

MILL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THIRTIETH ANNUAL WALK INTO HISTORY

DOWNTOWN THEN AND NOW

Guidebook

SUNDAY, MAY 27, 2007

Co-hosted with The Outdoor Art Club

TO THE GUIDES:

This is the 30th year that the Mill Valley Historical Society has organized a Walk Into History thanks to the efforts of many 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 and commitment.

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.

Walk-Into-History Chair: John Leonard

Guidebook Editor: Chuck Oldenburg

Guidebook Producer: Laureen Novak

Researchers: Gene Stocking, Barbara Ford and Chuck Oldenburg

Dedicated to Former Researchers: Norman (Bud) Ortman and Ron Olson

Guide leader: Barbara Ford

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR GUIDES

SAFETY FIRST

The appropriate side of the street is identified for each sidewalk, as are crosswalks at required street crossings. Be alert for cars and bicycles. On Memorial Day weekend the sidewalks will have sales tables. A great many people will be milling around. It will be a challenge to keep your group together. Designated stops are in locations where there should be no sidewalk sales tables.

OTHER TIPS

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 yourself 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. Don't 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 primarily for reference only. Tell the story, show pertinent photos and encourage comments and questions. When appropriate, resort to, wait a minute - I'll 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.

Stop #1. Along the fence on West Blithedale.

Start by covering the safety instructions on the previous page. Then provide an introduction and overview.

INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 30th Walk Into History sponsored by the Mill Valley Historical Society. Lucretia Hansen Little had been Mill Valley's 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 downtown business district. We will make 14 more stops of historical interest. The time required is about 1-1/2 to 2 hours. The total distance is less than one mile on level or gently sloping sidewalks.

OVERVIEW

The objective is to highlight significant changes that have taken place in downtown businesses. After the arrival of the railroad in Mill Valley in 1889,

and the land auction of 1890, nearby properties were purchased and buildings were built for businesses to serve the growing town. Since then, there have been many changes in the number and nature of the businesses. Technology has made some businesses obsolete, e.g., sales of coal, hay and kerosene. Cultural changes have had an effect, e.g., hair salons have replaced barbershops. Economic forces have sent pharmacies, hardware stores, gasoline stations and car dealerships elsewhere. Two small businesses founded in Mill Valley are now large chains, Smith & Hawken and Banana Republic. A few businesses are chains, e.g., Baskin Robbins. Others have moved from one building to another, changed ownership or both, e.g., Mill Valley Market. On this year's Walk Into History we will learn about the evolution of businesses in 44 buildings.

Follow the OAC fence to the front gate and then turn right and go down Throckmorton to the bridge over the creek.

STOP #2. On Throckmorton at the bridge over the creek. Discuss four buildings.

1. Summer House (#21) and Tamalpais General Store (#23)

Car dealership to pharmacy to variety store:

In 1929, there was a Studebaker Agency in this location, and in 1939, a pharmacy. Bennett's Variety Store occupied the building from the 1942 to 1980.

2. Sequoia Theater (#25).

One cinema to two cinemas:

Three months after the grand opening in 1929 a 12-foot high, 70-foot long "Mill Valley" was painted on the roof as part of a national project to provide guidance for pilots. In 1975 new owners decided to "twin" the theater, i.e., to make two cinemas out of one. They also proposed drastic architectural changes to the exterior: remove the marquee and convert the entire facade from art deco to ultra modern. The Planning Commission's Architectural Advisory Committee decided that any changes to the exterior must preserve the original design. Note the two business establishments in the front of the building. In the 1930s the business on the right was the Sequoia Sweet shop. Later, the business on the left was Village Music, which moved to its present location at #9 East Blithedale.

Anecdote

In the early days of the Sequoia Theatre, patrons received a free dish. If you went to the movies often enough you could accumulate a full dinner set. Another promotion was a door prize of a bag of groceries. Ticket stubs were numbered. The manager would draw the winning numbers. When the theatre was new, the American Legion celebrated Armistice Day on the afternoon of November 11. Admission was free. The master of ceremonies lead the audience in singing many songs from World War I including: Over There; There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding; and K-K-K-K-Katy, Beautiful Katy. Martial band music was played and legionnaires performed close order drill.

