

MILL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THIRTY SECOND ANNUAL WALK INTO HISTORY

HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS

Guidebook

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2009

Co-hosted with The Outdoor Art Club

TO THE GUIDES:

This is the 32nd 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 guides 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: Betsey Cutler

Guidebook Editor: Chuck Oldenburg

Researchers: Barbara Ford, Betty Goerke, Michael Lipman, Gene Stocking, Chuck Oldenburg

TIPS 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 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. Try to cover as much guidebook information as you can and 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 checking 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.
7. There may be members of your group who have interesting anecdotes to relate. This type of discussion should generally be encouraged.
8. Try to avoid groups ahead and behind your group. Speed up or slow down by covering some information before or after the stop where it should be related.
9. Feel free to ask one of the participants to manage the photo album for you.

Guides and walkers have enjoyed the annual Walk Into History for over 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.

INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 32nd Walk Into History sponsored by the Mill Valley Historical Society. Last year we toured Tamalpais High School which was celebrating its 100th anniversary. In our 2006 tour, we helped celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Tamalpais Park subdivision. This year is 120th anniversary of the arrival of the railroad in Mill Valley and establishment of Eastland and Millwood subdivisions.

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 El Paseo to the Depot Plaza, down the southwest side of Miller Ave. to Willow St., and back up the northeast side of Miller, a total distance of 1.6 miles. The time required is about 2 hours. The route is quite level.

Introduce yourself and determine how many in your group are not from Mill Valley.

SAFETY

The entire walk will be on sidewalks. The appropriate side of the street is identified for each sidewalk. Keep the group together at crosswalks and be alert for cars and bicycles. There is one stretch along Miller Ave. early in the walk where the sidewalk is quite narrow. Groups should walk in single file.

OVERVIEW

Primary objectives are to learn about the origins of Mill Valley and to envision what it was like to live in Mill Valley before 1910. The Tamalpais Land & Water Co. (TL&WC) subdivided the land southwest of the creek behind the Outdoor Art Club. Our main interest is the Millwood subdivision and the branch railroad line built in 1889 to serve it and the Eastland subdivision. We will stop at all pre-1910 houses in Millwood.

Cross Throckmorton, enter El Paseo and proceed to the courtyard

STOP #2 In El Paseo Courtyard

Describe the posters on display: Map No. 1 – Eastland and Millwood; pre-1910 photos of the railroad depots, tracks and engines. Cover the following topics:

1. Mill Valley is situated on two former Mexican land grants: Rancho Sausalito and Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio.
2. The border between these two ranches was Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio Creek, which we will refer to as “the creek”. It starts on Mt. Tam, flows down through Blithedale Canyon to the Outdoor Art Club, goes underground, then runs along Miller Ave. and dumps into Richardson Bay near The Redwoods Senior Community.
3. Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio, northeast of the creek, was granted to John Reed in 1834. Rancho Sausalito, southwest of the creek, was granted to William Richardson in 1838.
4. In 1884, a railroad tunnel was bored through Corte Madera Hill. The route of the North Pacific Coast Railroad was changed to follow today’s multi-use path from Manzanita across Bothin Marsh and along Mill Valley’s shoreline to a station at Alto near today’s post office. A county road, now East Blithedale, went from Alto Station to the Blithedale Hotel (1873) and nearby homes.
5. In 1855, ownership of Rancho Sausalito passed to Samuel Throckmorton and upon his death in 1883 to his daughter Susanna, in 1889 to the San Francisco Savings Union and later in 1889 to the Tamalpais Land & Water Co. TL&WC began preparing for extensive development of the land. To be successful, a branch railroad line would be necessary to serve the community. Depending on a stage coach from Alto Station was out of the question.
6. Joseph Eastland was president of TL&WC. He was also a former president of North Pacific Coast Railroad. In 1889, a 1.74-mile single track narrow gauge branch line was built from Mill Valley Junction (near today’s Tam High football field) to a depot at what is now downtown Mill Valley. An intermediate depot was established at Miller Ave. and Willow St. It was named Millwood after the name of a private railroad car used by North Coast Pacific Railroad executives.
7. Michael Maurice O’Shaughnessy was the surveyor who developed the plan, TL&WC Subdivision Map No. 1, covering 600 acres with 500 building sites in Eastland and Millwood. On May 31, 1890, 200 lots were sold at auction. Home construction began soon thereafter. Fewer than ten homes scattered across all of Mill Valley existed on the day of the Land Auction.
8. The Walk-Into-History will stop at several Millwood houses. Try to imagine what life was like prior to 1910 during the horse and buggy and railroad era.

Exit El Paseo, turn right and follow Sunnyside to Depot Plaza

Stop #3 In the Depot Plaza Bus Shelter

Look southeast at the house perched high on the hill. In 1903 when it was built, it had a magnificent view of the railroad yard, the depot, downtown and Mt. Tam. It was built by John Rea, a Congregational minister and land developer. He named it “Daybreak.” On a subsequent stop, we will see an old rock wall that has kept “Daybreak” from sliding down the hill.

