on her behalf. The suit went before Judge Joseph Wilson and history was made. Today more than 600 boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 13 sign up to play little league in Mill Valley.

Cross the baseball field (or walk back around it) to the bench in front of the redwood grove on the opposite side of the field.

STOP # 20 At the edge of the baseball field

Boyle Park Addition

Carmelita Garcia Boyle was the daughter of John Reed's widow, Mrs. John Thomas Reed, and her second husband Bernardino Garcia. In late 1905, Carmelita and her son Hugh A. Boyle II had a thirty-acre parcel surveyed for development. Streets, some named for family members (Carmelita, Sidney), were graded and sewer lines installed. Carmelita set aside the two "choicest acres" as a donation to Mill Valley for a park. In January 1906, Mill Valley trustees accepted the addition including the park. The city installed water lines and street lighting. In May 1906, Carmelita died in San Francisco of injuries suffered in the earthquake and fire the previous month.

In 1907, Hugh A. Boyle II developed the Boyle Park Addition. Rodney Gilbride, who lived at 71 Buena Vista, was the local agent for W.B. McGerry & Co. He placed the following advertisement in the Recorder=Enterprise:

"It lies on the sunny slopes of Mill Valley north of the county road with a commanding and unsurpassed view of the wooded hills and bay.

Where the fog does not linger.

Where you are close to the stars.

Where you can live the whole year round.

Where you can find the cheapest lots in the Valley considering size and location.

You had better buy now and not be sorry when they are sold.

One-fifth cash and ten monthly payments."

Development of Boyle Park

As early as 1909, additional acres had been purchased from Hugh and Ida Boyle. Later on, forty lots were purchased in 1930, one in 1933 and portions of two lots in 1937. The total purchase price for 7.7 acres was \$11,250.

In the 1930s, tables for picnicking were located near the baseball park. In the 1950s the area between the baseball park and the tennis courts was developed with a barbecue area, picnic tables and children's play area.

In 1962, Carmelita Boyle Silberberg wrote, "Boyle Park preserves for the people of Mill Valley an indication of beauty of the land granted to a citizen by the Mexican government as long ago as 1834. It perpetuates

the name of the branch of the family which appreciated the land's great oaks and meandering streams."

Walk around or through the redwood grove to the plaque on the opposite side.

STOP # 21 At "Nook" Armager Memorial Grove Plaque

"Nook" Armager Memorial Grove

Leslie Armager was known as "Nook" in Mill Valley. This redwood grove honors his service as a fireman - he was Fire Chief from 1942 to 1969.

The Armager family arrived in Mill Valley from Kentucky early in the 20th century. "Nook" was born in a house on East Blithedale in 1909. Two experiences as a boy portended his future life:

1. When he was 12 years old, he and two chums, Edward Bettencourt and John Silva, showed themselves equal to an emergency when they extinguished a grass fire at Alto Ranch that was assuming big proportions. He spent most of his life as a fireman.

2. When he was 13 years old, he and his friend, Charles Huntoon, decided to swim across the upper end of Richardson Bay near Alto. After "Nook" reached the opposite shore, Charles called out, obviously in distress. "Nook" swam out to him and began to tow him to shore. But the weight of the stricken boy proved too much for the rescuer. Despite "Nooks" heroic efforts, his companion drowned. In 1961 when he was fire chief, he saved the life of a 3-year old girl after she was found at the bottom of her parents swimming pool. Artificial respiration and a fire department inhalator failed to revive her. In a last desperate effort to save her life, he started the mouth-to-mouth breathing and continued for 15 minutes.

After "Nook" graduated from Tam High, he worked at Varney's Hardware for a short time and also for Russell Symes as a plumber. In 1932, he joined the Mill Valley Fire Department as a relief man. He worked his way up through the ranks. In 1938 he married Nellie Kompf of San Francisco. In 1942 he was promoted to Fire Chief, a position he held for 27 years until his retirement. He died on July 3, 1969 only three days after he had retired.

As a fireman and fire chief he had many interesting experiences. He jokingly described the challenges of his job as rescuing children who had locked themselves in the bathroom, extracting a cat caught in the wires under a dishwasher and counseling boys caught playing with matches. Actually, there were many fires to fight. The most destructive fire he fought was in June 1963 when Jolly Market on Miller burned to the ground.

Walk up Thalia on the right side, cross Carmelita at the crosswalk, turn right and walk a short distance on the sidewalk on the left.

STOP # 22 Across from 140 Carmelita

140 Carmelita

This house was built circa 1909/1910 by B.V. Creighton whose family lived in it until 1945 when it was sold to Louis J. Rilla, a partner in R&R Motors, which was across from the City Hall.

One day a man came by and told Mrs. Rilla that the McNear Brickyard in San Rafael had made the bricks for the stairway. He knew because he had constructed the stairway.

Walk to Sunnyside, cross Sunnyside, turn left and walk on the sidewalk on the right.

STOP # 23 In front of 137 Sunnyside

137 Sunnyside

This house was built in 1925 for Florence and Orin Prichard. At one time they owned a general mercantile store at 108 Throckmorton where the furniture store, Pullman & Co., is today. Florence Prichard was a good friend of Effie Thacker who lived in a house we will see in our final stop. In later years Mrs. Prichard's daughter Florence and her husband Alvin Johnson, a San Francisco police sergeant, raised their children, Dennis and Marcia, in this house. It remained in the family until 1982, shortly after Florence Johnson died. Florence had been the school secretary at both Alto and Edna Maguire Schools.