3. Champagne French Bakery Cafe. (#41)

Groceries to cafe to restaurants:

Businesses occupying this site have always involved food. First came Suey Kee's Market (fresh vegetables and fruit and groceries) until the 1950s. Sonapa Farms (a combination cafe and delicatessen came next and lasted several decades. The late 1990s saw the first restaurant, Sonapa Bistro, but it lasted only a couple years. A branch of the Noah's Bagel chain then took over for a couple years. Today, Champagne is a combination bakery, delicatessen, cafe and restaurant. It is one of a chain of 16 located primarily in southern California. Management has decided to move out of this location.

4. Wilkes Sport The Wilkes Bashford Company (#57)**Horses to hardware to clothing:**

The Redwood Stables occupied this site from the 1890s until 1929. From 1933 to 1995, Varney's Hardware occupied the site.

Follow Corte Madera Ave. past Mill Valley Market and City Hall to the fire station, then cross Corte Madera on the cross walk to #21.

STOP #3: In front of #21 Corte Madera (way back from street). Discuss five buildings.

1. Mill Valley Market (#12 Corte Madera)**Mostly groceries but also several other businesses:**

The building we just now passed has only two businesses: Mill Valley Flowers, a stall next to the creek, and Mill Valley Market which occupies what used to be three buildings. Mill Valley Market moved here from #118 Throckmorton in

1955 and expanded into adjacent buildings in the 1980s to provide space for the delicatessen and the Wine & Spirits Shop.

The following businesses have occupied the Mill Valley Market building site: PG&E office, La Provencal French Laundry & Cleaning, The White Mill (a restaurant), Peck Stanton Insurance, Meet the Quinn's (a bar), Marin County Milk Co., and three food stores (Tamalpais Market, Quality Market and Green Frog Food Center.

2. Tony's Shoe and Luggage Repair (#38)

Same business for 76 years!

Space for this shop was created by an addition to the house. In 1931, a Shoe Repairing Shop was established. In 1949, it became Tony's Shoe Service. In 1969, Vartin Pirinjian bought the business and later turned it over to his son Misaks.

3. Smith & Hawken (#35)

Automobile sales/service to garden supplies:

In 1979, Dave Smith and Paul Hawken founded a mail-order company, which imported England's finest high-quality gardening tools. In 1985 Smith & Hawken opened its first retail store in Mill Valley in this building. . In 1993, the founders retired. Smith & Hawken is now owned by Scotts Miracle Grow. When a new store was opened in the Strawberry Village Shopping Center, this store closed on May 6, 2006. The retail chain now has 58 stores in 23 states.

The building was a Richfield Service Station as late as 1947. The two entrances led to repair facility bays. Adjacent to the service station was a Packard Automobile Agency. The building later housed a radiator shop. From 1974 until Smith & Hawken purchased the building in 1984, the Unknown Museum occupied the site. Mickey McGowen was the creator and curator of the Unknown Museum, Marin County's overstuffed serio-comic monument to the pop culture of the TV era. He puckishly displayed quirky treasures.

Anecdote from the Pacific Sun about Mickey McGowan

The barefoot bicycle rider coasts down Throckmorton Avenue in Mill Valley with his long hair and robes flowing in the wind. He turns right on Corte Madera Avenue and peddles past city hall and Oscar's Auto Stereo, pulling up in front of a building that has more than 20 television sets perched on the edge of the roof. Faded letters on the building read, "Mill Valley Auto/radiator repairs." The rider is Mickey McGowen and the building is the Unknown Museum, one of the most delightfully bizarre places in Marin. Any effort to describe the Unknown Museum would be like trying to explain the plot of Mozart's *Così fan Tutti* but here goes. There are thrones and cars and unicorns, all adorned with stars and bangles and beads. There are items like steam irons, lunch boxes (with Mickey Mouse Club, Popeye and Woody Woodpecker models) and old 45-rpm records. There is an old drugstore display for trusses: "For post-operative, hernia, obesity, ptosis, back conditions." A new sign has been added to the display: "Museum Truss Fund. One, deposit money here. Two, rub my truss. Three, make a wish." McGowen says, "People

will come here without knowing what the Unknown Museum is all about...their reactions range from total absorption to immediate departure.”

4. Innovative Capital Management (ICM) Building (#25)

Automobiles to offices:

The mountain railway passed through this site. The building was built after the tracks were removed in the 1930s. R&R Motors occupied the site from 1938 to the 1950s. Their business was originally automotive service but later included sales of Dodge and Plymouth automobiles. Slot car racing took place on the second floor in the 1960s. The building was used as a U.S. Postal Service Annex in the 1970s. Smith & Hawken Catalog Sales was a recent tenant.