The first train arrived in October 1889. There was a narrow gauge single track as far as Forrest St., then double track to the station with a siding for freight trains. In 1896, the Mill Valley & Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway installed standard gauge track at the depot.

The first station was located on Miller opposite Sunnyside. In 1892, a waiting room, a telegraph and a ticket office were added. In 1895 a new station was built on Miller northwest of the first station. It contained a ticket office, waiting room, ice cream parlor, and tobacco shop. A large covered train shed provided protection from snow—an eastern architect’s folly. The train shed was torn down and the old wooden station was moved to where The Depot is today.

A trip to San Francisco’s Ferry building took 50 minutes. By 1891, there were already 14 trains to Eastland/Mill Valley each weekday.

Travel between Millwood and Eastland/Mill Valley was free until 1906 when it cost 10 cents. After 1908 when Tam High opened, students paid a special five-cent fare.

Steam locomotives burned wood until about 1900 when they switched to oil. Electrification of the railroad all the way from Sausalito to Mill Valley occurred in 1903 and the narrow gauge track was replaced with standard gauge. Freight service continued to be handled by oil-burning steam locomotives.

Newspaper article. On Thursday, May 12, 1904, a small boy while fooling around with the third rail at the depot got a shock which might have cost him his life. By a lucky accident, he was not very seriously hurt. It would be a real kind action for the railroad men to lay a cane across the backs of the youngsters who persist in haunting this deadly playground.

Newspaper article. In March 1910, a young Italian workman of Mill Valley was acting queerly, and on two occasions he brought incoming trains to a sudden stop by calmly sitting on the track just below the depot. He barely escaped death each time. He was taken to the San Rafael jail on an insanity charge. Two days later, with his bare hands, he ripped all the plaster and lathing from the jail ceiling. He then became violent, and it took several guards to subdue him. After securely strapped he was taken to Ukiah.

Across Miller is Mill Creek Plaza site of Mill Valley House, built in 1891 and destroyed by fire in 1896. It was one of the town’s first boarding houses/hotels. It was owned by Jesse and Lotte Bundy who bought the lot at the 1890 auction.

Proceed to the Ralston White Memorial Grove

**Cross Miller, turn left and proceed southeast on Miller
Enter parking area of #42 Miller**

Stop #4 In parking area for #42 Miller

Ravencourt was built in 1902 by George Paul Dillmann, a civil engineer. The 1910 census lists the following occupants of this home on Miller Ave.: George Dillmann, age 62, retired, his wife Eliza, age 60, and their daughter, Elsa, age 28. Both parents were born in Switzerland, their daughter in California.

The name Ravencourt comes from the fact that ravens nested here. At one time there were also three cottages on this property.

Stop #5 At hydrant on bricked area at the end of the parking lot

A freight shed was built in this area, toward town from where Vogue Cleaners is today. It was the reason for the large curve in today's outbound Miller Ave. Buggies and wagons used to drive on a dirt road where the island and parking area are today.

Note the old rock wall. This is a fine example of ancient dry wall construction—without mortar. The Chinese discovered that a wall leaning only 10° from vertical would not collapse. This wall holds up the path and steps that lead not only to the house you can see on the left, but also to “Daybreak”, the house high up on the hill that we saw from Depot Plaza. Today, “Daybreak” is accessed from Ethel Ave.

Proceed southeast on Miller

Advise single file on the sidewalk past Vogue Cleaners and the Lumber Yard

**Enter driveway to #180 (Innsbruck)
Go to far end of parking area**

Stop #6 In far end of the parking lot for Innsbruck

William Steele and his wife Isabel bought a seven-acre parcel at the 1890 auction and built a house here. Steele was TL&WC's super salesman. Vice-president Lovell White, purchased a 1.46-acre home site on the middle ridge at 95 Magee Ave. and built The Arches. President Joseph Green Eastland bought seven acres in Cascade Canyon at 565 Throckmorton. His 3-story, 22-room, English Tudor style home, Burlwood, was completed in 1893.

In 1901 John and Eva Finn bought the Steele home. The house slid in the 1906 earthquake. The house we see today was built to replace it. It is large and sturdy—8500 sq/ ft., 12"x12" beams and a 30' high foundation. It is likely that the design was influenced by Maybeck, because the Finns had been residents of Berkeley and knew Maybeck. [In 1902, The Outdoor Art Club of which Eva Finn was a member hired renowned architect Bernard Maybeck to design their club house which was built in 1904.] The Finns named their home "Wildwood" and maintained beautiful gardens on the hillside. A small creek ran through the property and there was a Japanese bridge over it. The property behind the house currently has many second growth redwood trees.

