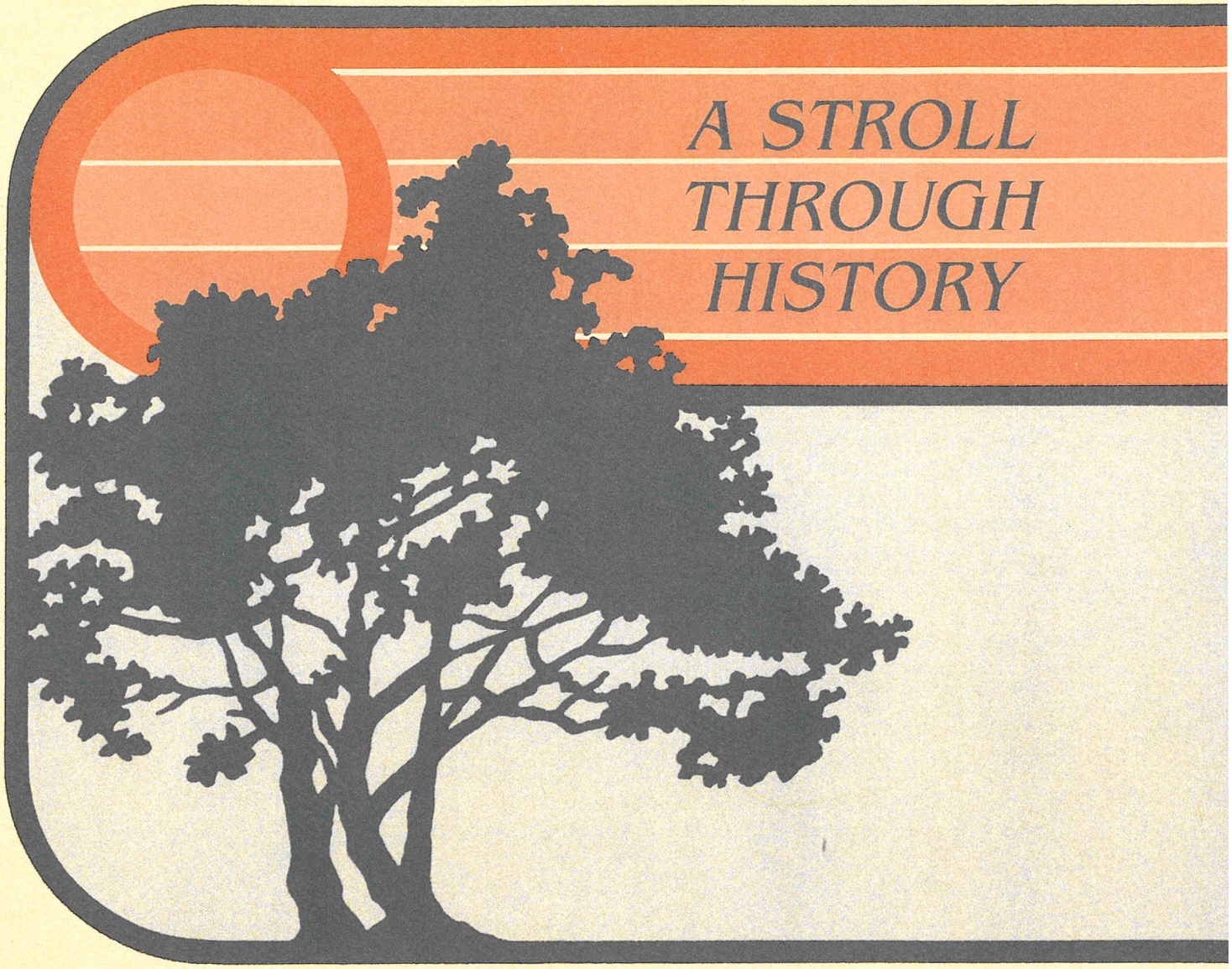
GREENBRAE



presented by
The Greenbrae Property Owners Association

by Ellen Murphy

ABOUT THE AUTHOR...

As President of the Greenbrae Property Owners Association, I had been looking for new ideas to acquaint the homeowners with our community. Among my thoughts was the concept to create a pamphlet about the history of our community. Board members laughed. All, except one. Ellen Murphy said "Ted, I can do that task." And she did, beyond anyone's expectations.

Many leaders lack the knack to define what they want. I was thinking of a brief pamphlet on the history of Greenbrae as it applied to the Greenbrae Property Owners Association community north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Ellen thought I meant Greenbrae from early history. Thus, she started on her assignment. The result is this remarkable book.

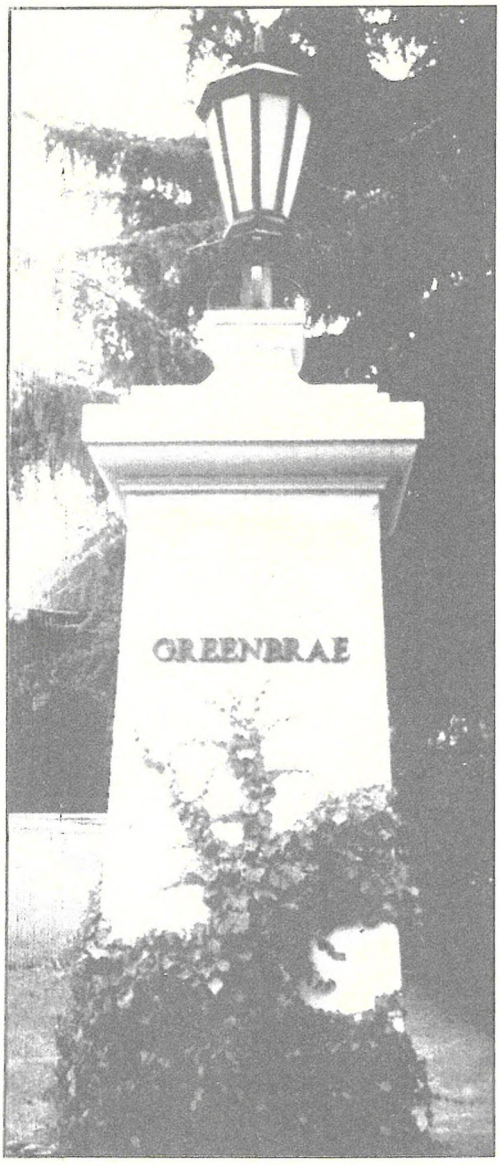
With singular dedication, Ellen sought out bits and pieces of information from our past, as she sifted through old photos, yellowed newspaper clippings and talked to early residents. The product of her research is an informational pamphlet for the Ross Valley Community and general public that will become an invaluable history annal for our community, the county and state.