Former Pacific Sun building (#21)

This building was also built after the railroad tracks were removed. It formerly housed the Mill Valley Record and later the Pacific Sun. It is now unoccupied.

Anecdote

Barbara Boxer worked in this building as a writer for the Pacific Sun.

Continue down Corte Madera and cross Throckmorton.

STOP #4. On the Throckmorton corner. Discuss two buildings.

1. Bank of America (#60 Throckmorton)

Bank for 95 years!

This building was built by Harvey Klyce in 1911. It was the first masonry building in Mill Valley. The Bank of Mill Valley moved here from its previous location at Throckmorton and Madrona. In 1926 the Bank of Mill Valley was acquired by the Bank of Italy founded by Amadeo Peter Giannini in 1904. In 1930, he changed the bank's name to the Bank of America National Trust and Savings Association (BofA NTSA). This change was brought about by his abhorrence of the fascist regime in Italy.

The Pacific Telephone exchange initially occupied the west part of the building until 1948 when it moved to its new building on the corner of East Blithedale and Walnut. Dimitroff's picture frame shop was the occupant until 1960 when it moved to #173 Throckmorton. The bank then expanded into the space.

2. The O'Shaughnessy Building:

Hotel to groceries to clothing and wine:

The O'Shaughnessy Building was built in 1893 as the Mill Valley Hotel with rooms upstairs and a restaurant on the ground floor. During World War II, the rooms upstairs were used to house Marinship workers.

Anecdote

In 1889, Michael Maurice O'Shaughnessy was hired as a surveyor by the Tamalpais Land & Water Co. to prepare Subdivision Map No. 1 which delineated nearly 500 building sites on about 600 acres. Philip Jewell was the original owner of a large block of land from here to the creek. He was distantly related to Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. Her husband bought the property from Jewell. The

building remained in the O'Shaughnessy family until the 1990s when it was purchased at auction by Lee & Lum of San Francisco. The rooms upstairs are not currently occupied.

Banana Republic (#59)

In 1978, Patricia and Mel Ziegler started buying and reselling exotic army surplus clothes such as Spanish paratrooper shirts and Gurkha shorts. Their motto was "in surplus we trust." At first they marketed their finds at flea markets. Then they moved into a storefront at #76 East Blithedale in the Broman building, calling their enterprise Banana Republic. By 1980, their mail-order catalog had thousands of fans. In 1983 they sold Banana Republic to The Gap, Inc. There are now over 500 Banana Republic stores in North America and Japan with total annual sales of over \$5 billion.

Previous businesses at this address were a restaurant, the U.S. post office, Purity Market, and a furniture store.

Vintage Wine & Spirits (#67)

Similar businesses have occupied this shop since 1955. Much earlier, the space was occupied by a plumbing supply store and later, Varney's Hardware until 1933 when it moved to #57 Throckmorton.

Proceed to the small plaza next to the bank.

STOP #5. At Richard Hiatt Place. The plaque says,

“In Appreciation of his Service and his Love for Mill Valley, 1973.”

Discuss eight sites.

1. California Savings Bank (#71).

Coal and wood to food service to banking:

The Mill Valley Fuel Co., one of the town's earliest and most important businesses, occupied this site. From 1939 to 1988, the building was used for a coffee shop, a restaurant and a cafe. Since 1988, banks have occupied this building.

2. Depot

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. Railroads brought people demanding goods and services from businesses located near where the train from Sausalito arrived and where the train to Mt. Tam originated. The original train station was the heart of the downtown business district as is today's depot.

Anecdote

What is now the plaza was the terminus for two railroads. In the 1940s it became the terminus for Greyhound busses. The train station building was where one bought train or bus tickets. The city of Mill Valley owns the plaza and the depot building, which it rents to the book store/café.

3. Lytton Square

At a ceremony on Memorial Day 1918, Lytton Square was named in honor of Lytton Plummer Barber, who at age 17 had enlisted in the Signal Corps and died of spinal meningitis seventeen days after his going away party.

4. Keystone Building (#82 to #100):

This building was built in 1906 and remodeled in Tudor-style in 1934. The upstairs was once the Odd Fellows Hall. There have also been many offices such as for a dentist, physician and attorney and other commercial enterprises. On the ground floor, there have been many types of retail business: stationery (Strawbridges), shoes (Mosher's), pharmacies, grocery stores, clothing (Famous for Our Looks), a coffee house (Peets) and Capricorn Gourmet Kitchenware.