John and Eva Finn had come to the Bay Area from New York in the 1880s. John Finn started the J.H. Finn Metal Works at 324 2nd St. in San Francisco. It was the first galvanizing metal works on the Pacific Coast. He soon had branches in Los Angeles and Seattle. He commuted to and from San Francisco by train and ferryboat. Mr. Finn often brought friends home for dinner. Mrs. Finn could watch out the window to see how many people got off the train at Park Ave. station with him. She would plan dinner accordingly while they were walking up to the house. It was proposed that the station be named Finn Station, but Mr. Finn said he preferred that it be called Park Station consistent with Park Ave. and Tamalpais Park subdivision. The Finns had children's play equipment, a croquet court, and a tennis court right here (#174, #180 and #184 Miller).

The 1910 Census lists the following occupants of this home on Miller Ave.: John Finn, age 58, proprietor in the Metal Works business, born in New York of Irish parents; his wife, Eva N. Finn, age 50, born in New York as were her parents; two sons: Richard, age 18, who worked as a bookkeeper in his father's business, and John, age 15; four daughters: Eva, age 20, Ruth, age 13, Grace, age 6 and Elizabeth, age 4; a Japanese couple, Isao Haramo, age 25, cook, Kiyō Haramo, age 20, maid; and Albert Christenson, age 39, gardener.

Be sure to point out the stone building in the back corner of the parking area. It was built in 1905 as the pump house for the Finn's well. The water was pumped up to a tank at the top of the property and used to irrigate the extensive terraced gardens and fish ponds on the hillside.

Just beyond this parking lot and next to a driveway that leads up the hill to "Wildwood" is 200 Miller, a house built in 1912 for the Finn's son, Robert, and his family. After Mrs. Eva Finn died in the flu

epidemic of 1918, Mr. Finn continued to live at “Wildwood.” Robert Finn, his wife and young children provided Mr. Finn with a family environment.

Proceed to Una Way, turn right and go up a way to avoid the traffic noise

Stop# 7 On Una Way

The Wise family lived in a house where the new houses are up the hill to the right. The 1910 census lists Robert H. Wise, age 45, his wife, Nellie R., age 41, and their daughters, Alma W., age 17 and Una K, age 15. Robert is described as a merchant in the piano business. Una Way is named for Una Wise.

Newspaper article. Mill Valley Independent, 1908: “The beautiful Wise house was badly damaged by fire on an early Sunday morning. When the firemen arrived, the roof was blazing merrily, but the boys worked heroically and succeeded in saving not only the lower portion of the house but all of the furniture and personal effects of the family. Mr. Wise, who is a member of the Clark Wise Piano Company of San Francisco appreciated the work of the boys in his behalf. He sent a check for \$25 to the department.” [\$25 in 1908 is equivalent to about \$600 in today’s dollars.]

Across the street, was the Park Ave. train station, built in 1906 when the Tamalpais Park subdivision was developed on the other side of the creek. Commuters would come down the steps from Molino Ave. on top of the ridge to Ethel Ave. and then down to Miller Ave. The upper flight is called Seymour Steps which connects with Seymour Lane across Molino Ave. in Homestead Valley. The flight below Ethel Ave. is called Una Way Steps which connects to Una Way.

Before we continue our walk, let’s think about what it was like to live here in Millwood on Miller Ave. in 1900. Most houses stood alone, separated from the nearest neighbor by several vacant lots. City water was supplied at the outset in 1890 and all houses were connected to the sewer main—the untreated sewage flowed through a pipeline down Miller Ave. to the bay. In 1893, telephone service was provided for three homes. Service expanded in subsequent years. Lighting was by kerosene or coal oil lamps and in some cases a network of gasoline lamps. Electrical service began in 1895, but many homes were not connected until several years later. The initial street lights were put up in 1902. Heating was generally by wood, coal or oil, although after 1895, electric heat was installed in a few homes. Cooking was by coal, wood, kerosene or gasoline—there was no piped-in town gas until much later. Kitchens had ice boxes. In 1890, a box in the train depot served as the Mill Valley post office. The Eastland post office was established in 1892, and the Mill Valley name was restored in 1904.

In front of houses on the other side of Miller Ave. were a wooden sidewalk, a narrow dirt service road and the railroad. Steam locomotives were fueled by wood until about 1900 when they were converted to oil. In 1903, the railroad was electrified, A 1907 timetable shows that every fifteen minutes from early morning to late at night, a train would pass going or coming. Freight trains had steam locomotives.

On this side of the tracks was Miller Ave., a dirt wagon road for horse drawn vehicles, muddy or dusty depending on the season. It was named for Albert Miller, president of the San Francisco Savings Union which had gained control of Rancho Sausalito before the creation of TL&WC. The first automobiles did not appear until 1906, and they were few and far between in 1910. Paving the streets began in 1917.

In 1903, the Marin County Board of Supervisors considered a petition to prohibit the use of automobiles in Marin County. The petitioners asserted that “Marin County is essentially a horse keeping and a horse loving county, and that the automobile in Marin County can never be more than a plaything for the few fortunate individuals who have a surplus of time and money.” After the Board of Supervisors rejected the petition, the California Automobile Association took the supervisors for a ride. Only one horse was spooked and that was the fault of the driver of the buggy, not the chauffeur of the car.

