

Kentfield Greenbrae Historical Society Historian

December 2017 Volume 5, Issue 4

www.kghs.org

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President's Message

The holiday season is here! It's a time to gather with family and friends, and share a little nostalgia of memories past. One way to do that would be to explore our local history and visit one of the numerous historical museums and sites in the community. Some historical societies offer monthly speakers and activities, some have museums, and others provide walking tours. As you settle into the holidays, take time to learn more about the background of the names of cities and streets, the story behind some of our buildings and parks.

Our local Historical Societies and Museums are rich with stories of our community. They often share common roots. Much of Marin was once the land of the Miwoks, and later part of the Mexican Land Grants: Punta de Quintin, Corte del Madera, la Laguna y Canada de San Anselmo. I was surprised to find so many sources at our fingertips, from the Marin History Museum and the Anne T. Kent California Room at the Marin County Library, to the small museums in Nicasio, Tomales, Stinson Beach and San Quentin.

Because there are too many groups to fully describe in this newsletter, we will highlight some of those museums in the communities that were part of the Punta de Quintin Land Grant that stretched from Red Hill in San Anselmo to San Quentin. You will find a link to a complete list of museums and historical societies in Marin at the end of this newsletter and on our website. Their websites provide a wealth of interesting information and old photos. Who knows what you might discover!

Happy Holidays,
Marilee Rogers
Co-President, 2017-18

Mexican Land Grant: Punta de Quintin...

Following the secularization of the missions in 1834, the Mexican governor began doling out property to persons who had served Mexico and would make productive use of the land. A man named, curiously, Juan Bautista Rogers Cooper, obtained land as a grant from the Mexican government in 1840. **Rancho Punta de Quintin, Corte del Madera, la Laguna y Canada de San Anselmo** was an 8,877-acre grant that comprised not only the San Quentin peninsula, but also the present-day Ross Valley. The Rancho stretched from San Quentin Point, including the entire peninsula, inland to Red Hill and the Lagunitas Creek country on the north side of Mt. Tamalpais, enclosing the current sites of the Meadow Club and Marin Municipal Water District reservoirs Phoenix, Lagunitas and Bon Tempe Lakes. (cont'd p.2)

Did you remember to renew your Membership?

If your KGHS renewal is due, you should have received a letter and remittance envelope asking for your continued support. It's also a good time to invite friends and neighbors to join. If you know of people who are interested in preserving and recognizing local history, please forward this newsletter to them and encourage them to become a member.

DO IT [ONLINE](#) NOW before you forget!

- \$20 - Students & Seniors
- \$30 - Individuals & Families
- \$50 - Business Membership
- \$100 - Patron
- \$250 - Benefactor *
- \$500 - Historian *
- \$500- Business Partner *
- \$1000 + - Lifetime Membership*
- \$1000+- Lifetime Business Partner *

Or you can send a check:

**KGHS Membership
Box 236,
Kentfield, CA 94914.**

Please include your name, level of membership, address, email and phone number. If you use a credit card number, please include your CVV code (we left it off our envelope!) Included with your membership is the quarterly newsletter, special invitations to member events and an invitation to volunteer on one of our committees.

(Punta de Quentin cont'd) Cooper established a lumber business, which he contracted others to run. In 1847, he leased a section of the point to the U.S. government for a saw mill. He sold his interests in both Marin County ranchos to Benjamin Rush Buckelew in 1850 for \$55,000. Besides Cooper's Rancho Punta de Quentin, Buckelew also purchased Cooper's Rancho Nicasio and John Reed's Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio. In 1852, the California Legislature bought twenty acres at the tip of the rancho, where the Board of Prison Commissioners planned to build a state prison.

Due to illness, bad luck, and poor judgment, Buckelew became embroiled in a series of costly lawsuits resulting in the loss of all three ranchos. Buckelew fought with John Cowell and James Ross over the ranchos until his death in 1859. In 1857, James Ross (1812-1862), in partnership with John and Henry Cowell, bought Rancho Punta de Quentin from Buckelew. Ross made use of the head of navigation on Corte Madera Creek, less that a mile downstream from his house, as a shipping point for the logging. This landing, Ross Landing, would be the seed out of which grew Kentfield. His son was given the area that is now Greenbrae as a dairy farm.