Anecdote

After 36 years of catering to Mill Valley customers, Capricorn recently went out of business as a result of a cruel streak of bad luck that included a devastating flood and an unrelated evacuation order from the city. The flood was caused by inept plumbing work upstairs. Capricorn reopened a month later, but was closed the next day by a building inspector who discovered structural weaknesses in the building's beams, flaws not caused by the flood. The 65-year old owner, Mike Jurs, took the events philosophically and said, "I think when I get past it all, I will see there was a silver lining after all. Maybe it was the incentive I needed to retire."

Anecdote

Of all the offices upstairs in the keystone Building, the most notorious was that of Dr. B. P. Kemp, a dentist. He filled cavities and extracted teeth without Novocain. His Mill Valley patients were hardy souls who learned to cope with pain.

5.Brabo Building (#76 to #80).

A great variety of businesses:

In the 1950s, Tony Brabo bought the building from jeweler Manny Gomez. There are six offices upstairs and two stores on the ground floor.

Businesses at #76 included a tailor in the 1920s, a laundry in the 1930s, Manny Gomez' jewelry shop (1940 to 1960), Wilton Pet Supplies (1973 to 1990) and clothing thereafter. Businesses at #80 included Marin County Milk Co. (1908 to 1930s), beauty salons (1938 to 1960) maternity clothing (1967 to 1985) and jewelry (1988 to present).

6.The Pleasure Principle (#74)

Real estate office to jewelry

This building was built in 1930 when the railroad tracks were removed. Real estate agencies were the original occupants Cagwin, Seymour & Hamilton began business here. In 1966, David McDonald opened his jewelry shop here. It is now called The Pleasure Principle. In the window is a sign, which reads,

Historical Site, The Oldest Shop, Single Ownership In Mill Valley

7.Michael Quinn Opticians (#70)

Ticket office to pharmacy to publishing to eye care

The Mountain railway ticket office occupied this site from 1896 to 1910. This was followed by Tippings Drug Store from 1910 to the 1930s, the Mill Valley Record in the 1940s and 1950s, and for most of the time since then, an optometrist or an optician.

Anecdote

With the completion of a road to the top of the mountain, and regular tour bus service to the summit in 1929, the Railway began a period of steady decline in passengers. The fire of July 1929 followed by the stock market crash in October brought an end to the business. The tracks were pulled up in the fall of 1930.

8. Cavallo (#68)**Clothing to pharmacy to clothing**

At this address were Effie Thacker's Ladies & Gents Furnishings in the 1920s, Rutherford's Drug Store from 1939 to 1980 and clothing stores ever since.

Proceed past the depot, cross Miller, cross Throckmorton, turn left, point out stores along Throckmorton while walking and stop at the Citibank parking lot.

STOP #6. Citibank parking lot. Discuss five buildings and lot.

1. Vasco (#106, corner of Bernard).**Carpentry to groceries to bars to restaurants:**

This was the first lot sold in the 1890 auction. The first business was a carpenter shop. In 1894 Pioneer Grocery arrived. Three more grocery stores followed, the last one being Mill Valley's first Safeway store which arrived in the 1930s. Two bars came next, Old Mill Tavern and O'Leary's Pub & Grill, then four restaurants: Bistro, Bistro; Annabelles; The Frog and the Peach; and Vasco.

2. Pullman & Co. (#108)

This building was built in 1966 to house El Marin Florists. In 1992 Pullman Co. took it over. The original building on this site, which dates from the 1890s and was occupied by at least eight businesses that sold dry goods or drugs or food (Gossers Meat) or liquor (Del's Liquors, 1948 - 1966).

3. Lando Mill Valley (#116).

Offices to book stores to bicycle sales to clothing :

The original building on this site housed the post office (1903 to 1908) and then real estate offices until the 1950s when it was replaced by the present building. Subsequent businesses have included appliance repair, a weekly newspaper (The Mill Valley Review), three different book stores (1959 to 1994) and bicycle sales.

4. Mill Valley Hat Box (#118).

Groceries to laundry service to hats:

This Victorian building was built in 1898 with lodging upstairs and a store downstairs. In 1911, a grocery store, which became the Mill Valley Market, began a 43-year occupancy. Frank Canepa bought the business in 1929, moving

in the very day of the disastrous fire on the middle ridge. In 1954 he moved Mill Valley Market to #12 Corte Madera. From 1954 to 2001 the building was occupied by Mill Valley Laundromat.