Proceed southeast on Miller

Enter driveway of #232, go to far back of the property to view the Carriage House

Stop #8 #234 Miller, “The Magnolias” (1895)

The “Carriage House” was built in 1895, the same time as the house, to accommodate the family’s horses and carriages. A garden was laid out that climbed the hill toward Ethel Ave. The gate consists of elevator doors from the St Francis Hotel and the front door is from Stanford Hospital, both recovered from the earthquake and fire of 1906.

Go around the southeast side of the house to the front of the house

In 1895, a Mr. Smith sold the lot he had bought at the 1890 auction to George Lingard Payne of Payne Bolt Works at Howard and Main Streets in San Francisco. Payne built this substantial Victorian home as a summer home. He planted a row of magnolia trees along the front of the property for his bride, Barbara Marie Frey, a southern belle, and the house was named, “The Magnolias”. They had 5 children. “The Magnolias” was their secondary residence. They lived at 2830 Pacific Ave. in San Francisco.

Stop #9 #240 Miller, close to front of house

The Lenhart family built this classic Victorian home in 1902.

Newspaper article. On Tuesday, May 12, 1904, “Barry” the big St. Bernard at Millwood, owned by Mrs. Lenhart, came in contact with the third rail, much to his surprise. Fortunately, “the most valuable dog in Marin County” was not killed.

The 1910 Census lists the following occupants for this house on Miller Ave.: Nanno M. Lenhart, age 66, retired, born in Ireland, his daughter, Mary C., age 45, an artist, his son, Charles R., age 29, a shipping clerk, his son-in-law, Charles E. Morse, age 42, an engineer, and his daughter, Josephine T. Morse, age 35, a teacher, known as Jessie, who taught primary grades in Mill Valley from 1900 to 1906.

Stop #10 In Driveway of #254

The Bacchus family built a small house on this property in 1889. In 1903, the O'Briens purchased and built this house. O'Brien was the proprietor of the bar at the San Francisco Opera House. He and his large family of 7 children first spent summers here and later lived here permanently.

Stop #11 #306 Miller, "Poplar Brae" (1894)

Go into the driveway southeast of "Poplar Brae" to view the house.

In 1893, William Terry, a Scotsman, purchased several adjacent lots with a total frontage of 200 feet. He planted poplars all across the property and named the family's home "Poplar Brae". Its exterior appearance remains as it did when constructed. It is a two-story structure set against the hill. It has verandas across the entire front on both floors. The railings are decorative giving almost an oriental appearance. There are also bay windows on both floors. The house is now called "The Poplars" and has three rental units. A sign over a sidewalk leading to the apartment in the rear reads, "Poplar Brae".

**Cross Miller Ave. at crosswalk and turn right
Enter driveway at #333 Miller**

Stop #12 In driveway of #333 Miller

Across Miller Ave. we can see "The Maples" on Ethel Ave. This house was built by Jacob Gardner in 1889. The property, formerly 352 Miller Ave., ran from Ethel to Miller.

In 1868, Samuel Throckmorton hired Jacob Gardner to be superintendent of Rancho Sausalito. Throckmorton was a financier who lived in San Francisco. When he brought his friends to the ranch to hunt elk and bear, they stayed in one half of his lodge which was located at what is now the corner of Ethel Ave. and Montford Ave. He named it, "The Homestead", a name later applied to the valley. Superintendent Jacob Gardner lived in the other half of the lodge.

In 1873, Gardner left for greener pastures. He returned with a wife and children in 1880. Throckmorton's ranch eventually became the property of the Tamalpais Land & Water Co. In 1889, board members encouraged Jacob Gardner to build "The Maples". They wanted to show prospective buyers of properties in Eastland and Millwood that building on hillside lots was feasible. "The Maples" was not only on a hill, but also highly visible from the train tracks. The house looked stately on the day of the auction, but was actually unfinished inside.

Jacob Gardner became a prominent citizen, county sheriff, town trustee, county supervisor and Mill Valley school trustee.

In 1884, Jacob Gardner allowed the newly married Manuel Fostine, an immigrant who had arrived in 1878 from the Azores, to build a house on this property. Fostine had done some farming for Gardner on the Throckmorton ranch. In 1883, he had worked on clearing a route for the railroad from Alameda Point (below Marin City) toward Mill Valley, and probably worked on removing rock and earth in construction of the Alto railroad tunnel. In 1889, he worked on grading Ethel Ave. and the road over the hill to Corte Madera. At the 1890 auction, Gardner made Manuel's bid for five lots around this site—Manuel's English was limited. In 1901, he began working for the city, grading roads and sprinkling the dusty streets. He also quarried rocks and built many of the rock walls that still exist around town.

Go around the back of #333 and turn left on Willow St.

