

UNDER THE GABLES

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Spring 2018



Social and Cultural Organizations of West Marin

**A New Exhibit at the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History
April 15 through August 15, 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 "Social and Cultural Organizations of West Marin" is curated by Tom Branan and Meg Linden. It focuses mainly on the buildings used to house these organizations including the churches and schools as well as the Druids Halls and various "Community Centers," most of which did not have that name but served that function. There are far too many organizations to feature all of them. This exhibit represents a sampling. Previous exhibits have focused on some such as the Inverness Garden Club and the Inverness Yacht Club. The exhibit is open any time the Inverness Public Library is open (Monday 3-9 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Friday 3 – 6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. It will run from April 15 through August 15. Please join us for an Open House on Sunday April 15, 2018 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Tom Branan spent twenty-five years researching and writing about the California Legislature and California's public retirement systems. He moved to Inverness in 1994. He is Chair of the Museum Committee and also a member of the Inverness Foundation/Inverness Association Board.

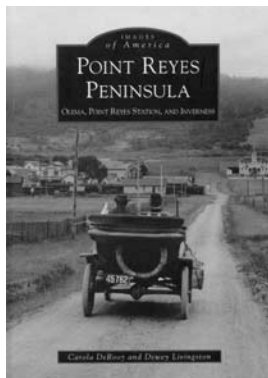
Meg Linden is a retired librarian who has lived in Inverness Park since July 1971. She was also a history and political science major at college and has been a part of the Museum Committee since 2007. In addition to cataloging the collection she has prepared many of the exhibits, helps to answer research inquiries and handles the finances of the Committee.

RESEARCH IN THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES

An appointment is needed to do research at the museum.
Please call 415-669-1099 to set up a visit.

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"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:

The Foresters Hall after it had become Bill and Jeanne Booras's Sandcastle gallery. The stately hall was built in 1916.

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

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COMMUNITY CENTERS IN WEST MARIN

by Meg Linden

MANY DIFFERENT PLACES have served the function of “community center” for the various villages of West Marin. Point Reyes Station is the only one that finally built a complex especially to be a community center. More of that later. (We are not including Bolinas, Stinson Beach or Tomales in this article.)

INVERNESS

In 1909, Attilio Martinelli made one more purchase on the main street of Inverness and built a two story building. The bottom floor was a candy store and on the second floor there were living quarters for the family that ran the store, as well as a large room that was used for community events. When that building burned down in late 1948, it had become a bar, and its replacement was a restaurant/bar. Some organizations that had dinner meetings met there. Also, the school had many organizations using their space after school hours for meetings, social events, fundraisers and other activities. For example, the Inverness Garden Club held monthly meetings at the school in the late 1940s and also held their Christmas parties there. In the 1960s the Inverness Improvement Association (later Inverness Association) met at the school and there in 1966 the Inverness Foundation was born. In the 1982 disaster the school served as the Red Cross Center.

The Inverness Yacht Club, which had been disbanded in 1940, was reorganized and reactivated in 1949. It served as a community center for some organizations besides itself. In 1950 the Inverness Garden Club bought a 2-acre lot near Dream Farm and planned to build a club house for their organization which would also be available to other groups as well. Although they started a building fund, they were not successful in raising enough money to build on their lot. Also, in 1960 their emphasis switched to raising money for scholarships so local students could attend college or trade schools. In 1971 they sold the lot to Audubon Canyon Ranch

for \$10,000 and it is now the William Page Shields Salt Marsh study area, by the Inverness Motel. It was Shields’ donation to the club which provided the original purchase money.

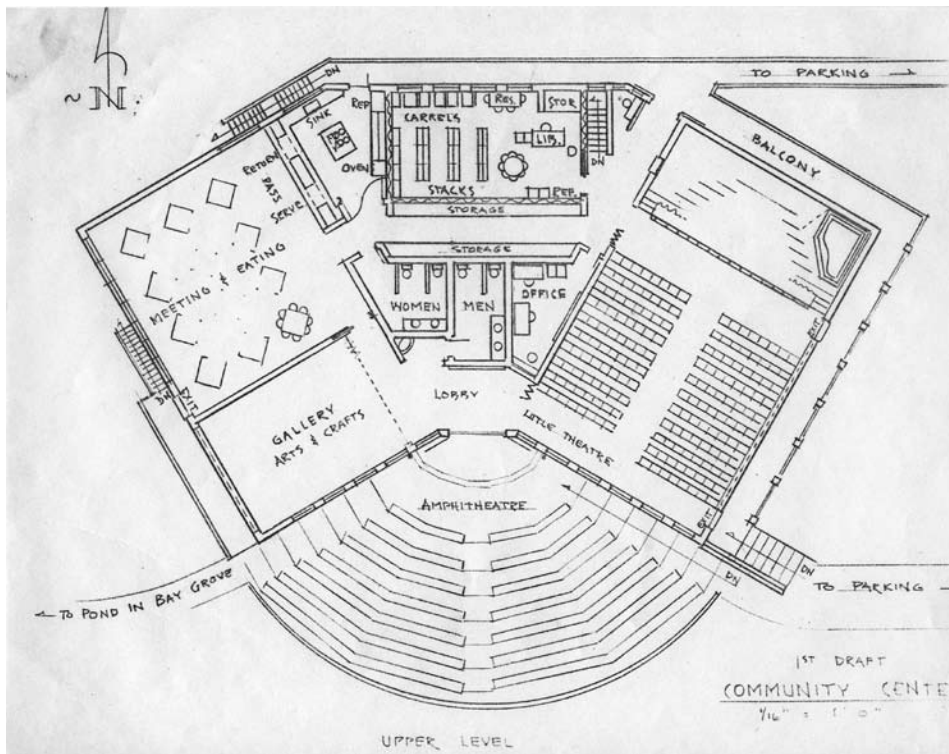
In 1951, when St. Columba’s purchased the Frick mansion for their church, there was talk of also using it as community center. In effect it was, since many organizations rented the basement for meeting space; Inverness Garden Club and AA meetings are just two examples. It also served