I'd like to think this project was conceived and written because of Ellen Murphy's devotion to Greenbrae, and specifically the Greenbrae managed by the Greenbrae Property Owners Assoc. As a Greenbrae resident since 1979 and a member of the GPOA since 1988, Ellen has made an invaluable contribution to our community. When she's not discovering new facts about life here, she sells real estate, which neatly combines the two activities. She and husband John live on Bretano Way.

As sponsors of this project, the GPOA would like to dedicate this piece to you, the community which we sincerely cherish. We hope it will give you a deeper understanding of Greenbrae, and a stronger interest in our community.

Respectively yours,

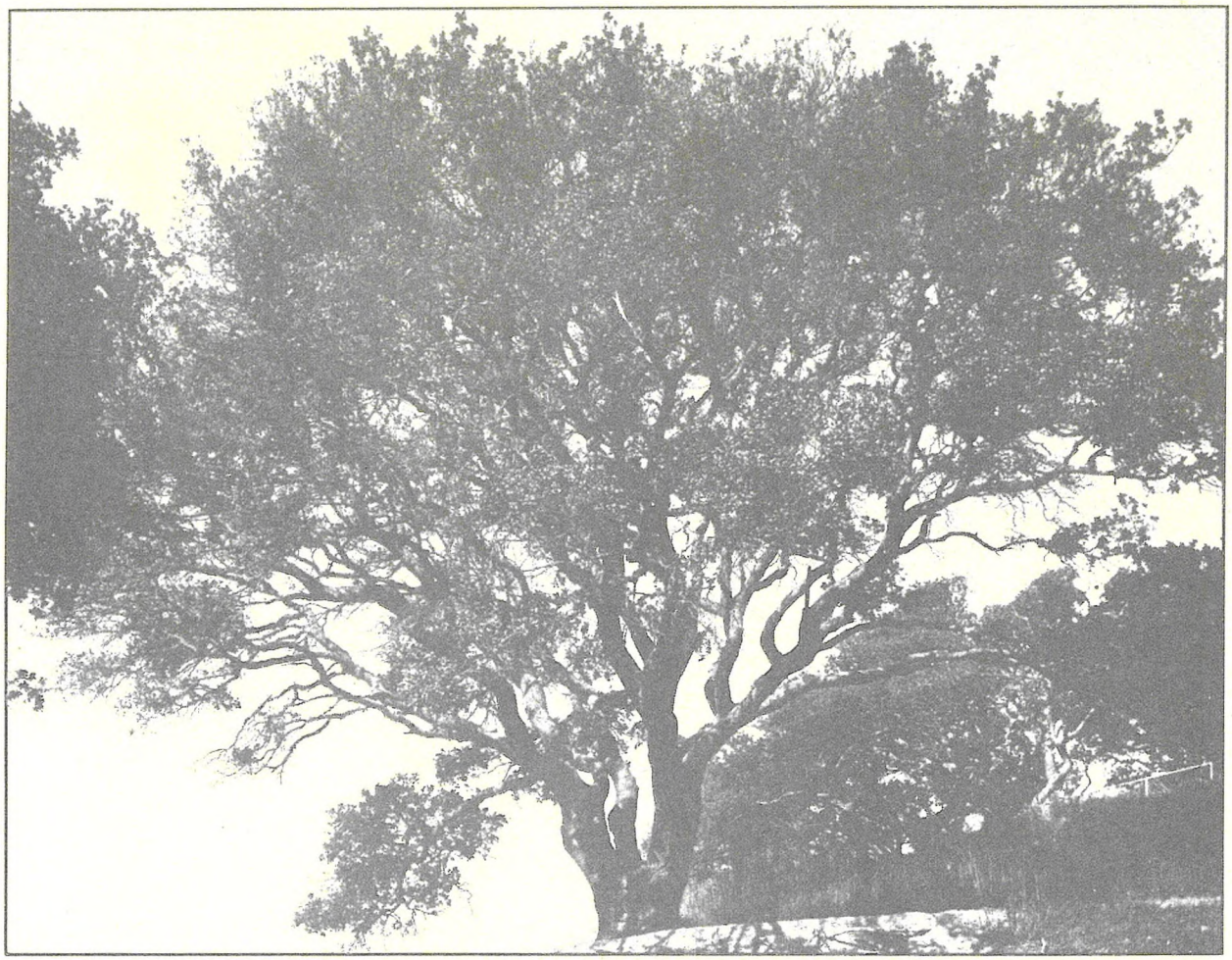
Ted Canon
Past President



GREENBRAE

WELCOMES EVERYONE THROUGH ITS PORTALS

Copyright 1991 by Ellen Murphy

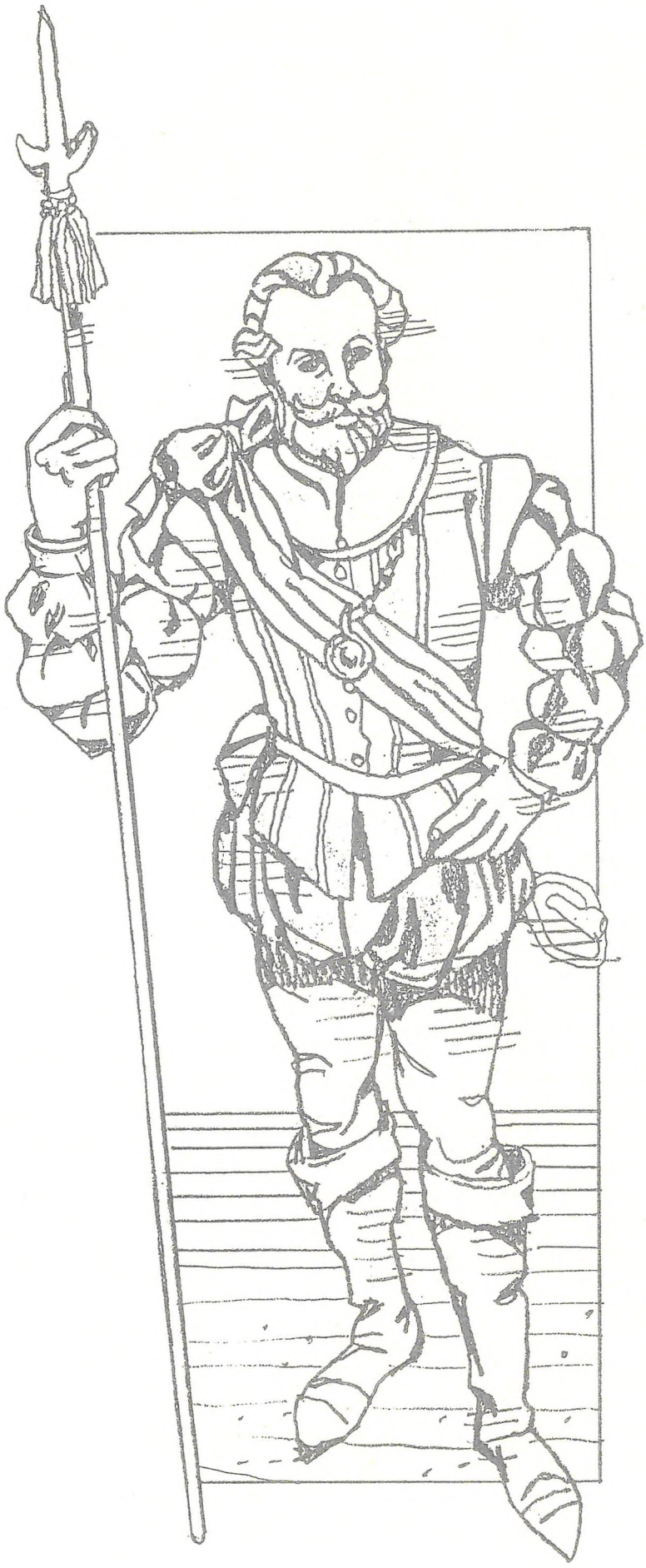


GREENBRAE

A Planned Community "In the Oaks"

Marin County is rich in historical lore about the early beginnings of its many individual towns and communities, from the colorful rough and tumble days on Tiburon's waterfront Main Street, to the affluent community of Ross, where "villas" were built amid rose gardens and orchards. Yet, little or nothing has ever been written about Greenbrae, possibly because it did not follow the usual pattern of growth and development that comes from a unique geographic location, nor did it evolve as a result of economic conditions.

Rather, Greenbrae, as we know it today, came into existence as the result of builder Niels Schultz Sr., who envisioned a model community that would provide its citizens with every element necessary for quality living: a well-balanced district of single family and apartment residences, supported by shopping facilities, schools and churches. All this was to be created from a singular setting of gently rolling hills studded with magnificent oak trees. An ambitious undertaking. And remarkably, begun as late as the mid-1940's.



