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MARIN HISTORY MUSEUM

Newsletter
Summer 2006



Marin History Museum Creates Community Council

To help guide the development of the Marin History Museum's exhibition plans and educational programs, the Museum established a Community Council in January 2006. The Community Council is an advisory panel composed of volunteer community leaders. While taking into consideration the Museum's mission, goals and resources, the Community Council makes recommendations that help Museum staff accomplish the following goals:

- Ensure that MHM is a vibrant community museum that reflects the needs, concerns and history of an ever-changing and evolving county;
- Strategize and promote countywide communication and partnership between various local organizations;
- Expand the Museum's current collections and programs to more accurately represent its constituencies.

Community Council members attend bi-monthly meetings, offer program and exhibition suggestions, and assist in volunteer recruitment and in promoting Museum activities throughout the county. Council

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The Ed Brady Collection

In February 2006, the Marin History Museum acquired the Brady Collection, commonly referred to as Aero Photographers, Inc. (API), from Grethe Brady, widow of API founder Ed Brady. This significant collection contains over 65,000 photographic negatives, which were taken from a small, single-engine aircraft by pilot Ed Brady. These rare images were captured using World War II surplus cameras that Brady inventively mounted to his own plane and operated while in flight. Because Brady was the photographer as well as the pilot, his aerial images were shot at an angle rather than straight down, creating a unique yet readable landscape view. The resulting images are easier to identify and strikingly beautiful.

Ed Brady, a former World War II pilot, and his then partner, Jack Van Wart, founded API in 1954. Neither man was a photographer, but Brady owned his own plane and recognized the need for aerial photography in the rapidly expanding San Francisco Bay Area, as well as throughout California. API began as a strictly two-man operation, with both Brady and Van Wart doing the work in their off-hours from their regular jobs at local radio station KNBC. Located in the former World War II Maranship building in Sausalito, Brady and Van Wart quickly established API as one of the most prolific and state-of-the-art aerial photography companies in the state. After only eight years in business, API

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Ed Brady with his plane and camera equipment, c. 1975. (Photo courtesy of Grethe Brady)

MHM Creates Community Council
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members also evaluate the Museum's program schedule, web site and other activities, as well as advise on methods of addressing community issues.

Presently, the Community Council consists of the following eleven members:

- Carola DeRooy, Museum Archivist, Point Reyes National Seashore
- Michael Dybeck, Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America – Marin Council
- Dr. Betty Goerke, Author and Board Member, Marin Museum of the American Indian
- Karen Hingson, Vice President, Mt. Tam Quilt Guild
- Michael Hingson, National Public Affairs Representative, Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Vinh Q. Luu, Project Director, Community Action Marin
- Brigitte Moran, Executive Director, Marin Farmers' Market Association
- Elisabeth Ptak, Associate Director, Marin Agricultural Land Trust
- Samantha Toffoli, Interpretive Ranger, California State Parks – North Bay District, Marin Sector
- Pat Warren, Staff Coordinator, Marin Women's Commission/Marin Women's Hall of Fame
- Dr. Frances White, President/ Superintendent, College of Marin

In an effort to better represent the diverse neighborhoods and population of Marin County, the Museum is recruiting additional Community Council members this fall. In the meantime, we thank the current Community Council members for all their valuable input and participation! If you happen to know any of these



Aerial view of Angel Island, Tiburon and Marin County, 1971, from the Brady Collection.

key individuals, please feel free to offer your suggestions for how to improve the Museum's connection to your community.

The Ed Brady Collection
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accumulated an extensive archive of images and had a vast client list including realtors, land developers, governmental agencies, engineering firms, lawyers, oil companies, the press and universities. API captured California's boom following World War II and continued to document the rapid development of the land in both Northern and Southern California through the 1980s. From San Diego to Eureka, API photographed the development of these communities and their changing landscapes.

During the early 1960s, API expanded to four full-time staff with two full-time photographers and additional part-time help. Grethe

Brady married Ed Brady in 1972 and took over the business in 1975 after Ed bought Van Wart's share. Grethe had provided limited access to the Brady Collection from her home before deciding earlier this year to donate the collection to the Marin History Museum so that it could be properly preserved, cared for and shared with the public.