The Frick mansion became St. Columba’s Episcopal Church and is also used sometimes a community center.

as the site of a mobile TB testing service in the 1950s. In 1966 an outdoor amphitheater was built and the West Marin Music Festival held many of its concerts there. West Marin Elementary School held some of their graduations there in the 1970s. During the floods and mudslides of January 1982, it became a community center for real, serving meals to those displaced by the floods and to those who had no electricity for cooking at home. St. Columba’s also served as a clearing house for emergency information and services. Recently, the amphitheater was refurbished and several plays have been performed there.

In the 1960s the Inverness Public Utility District built a volunteer fire department which has a small



Land given by David and Nora Plant was first held by Pocket House, Inc. and then given to the Inverness Foundation. Harold Wagstaff drew up a plan for a community center on the property.

room which is used from time to time for meetings of various organizations.

In 1971 the Inverness Improvement Association discussed turning Brock Schreiber's boathouse into a community center and indicated that the County had given permission to improve access to the property and to build a small parking lot. This would have fit nicely with the already owned Children's Beach, purchased in 1946, which extended on either side of the boathouse.

In 1973 Del Bender died and the Inverness Association and Foundation considered buying his property at Dream Farm for a site for a community center and nursery school (at a cost of \$60,000). However, the members defeated the proposal.

In 1979, David and Nora Plant gave the town of Inverness a 9-acre parcel adjacent to the old Inverness store complex, in memory of their son Peter. For a while it was managed by a separate corporation, Pocket House of Inverness, Inc. but in 1984 it was transferred to the Inverness Foundation. Many people hoped that a community center could be built on the property. A questionnaire was circulated asking people what they most wanted in such a center. Based on the responses Architect

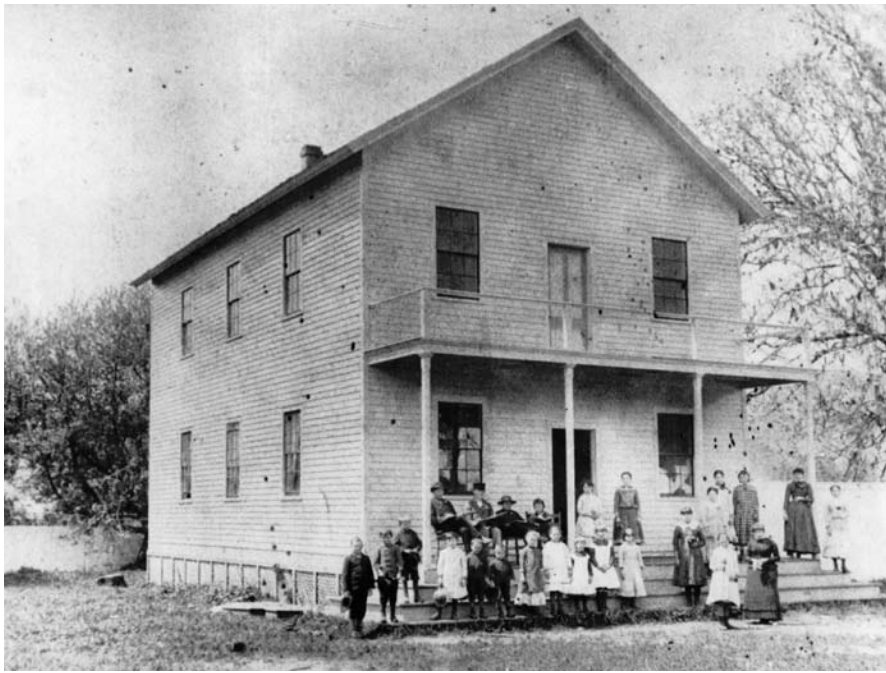
Harold Wagstaff was commissioned to draw up a proposal of how the land might be developed. This was presented to the 1986 annual meeting of the Inverness Association and Foundation but no action was taken. Nothing was built on the land, now known as Plant Park and maintained by the Inverness Garden Club. There are a few picnic tables and a few chairs.