A detailed story of the "beginnings" of our local history can be found in Dewey Livingston's book *In the Heart of Marin, A History of Kentfield and Greenbrae* (pages 10-19). The communities that were once part of the land grants all have rich stories to tell, and they are all connected. Check out our local museums and historical societies for more information.



Punta de Quentin Land Grant



San Anselmo Hub (courtesy of SA History Museum)

San Anselmo Historical Society & Museum

www.sananselmohistory.org

The San Anselmo Historical Museum houses an ever-expanding collection of photos and memorabilia highlighting our town's history. The museum offers historical records of the town's notable people, neighborhoods, businesses, celebrations and events. A timeline traces the history of the area, from the days of the Coast Miwok to the founding of San Francisco Theological Seminary and the glory days of the railroad - the industry that put our town on the map. Special displays of local historical interest are on view on a rotating basis. Photographs are regularly on display, with copies available for purchase. Videos and oral histories are also available for viewing at the Museum. The Museum offers a Children's Corner with crayons and San Anselmo-themed coloring books. Open Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to noon and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or by appointment.

The self-guided walking tour is available at the museum for \$5. It is self-paced stroll through San Anselmo history beginning at Town Hall. The tour will take you along the town's scenic back roads, first to the quiet beauty of San Francisco Theological Seminary, then onward to the stately Robson-Harrington property and back again to the business district, with a side trip to the historic Hub and points of interest on the east side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The tour ends where it began, at Town Hall.

Moya Library/Ross Historical Society

www.moya-rhs.org

In 1968 the Marin Art and Garden Center wanted to honor Jose Moya del Pino for his contributions as a founding MAGC member and recognized community artist. Funded with a generous donation from the Moya family, the old octagon house was moved from a former site and placed on a new foundation. The renovated Octagon House became the **JOSE MOYA DEL PINO LIBRARY**, and a supporting guild was formed under the knowledgeable guidance of Mrs. Thomas Kent and Mrs. Russell Smith.

The public is encouraged to take advantage of this unique reference library. The collection is limited to works related to art, decorative arts, architecture, gardening and local history. Many of the original volumes are from the personal collections of Moya and other local families.

The **ROSS HISTORICAL SOCIETY** was established in 1982. Its founding directors diligently researched early Ross history and compiled a collection of rare photographs and memorabilia. Founding member Carla Ehat spearheaded the countywide Oral History project which now resides in the California Room at the Marin County Library. New interviews are being added to keep the Ross segment up to date.

The two organizations consolidated in 1994. Today the unique and charming Octagon House continues to serve as the Moya Library, complemented by a wealth of historical resources. An important ongoing activity is our **First Friday Forenoon Programs** ~ Presentations are given by authors, artists, scholars, experts in a given field, and in a variety of interesting topic areas. Check our website for details of upcoming guests.



Lagunitas Bridge with Lights (Courtesy Richard Torney Collection)

Larkspur Heritage Preservation Board

www.ci.larkspur.ca.us/128/Heritage-History

The Larkspur Heritage Preservation Board has many roles. It has created an official Historic Resources Inventory, identifying structures and sites for designation, as well as reviewing building permits for those sites. They raise awareness of the value and importance of historic preservation through a variety of programs and activities, including management and operation of the Historic Preservation Awards Program, Historic Walking Tours, and the publication of the book *Larkspur Past and Present: A History and Walking Guide*.

The original highway through southern Marin was mapped out in 1909, and Magnolia Avenue served as the major access road for much of Marin. Today, Magnolia Avenue looks much as it did when it was the main county road. The false-front store facades, the Mission Revival style church and City Hall, the early Queen Anne Victorians, and the Blue Rock Inn, all evoke the flavor of the city's past. Larkspur's downtown, between the Lark Theater and the Lark Creek Inn, has been designated as a state and city historic district and is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places because the buildings are representative of commercial architecture that was typical of small California towns at the turn of the century. You can download the walking tour and map from the website.

