



UNDER THE GABLES

Volume XXII, Number 3

Winter 2017-18



Architectural Styles of West Marin

A Renewed Exhibit at the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History
Through February 2018

JACK MASON MUSEUM OF WEST MARIN HISTORY

Inverness Way at Park Avenue, Inverness Phone 415-669-1099 www.jackmasonmuseum.org

NEW EXHIBIT AT THE JACK MASON MUSEUM

The exhibit, called "Architectural Styles of West Marin," was curated by Mary Cardwell and Corwin Mocine. It originally was shown in 1990 and was the ninth exhibit the Museum produced. It shows many of the distinctive houses of the area in a wide range of styles from French Renaissance, Italian, Arts and Crafts houses by various architects associated with the Bay Region Movement including Ernest Coxhead. There are examples of modern architects including Jack Hilmer, Theodore Bernardi and Dmitri Velansky. The exhibit also features some of the homes built on pilings over Tomales Bay. The exhibit will run from November 20, 2017 to end of February 2018. Join us for an open house reception on Sunday, December 3 from 1-4 pm.



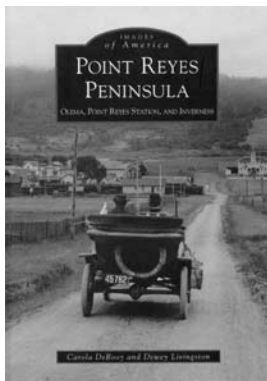
Curators Mary Cardwell and Corwin Mocine in 1990

Mary Cardwell came to the Bay Area in the early 1940s to study architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. There she met and married Kenneth H. Cardwell, at that time an architectural student at the East Bay campus. She raised five children and worked closely with her husband, a practicing architect and member of the faculty of the School of Architecture at UC Berkeley. The Cardwells purchased a home in Inverness' First Valley in the 1950s and both have been actively involved in the Jack Mason Museum.

Corwin Mocine graduated from UC Berkeley in 1935 with a degree in landscape architecture. Scant demand for landscape architects during the depression led to city planning, where during his long and distinguished career, Mocine served as City Planner for Phoenix, Berkeley, and Oakland. Later he became head of the city planning department at his Berkeley alma mater. A long time summer resident of West Marin, Mocine and his wife, Betty, established a permanent residence in Inverness when retired in 1975.

RESEARCH IN THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES

An appointment is needed to do research at the museum. Please call Meg Linden at 415-663-1488 or Dewey Livingston at 415-669-7706.



"POINT REYES PENINSULA"

Copies signed by the authors, Carola DeRooy and Dewey Livingston are available at Museum Open Houses and from the Archives for only \$20.00. The proceeds benefit the Museum.

ON THE COVER:

*Highland Lodge as it appeared in 1914,
photographed by noted Inverness
photographer Eva Van Valkenburgh.*

JACK MASON MUSEUM COMMITTEE OF THE INVERNESS FOUNDATION

Tom Branam, Chair
Gray Brechin
Andrew Buckingham
Carola DeRooy
Loretta Farley
Meg Linden
Dewey Livingston
Ann Read

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mary Cardwell
Gyanne Enquist
Mary Kroninger
Vivian Mazur
Jenefer Merrill
Connie Morse

HONORARY MEMBER

Barbara Mason McClellan

THE JACK MASON MUSEUM OF WEST MARIN HISTORY IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE INVERNESS FOUNDATION

Under the Gables
is written and edited by
Meg Linden and designed
by Dewey Livingston

Inquiries:

415-669-1099
info@jackmasonmuseum.org
www.jackmasonmuseum.org

MARY FLORENCE BURRIS AND THE HIGHLAND LODGE, INVERNESS

by Meg Linden with contributions from Patricia A. McCurdy

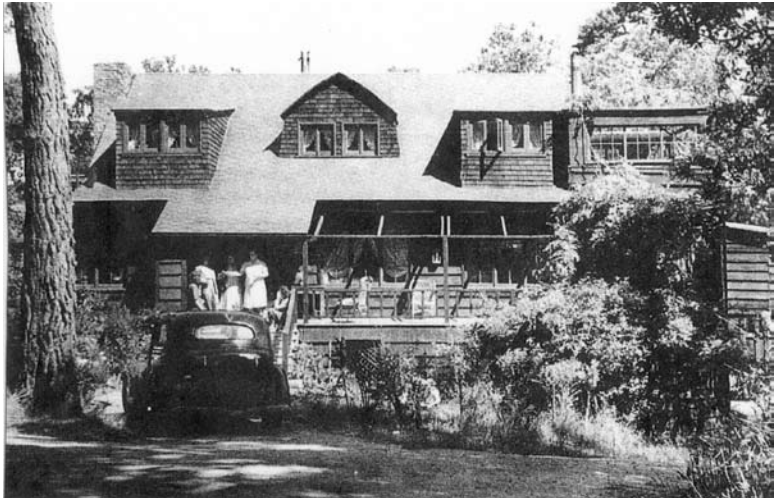
MARY WAS BORN on August 26, 1856 in Dove's Nest, Middletown, Delaware, daughter of Mary Jane Crawford and Nehemiah Burris, both born in Delaware, although she probably was of Scottish ancestry. She had one older sister Sarah and three brothers, Jonathan Fletcher and Martin, both older and Eugene, three years younger. She grew up on a farm and probably worked on the farm. However, she had a good education. By 1877 her eldest brother Jonathan Fletcher, also known as John F., had moved to Oakland, where he was a Professor at California Military Academy. Although there is no proof it is easy to assume that Mary went to visit her eldest brother and his family in Oakland.

From Oakland Mary became interested in Inverness. She started buying property there. She eventually owned Lots 1-7 in Block Ten as well as Lot A, although the only actual deed we have is dated 1903, when she bought lot 7 in block 10 from Julia Shafter Hamilton and James Chester Shafter. The deed is dated October 1, 1903 and was recorded January 30, 1906. On her property she built the Highland Lodge, a two-story house which she immediately set up as a full-board hotel. Several years later, probably 1908 she built another two-story house nearby which served as her own home and the residence for staff for the Lodge.

Most often the staff was comprised of her own relatives. Her niece Mabel L. Reed was a schoolteacher who helped out during her summer vacations (see sidebar). Another much younger niece, Grace Gertrude Burris arrived at age 12 after the

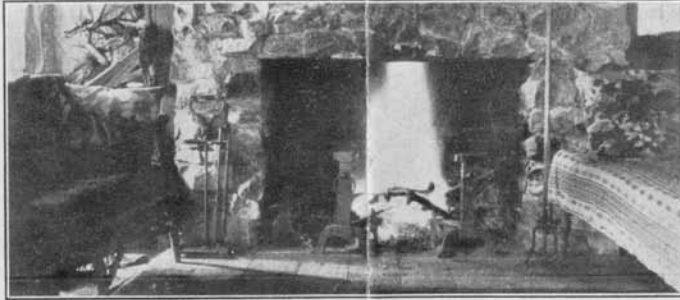


Mary Burris at her Highland Lodge, courtesy of Patricia A. McCurdy



Highland Lodge in its heyday.

1906 earthquake destroyed her family home in San Francisco, as did her much older brother William Wadsworth Burris, age 22. They both helped their aunt run the Lodge. Eventually Mary put Grace through teachers' college in San Francisco and she taught in the one-room Marshall School for about two years, between 1915 and 1917. Later she became teacher and then principal of Belvedere School.



"Lang May Your Lum Reek"

Highland Lodge Offers You

GOOD FOOD . . . VARIED MENUS . . . SPECIAL DIETS

Sleeping Porches and Comfortable Cottages.

OUT-DOOR RECREATIONS

**Tennis, Fishing, Hiking, Boating,
Horseback Riding
Swimming**

Safe Beaches for Small Children



"Breakfast Is Served"

RATES: American Plan, \$3.00 to \$4.00 per day, per person; Weekly \$21.00 and up. Rates for Families. Hot water in all rooms, day or night.

PHONE INVERNESS 24—MAKE RESERVATIONS.