In 1986 the energy of Inverness was turned to making Jack Mason's dream of turning his house into the Inverness Library and museum. The reading room of the library also serves as the museum display space

and is used by some organizations for their meetings, for example a Stamp Club, a computer users group, quilters and Alcoholics Anonymous. Inverness never did get a community center but uses effectively a number of places to maintain a tight sense of community.

OLEMA

In early years various organizations met in hotels and in the schoolhouse, built in 1866. Eventually some of the organizations became large enough to have their own buildings which also were used by others in the community. The major examples are the Druid's Hall (see separate story), the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Catholic Church. Methodist Episcopal preachers came to Olema regularly starting about 1862 when they held services in one of the Olema hotels. Starting in 1866, they began to meet on the upper floor of the Garcia (Olema) school. The Catholics also held services there, probably on alternating Sundays. Eventually both groups built their own chapels, the Methodists in 1891 on land donated by Payne Shafter. The Methodist church folded in the late 1930s and during World War II the building was



Olema's first schoolhouse on Shafter Lane, south of town.

used for officer housing. It burned to the ground in 1946. The Catholics built on land purchased from Angelo Pedrotti in 1892. It was called Our Lady of Lourdes, and in 1909 it became Sacred Heart. The Catholic church closed in 1923 when what was left of the congregation joined the church in Point Reyes Station. In 1967, a new modern Catholic church, also Sacred Heart, was built next to the old Catholic rectory on Highway One.

Olema had a reputation for drinking, but it also had, for a short while, an active chapter of the Sons of Temperance, who met in the school house and later in one of the hotels.

The Olema Grove of Druids was formed in 1881 and built their own hall in 1885. In addition to serving the Druids, many other events were held there, including school plays, musical performances and meetings of the Teachers Institute. This was a gathering of all the teachers of the county and the 1895 Institute received extensive coverage in the *Marin Journal* of May 5, including the full text of the address by Payne J. Shafter and a sketch of the Druid's hall, of Shafter and of William L. Oge, the Superintendent of Public Schools. It was also the polling place for Olema.

Serving the entire area, the Olema Cemetery Association was organized as a public organization in 1881 and in 1882 Joseph Bloom, a Druid, deeded a portion of his ranch to the association. There was a special corner for burial of Druids.

POINT REYES PENINSULA

On the peninsula, the Post Office at F Ranch served as a social and community center as people stopped to visit while collecting their mail. Another community center, although serving primarily the Portuguese immigrants, was the Irmandade do Divino

Espirito Santo (Brotherhood of the Divine Spirit; I.D.E.S.) Hall located on the N Ranch at the intersection of Sir Francis Drake and Home Ranch Road. It was built in the 1890s and served as a polling place and meeting hall. Church services (Catholic) were held there as well as an annual Holy Ghost festival which lasted all day and well into the next morning. Ranchers and others do-

Continued on next page



The Hall family and friends enjoy an event at the I.D.E.S. Hall grounds in the 1930s. (Point Reyes National Seashore Archives)



The ballroom at the Grandi building was the site of bazaars and other fund-raisers as well as dances and school graduations.



The Dance Palace was founded in 1971 in the old Palace Food Market (top, now Cabaline), and offered a public place for classes, performances, meetings and children's programs.

nated food and orchestras were hired to play for the dancing. Use of the building as a community center stopped about 1940 when the new owner of the ranch did not honor the verbal agreements made decades earlier.

POINT REYES STATION

In the early years there were few clubs and organizations in Point Reyes Station. Such as were there met in the hotel annex, built by Mr. Hewitt. Indeed, from 1905 until 1916 the annex bore the sign "F of A" and was used by the Foresters of America (see separate story). Organizations later used the ballroom in the Grandi Building which was also a mercantile and a hotel. For example, the Presbyterian Church is said to have first met in the ballroom, at the instigation of Hilda Grandi, co-owner Reno's wife. Eventually they built their own small church in 1950 and expanded with a new church building in 1985. In a search of the newspaper for 1950, we found the Lions Club meeting there, and a church guild and the Blue Birds both had food sales on different days in March.

In 1916, the Foresters of America built a two story building on the north side of town which served in a number of ways as a community center. Starting in 1919 it was the site of family movie nights and later there were huge parties to celebrate such things as the new Green Bridge and the naming of the main highway to West Marin as Sir Francis Drake Highway. The Boy Scout troop also met there. During World War II, it was fitted out as a hospital although never used as such. In Spring 1950, The Foresters hall had both the Catholic Church's St. Patrick's Day card party and the local community (Presbyterian) church holding a slide show of post-war Germany. The Olema Volunteer Fire Department held a Ball there. Even after it was sold to Jeanne and Bill Booras and became the Sandcastle gallery it was used occasionally



West Marin Lions Club bought the Red Barn (the old railroad maintenance building) from the Vonson family in 1955 with the intent to create a community center. For generations it was the venue of the West Marin Junior Livestock Show, seen at left in 1981.



for community events.