5. Citibank (#130 and parking lot).

Offices to groceries to offices to bank:

In 1890, the Tamalpais Land & Water Co. constructed a wooden building with a wide veranda around it on this site. This and other buildings constructed later provided office space for managing the 1890-land auction and the company's later property sales. With few exceptions, the site has been used primarily for office space and banks. One exception is Ye Village Groceries located in the early 1900s on a site that is now the west part of the bank building.

Proceed to the Theatre (#138 to #144)

STOP #7. The Theater Building (#138 to #144)

1.Theater (#142).

Proceed through the lobby to the auditorium

The Hub Theater Building was built in 1915 as a movie theater showing silent films. 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. From 1952 to 1995 it was home to the Odd Fellows Temple (IOOF Lodge #399). The auditorium was then used for Saturday Night Movies

featuring foreign films. The Mill Valley Film Festival has its roots in this business.

Suggestion

Tell your group about a famous painting that they may wish to return to see later. It can be viewed from the landing on the stairway up to the balcony of the theatre. The scene of Mount Tamalpais was painted by Jules Mersfelder in 1917. The painting hung in City Hall for many years and was recently restored by Steve Coleman. The lobby of the theatre is often open in the afternoon for ticket sales and there is other art on display besides the Mersfelder painting.

Return to the front of the building

2. Troop 80 Mountain Shop (#138).

This store space has seen a wide variety of businesses including, sales of knitting materials from 1957 to 1995.

3. Persimmon (#144).

Barber shop to beauty shop to clothing/accessories:

This store space was a barbershop under 3 different owners from the 1930s until 1995, when the business became a beauty shop. The present business is a local artisan cooperative selling purses knitted by residents of The Redwoods as well as other “one of a kind beautiful creations.”

Around the corner at #4 Madrona is an entrance leading to the second floor of the building, which formerly housed offices, the most notable of which was that of Dr. George Landrock who had his medical office there in the 1920s and 1930s. Later on there was a tailor shop and a weaving supplies shop. The space then became mainly offices for architects, a graphic artist, etc.

Cross Throckmorton to Dowd's lot.

STOP #8. At Dowd's lot close to the hotel. Discuss two buildings plus Dowd's lot.

1. The building on the corner of Madrona (#154 to #160 Throckmorton).

This building was built by Harvey Klyce in 1906 and occupied by the Bank of Mill Valley until 1911 when it moved to the building Harvey Klyce built at #60 Throckmorton.

Hiker's Retreat was the next occupant until 1918 when it moved across the street to where the Sweetwater is today. Hiker's retreat had lockers, showers and changing rooms for hikers. Hiking was the most popular form of exercise of that era. Mill Valley, gateway to Redwood Canyon (now Muir Woods) and Mt. Tamalpais, was a mecca for Bay Area hikers. Various types of business followed: a grocery store, three shoe stores, Top Notch Cleaners, a physician (Dr. F.W. Didier), an optometrist (Dr. J.W. Hoag), etc. Today the businesses on the ground floor are Robert Green Fine Arts (#154) and Marin Optometry (#158). Also in the building is the Center for Pain and Recovery Medicine of the renowned physician, Howard Kornfeld, M.D. & Associates.

2. Dowd's lot (#157).

Horses to moving and storage to used furniture to nothing:

The history of this property dates back to 1892 when Charles Dowd established Dowd's Fashion Stables, which furnished over 100 horses for drayage, recreational riding, transportation, grading and excavation. In 1910, the building burned down and was rebuilt. In 1919, Dowd's replaced horses with trucks and renamed the business Dowd's Auto Express. The business evolved to general hauling, moving and storage. In 1973, Del Goetz bought the business. She later converted it to sales of used furniture and household items. In 1984, the building burned down along with the building next door. She moved the business to the building in the rear known as Dowd's Barn and later The Barn. The property now belongs to the owners of La Ginestra. Nothing can be built on the site under present zoning rules affecting parking.

3. Mill Valley Inn (#159 to #165).

Hotel to restaurant to hotel

From 1958 to 1984 there was a series of three restaurants next door to Dowd's: The Palate, Luisa's Palate and La Veranda. In 1984, the building was destroyed by fire along with Dowd's. There had been a small hotel here before 1910. The Mill Valley Inn was built in 1994.

Proceed southwest on Throckmorton to the driveway beyond Dimitroff's Frame Shop.