Turn right on Dell and then right on Buena Vista. Walk on the sidewalk on the right to Carmelita.

**STOP # 24 On the corner of Buena Vista and Carmelita,
catty-corner from 319 Oakdale**

319 Oakdale - Chateau Arnoux

This home with its castle-like entrance was built circa 1916-1920 by Camille Solon and his wife, Sylvia. Solon was a descendent of an illustrious line of French potters for which the Chateau is named. Sylvia played the organ every Sunday at Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, taught music and gave French lessons. Camille and his brother Albert taught pottery to the tuberculosis patients at the Arequipa Sanitarium in Fairfax. [Arequipa is now owned by the San Francisco Bay Girl Scout Council (5 counties)]

Albert Solon founded the famous Solon & Schemmel Tile Company in San Jose which manufactured art tiles from 1920 to 1936. Solon & Schemmel tiles decorate many buildings in the bay area as well as Hearst Castle at San Simeon. Camille Solon was known as a muralist. One of his murals, an 80-foot long depiction of the six days of creation decorated the social hall of the Temple of Religion and Peace at the 1939-40 Golden Gate Exposition on Treasure Island. He enjoyed a long collaboration with famed architect Julia Morgan. For her Hearst Castle project, Camille was director and designer of murals and designer of the beautiful Roman pool which incorporated Solon & Schemmel tiles.

Chateau Arnoux has many unique Solon touches such as handmade Gothic doors and doorways, a hand carved banister, a Gothic mural, hand-tinted leaded windows, a Latin inscription painted on the wall timbers of one room, and, of course, Solon & Schemmel tiles.

Cross Buena Vista, turn left and walk on the sidewalk on the right.

STOP # 25 Across the street from 92 Buena Vista

92 Buena Vista

This house is a classic example of homes built in Mill Valley in the 1930s. It was built by Mary and William Dux (pronounced Dukes). From 1926 to 1986, Bill Dux and his brother-in-law, Ralph Tieman, owned Tamalpais Hardware located at 30 Miller Ave. Their wives worked in the store and did the monthly billing, all by hand.

In the 1930s, Bill Dux delivered ice to Mill Valley homes. He would drive to the house, often climb many stairs and put a block of ice in the icebox, usually on the back porch. All this for 25 cents. Bill Dux was very active in the American Legion. He always marched in the Memorial Day and Veterans Day parades proudly wearing his World War 1 Marine Corps Uniform.

STOP # 26 In front of 55 Buena Vista at Hill

55 Buena Vista

This house was built by Jack Garrett who built spec. houses all over Mill Valley. He and his wife, Norma, would live in each house for a while before putting it on the market. Since Norma was a professional singer, most of the houses her husband built had wonderful cathedral ceilings that provided excellent acoustics.

The 1999 Walk Into History included a stop at one of his houses, 144 Hillside.

Cross Hill and Buena Vista and walk on sidewalk on left.

STOP # 27 Across the street from 35 Buena Vista

35 Buena Vista

This lovely brick and shingle house was built for Effie Thacker in the late 1920's. It was called the "Rose Cottage." At one time she worked at Prichard's Store, which sold general merchandise at 108 Throckmorton, site of today's Pullman & Co., a furniture store. She subsequently managed her own store, "The Bella," which sold ladies ready-to-wear at the present location of Cavallo Shoes, 68 Throckmorton. Her friendship with Mrs. Prichard was well known. They would walk half way home together, then walk a short way back and forth, and finally say goodbye. Almost every evening, they would also get together. We saw the Prichard house at 137 Sunnyside at Stop #22.

The Thacker family had moved to Mill Valley from Oakland in 1906. Before Effie Thacker moved to the "Rose Cottage," she and her two sons lived across the street at #42 Buena Vista, with her mother, Mrs. Southworth. Both boys grew up in Mill Valley and attended the Mill

Valley Grammar school (Summit School) and Tamalpais High School. One of the boys, Earl Thacker, graduated from Tam High in 1918.

During World War 1, Earl was an ordinary seaman in the Merchant Marine. After the war, he stayed in the Merchant Marine and attained the rank of Master Marine. He also obtained pilot licenses for both San Francisco and Honolulu harbors while still in his 20s.

In 1965, a Honolulu newspaper described Earl Thacker as a merchant seaman that had become a millionaire. After he moved to Honolulu, he became well known and was fondly called “Mr. Greylines” of the island. On the walls of his office in the Thacker Building were photos of family and friends, including the Sultan of Johore, Ernie Pyle, Robert Ruark, Chester Nimitz, Lowell Thomas, Bing Crosby, Lauritz Melchior, Gilbert Roland, Governor Wallace Rider Harrington, Duke Kahanamoku as well as five American presidents: Calvin Coolidge, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson.

Effie Thacker continued to live in Mill Valley even after her son Earl became a millionaire. She was very independent. She did not want to be dependent on her son and she continued to work. She even did custodial work at the old Mill Valley Library on Lovell Ave.

Follow Buena Vista to Blithedale and cross at crosswalk to return to the Outdoor Art Club