In 1955 the West Marin Lions Club purchased a 3-acre site from the Vonson family for a proposed Pt. Reyes community center and permanent site of the Junior Livestock Show, which was started in 1949. That site included the old Northwestern Pacific Railroad engine house (roundhouse). After renovation work it was officially dedicated as the West Marin Community Center in 1961. In addition to Lions Club dinners and meetings it was the official home of "Western Weekend," which consisted of a junior livestock show and other 4-H projects, a town parade, a queen, a dance and a barbecue, usually on the first weekend in June. It was also used for school graduations, blood donor drives, 4-H meetings, countless fund-raisers, dances and parties. The main section consisted of a large hall with a snack bar area and moveable stage. The section on the right was the "Over 21 bar area" and which for a period of time in the '80s functioned as the "Head Start" daycare center (toddler equipment had to be put away at close of each day). By 1966 the Lions had transformed it into a youth center, for youths 13 to 20 years old, who needed a free membership card to enter. They

had pool, ping pong, volleyball, cards, dancing to recorded music, and a strict set of rules to follow. There were still many community uses of the "Red Barn." For example, the Inverness Garden Club held one of their famous Primrose Teas in the barn and often had their holiday luncheon there. The radio station KWMR started in a corner of the barn. The Community Thanksgiving Dinners were held there for many years. It was sold into private hands and the "Red Barn" was then painted green.

In 1971 the Dance Palace was started in what is now Cabaline. It included dance and theater performances, as well as classes for all ages. After many tribulations they were able to buy the old Catholic church in Point Reyes Station and the whole block on which it sat. In 1989 they constructed the main building. In 1991 the lobby connecting the new building to the former Catholic Church was completed and Point Reyes Station had a real community center. In 1995 it served as the emergency center to coordinate services during the Mount Vision fire and recently it suspended its regular activities again to serve as a shelter for refugees from the Sonoma County fires.

The United Ancient Order of Druids

by Tom Branam

THIS IS A MODERN fraternal and benevolent society which takes its name from the Druids of ancient Gaul and Britain. Those Druids were the religious leaders and judges of their people. They gathered in sacred groves of oaks, and their temples were most often comprised of huge stones set in circles in the earth.

The Druids in the United States

It was almost two thousand years later when the modern order of Druids appeared. That was when the Grand Lodge of the Ancient Order of Druids was formed in London in 1781. Two years later the Grand Lodge began chartering "Junior Primitive Lodges" around Britain.

In 1839, a new Grove of The United Ancient Order of Druids was founded in New York, and the Order has continued in this country since then.

Druids in California

The first Druids Grove established in California was founded in Hang Town (Placerville) in 1860. This group was founded to help the families of miners killed or injured in the gold fields. There were at one time over 200 Druid Groves active in California but, like many other fraternal organizations, Druid membership has dwindled in the last fifty years or so. There are now 13 Groves in California, from Bakersfield in the south to Point Arena in the north.

Druids in California are organized into three types of organizations: Groves, Circles and Chapters. The Groves are the original male-only groups. The Circles are the women's auxiliary, and the Chapters are groups where men and women meet together. The modern Order describes itself as "a moral, social, and beneficial society" whose "principles do not conflict with any of the established systems of religion" and are compatible with "the peace and welfare of the State."

The importance of this self-description can be appreciated more by looking at the number of orders and secret societies which arose in the nine-



The Olema Druids Hall, built in 1885, was sold to private owners when the organization disbanded in 1970.

teenth century and were dedicated to the exclusion of other groups in society, such as Catholics, Jews, Blacks, Irish, and Asians, to name only a few of the targeted groups.

In contrast, the Druids declare that their "object is to unite men together, irrespective of nation, tongue, or creed, for mutual protection and improvement...and to foster among its members the spirit of fraternity and good fellowship." And finally, they say that their system of "dues and benefits provides for the relief of the sick and destitute, the burial of the dead, and the protection of the widows and orphans of deceased members."

The history of the Druids in West Marin seems to bear witness to these stated objectives.

The Druids in West Marin

Nicasio – The Druids (Grove No. 42) of this community found a home in 1867 when William Miller completed construction of his the Nicasio General Store and Druids Hall. The general store occupied the ground floor of this building, with the Druids Hall on the second. The Nicasio Grange No.155 also used the upstairs for their meetings. This part of the building was divided into several rooms for meetings, social gatherings and dances. These dances were quite popular and were often

reported on in San Francisco newspapers. One such article from 1905 reported that, "A large crowd of merry dancers attended."