An Historical Site

For many years the Greenbrae Ranch had been a landmark in Marin County. In earlier times "Drake's Plate," the plate thought to have been originally planted at Drake's Bay by Sir Francis Drake to claim the land for his queen, had inexplicably been discovered atop one of its tree-studded hills. (Note: recent controversy disputes this theory, yet today Drake's Landing is commemorated with a large metal sculpture at the Bay's edge).

Here the peace-loving Bay County Indians had existed in a near static culture that was almost unchanged for an estimated twenty centuries. Subsisting on fishing and berries, these gentle people enjoyed both the ideal climate and bounties the land so copiously offered.

What we know as Greenbrae today was once part of the Punta de Quentin Rancho, which occupied land extending from the tip of peninsular San Quentin through the major part of the Ross Valley and including most of San Anselmo. This tract was granted to Juan Cooper in 1840 by Governor Alvarado. Ten years later, Cooper sold the tract to Benjamin Buckelew for $55,000. Already having acquired the Rancho Corte Madera, and soon to secure possession of part of the Rancho Nicasio, Buckelew had great plans for developing his vast holdings. However, fate had other ideas and soon thereafter Buckelew was forced to start selling off his land because he needed the money. The western portion of the Rancho was eventually sold to Robert Cowell and James Ross, and two years later Buckelew died without realizing his dreams.

The Greenbrae dairy ranch, now site of Eliseo Drive. 1946

The Greenbrae Dairy Ranch

After buying the western part of the San Quentin Peninsula, James Ross finished logging most of the trees remaining on the property, and began the Greenbrae Dairy on the denuded hills.