The Museum is thrilled to be the recipient of the Brady Collection and profoundly thanks Grethe Brady for her generous donation. The Brady Collection is a tremendous resource for historians, geographers and environmentalists, as well as a visual treasure trove for current business owners, cities and counties. To make this unique collection accessible, the Museum is properly archiving and organizing the large number of negatives and prints. We look forward to sharing the riches of the Brady Collection with our members and the public in the near future.

MHM Sponsors *Photo Day* at Villa Marin

On May 23, volunteers and staff of the Marin History Museum set up shop at Villa Marin, a retirement community in San Rafael, and listened. They listened to the stories told by residents as they shared their family photographs and memories of past times—both remote and recent—in Marin. A professional photographer was on hand to create archival copy prints of the unique visual records brought by the residents. Trained staff and volunteers also were present to record the priceless historical information that accompanied each photograph.

This daylong event involved 14 residents of Villa Marin who shared their family stories, personal memories and snapshots with the Museum. This was the second successful *Photo Day* event sponsored by the Museum, and more are planned.

The photographs and accompanying stories collected at *Photo Day* events are added to the Museum's permanent collection and, eventually, will become a part of the *Family Photo Album* exhibit in the new Marin History Museum. This interactive exhibit will illustrate a central theme of the Museum: that

the stories of Marin County families are an integral part of our history and influential on our future. To honor, understand and draw inspiration from family stories, this interactive, computerized exhibit will display old and new photographs from as many Marin families as possible. Eventually, this exhibit will contain thousands of images from hundreds of families from all backgrounds and all parts of Marin.



E.W. Smith Boot and Shoemaker on B Street in San Rafael, 1895. Shop owner Eugene William Smith, center, is the father of San Rafael native and lifetime resident Eugenia Pitcher-Butts, who shared her family photographs at Villa Marin.

2006 GALA SPONSORS

The Museum held its second annual Gala, *Cruising Through Time*, on May 6, 2006. The evening was a huge success—as measured by the money raised as well as the good times. The Museum honored Arno and Carol Rayner of Tiburon and John and Peggy McCormick of San Rafael at the event for their generous contributions to the Museum's Capital Campaign.

The Museum gratefully acknowledges the following 2006 Cruising Sponsors and Donors.

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Museum Receives California Heritage Council Award

The California Heritage Council, dedicated to preserving and honoring those places and buildings that have given quality and distinction to the cultural life of California, recently recognized the Marin History Museum for its restoration and preservation of the Boyd Gate House, built in 1879. Executive Director Merry Alberigi accepted the award on behalf of the Museum at the Council's 46th Annual Award Ceremony on Thursday, June 22, at the Presidio Golf Club in San Francisco.

Alberigi gratefully acknowledged Museum Board Member and California Heritage Council Member Richard Torney, who nominated the Boyd Gate House for the award. Torney has been instrumental in overseeing the preservation of the building for the past twenty years. Other organizations honored that evening include the Castro Theatre (San Francisco), Napa River Inn/The Still House at Greystone (Napa), San Mateo County Court House and Museum (Redwood City) and Swedenborgian Church (San Francisco).

RECENT GIFTS TO PERMANENT COLLECTION

Straus Family Creamery milk bottle & ice cream container, 2006

MARCIA EYMANN

McEvoy Olive Oil box, 2006

JOCELYN MOSS

Policeman's Ball program, 1954

NANCY WILSON

Rotary Club commemorative plate, 1972

SAN RAFAEL ROTARY CLUB

Collection of Marin County bottles, c. 1860 – 1895

ANDREW KOITSOUKOS

Ham Radio equipment & log books, 1930s – 1940s

GEORGE KLEIN

Collection of Thayer family photographs, albums & documents

DARCY McDONNELL

Collection of photographs & ephemera from San Rafael organizations

HERBERT WALTON

Collection of photographs & documents from the Parker family

DRU PARKER

Collection of photographic prints & negatives from Aero Photographers, Inc., 1945 – 1970