In 1885, the Nicasio Druids bought the building from Mr. Miller. They continued the use of the top floor for their meetings and leased out the commercial space below, continuing its use as a general store. In addition, the downstairs contained a Wells Fargo office, a post office and a popular saloon. Just outside and to the side of the store was a public bocce ball court, maintained by the store employees.

In 1934, the Druids build a new dance hall over their bocce ball courts. When the original Druids Hall and general store burned in 1952, the dance hall survived and remains a social center in Nicasio to this day, hosting numerous social events such as the annual MALT art show and sale.

By providing the upstairs meeting space for itself, the Grange, and other social groups, along with the varied commercial and alcoholic offerings downstairs, the Nicasio Druids provided both a social and economic center for the people of Ni-

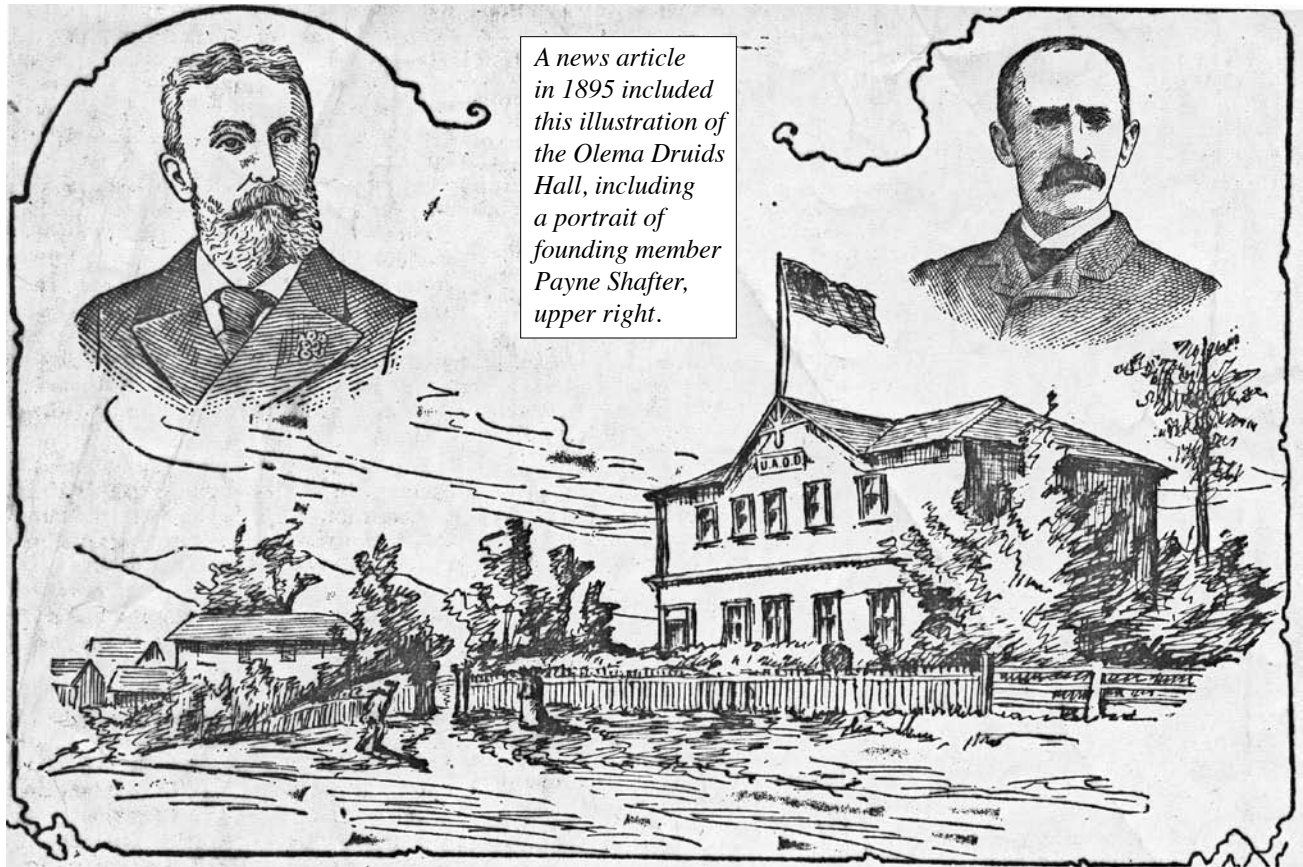


The Nicasio Druids Hall, seen here in 1895, shared a building with the general store. (Nicasio Historical Society)

casio. It is the only one of the three West Marin Druids groups that is still in operation.

Bolinas – The Druids of Bolinas (Duxbury Grove #26) established their Grove in 1874 and received their charter the following year. They dedicated their newly completed hall in 1879 with a Grand Ball and dinner for the public – the first of many

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Foresters of America

by Tom Branan and Meg Linden

THE FORESTERS OF AMERICA established their first “Court,” as their local organizations were known, in Point Reyes Station in 1905. However, the Foresters were already well established internationally before that.