In 1860 Cowell sold his interest to Ross, who had to borrow $50,000 from his employee, George Worn, to pay off Cowell. Except for the Rancho house and 243 acres surrounding it, Ross gave up the entire Rancho as security. When Ross died "land poor" in 1862, the Rancho consisted of 8,840 acres. In accordance with his will, the Rancho was divided up and sold off piecemeal to pay debts and meet "cash" bequests promised his children.

Again former employee Worn stepped in. In 1863 he married Ross' daughter Annie. Seven years later when the remaining lands of the Rancho were auctioned off, Worn bought the remaining acres of the grant, including Greenbrae, for $25,000. One of the parcels he obtained included the Greenbrae ranch.

But Worn and his wife didn't own it long. His mining investments began to fail, and in October of 1870 he sold the ranch to David Porter. The following year Porter sold a small portion (38 acres) of the Greenbrae Ranch, and in 1876 he conveyed 1,181 acres to Ann Ross, widow of James. Despite the sale, the Ross/Worn families continued to live on the dairy ranch. Ownership of the ranch reverted to Porter again in 1879 when Mary Tunstead, widow of Ross' son, sold it to him for $36,000. By then the ranch consisted of 906 acres. Porter held on to most of the land for 20 years, then sold it to F.S. Wensinger for $50,000.

Intersection of Hwy. 101 and Sir Francis Drake Blvd. 1946

Into The Fold of the Catholic Church

In 1890 Wensinger sold the Greenbrae ranch to Patrick William Riordan, archbishop of the Catholic Church in San Francisco for $50,000 (obviously land appreciation then was not as it is today!). As was the custom in the Catholic Church, Archbishop Riordan purchased the lands in his own name for the church. The ranch was owned and subleased as dairy lands for the next 50 years.

During the time of church ownership, a traveler described Greenbrae: "The opening section of the highway (Sir Francis Drake at Hwy. 101) gives the traveler a glimpse of Marin County at home. The first mile cuts between cozy hillside dairylands, grass-covered slopes where cattle rest beneath oak trees to make such an ideal rural scene that classes in photography are brought from San Francisco to take pictures of it." Special highlights for the visitor to the area included a blue heron rookery in the eucalyptus trees on the lane of the ranch house, and the Elizabeth Hardee Iris Garden about 1 1/2 miles down the road where "visitors were welcome."

Today it is almost impossible to imagine that this ever-busy thoroughfare was once a two-lane road that seldom saw a Ford or DeSoto past nightfall. And if an automobile driver should decide to turn off onto Drake Blvd. while heading north on Hwy. 101 he had to have his wits about him, for there was not even a stop light to mark the exit—or help him safely across the intersection. The sole side road off Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in the area led to the ranch where the Greenbrae School later stood. Beyond that was all wide-open space.

Enter: Man With a Mission

Over the years, San Francisco and Millbrae developer Niels Schultz Sr. had been a frequent visitor to Marin. On a visit in the 1940's he was informed that there were two substantial parcels of land available, one in Strawberry, the other at Greenbrae.

The Greenbrae property, as yet owned by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, appealed to him most, so he purchased more than 600 acres that very day for approximately $200,000 (not an inconsiderable price for the time).

This was near the end of World War II, and due to the extreme lack of construction materials and manpower, Schultz' plans for building a complete community had to be delayed for the duration.

What's in a Name

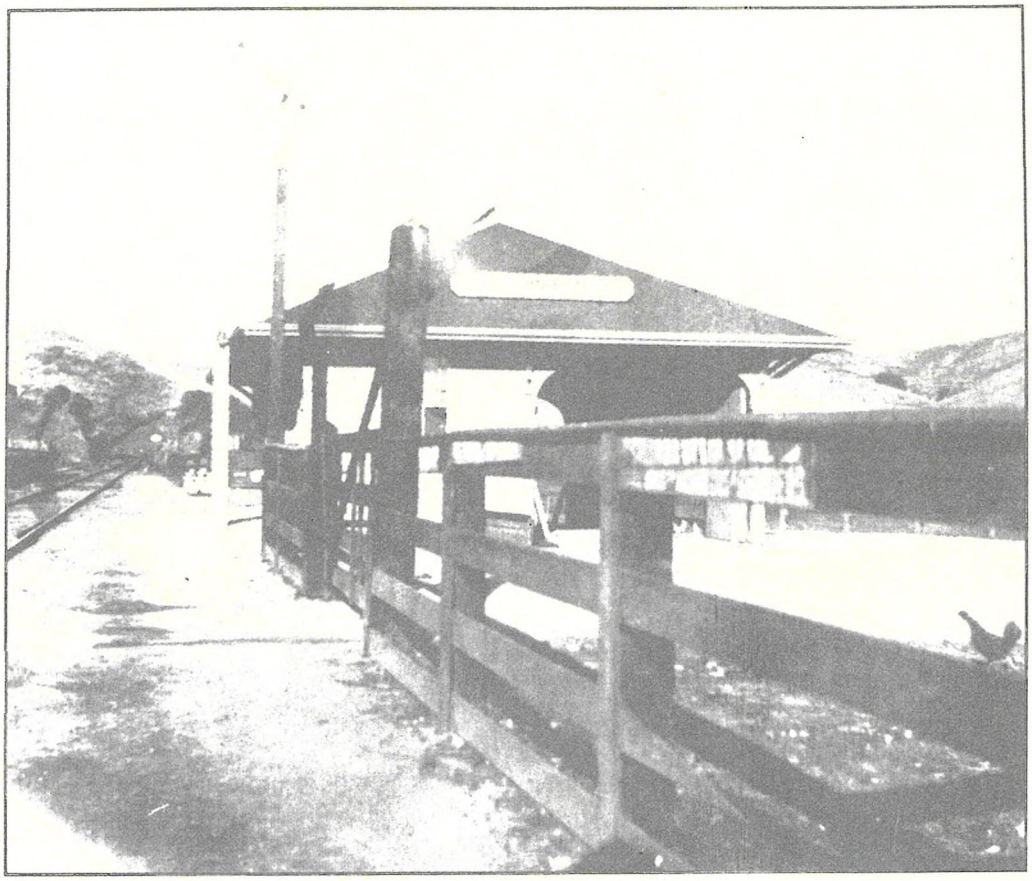
In Scotland "brae" means hillside, which is an apt description of the rolling terrain of this Marin countryside setting. However bucolic this sounds, there was some question about giving the new community this name, as Greenbrae was the recognized train stop for San Quentin and many people were uncomfortable with this association. However, Mr. Schultz liked the name and Greenbrae it stayed.