STOP #9. In driveway next to Dimitroff's. Discuss one building.

Mauer Building (#167 to #173)

The Mauer Building was built by Louis Mauer in 1925. It has four apartments upstairs (#169) and three commercial units on the ground floor (#167, #171, and #173). Current tenants are Mill Valley Mercantile at #167, Salon at #171 and Dimitroff's at #173.

Stephen Dimitroff was a well-known muralist. He and his artist wife Lucienne Bloch, daughter of internationally known composer Ernst Bloch, met while working for Diego Rivera in New York.

Dimitroff's picture frame business had occupied the west side of the Bank of America Building on the corner of Throckmorton and Corte Madera until 1960 when it moved to the Mauer Building. In 1961, ownership passed to the Lincolns, and in 1967 to Matthew Davis (with a partner until 1993). In 2000, he sold the business. The new owner also owns Art and Frameworks in Tiburon.

Matthew Davis is the author of the recently published book,

"Opening the Mountain - Circumambulating Mt. Tamalpais - a Ritual Walk."

The most recent chapter in business evolution at this address is taking place in the basement where the new owner has established Marin Image Works, which does Photographic and Fine Art Archival Digital Printing, serving such clients as Sweetwater, the Mill Valley Film Festival, Peter Coyote, and Grateful Dead Productions.

Other businesses that have occupied the commercial space in the Mauer building include in-line skate sales/service in 1994, a personal fitness center in 1997 and Global Exchange, which supported crafts people around the world (1995). Earlier tenants include Valley Market (meat and groceries), Tamalpais Pet & Garden Center during the 1950s, a dress shop, a shoe store and nail care.

Make a U-turn and proceed northeast on Throckmorton to La Ginestra.

STOP #10. In front of La Ginestra. Discuss three buildings.

1. Sweetwater (#153).

Hiker services to restaurant to bars:

In 1918, Hiker's Retreat moved here from across the street. It served weekend hikers needing a locker and a shower until the 1920s. The property subsequently housed The Log Cabin restaurant and later two bars: Sweenie's and The Office. In 1973 Sweetwater took over.

2. G2 Mill Valley (#149).

Groceries to variety store to groceries to Gift Shop:

From 1931 to 1935, this building was occupied by a grocery store, People's Market. The Five & Dime store was here from 1935 to 1973 under various ownerships. Sherwood Forest Arts & Crafts occupied the building until 1980. Then came Living Foods selling organic healthy foods until 1993. The current business, G2 Mill Valley, features Italian imports.

3. La Ginestra (#127 and #131).

Bar area of La Ginestra (#131)

Pool parlor to watch repair to restaurant

From 1900 to 1911 the Ben Price Billiard & Pool Parlor & Cigar Store occupied this address. The proprietor kept a constant gas flame glowing for the convenience of cigar smokers. The Clock Shop (sales/service of watches and clocks) occupied this address from 1954 to 1974 when La Ginestra expanded into the space.

Restaurant area of La Ginestra (#127)

Candy store and soda fountain to restaurant:

Esposti's candy shop and soda fountain was here from 1920 to 1964. In 1931 the shop was remodeled to include a kitchen for food service. A large window was also installed on the front so that anyone on the sidewalk could watch the ice cream machine in operation. In 1936 it was remodeled again as a restaurant. In 1964, new owners opened La Ginestra, now a 43 year-old Italian restaurant.

Go around the corner and down Miller to the Wells Fargo Bank.

STOP #11. In front of Wells Fargo Bank. Discuss five buildings.

1. La Coppa Coffee (#2) and Alpha Dog (#6) on the corner of Miller and Throckmorton. The Victorian style Leal building was built in 1906 on this site.

It had three stories and a tower. It was the largest building in Mill Valley. It was torn down in 1939 and replaced in 1940.

Pharmacy to department store to clothing to coffee

Lockwood's pharmacy occupied most of the ground floor of the Leal building from 1906 until 1937 when it moved to #12. It had a very large free scale on the sidewalk available to all. After 1939, a department store occupied two floors and the basement. It was called Albert's until 1954 and Mayer's until 1973. Mayer's also occupied #22. Clothing stores occupied the building from 1973 to 1986 when coffee businesses took over.

2. Baby & Kids (#12) and Margaret O'Leary (#14).

This building has housed many diverse businesses: bakeries (Eastland and Meier's) grocery and meat markets, Lockwood Pharmacy until 1989, and Susan Cummins Gallery in the 1990s.