Stop #13 On Willow Street at corner of Miller

Note the jog in Miller for Millwood Depot

The Millwood depot was built on the corner of Willow St. in 1889. It was the only stop between Mill Valley Junction and the end of the line. In 1906 with the development of the Tamalpais Park subdivision, a new station was built at Park Ave. and the Millwood station was moved one block southeast and named Locust Ave. station. The wooden platform, 400 ft. long, extended from La Goma to beyond Locust.

One of the important features of the 1889-design of Eastland and Millwood subdivisions was that streets would parallel the ridges. Horses had difficulty managing streets perpendicular to the ridges, but pedestrians could manage such slopes. Steps, lanes and paths were laid out to connect the streets. Residents could go directly down to the railroad station to avoid winding around on the streets.

On the other side of Miller Ave. you can see the bottom of the Willow steps. These steps begin at the top of the ridge on Molino Ave., go down to Ethel Ave., and then down to Miller Ave., ending right here at the Millwood station. Willow St. leads to Willow Path which crosses the creek and then goes through Tamalpais Park to Sycamore, Walnut, Locust and Elm—it initially went all the way to East Blithedale. Commuters would use Willow Path from the northeast and Willow Steps from the southwest to get to and from Millwood station and Locust Ave. station.

Stop #14 In the garden of #305 Miller

**Walk between the hedges to the fountain
behind the small office building**

Captain Bingham and his wife, Helen, purchased a large home on this property in the early 1900s. He was port captain for the old Pacific Mail Steamship Co. plying in and out of San Francisco. His wife is the author of the well known book on early Marin titled, "In Tamal Land". Originally the property was covered with bay trees and brambles, but the Bingham's planted a garden considered to be one of the loveliest in Mill Valley. This small garden with the large palms is all that remains today; the paths and fountain area are much like they were 100 years ago.

Stop # 15 In driveway of #271

In 1892, Julian Harries (accent on second syllable) purchased 200 feet of frontage on Miller Ave. A house was constructed for the family on property that is today 265 Miller. They later moved the house forward—it is now offices. In 1899 they built this house next door at #271 for their daughter.

The 1910 Census lists Julian B. Harries, age 74 and retired, his wife Lucy B., age 58, and their daughter Maude A., age 34, a saleslady. [The Harries likely had another daughter who lived next door with her husband whose name we don't know.]

Note the tan roof of the Wheeler Martin house to the northeast. Wheeler and Lorena Martin were San Francisco pioneers. They purchased this property as a vacation place, and built an informal retreat here, calling it "Antler Lodge", so named because over the front gate were antlers from a deer they had shot. A permanent home was eventually built, and the family moved here from their extensive estate adjacent to Mission Dolores in San Francisco. Mr. Martin opened his grocery store at the corner of Bernard and Throckmorton. He was the first postmaster when the post office was moved into a corner of his store.

The house used to be much closer to Miller Ave.—it was moved to the rear of the property to allow dumping of dirt excavated for construction at the Russell & Gooch property across the street. The historic path winding up the hill from the Russell & Gooch building to Ethel Ave. has been impassable for the past several decades.

Stop #16 In driveway of #257 on the right side

The Charles Gerrish family came to Mill Valley from Port Townsend, Washington in 1897-8. They first lived in the nearby house of Captain Bingham at #251 which has since been demolished. In 1902, they purchased this property at #257 and built the present house incorporating an existing old cottage for the kitchen. The living and dining rooms are redwood paneled with nine foot ceilings. A rental cottage was

built behind the house in 1905. When the main house was damaged in the 1906 earthquake, the family lived in the cottage while repairs were being made.

The 1910 census lists the following occupants of this house on Miller Ave.: Charles M. Gerrish, age 53, born in New Hampshire, a salesman in the grocery business; his wife, Helen, age 50, born in California; two sons: Fulton, age 27, a stock clerk of general merchandise, and Robert, age 21, an electrician who had his shop at the home; and a live-in Japanese servant, Maroa Itano, age 19.

Robert's son and grandson carried on the electrical business with offices and shops behind the house. There are now three living units on the property, which extends all the way back to the creek.

Stop #17 In driveway of #247 to view the side of the house

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur William Pooley, and their daughters Edith and Eliza had been living for some years in Marin County and wanted their own home. Mr. Pooley chose Millwood largely because it was an English settlement. Being a native of England, he had many friends among the settlers.

In August 1897, the family moved into a cottage which had been built in the rear of the property. They moved into the main house a few days before Christmas 1897. Harvey Klyce was the builder. He showed the house as a model of his work. Mr. Pooley named it "Home Croft" after the Pooley family home on the Mersey River in England.

The 1910 Census lists three occupants of "Home Croft": Arthur W. Pooley, age 60, a piano tuner, born in England; his wife Anne C. Pooley, age 57, born in New York; and their daughter Edith, age 34, born in South Dakota, a private teacher.