Realization of a Dream

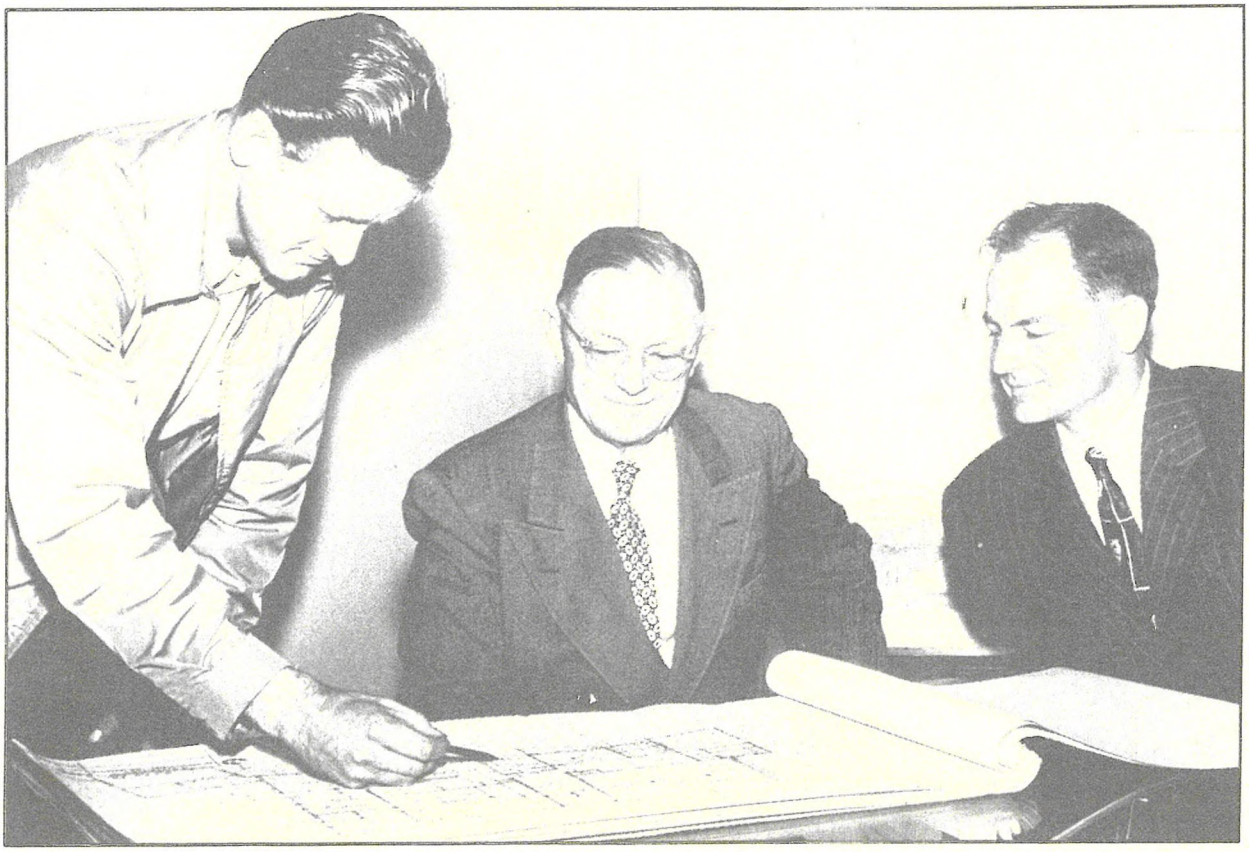
From the beginning, the Schultz Co. envisioned Greenbrae as a carefully planned self-contained community. The original plan foresaw housing for 10,000 people, a shopping center, a community recreation park, yacht basin and school. Unlike most other developments, Greenbrae grew in groups of 30 to 50 homes, built primarily by the Schultz Co. and Burger Construction Co, plus various other individual builders, on the hills north of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. To the south, plans were made for a shopping center and garden apartments.

Born to farming parents in Germany, Niels Schultz,Sr. was taught to value nature. More than anything, he wished to build a full community that blended with the environment. Thus great pains were taken to engineer roads and driveways around the many majestic oak trees that dotted the hills. Homes were carefully sited so as to disturb as little of the terrain as possible. Cul de sacs often were punctuated with a venerable great tree at their tips. Rather than resculpting the land to fit the new homes, many road divider strips were created, which gave the emerging community a lush and natural look.

To minimize traffic problems and give the area a sense of community, access to the homes from the boulevard was limited and a planted park strip on either side of Sir Francis Drake was dedicated to enhance the appearance of the community (the latter was eliminated when, by necessity, the boulevard had to be widened).



Green Brae train station at San Quentin.