GRETHE BRADY

Collection of clothing, c. 1900s

BRADFORD DEGRAF

Collection of Marin County postcards

JEFF CRAEMER

Marin Cleaners hanger & bag, cookbook

SHIRLEY GRAVES

Collection of photographs from wife of San Quentin officer, c. 1920s

BEVERLY BASTIAN

Collection of family daguerreotypes & Girl Scout sashes

ROY FARRINGTON JONES

KampKook gas camping stove, c. 1927

ALLAN LARKINS

Collection of ranching items including bridle, saddle, hat & branding iron

ERNEST P. ONGARO

Collection of 20th Century Marin County photographs

PETALUMA LIBRARY & MUSEUM (MIRIAM LANG)

Tamalpais Quadrangle map, 1950

A. M. PETROFSKY

Golden Gate Bridge souvenir rivet & postcard collection

JOHN R. McCABE

Collection of ephemera, hats, washboards, scale, milk bottle & hay hook

GLORIA SIMONDS



Wilbur Thayer photo album and documents, gift of Darcy McDonnell.

From the Collection

The Museum is delighted to announce a recent gift from Darcy McDonnell of his collection of Wilbur Thayer's billheads and family albums. The photo albums were compiled by Rose Sommer (Wilbur Thayer's sister-in-law) and document many festive turn-of-the-century Thayer family travels, possibly taken in Thayer's 1904 Oldsmobile. The Museum is restoring the classic Oldsmobile, which Thayer donated to the Museum in 1960.

Wilbur Thayer was born in New York in 1881 and came with his family to San Rafael in 1893. In 1903, he helped turn the family bicycle repair shop into a thriving auto repair business, Thayer's Garage. He owned and operated the garage with his father, Alvin, and brother, Clifford, for over thirty years. Thayer's 1904 Oldsmobile is believed to be the first car owned by a San Rafael resident. We are excited to unite the photos and documents with the automobile in the Museum's collection.



Cruising Through Time. Buck Kamphausen, Charles Goodman, San Rafael Vice Mayor Gary Phillips and Mayor Al Boro (left to right) rev up for the Great Race at the 2006 MHM Gala. All four participated in this year's historic Great Race from Philadelphia to San Rafael. Charles Goodman came in 3rd place in the Rookie Class and generously donated his \$5,000 prize to the Museum.



Left to right: Alan Tobin, James Russell Symes, the tall boy is unidentified, Gertrude Tobin, wearing San Rafael Baths rental bathing suits, c. 1912. (Photo courtesy of Carlna S. Houweling)

San Rafael's Salt Water Baths

by Jocelyn Moss, MHM Librarian

Warm summer days, the splash of water and the shouts of happy children; for many of us these are cherished childhood memories. While a few local residents may recall days of recreation at the indoor bathhouse near downtown San Rafael, today there is no one who can remember the city's open-air salt water baths.

In 1901, Charles P. Ware leased the "flushing basin" on the San Rafael Canal from the City of San Rafael for ten years. He erected a bathhouse



The San Rafael Salt Water Baths as they appeared c. 1902. (MHM photo)

with 20 dressing rooms and an office where he ran an open-air bathing establishment on the canal. Ware operated the swimming baths for the ten years of his lease and then returned them to the city.

On February 14, 1914, the Board of Trustees of San Rafael and Mayor Sig Herzog passed a resolution to build a new indoor bathhouse for San Rafael at Second and Irwin Streets. The building was designed by local architect Thomas O'Connor in the Mission style of architecture. The first floor held the tank, which measured 50 by 120 feet, a children's tank of 25 by 40 feet, dressing rooms and lavatories. On the second floor a balcony surrounded the pool below, where spectators could watch the activities. There was a slide from the second floor into the pool, as well as a diving board for the deep end, which was nine feet deep. The water came from the canal and was treated to make it exceptionally pure—it was filtered four times, left standing in the sun for a week, then treated chemically and heated to eighty degrees.