INVERNESS
in
"Marvelous Marin"

**HIGHLAND
LODGE**

MRS. LUCIAN KNIGHT



**On The
DRAKE HIGHWAY
60 Minutes from San Francisco**

Mary, known as "Aunt Mollie" to both her family and those who stayed at the Lodge, was an excellent cook. Family stories relate how Mary often rowed her small boat across Tomales Bay to buy groceries in Marshall to stock the kitchen. Many couples and families returned year after year to stay with her at Highland Lodge for a week, or even for the whole summer. Most hotels in West Marin placed ads in the San Francisco and sometimes in the Sacramento newspapers during May, in order to fill their rooms for the summer. Mary rarely did. Word of mouth as well as returning visitors kept her establishment comfortably filled every year. However, in 1909, she advertised in *Vacation 1909*, a Northwestern Pacific Railroad pamphlet, stating Highland Lodge is open only to those who give satisfactory references. The rate to stay at the Lodge was advertised at \$2.50 per day, or \$10.00 and upwards per week. A later flyer for the Lodge indicates Bed and Full Board was \$21.00

Mary Burris published inviting brochures for her Highland Lodge, above. Below, Mary's niece Grace Gertrude Burris arrived at age 12 after the 1906 earthquake destroyed her family home in San Francisco, and helped her aunt run the Lodge. Photo courtesy of Patricia A. McCurdy





a week. About 1915 she built a small cabin nearby and in 1916 she added an outdoor sleeping porch to the Lodge as well as building another cabin. The porch was eventually glassed in. In 1919 a third cottage was built to accommodate even more guests. Each cabin included a bathroom.

The guest book from Highland Lodge for 1905 through 1910 gives a wonderful portrait of the families who came summer after summer. A great number of guests were from Berkeley, including University of California professors, artists, architects – both Ernest and his brother Almeric Coxhead, signed, and civic leaders such as James Rolph and Warren G. Harding, who later became President, signed the guest book in 1908.

As Mary grew older, her niece Mabel (by now Mrs. Lucian Knight) took on more and more responsibility and when Mary Florence Burris died on December 3, 1942, Mabel soon closed down the Lodge. The building was sold to John Wolohan, a famous local bandleader in 1943. The building still exists as a private residence.

Mary put Grace, at left, through teachers' college in San Francisco and she taught in the one-room Marshall School for about two years, between 1915 and 1917. Later she became teacher and then principal of Belvedere School. Photo courtesy of Patricia A. McCurdy

MABEL L. REED MARSDEN KNIGHT

The Highland Lodge story refers to Mabel Reed as one of the nieces of Mary Florence Burris, the proprietor of the Lodge and one of her major helpers. Indeed Mabel ran the lodge after her aunt was no longer able. However, she became an interesting Inverness person in her own right. She was born on December 30, 1874 in Maryland, daughter of Sarah S. Burris (Mary Burris's older sister) and Richard R. Reed, and later moved to Oakland. She was a teacher and spent her summers helping her aunt. About 1906 or 1907 she married Joseph Marsden, whose hunting cabin was next door to the Lodge. Joseph was known to stay at the lodge from time to time and enjoy Mary's lovely meals there as well. After Joseph and Mabel married he commissioned Ernest Coxhead to design and build a large house on his property. Joseph had been born in England, but



in 1870 went to the Hawaiian Islands where he became owner of several sugar plantations and a prominent citizen. He was a friend of King Kalakaua and was involved in the turnover of the Hawaiian Islands to the United States. He moved to California in 1899. Their marriage

Continued on page 7

ERNEST COXHEAD'S TIES TO INVERNESS

ERNEST ALBERT COXHEAD, architect, was born in Eastbourne, England on October 1, 1863. He was apprenticed to a civil engineer when he was fifteen years old, and worked with him on public projects and residential developments. In 1883 he went to London and worked for architect Frederic Chancellor who instilled in him an interest in old churches. He was also admitted to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1883 and took night classes at the Architectural Association. He was elected Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1886. In the same year, Coxhead, at that time 23 years old, moved with his older brother, Almeric William Sylvester Coxhead, to Los Angeles, where the two began their architecture practice in January 1887. Almeric ran the business side of things. In 1889 they moved to San Francisco to build six churches in Northern California and in 1890 they opened Coxhead and Coxhead.

To continue with his personal life, about 1892 he designed a home for himself and his brother on Green Street, a simple design using materials with minimum of finishing in order to harmonize with the landscape. Also in 1892 his brother married Mary A. Haskins in Los Angeles and she joined them in the house Ernest built. In 1893 when Episcopal Bishop William Kip, who had commissioned much of Coxhead's church building, died he started to concentrate on residential work in San Francisco and Berkeley. In June 1898 when he was 34 years old he married Helen B. Hawes, age 29 with his architect friend Willis Polk as best man. Their first son, John was born June 13, 1899.