Move to house next door, #239

Stop #18 In driveway of #239

Casper Gardner built this house in 1893. It was originally to be a hotel, but plans were changed just before the kitchen was to be installed. "Gardner Villa" is a late Victorian style two-story house with decorated gable ends, scalloped shingles and long double-hung windows.

Casper's parents were Marin pioneers. His father, Peter, came to Marin in 1850. His mother, Cornelia Buckelew, was a child in the tragic 1846 Donner trip west; fortunately, her parents did not take the Donner's fateful Hastings cutoff and arrived safely in California.

Casper was born in Corte Madera in 1862. He became one of Mill Valley's most prominent citizens. He was the nephew of Jacob Gardner, whom we talked about when we discussed "The Maples".

The 1910 census lists only two occupants of this house on Miller Ave.: Casper J. Gardner, 47 years old, and retired. and his wife Louise, 38 years old. He was Mill Valley City Council member and Mayor (1916 – 1920) and Marin County supervisor (1912 to 1932)

Imagine what it must have been like to live in this large house close to the railroad. Before 1900, the noisy, wood burning locomotives belched smoke. The dirt wagon road, Miller Ave., was usually either dusty or muddy and often strewn with horse manure.

Stop #19 On Park Ave. a few steps from Miller

Legend. A Mr. and Mrs. Graham lived in a small cottage where this apartment building stands today. Most every morning and evening, Mr. Graham would be seen walking his cow to and from pasture on grassy lots along Miller Ave., followed by a flock of honking geese. Such was life in Millwood.

Across Park Ave. is the Mackie house at #217 Miller Ave. In the 1890 land auction, James and Emily Mackie acquired the lot which extended from the railroad tracks to the creek. Shortly thereafter, they built the house as well as a cottage in the rear. When James Mackie died in 1913, Emily moved to the cottage and rented the house.

The width of the parcel, originally 139.8 ft., was reduced to 90 ft. in 1906 when a strip of their lot became Park Ave. which was needed to access Park Ave. station from the Tamalpais Park subdivision.

Park Ave station was right around the corner. The wooden platform was 400 ft. long with a gap at Park Ave. A magnificent redwood tree had to be removed to make way for the station. Service began on April 18, 1906, the day of the San Francisco earthquake.

Newspaper article. In February 1908, youngsters put a dummy dressed in man's clothes on the tracks near Park Station about 9 PM on a Friday. The engineer did not see it until it was too late and crashed into it. He applied the emergency brakes, bringing his train to sudden stop and almost throwing the passengers from their seats. Several women were frightened almost into hysteria. "Parents should warn their youngsters to turn their talents for practical joking into other directions where frail, and possibly sick women would not be affected by it."

Proceed to #189 Miller

Stop # 20 In driveway of #189 Miller Ave.

This house was designed and built by Harvey Klyce for the McCann family in 1904. When the McCanns purchased the property, there was a log cabin here. It was replaced by this brown shingled house set in mature redwoods and oaks. To the rear of the house was a small building similar to a tiny garage. For many years, railroad employees used it as a place to rest and eat while in Mill Valley.

The 1910 census lists William McCann, age 72, and his wife Elizabeth, age 63 years. They were both born in England. There were no other occupants of this house on Miller Ave.

During the 1920s, Dr. George Landrock operated a maternity hospital here. Children in small towns like Mill Valley were usually born at home. This sort of place was the first step away from the tradition of home births. Today it is a single family home. The McCann's grove of trees has been preserved.

Proceed to second driveway of #169 Miller

Stop #21 In northwest driveway of #169 Miller Ave.

Review what we have learned about life in Millwood before 1910

This house was built in 1927 and its history is therefore not discussed in our Walk-Into-History. But its location and remoteness from the noise of Miller Ave. provide a good venue to review what we have learned about life before 1910 in Millwood. Here we also have a good view of the Finn house which we talked about when we were on the other side of the street. This is our last stop in Millwood. All the houses on our tour were built by relatively wealthy people.

If you walked out the front door of one of the houses that we saw on this side of Miller Ave. you would first encounter a wooden sidewalk (concrete after 1903), then a narrow dirt service road and finally the railroad tracks. On the other side of the tracks was a dirt wagon road, Miller Ave. At first, steam engines burned wood. In about 1900 they switched to oil. In 1903 the railroad was electrified. In 1907, a train passed by every 15 minutes from early morning until late at night. Freight trains were less frequent, but they used oil-fired steam engines.

People got around by walking, bicycle, horseback, horse and buggy and train. Streets were not paved, so dust and mud were common inconveniences and was horse manure. A resident could board his horse at a stable in downtown Mill Valley, or he could rent a horse or rent a horse and buggy. We saw only one house on our tour, "The Magnolias" which had a carriage house for horses and buggies. But there likely were others.

Groceries, coal, firewood, kerosene, ice, clothing, and various other supplies were normally delivered in horse drawn wagons. In 1897, after operating a Chinese Wash House, Suey Kee established a business based on home delivery of fresh fruit and vegetables, much of it grown on land he leased in Millwood. He carried the produce in baskets hanging from a yoke across his shoulders.