San Quentin Museum...

The San Quentin Museum lifts the veil off the mystique of California's first prison. It's super informative, interesting and full of 165 years of artifacts. What makes the museum special is its curator, Jeff Craemer. He mans the front desk each Tuesday and Thursday (the only days the museum is open), happy to be spending his morning at the prison, waiting to regale visitors with stories from the old days. The museum is obviously a labor of love.

If you'd like to visit, here is what you need to know: Tuesday and Thursday only; 10:00am - 3:30. Jeff, the curator, recommends you arrive no later than 2:30. Call to confirm: (415) 454-1460 ext. 5803

Visitors will need to show ID at entry gate. No cameras or cell phones with cameras allowed. **NO BLUE JEANS!**



Old San Quentin



Building Blue Rock Inn (Courtesy Larkspur Heritage)

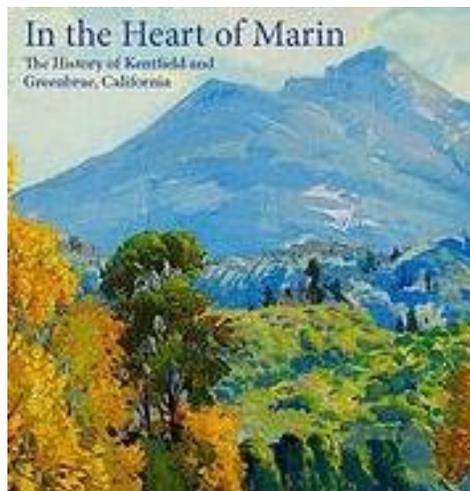
Local Historical Societies and Museums...

There is a link on our KGHS website that will connect you with all of the Historical Societies and Museums in Marin. Most have websites, some have actual museums, and others have posted activities. We will continue to feature different groups in the coming year.

List of Marin Historical Societies and Museums

A Perfect Gift...

Our Pop Up Store in Bon Air gets little traffic but you can still purchase our books at www.kghs.org: Copies of *In the Heart of Marin: A History of Kentfield and Greenbrae* as well as the companion books *Historical Reflections* and *Oral History Project* are available. If you want Otis or Vintage cards or tote bags, please contact us at info@kghs.org or call 415-484-5447. We'd be more than happy to open the shop for you. Happy Holidays!



KGHS Calendar

December 5, 12 & 15... "Then and Now" slide presentations to Third Graders at Bacich

December 11: Mt. Tamalpais: The History of Three Peaks and their Legendary Trails with Brad Rippe 6:30 pm
Anne T. Kent California Room MCFL: California Map Room Annex 1600 Los Gatos, San Rafael

2018

January 11: KGHS Board Meeting 9:00-11:00 am Bon Air Conference Room

February 8: KGHS Board Meeting 9:00-11:00 am Bon Air Conference Room

May 5: Community May Day Celebration
hosted by KGHS and the Bon Air Center
Bon Air Center 11-3... details coming

Happy Holidays from KGHS!
Wishing you good health and happiness in 2018!

Get Involved!

We are always looking for more community members to become involved. If you are interested, please contact us!

- Events Committee: helping to organize and publicize member and community events
- Research Committee: collecting more oral histories and generating the historical background of sites in the Kentfield and Greenbrae area...developing curriculum for third grade students, creating walking tours...
- Membership & Outreach Committee: reaching out to local businesses and alumni to expand our membership

If you would like to be on one of the above committees, please send a message through info@kghs.org and we will get back to you.

Board of Directors

Susan Morrow, Lorelei Evans, Sarah Fletcher, Mary Gilardi, Julie Gondak, Ross McKenna, Sydney Park, Marilee Rogers, Heather McPhail Sridharan, Richard Torney, Marlies Zeisler
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