The Ancient Order of Foresters was first established in Britain in 1834. It was both a social and a welfare organization. Coming as it did well before the institution of government-provided health insurance, the Order offered sick benefits to its working-class members.

In 1874, the American and Canadian branches left the (British) Ancient Order of Foresters and established their own independent organizations or Courts. Forester Courts were established throughout this nation, California and the Bay Area, with the Point Reyes Court of the Foresters of America #219 being formally instituted in the summer of 1905. As can be seen in the adjacent photo, the hotel annex building in the front left has “FOA” displayed on its front. The Foresters rented this building as their social and fraternal headquarters for the next decade.

From their beginning, the Point Reyes Station Foresters played an important role in the social life of the community. To celebrate its founding, the Court threw its first Grand Ball in August of 1905. There was dancing until midnight then dinner was served for 70 couples, after which dancing resumed until dawn.

The *Marin Journal*, reporting on that event, declared the Ball to be “both a social and financial success”, and noted that “the new Foresters’ Hall overflowed with pleasure seekers of a truly cosmopolitan nature.”

At the second annual Grand Ball, held in the fall of 1906, a Foresters official from San Francisco discussed the relief work done by the Point Reyes Court after the great earthquake, and singled out the financial secretary, Mr. Grandi, for special notice. Then, accord-



The Foresters originally met in the hotel annex, seen in this circa 1907 photo to the left of the 1880s Point Reyes Hotel. Note their initials on the second floor. Both these buildings were moved aside in 1914 to make way for the Grandi Building.

ing to the *Sausalito News*, he went on to declare the Point Reyes Court to be “the youngest, most energetic and one of the strongest in the country.”

Bay area newspapers make it clear that dances were organized by both the men of the Court and by the ladies auxiliary Circle for decades to come, with the Grand Ball being the annual highlight. At times, an orator would hold forth on the issues of the day.

In 1916, the Foresters began work on their new hall on the north side of town. The impressive two-towered structure is still in place. An official Notice of Completion was published in the February 8, 1917 issue of the *Marin Journal*. Once the Foresters had moved into that building, they added an outside barbecue to their annual Ball. There are a number of references to the ways in which the hall served as a Community Center in the accompanying article. The men appear to be less and less active in the use of the building and the Companions of the Forest, Circle 1018, the



The Foresters constructed their own building on Mesa Road facing the railroad tracks, as seen in this 1920s photo.

women's auxiliary, used the building more and more. In 1940 they purchased it from the men. In 1949 the women put on a carnival in August which the next year, in cooperation with the Lions Club, became what we now know as "Western Weekend." Sometime in 1960 the building was

sold to Charles Mel who had plans to break it up into apartments. This did not happen and it was eventually sold to Jeanne and William Booras who used it both as their home and as a shop, the Sandcastle (see front cover). It now has been broken up into apartments.

Druids

Continued from page 9

such events. The Bolinas hall was used by political parties for rallies and meetings, by local police for dances and fundraisers and by the women of Bolinas for Japanese tea parties. In addition, the "Catholic Ladies of Bolinas" held their Harvest Home Festival and Dance events in the Druids Hall for the benefit of their church. Another popular event was the periodic presentation by local school children of music, plays and readings of the works of such authors as Mark Twain. The Bolinas hall, like the other Druids halls in West Marin was also used for wedding receptions and large family events.

Olema – This Grove (#39) was instituted on April 7, 1881. It started at Nelson's hotel and in the early years met at the Garcia School (which was in Olema on Shafter Lane). Its hall was dedicated on October 23, 1885 with a ball and dinner, which a local paper declared was, "one of the grandest that has ever been called together in this county by any similar occasion."

The site of the hall was the gift of Mr. Joseph Bloom, while Mr. Joseph Codoni served as the

chairman of the building committee. About three hundred guests were served with supper that opening night by the Druids in their new hall. Mr. Payne Shafter, called the "squire of Olema" by Jack Mason, gave a short address in honor of the works of the Druids. The building was dedicated free from debt. The use of this hall by other organizations is covered in the Olema section of the Community Centers of West Marin article.

Referring to a ball at the Druids Hall in the summer of 1895, a Sausalito newspaper reported that, "About all of Olema turned out to attend the ball...." Likewise, the *Marin Journal* reported in 1901 that the "Druid's ball at Olema Druid's hall last Friday evening was well attended and proved to be a social event long to be remembered." This Grove was disbanded in 1970.

To conclude, we see that the Druids of West Marin, along with their halls, served an important role through the late 19th and early 20th centuries as social, charitable and cultural centers for each of their communities. However, it seems that as society, transportation, and the role of government changed, the role of the Druids diminished.