For 83 years there was at least one pharmacy in downtown Mill Valley, and for 61 years there were two. Since 1989 there have been none.

Anecdote - Bakeries

In about 1900, Bernard and Rose Grethal established Eastland Bakery, the first in Mill Valley, which was originally Eastland. It was located at #18 Miller Ave. and also sold ice cream, soda water and confectioneries. Grethal's Hall was on the 2nd floor. The first city council meeting was held there. The baking ovens were in a separate building in the back. In 1905, the bakery moved next door

to #14, but the baking ovens remained behind #18. Subsequent proprietors of Eastland Bakery were Chris Hack in 1911, John Kraft in 1921, Rasmus Erichsen Jendresen in 1928, G. Gerhard in 1939, F. C. Mendenhall in 1946 and Christian & Elsie Meier in 1948. The Meiers changed the name to Meier's Bakery and lived upstairs. They closed the bakery in 1960 and Lockwood's pharmacy expanded into the space.

3. Wells Fargo Bank (#18 and #20).

This building was built in 1926 to house a bank at #18 and other businesses at #20. The U.S. Post Office was at #20 from 1933 to 1941, followed by the Office of Price Administration from 1942 to 1945. [The OPA controlled the American economy during World War II by fixing the prices of consumer products and rationing food, clothing, gasoline, tires, etc.]. In 1954 the bank expanded into #20.

4. Piazza D'Angelo (#22).

Horses to automobiles to clothing to restaurants:

Sometime before 1900, Landgraf Stables was on this site. Until 1907, the Joseph Landgraf Villa offered refreshments to those who used his picnic grounds and dancing platform. From 1908 to the early 1920s, White's Livery Stable occupied the site in conjunction with a small cigar store and barber shop. In the 1920s, the old stable was torn down and replaced with a building for automobile dealers until the 1950s. Mayer's Men's Shop (men's and boys' clothing) occupied the building from 1958 to 1973 - the Mill Valley School District offices were on the second floor. Since then, the building has housed a

restaurant, first Davood's until 1981 and then D'Angelo's - the name was later changed to Piazza D'Angelo.

Anecdote

The owners of Piazza D'Angelo own the land behind the restaurant. In return for issuing a liquor license for the expanded restaurant, the city of Mill Valley signed a 20- year lease of the land for public parking. The lease will soon terminate. Negotiations are in progress for the city to buy the land.

5. Red Dot (#30).

Hardware to clothing:

From 1926 to 1986, this building was occupied by Tamalpais Hardware, which was owned by Bill Dux and Ralph Tieman. Recall that Varney's Hardware was in operation on Throckmorton from 1933 to 1995.

For 69 years there was at least one hardware store in downtown Mill Valley, and for 53 years there were two. Since 1995 there have been none.

Cross Miller and cross the plaza to the bus stop.

STOP #12. At the bus shelter - seating available. Discuss two shopping centers.

1. Mill Creek Plaza. (#38).

Furniture to shopping center:

This 25,000 sq. ft. building was built in 1933 as Brown's Furniture store. The owners, Lester and Tilly Brown, closed the business in 1970. After extensive remodeling, the building opened in 1973 as a shopping center with about two dozen retail businesses. It was called Old Brown's Store. In 1987 the building was renovated and renamed Mill Creek Plaza.

2. #25 to #37 Miller.

Manuel Gomez who was a jeweler in the Brabo building at #76 Throckmorton built this shopping center of seven business establishments in two buildings in 1954. He installed large concrete pipes under the site for both Old Mill Creek and Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio. He also constructed two buildings instead of one in order to preserve redwood trees. As an artistic touch, he commissioned the mosaic typical of the 1950s next to the bus stop in front of the shopping center.

Current businesses include a real estate office, a hair salon, a dry cleaners and a sushi bar. The business that has survived the longest is Baskin Robbins. When it arrived in 1964 the owners of Esposti's Candy Shop and Soda Fountain on Throckmorton used the arrival of Baskin Robbins as one of the reasons behind their decision to close. A Montgomery Ward catalog and pick up store occupied #37 for many years.