Alvin Schultz, Niels Schultz Sr., Niels Schultz Jr. 1947

The landmark castle housed the Greenbrae sales office. 1946

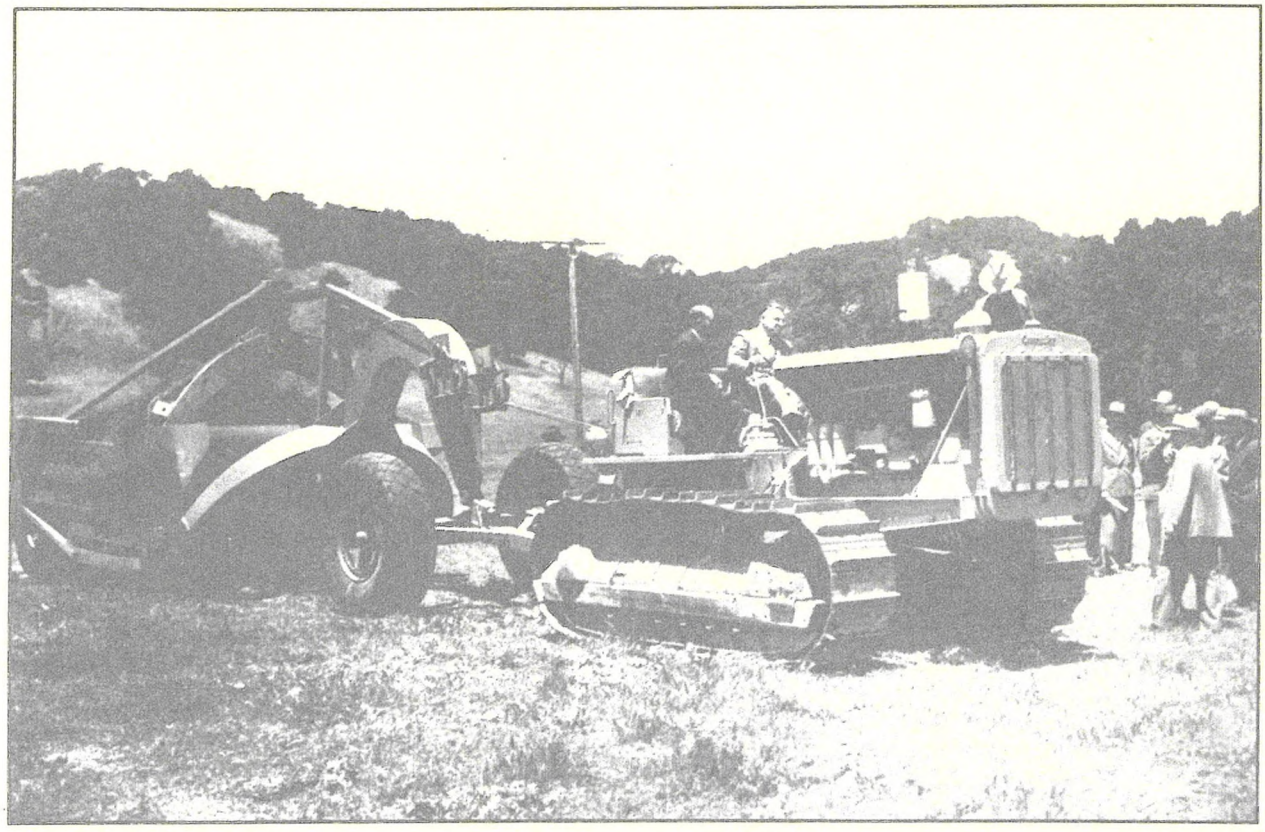
A Total Community

Greenbrae was planned as a complete environment: single family homes on one side of the boulevard; multi-family, commercial and professional use on the other.

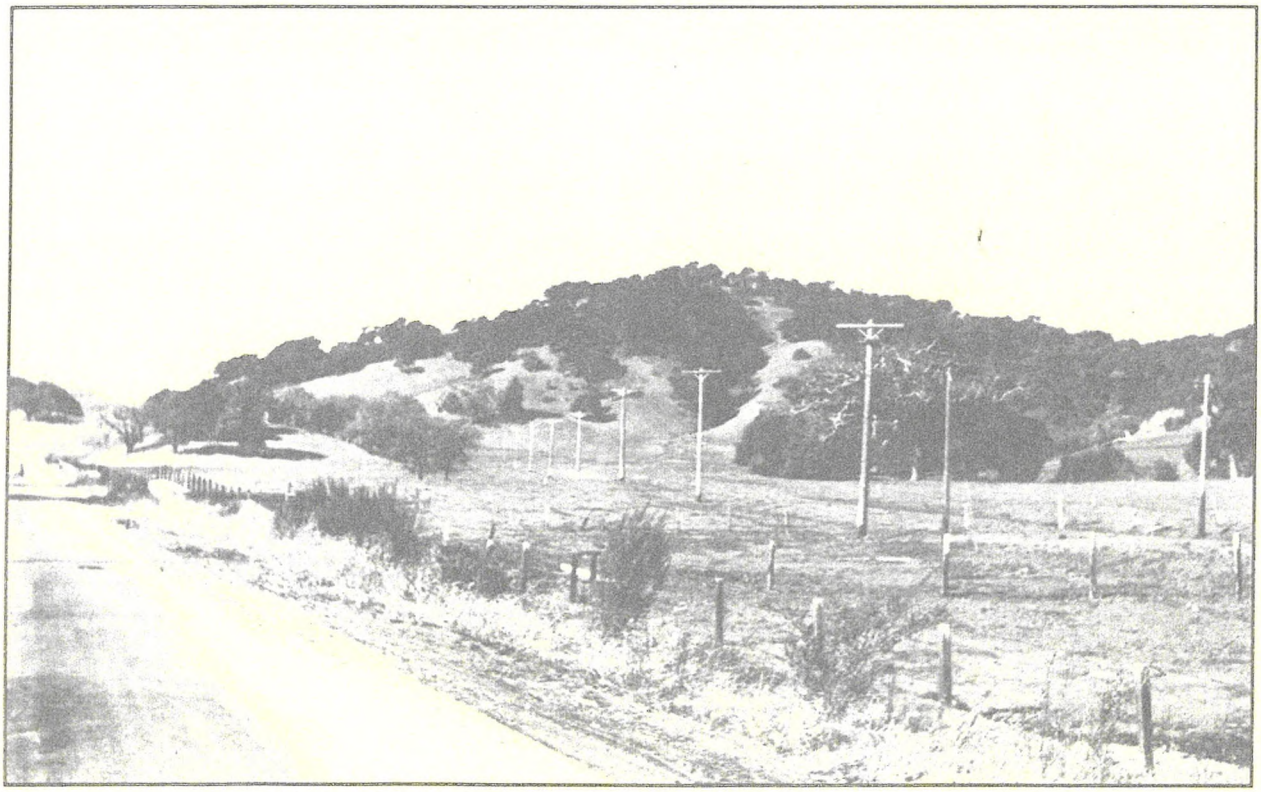
At this time in Marin's history, with a population of about 53,000 people and the post-war building boom about to begin, Schultz and his two sons (who by now were full-fledged partners in the company) wished to help direct the expansion of the county while preserving its unique character.