Train service was excellent, only 50 minutes from Mill Valley to the San Francisco Ferry Building. Commuters would sometimes leave home before sunup and/or return at night. Even after street lights were installed in 1902, they would use lanterns when walking to or from home in the dark. There were

pegs at the stations where one could hang up his lantern in the morning and retrieve it at night. Some trains ran directly to Sausalito. Others required a change at Mill Valley Junction.

Shoppers could take the train to Sausalito, a ferry to San Francisco and a street car to the Emporium department store on Market Street. Purchases would often be delivered to their home. The Emporium would send packages by ferry and train to Mill Valley where an agent would receive them, take them to a small warehouse on Throckmorton Ave. and then deliver them by horse drawn wagon to the customer's home.

Utilities except for natural gas were those that we have today: electricity, telephone, city water, and connection to a sewer main. Fuel for heat was wood, coal, oil, and rarely, electricity. Fuel for cooking was wood, coal, kerosene or gasoline. Kitchens had ice boxes.

Our next stop will be in the Sunnyside Tract. We are through with Millwood.

Proceed northwest on Miller, cross creek at Millwood St. Enter Sunnyside Tract (1902)

Before crossing Millwood St., note the cabinet shop on the left which straddles the creek. It was likely constructed before 1910. According to the present owners, the building housed the production of everything from caskets to casement windows. When they remodeled it, they left in place such historical features as horse hitches and an antiquated pulley-and-belt system that provided power to various tools.

Continue on Presidio Ave. to #41

Stop #22 At #41 Presidio opposite Mill Valley Lumber Co.

Probably in 1891, Robert Dollar (1844 – 1932) established the Dollar Lumber Co. at this location. In 1895 he acquired his first vessel to move his lumber from the Pacific Northwest to markets down the coast. In the process he became a San Francisco shipping magnate who entered the lumber trade in Canada. He later became one of Marin's wealthiest citizens; his San Rafael mansion, Falkirk, still stands as a Marin treasure. He also owned Dollar Point at Lake Tahoe and Dollar Ranch, now Rossmoor.

Note that the lumber yard straddles the creek. Map No. 1 shows the railroad line is northeast of the creek in this area. A problem for surveyors of the new branch line was that the irascible Ebenezer Wormouth owned land on the northeast bank of Arroyo Corte Madera near the proposed terminus. Running the line entirely over TL&WC land on the southwest side of the creek would have precluded the planned wagon road (Miller Ave.) into the new town; there was little distance between the creek and rock outcrops on the southwest. But a deal was struck with Wormouth and the line traversed his property. Some of the lumber yard buildings straddle the creek, but the closest building does not—it was a stable for 4 horses.

In 1898, J. H. McInnes bought out the interest and entire stock of the Dollar Lumber Co. By 1905, ownership had passed to The Doherty Company which also owned lumber yards on Evergreen Ave. in Homestead Valley and in Larkspur. In April 1910, Nicholas Yost and Carl Christley took over and named it The Mill Valley Lumber Co. By July 1911, The Mill Valley Lumber Co., owned by Yost and Christley, had purchased the entire stock of The Doherty Co. at this location.

Note the historic sign, “RAILROAD EMPLOYEES MUST NOT MOVE ENGINES OR CARS BEYOND THIS POINT”. The siding went all the way to the cabinet shop. Although passenger service had ended in 1940, freight service by oil-burning steam locomotives continued until 1955.

1910 Census data:

Earle L. Doherty, age 27, his wife Gertrude, age 25, their daughter, Keville, age 5, and their son William, age 3, lived on Cascade Ave. Earle was a merchant in the lumber business. He was born in Arizona, his wife and kids were born in California.

Nicholas P. Yost, age 55, and his wife Bertha, age 44, lived on Forrest Ave. He was born in Wisconsin of German parents. He was a merchant in the lumber business. She was born in Minnesota; her parents were born in New York.

Carl E. Christley, age 33, his wife, Bertha, and their daughter, Lois E., lived on Sycamore Ave.. Carl was a partner in a lumber yard. He was born in Indiana, his wife and daughter were born in California.

Proceed on Presidio to the corner of Forrest St.

Stop #23 At the corner of Presidio and Forrest St.

In January 1908, J.T. Irish managed The Marin Lumber and Fuel Co. here at the end of Presidio. In April 1909, Carl E. Christley took over and named it The Tamalpais Lumber Co. In May 1910, Christley sold The Tamalpais Lumber Co. to The Doherty Co.. In August 1910 The Doherty Co. established its main office here in this branch yard—its main yard and mill was near Locust Ave..

Point out Vogue Cleaners across Miller Ave. Part of the building dates back to 1903 when Herman Heckman built a mill there. He manufactured doors, windows, cabinets and other products. He also did general carpentry such as house additions and remodeling.