Boy Scouts in West Marin

by Tom Branam

THROUGHOUT THE 20TH century, the Northern California Councils of the Boy Scouts of America have provided summer camping areas for their scouts. In the early 20th century, two of those councils, the Silverado Council and the Luther Burbank Council, established their campgrounds in Marin County.

Camp Inverness

There were two such camps in Marin, but the one of most interest here was the first, Camp Inverness, which served boys from several Northern California counties, including Napa, Sonoma, Solano and Mendocino (but not Marin), beginning in the early 1920s. This camp was located in what is now known as the Second Valley neighborhood in Inverness, but which was then a large grassy area surrounded by trees.

Camp Inverness was in use in June and July of each year, with each group of scouts there for two weeks. It was a popular place to camp with up to 150 scouts or more there for each two-week period. The scouts studied and worked for merit badges on such topics as nature studies, music, first aid and life-saving. In addition, there were many organized events outside the camp, such as hikes up Mount Vision, visits to the seashore and to Olema, as well as field trips to the Point Reyes Lighthouse.

When Camp Inverness opened, conditions were quite Spartan, to say the least. The boys and staff lived in canvas tents or teepees, ate meals prepared by a mobile military field kitchen, and used outdoor latrines. One of the largest early improvements in the scout camp came in 1925 with the installation of hot and cold fresh water



The Boy Scouts of America's Camp Inverness hosted troops from around the Bay Area; here, the Vallejo band prepares to play for an outdoor community concert.

showers. Formerly, all bathing was done in the salt water of Tomales Bay. After the installation of the showers, scouts still had to wash up in the bay but then could rinse off in a warm shower. Local newspapers hailed this advance in youthful cleanliness.

Parents and others interested in the scout encampment were invited to attend on special visiting days. Lunch was served to visitors on that day and the scouts put on demonstrations of skills they had learned.

By January of 1931, it was known that Camp Inverness would soon no longer be available to the Boy Scouts. This was confirmed by an article in the July 3rd, 1931, edition of the *Sausalito News* which contained an announcement about planned 4th of July festivities in West Marin, stating that, "One of the interesting events of the day will be the public inspection of the Boy Scouts' new camp on the Shafter property at Olema. The site of the camp is one of the oldest settlements of Marin County belonging formerly to Payne Shafter...."

Camp Bear Valley did not last through the Depression. The site is now owned by the Vedanta Society in Olema.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE LIONS CLUB

by Meg Linden

THE LOCAL CHAPTER of the Lions Club has been in Point Reyes Station at least since 1930. At that point it was called Sir Francis Drake Lions Club, and Dr. F. M. Cannon was the President. The Northwestern Pacific Railroad gave them a passenger car and they arranged to move it to what is now the Point Reyes Storage facility, across the street from the second Black School, and to turn it into a library.

In 1931 and for several years afterwards the Lions Club was the main organizer of the 4th of July celebrations in Point Reyes Station. These were elaborate, starting a few days before with a grand ball at the Foresters Hall, the next day motorboat races at Millerton, and on the day itself, a baseball game pitting the Lions Club baseball team against another Marin County Lions club team. This was followed by a barbeque outside the Grandi Building and races at the Genazzi ranch. In 1934 they announced a "free venison feed" to accompany the dedication of their park in Point Reyes Station. Unfortunately the location of this park was not reported.

At some point before 1957, the name of the organization was changed to the West Marin Lions Club. Many of its later activities are profiled in the



The West Marin Lions Club sponsored the Junior Livestock Show at its Red Barn for many years. Youth from around the region showed their animals and home projects, and the weekend was capped with the "Western Weekend" parade and barbecue.

article about Community Centers, Point Reyes Station section, when it owned the "Red Barn" and managed it as both a community center and a youth center. The Lions are still active, meeting monthly at the Station House Café.

THE ROTARY CLUB by Kathy Hartzell

The Rotary Club of West Marin was founded in 2005 and for years met weekly in the "mess" at the Coast Guard Facility in Point Reyes Station. When this facility phased out, the club accepted the hospitality of Toby's Feed Barn and has met since then on Wednesday mornings at 8 a.m. in the Gallery.

Rotary has done service projects for Walnut Place and Stockstill House, building sheds and raised planting beds. For years, the club staffed

stations along race routes for West Marin Senior Services for its annual fundraising bicycle race. Annually, every West Marin third grader (from Woodacre to Bolinas and Bodega Bay) receives the gift of an illustrated dictionary from the club. The club raises money for Rotary International's Polio Eradication campaign as well as its initiatives for peace worldwide. Many other endeavors, local and international receive financial support from the Club.

The Sir Francis Drake Association

by Tom Branam

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE was an English sea captain, privateer and explorer who lived from around 1540 until 1596. Queen Elizabeth I eventually made Drake a Vice Admiral in the English Navy and awarded him a knighthood in 1581. He was second-in-command of the English fleet in the battle against the Spanish Armada in 1588 and was given much of the credit for that victory.