The bathhouse opened on April 18, 1915, and was an immediate success. Manager Richard Kinsella reported that the average daily net income was \$53.60. On June 10, the *Marin Journal* reported that 300 children were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Douglass at the baths. These

generous people had bought the bonds for the bathhouse and contributed 300 bathing suits for the children's use—and there was free ice cream for all. Every Tuesday the baths were free to children and a swimming instructor was provided, which the city offered



The newer, indoor San Rafael Baths, opened April 18, 1915. (MHM photo)

in gratitude for the Douglass' gift.

The baths were the site of many swimming competitions through the years, and Olympic gold medal winner Eleanor Garatti trained there. The popularity of the baths continued into the 1920s. Unfortunately, the Great Depression left few resources for the city to maintain the baths and they sat idle for several years.

In 1935, the city leased the bathhouse to Harry C. Little, whose company built oil burners for home use. The H.C. Little Burner Company took possession and converted the baths into a factory by decking the pool with heavy timbers. The firm continued operations until June 4, 1949, when the bathhouse burned in a spectacular blaze. Fueled by oil and paint stored inside, the fire was so hot that the entire building was engulfed in minutes. An estimated 3,000 people crowded the streets to watch the conflagration. The firemen were unable to contain the inferno and could only keep it from damaging nearby buildings.

Today, the site of the building is near the Second Street on-ramp to southbound Highway 101, with no remnants to remind us of the old San Rafael Baths.



Daguerreotype of Reverend William A. Jones, c. 1854.

Roy Farrington Jones Donates Daguerreotypes

The Marin History Museum recently received a superb donation of four daguerreotypes from Advisory Board Member Roy Farrington Jones, a longtime Museum member and supporter. These rare, one-of-a-kind photographs add a special depth to the Museum's collection. Jones' gift features personal portraits of family members. Each image is unique and striking, but one in particular stands out because of its beautiful composition as well as its subject: the Reverend William A. Jones, who came to California in 1854 with his new bride, Anne Louise Farrington, on the clipper ship *Cleopatra*.

Reverend Jones and wife Anne originally traveled to California to minister to the miners in the gold fields. Like many of the people who chose to make the treacherous journey to California, Reverend Jones took the time before leaving to have his portrait taken via daguerreotype photography. Documentation of one's self was typically done at the beginning of a journey, sometimes as a keepsake for those left behind, or merely to document the individual at that point in time. Reverend Jones'

portrait shows us a handsome young man who is dressed in his best clothes and looks formal and austere. The exceptional beauty of Reverend Jones' daguerreotype comes from the craft of the photographer, who has beautifully captured the elegance and grace of the sitter. This portrait and the three additional portraits included in the donation will help the Museum better document the Gold Rush era of the county and the history of some of its longtime residents.

Daguerreotype photography was just a little more than ten years old when gold was discovered at Sutters' Mill and the California Gold Rush began. Daguerreotypes are intimate objects, commissioned for personal reasons and intended for private and personal viewing. In fact, portraits are the most common type of daguerreotype. They are relatively small and always come sealed in cases with cover glass protecting them. Unlike modern negative-based photography, in which multiple copies are available, daguerreotypes are singular objects—the same image that the original owner once held in their own hands while gazing upon their reflection is the image we see today.

MHM Wraps Up Successful *Marin Stories* Speaker Series

From February to June 2006, the Marin History Museum hosted *Marin Stories*, a new series featuring presentations by authors and artists on different aspects of Marin's unique history. Programs included an illustrated discussion about the grizzly bears that once roamed Marin's forests, a woodcut printing demonstration and slide lecture by well-known Marin artist Tom Killion, an intimate telling of the Italian internment in Marin during World War II by Lawrence DiStasi, and readings of John Muir's poetry about what used to be known as Redwood Canyon. These and other *Marin Stories* programs provided participants with a varied perspective on "Marvelous Marin." The program drew members as well as first-time visitors to the Museum. Volunteers welcomed visitors, showing them around the historic Boyd Gate House, and helped sell over 20 of the featured authors' books. The Museum is planning additional lectures for this fall/winter to complement the upcoming exhibition, *An Artist's Refuge: Dorothea Lange at Steep Ravine*.