Anecdote

Manuel Diaz Gomez came to Mill Valley in 1926. He bought his first piece of property in Mill Valley for \$700 from a tax delinquent list in 1935. The transaction had to go through the City Council, and quite a skirmish ensued. Thus began his long battle with city councils over variances and ordinances. When we were in Lytton Square we learned that Manny had a jewelry shop in the Brabo building from 1940 to 1960. By 1965, Manny's real estate holdings included 33 apartments on Gomez Way next to the high school, four houses and several pieces of commercial property on Miller Avenue including this shopping center. Manny attended almost all city council and planning commission meetings. In spite of all the difficulties he encountered in dealing with the city and planning officials, he dearly loved Mill Valley. Manny Gomez will be long remembered as a respected and honored citizen of Mill Valley.

Proceed a short distance up Sunnyside to the driveway beyond #23.

STOP #13. In the driveway at #23 Sunnyside. Discuss the diversity of buildings.

This block of Sunnyside Avenue was a cul de sac until about 1956 when the railroad tracks on Miller were removed. Since then several residences have been converted to businesses; others have been demolished and replaced with business buildings.

Across the street at #20 is a two-story office building and the residence at #24 has been remodeled to accommodate a restaurant.

On this side of the street are two building complexes with walkways:

El Paseo (vintage 1948) has always had a restaurant, but now has only two shops on Throckmorton, two shops on Sunnyside. Originally there were many more shops in spaces that the restaurant has taken over.

The walkway at #31 Sunnyside (a relatively new development) starts between Toast and Mt. Tam Bikes and leads past several shops and offices to shops on East Blithedale. This property is part of the site of the Felton Volkswagen dealership.

Proceed to the entrance to the parking lot for Bungalow 44.

STOP #14. At the entrance to the parking lot for Bungalow 44. Discuss two buildings.

1. Westamerica Bank (#64 East Blithedale)

Dairy products and wood/coal/ice to supermarket to bank:

The Wood, Coal & Ice Co. and Costa Creamery occupied the parking lot site from 1908 to 1937. These buildings were demolished in 1938 when a Safeway was constructed on the adjacent site. Safeway was the first store in Mill Valley with a free parking lot. It was followed by Golden Valley Market when Safeway built a new store on the corner of Camino Alto and Miller. Since 1980, the site has been occupied by a bank in the building.

2. Bungalow 44 (#44 East Blithedale)

Gasoline service station to restaurants:

From the 1940s to the 1970s, a service station, first Flying "A" and later Phillips 66, occupied this site. In about 1980, the building was remodeled as a restaurant called the Avenue Grill. Other restaurants followed for shorter tenures than the current Bungalow 44 has experienced.

Proceed on Blithedale to the other entrance to parking for Bungalow 44.

STOP #15. At west entrance to the Bungalow 44 parking lot. Discuss three buildings.

1. Frank Howard Allen Realtor (#21 to #25).

Travel agency and fabric store to real estate office:

This building was built in 1940 for Small World Travel, a business that lasted until 2005. The Nimble Thimble, a fabric store occupied the west third of the building.

2. Four Shops (#11 to #19)

#15 was occupied by Wm. E. Doud & Co. realty for 15 years, Gilmore Photo from 1966 to 1985, and then Romance & Roses (bed and bath shop) and Mill Valley Hat Box, which moved to #118 Throckmorton in 2001. The owner of the building had a health food store at #11 from 1978 to 2001. Stefano had bought the building in 1999 and moved his pizzeria to #11 when the health food store closed.

3. Five shops (#1 to #9)

The original building on this site was a brown shingle house that was moved to the rear of the property at #15 Buena Vista. From 1937 to 1961, this was the site of a Mobil Service Station. Since 1963, hair-cutting businesses under four different ownerships have occupied the building. The present owner is a long time resident of Mill Valley. She grew up on East Blithedale.

#5, #7 and #9 have been occupied by Village Music for more than 46 years. Rock star Elvis Costello writes, "Some of my best discoveries have been made in what may be the greatest record-collector store in the world: Village Music in Mill Valley." The owner, John Goddard, worked in the Village Music store when it was located in the Sequoia Theater building. In 1961 it moved to its present location. In 1968 John Goddard bought the business from Sarah Wilcox who had decided to retire. He recently announced his retirement. Village Music will close in September.

#1 is now occupied by Up to Date - Men's Haircutting. Next-door at #3 is a women's hair cutting salon.

Suggestion

Suggest to your group that they might want to visit Village Music after the walk. This may be their last chance to see this amazing store.

Final Suggestion

Suggest to your group that they return to buildings we stopped at on our tour and visit the businesses. Some of the stores have historic photos in their windows.

Return to OAC via crosswalk on Throckmorton.