Architect Ernest Coxhead



Sketch of the Coxhead house on Forres

Then they had a daughter Mary born March 13, 1902 and another son Ernest Browning born October 28, 1903. Also about 1903 he designed a home for himself in San Mateo, where Mrs. Coxhead became very active in social affairs. She died on October 13, 1909. By the 1910 Census Ernest was living in a Berkeley rooming house along with his children and his brother Almeric and his wife Mary. In 1911 Ernest was active in developing plans for the Panama Pacific International Exposition, which took place in 1915. After the First World War he spent many months in Le Mans, France giving French architectural students the skills they would need to rebuild their country. He was active in the local architectural community. He was involved in the emergence of the Arts and Crafts style in California, and his designs reflect that style. (This is not the place for a full elaboration of his contribution to this movement.)

His brother died in November 1928, bringing to an end their lifelong partnership. He himself died on March 27, 1933.

The main reason to profile Ernest Coxhead in this issue is because his connection to Inverness. As early as 1905 his and his brother's names appear in the guest book of the Highland Lodge. He built a house in Inverness for the wealthy businessman, Joseph Marsden and his wife Mabel Reed Marsden, one for Josephine Hyde and also one for his brother Almeric and his wife Mary. After Ernest's wife died he often spent summers in Inverness with his children, presumably staying with his brother and his wife. Also there is mention that Ernest and "Bud" went sailing on Tomales Bay. A letter Ruth Colby wrote to Ruth

Rogers refers to “Bud” as Ernest’s nephew and ward but there is no listing of his only brother having any children. There is a 1935 article about a race at the Richmond Yacht Club where Bud Coxhead almost won. The article also refers to E. B. Coxhead so “Bud” is most probably Ernest and Helen’s younger son.



This fine and well-preserved shingled home on the Inverness Mesa was designed by Ernest Coxhead.

Mabel Knight, from page 5

was short lived. In late 1908 Joseph became ill and they moved to Berkeley where they stayed with her mother, Sarah S. Reed. He died unexpectedly of heart disease in late May 1909.

In 1915 Mabel married Lucian Whitman Knight in a small private ceremony. Knight was a prominent San Francisco businessman and member of the Bohemian Club. After he died on February 16, 1949, she remained in Inverness. She was a

founding member of the Inverness Garden Club and served in many capacities including hosting the Primrose Tea in her home a number of times and serving on many committees. She was made an honorary member of the Inverness Yacht Club when it was reconstituted so she must have been a member of the original club. She was also active in Inverness School governance and an amateur painter.

She died July 17, 1960 in Inverness at the age of 86.

POINT REYES STATION HISTORIC WALKING TOURS

The regularly scheduled Saturday tours have ended for the winter season, but if you have a group of 5-10 people who would like a tour and are willing to pay \$10 a head, special tours can be arranged. We may not be able to include a youth guide but we will try. Please call Meg Linden, 415-663-1488 or email info@jackmasonmuseum.org to arrange one.

Support the new book by Dewey Livingston!

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, DEWEY HAS BEEN been studying and writing about the history of the Point Reyes Peninsula, Olema Valley, Tomales Bay and our local towns for more than 30 years. Now he is writing the definitive history of this remarkable and historic place, to be published by the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History. The 300-page book will provide a wealth of new information. Would you consider making a tax-deductible contribution to this project? Donations of any size can be mailed to the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History, P.O. Box 94, Inverness, CA 94937. Please write your check to “Jack Mason Museum” with “Book fund” in the memo line.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History
P. O. Box 94
Inverness, CA 94937

www.jackmasonmuseum.org

An affiliate of the Inverness Foundation

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 5
Inverness, CA
94937

Check out the Inverness Foundation's new website, and be sure to join if you are not a member! The IF is the Jack Mason Museum's parent organization.
www.invernessassociation.org



Architectural Styles of West Marin

Exhibit open through February 2018
during Inverness Library hours

Join us for an open house reception
on Sunday, December 3 from 1-4 pm.