His many exploits against the Spanish in both the New and Old Worlds are well-documented and make for excited reading, but it was something else he did that brought about the creation of California's Sir Francis Drake Association. In a voyage which lasted from 1577 to 1580, Drake was the first Englishman to circumnavigate the earth. During this voyage, on June 17 of 1579, Drake landed on the coast of what is now Northern California. He and his crew remained there for 36 days, restocking provisions, and making repairs on their ship, the Golden Hinde.

Though inhabited by friendly Native people, Drake claimed the land in the name of Queen Elizabeth and the Holy Trinity and named it Nova Albion, Latin for "New Britain." His Chaplain, Frances Fletcher conducted the first Protestant prayer service in North America. Drake claimed to have left a brass plate nailed to a large pole on the site of his stay, which named him and declared that the land now belonged to England. (Photo here) When that plate was "rediscovered" in the 1930s, it figured prominently in the discussions of the landing but subsequent metallurgical and other scientific analyses found that it had been made in the 19th or 20th century.

While no doubt remains that Drake did land in California, the question of exactly where he came ashore generated a great deal of heat and contro-

versy throughout the 20th Century since Drakes original diaries disappeared and other first-hand accounts were not published until many decades after the voyage. Scholars and others argued for different locations including: 1. Drake's Bay / Drake's Estero 2. Bolinas Bay 3. San Francisco Bay and Bodega Bay among others.

With this background in place, San Francisco Bay Area people interested in the exploits of Drake began to gather informally to discuss them in 1910. Then, in 1912, they came together to form the Sir



First meeting of the SFDA, Drakes Bay, September 1, 1914

Francis Drake Association. The Association was dedicated to learning and teaching about Drake, to determining where he landed in the Bay Area, making supportive connections with English historians and museums, and to creating a memorial to his landing. In addition, there was a strong social aspect to the Association, with organized annual group "pilgrimages" to Drakes Beach for picnics, speeches and historical reenactments.

The Association came to support the contention of California Coast Survey geographer George Davidson that the landing site was out below Chimney Rock (where the Coast Guard lifeboat station is now). With that in mind, the Association erected a stone cross dedicated to Drake and his landing across the bay facing Chimney Rock. In addition, the Association erected a large redwood pole at Drake's Beach after nailing a replica of the brass



A monument to Drake's landing was installed at Drakes Beach in the early 1950s.

plate to it. However, by the late 1940s, the Sir Francis Drake Association was somewhat in decline, with few remaining founding members, though they continued on through the mid-1950s

And not everyone was satisfied that Chimney Rock really was the correct site. In 1949 the Drake Navigators Guild was formed by a group including military veterans such as Fleet Commander Chester Nimitz, who wanted to reexamine all the evidence from a number of new perspectives to try to make a determination about Drake's landing site in 1579. Part of their approach was to bring relevant experts throughout the world together to consider the evidence without preconceived ideas. They weren't convinced that George Davidson's designation was the correct location and in 1956, the Guild reported that Drake's Cove, inside of Drakes Estero was the site where the Golden Hinde had been repaired and where Drake and his men had encamped.

In 2012, the Secretary of the Interior declared that the officially recognized location of Drake's New Albion is Drakes Bay, California by designating the Drakes Bay Historical and Archeological National Historic Landmark.

Dewey's Book Update!

THE MUSEUM'S HISTORIAN DEWEY LIVINGSTON has been studying and writing about the history of the Point Reyes area for more than three decades. For the past two years he has been writing a definitive book to be published by the Jack Mason Museum.

The first half of the manuscript was much bigger than planned. So, we made the decision to split the book into two volumes. This will do at least two good things: allow Dewey to use more historical information gleaned from research for the book (less cutting); and to get the first volume out in a reasonable time (people have been asking!).

Volume One, now due in July, covers the history of our area up to around 1915, including the Miwok and Mexican periods, American pioneers and creation of farms and ranches, development of the towns, the coming of the railroad. The second volume covers the time since, using many voices that tell firsthand of their experiences and stories about family, work, play and what life was like in our beloved area generations ago. The volumes will be quite an addition to our local life and appreciation of this wonderful place we live in.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to this project, donations of any size can be mailed to the museum at P.O. Box 94, Inverness, CA 94937. Please write your check to "Jack Mason Museum" with "Book fund" in the memo line. Thank you!

THE MUSEUM NEEDS VOLUNTEERS FOR ARCHIVAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, OUTREACH, AND COMPUTER RELATED TASKS. PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE MUSEUM, 669-1099.

POINT REYES STATION HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS

The regularly scheduled Saturday tours will not resume until late June, 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.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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www.jackmasonmuseum.org

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Also see the Inverness Foundation's 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

The Museum has a new website:
www.jackmasonmuseum.org.
Check it out!



Social and Cultural Organizations of West Marin

Exhibit open April 15 through August 15, 2018
during Inverness Library hours

Join us for an open house reception
on Sunday, April 15 from 1-4 pm.