Nicholas P. Yost, born in Wisconsin, was working in North Dakota in the early 1890s when he and his wife moved to Mill Valley where he got into the lumber business. His sister Catherine lived in Wisconsin with her husband, Herman Heckman, who was a carpenter and cabinet maker. Nicholas wrote to Herman about Mill Valley and the great opportunities that awaited him here. In 1903, Herman decided to come out and take a look. He stayed.

In 1903, the TL&WC subdivided Homestead Valley. In 1904 Herman Heckman bought a block of land delineated today by Ethel, Evergreen and Linden Lane. He sent for his wife and eight children who had remained behind in a small town in the middle of Wisconsin. They arrived just in time to see him start construction of their 13 room house on the site of “The Homestead” which Throckmorton had constructed in 1866 as a combination hunting lodge and quarters for his ranch superintendent. In 1900, “The Homestead” had burned down.

The 1910 Census for Homestead Valley lists Herman C. Heckman, age 47, a carpenter, his wife Catherine, Norbert, age 21, a carpenter, Elsie, age 20, a telephone operator, Alice, age 16, Arvin, age

14., Edward, age 6, and a daughter, age 2. All were born in Wisconsin. Herman's and Catherine's parents were born in Germany.

The Heckman house now has four apartments. It is on the corner of Ethel Ave. and Montford Ave. in Homestead Valley.

Proceed on Forrest St. and turn left onto Laurelwood Ave.

Stop #24 At #24 Laurelwood

This house was built in 1907 by Dominick Mainini as a small two bedroom cottage.

The 1910 census lists Dominick Mainini, age 30, a laborer in a retail coal establishment, and his wife, Isabel, age 27, their daughter Josephine, age 3, and their daughter Dora, age 2.

Several years later, Rose Bedecarrax lived here for 42 years. Her husband, Al, was employed by the Mill Valley School District as a bus driver. Al's parents, Jean and Josephine Bedecarrax emigrated from the French Pyrenees and started the French Laundry on Miller Ave. near the Depot. They later opened a second French Laundry on the corner of East Blithedale and Hill Street.

Proceed on Laurelwood Ave. to Sunnyside Ave.

Stop #25 At corner, #12 Sunnyside

In June 1903, Thomas Henry Bagshaw, his wife Jane Morgan Bagshaw and their children arrived from Cardiff, Wales. After a brief stay with Mr. Bagshaw's brother they moved to this house which they bought from an Italian family named Buetti. Mr. Bagshaw had been a stone mason in Wales. He became a grocer managing Pioneer Grocery for the owner, Wheeler Martin. Later on the Bagshaws owned and operated Sunset Grocery in the Keystone building.

The 1910 census lists the following occupants of this house: Thomas H. Bagshaw, age 40, a wagon driver for a Laundry, his wife Jane, age 34, Thomas F., age 11, Samuel, age 8, Sydney, age 6, and John, age 3. All were born in England except the two youngest sons who were born in California..

Stop #26 At corner opposite #15 Sunnyside

In 1903, Charles Thoney, a fireman for the City of San Francisco Fire Department, bought this lot in the Sunnyside Tract. He built a platform for a tent on it. He, his wife and children used it as a vacation spot. He began to construct a two story dwelling on the lot while still commuting to his job in the city. The property was recorded on Feb. 29, 1904, but it was not until April 1906 after the earthquake, that the family moved permanently to Mill Valley.

Three wells were dug to supply water for the family: eight boys and one girl. Charles Thoney worked as a fireman for the Mill Valley Fire Department. Three of the boys later became employees of the Mt. Tam & Muir Woods Railway, performing the jobs of engineer, brakeman, conductor and driver of the

Lee St. Local. Their youngest son, Clinton, became Mill Valley Fire Chief in 1929, the year of the disastrous mountain fire.

The 1910 census lists the following occupants of this house: Charles H. Thoney, age 52, born in California of Austrian-Italian parents, a teamster in a lumber yard; his wife, Olga, age 45, born in California of Swiss-Italian parents; their daughter Francis, age 17; and their eight sons: Charles H., age 26, a fireman on the Mountain Railroad; Frank, age 24, a carpenter; Joseph, age 22, a carpenter; Theodore, age 20, a candy maker in a factory; Albert, age 16; Emanuel, age 11; Vollmer, age 8 and Clinton, age 6.

End of Walk Into History

We began our tour talking about the North Coast Pacific Railroad and its Mill Valley Depot. We end our tour by mentioning the mountain railroad.

Newspaper article. In May 23, 1910, the Mt. Tamalpais railroad scheduled special trains to the top of the mountain where passengers could have dinner at the Tavern, view the sunset and have an unobstructed view of Halley's comet during the total eclipse of the moon between 9 and 10 PM.

Invite comments, answer questions and ask for anecdotes

Suggest returning to the Outdoor Art Club via Sunnyside to East Blithedale, avoiding El Paseo.

At the Outdoor Art Club they can enjoy refreshments, view the "Horse and Buggy Days" video and look at the various publications on display.