Off To A Grand Start

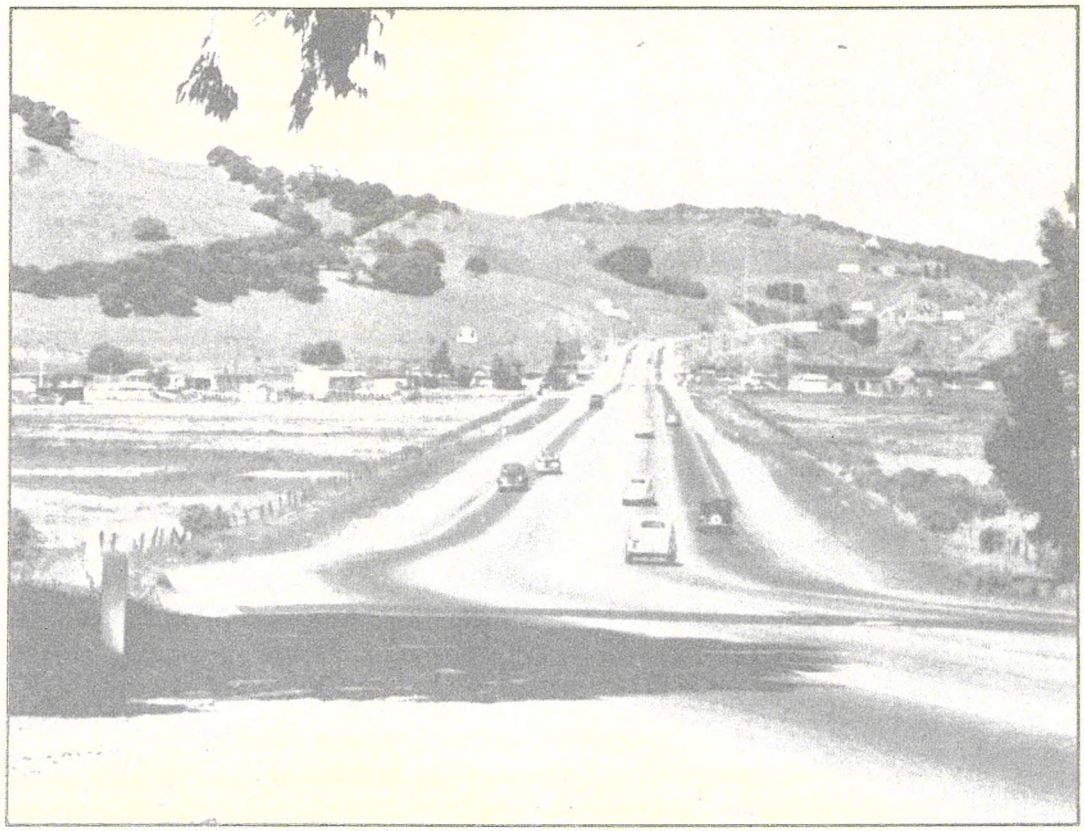
Groundbreaking for the first construction took place in May of 1946. The original subdivision started at the main entrance on La Cuesta Drive, which was grandly flanked by the charming castle-like structure that housed the sales office for the soon-to-be built homes. One hundred and ninety seven homes would go up in this phase, with Bretano Way and Corte Morada the first streets to undergo construction in order to give a "front door" appeal to the emerging community.