Photographer Rondal Partridge, left, and his daughter, Elizabeth Partridge, co-author of *Quizzical Eye: The Photography of Rondal Partridge*, presenting his slides and a lively discussion at the Boyd Gate House during the March *Marin Stories* program.



MHM Volunteer Ann Batman.

MHM Volunteer Spotlight

This month the Museum is spotlighting one of our most active volunteers, Ann Batman of Greenbrae. Ann works weekly at the Boyd Gate House as a "Museum Greeter" and also helps with special events and projects.

Referred by our Board President, Suzy Coxhead, Ann became a volunteer with the Museum in October 2005. She quickly became a much-appreciated addition to the Museum team for her dedication and great attitude. When asked what motivates her to volunteer, she said, "I see a lot in the community that needs to be accomplished. With such a lack of funding we need volunteers to fill the gaps." On a personal level, she adds, "Since I'm retired, I also have more time and I like to use my skills to keep active."

Ann has come to appreciate the friendships she has made here and the greater purpose of the Museum, which she describes as, "bringing the history of Marin alive to children and adults." She encourages others in the community to volunteer, and sees a particular need for more Museum Greeters at the Boyd.

Starting as a Campfire Girl leader in Illinois in 1957, Ann has been volunteering for many years. Today, Ann also volunteers for the Ritter Center, an organization in Marin that helps the homeless and working poor. She was nominated for the Heart of Marin award in 2005 for her work on the Ritter Center board and for helping to create their Family to Family Christmas Program.

Overall, Ann finds that the greatest benefits of volunteering are meeting great people, keeping up and building one's skills, and helping to make a difference in the community. Ann has certainly made a difference to all of us at the Marin History Museum.

2006 MHM Volunteer Appreciation Day

Past, present, and future Museum volunteers were welcomed to the lovely home of Board Member Catherine Munson on June 29 for a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. It was a wonderful occasion for the Museum's staff and board to thank our many dedicated volunteers and to inform potential volunteers about our programs and plans for the future.



MHM Volunteer Tara McCarthy and MHM Collections Manager Nina Fairles at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

IN HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Special thanks to our donors who have made contributions in honor and memory of the following individuals.

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COME AND VISIT US!

The Boyd Gate House is open Tue. & Fri. 9 am – noon and Wed. & Thu. 9 am – 4 pm. Current exhibits include *Louise Arner Boyd: Marin's Arctic Explorer*, as well as conceptual drawings of the new Marin History Museum. We look forward to seeing you!

NEW LIBRARY HOURS

If you are interested in using our archives to research Marin County history, please make an appointment to visit our library. Appointments are available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays

from 10 am – 3 pm. Use of research facilities costs \$5/free to Museum members. Please contact the Librarian, Jocelyn Moss, at (415) 454-8538 ext. 2, or jocelyn@marinhistory.org.

JOIN THE MUSEUM!

Become a member of the Marin History Museum! As a member, you'll receive special benefits and know that you are helping to preserve the past for the future. Please contact Amy Foster at (415) 454-8538 ext. 1, or amy@marinhistory.org.

WELCOME NEW MHM BOARD MEMBERS!

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UPCOMING EXHIBITION

*An Artist's Refuge:
Dorothea Lange at Steep Ravine*

November 6, 2006 – March 1, 2007
At the Marin Community Foundation, Novato

The Marin History Museum will present a landmark exhibition of photographs by one of the 20th century's pre-eminent photographers, Dorothea Lange. The exhibition features Lange's intimate

family portraits and landscapes of Steep Ravine, where she and her family found freedom on the rocky coast below the western slope of Mt. Tamalpais.

This is an exciting opportunity to view a body of work by Dorothea Lange that has never before been exhibited. Stay tuned for more information about the exhibition and related public programs.

Presented in conjunction with the Marin Arts Council, the Marin Community Foundation and the Oakland Museum of California.

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Amy Foster, Development Associate
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