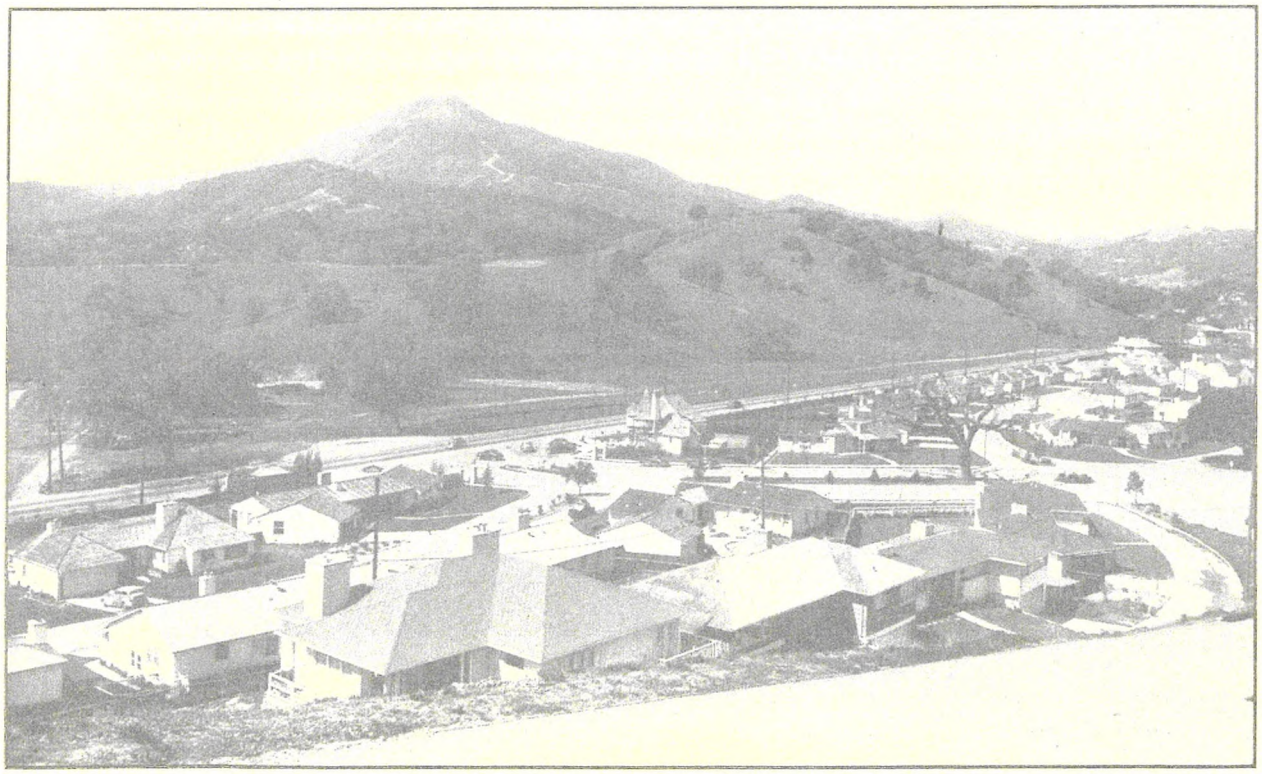
Grading the land begins in 1946.



Sir Francis Drake Blvd. looking towards Greenbrae pastureland. 1946



No traffic lights, in fact, no traffic on Drake Blvd. 1946



The first homes photographed from Bretano Way. 1947

The Price Is Right

Those were the good old days, for, as incredible as it might sound, a completed two bedroom home carried the heady price tag of $10,500. Of course, the year was 1946 and the dollar did go a lot further then, but there was another important reason. With the war just over, material goods were in scarce supply, so the government placed a strict limit on the cost of constructing a home, stating that building supplies could not exceed $10,000. This explains why many of the homes in this area are smaller than those that came later.

It is interesting to read the advertising copy for these early homes. An early sales brochure described Greenbrae as an "historical site: The Greenbrae Ranch, for many years a landmark in Marvelous Marin, is now being prepared for home lovers. This is truly Marin County at home." The brochure explained that "Greenbrae is not a subdivision. It is the beginning of a model community...a community with its own modern shopping district, schools, churches, and a well-balanced residential district of beautiful homes."

People from San Francisco were quick to respond to the new community, attracted by the near-perfect climate, the quality of the homes, and the attractive prices. The first "settlers", who purchased 14, 16 and 18 Bretano Way, west of La Cuesta, were Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Brear, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Wade, and Mr. and Mrs.T.N. Hansen. Of these original owners, only Mrs. Wade remains in the same house she moved to 43 years ago. (Mrs. Wade, fondly reminisced to the author about how she felt like a pioneer in the budding community, and the close kinship of the new arrivals). One year later 90 of the homes were occupied and the remaining 107 lots had been sold and most were well under construction. Plans for Phases 2 and 3 were being finalized. Greenbrae was almost an overnight success.

Bon Air Apartments

Believing that a well-rounded community should include multi-unit economical housing, the Schultz Co. plan called for apartments as well. After much controversy with the now entrenched Greenbrae homeowners and the County planning department, the 75-acre Schultz tract west of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. was developed in 1950 and annexed to Larkspur. The first to be built, the Solano Court Apartments, was an 11-unit complex designed to house 60 middle-income families. Rents then were $71 to $117 per month. Today, the hills in this area are dotted with a mixture of apartments buildings and condominiums.

THE GREENBRAE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

No family community would be complete without a school to educate its growing flock of children. Thus, in 1949, the Schultz Co. donated 7 acres of land to the Kentfield School District for an elementary school to be built on the site of the old Greenbrae dairy ranch.

The first building, consisting of a kindergarten, 3 lower grade classrooms and teachers' room, was completed in 1951 at a cost of $80,559. One year later, further buildings were added to house more classrooms, a multi-use room, kitchen and administrative areas. Besides providing an exemplary education to the children of Greenbrae, the school provided a focal point for many community activities.

In the 1970's school enrollments throughout the country declined to the point that many schools were forced to close. Sadly, the Greenbrae School fell victim to the same trend and the school's doors were permanently closed in 1981. Today, the community sends its children to Bacich School in Kentfield. The school itself has vanished, the land having been sold to a developer, who constructed 19 luxury homes where children once romped and learned to read.

Beth Ashley, columnist for the Independent-Journal, wrote a farewell column to Greenbrae School, and with her permission, here are a few fond reminiscences:

"Years ago, Greenbrae School was where it all happened. That was where my kids learned to read and write. It's where I met my first friends in Greenbrae and left my first mark."

She talked to a number of former students, who made these comments as they visited the school for the last time:

> Carl Simmonds: I learned to tie my shoes watching Dougie Davis...we all used to take naps in Mrs. Farr's kindergarten room. I still have my pillow.
>
> Jim McNamee: Remember Hot Dog Day and snakes running around the room in the fifth grade, and Mr. Jung, the school janitor who taught the kids to make kites.

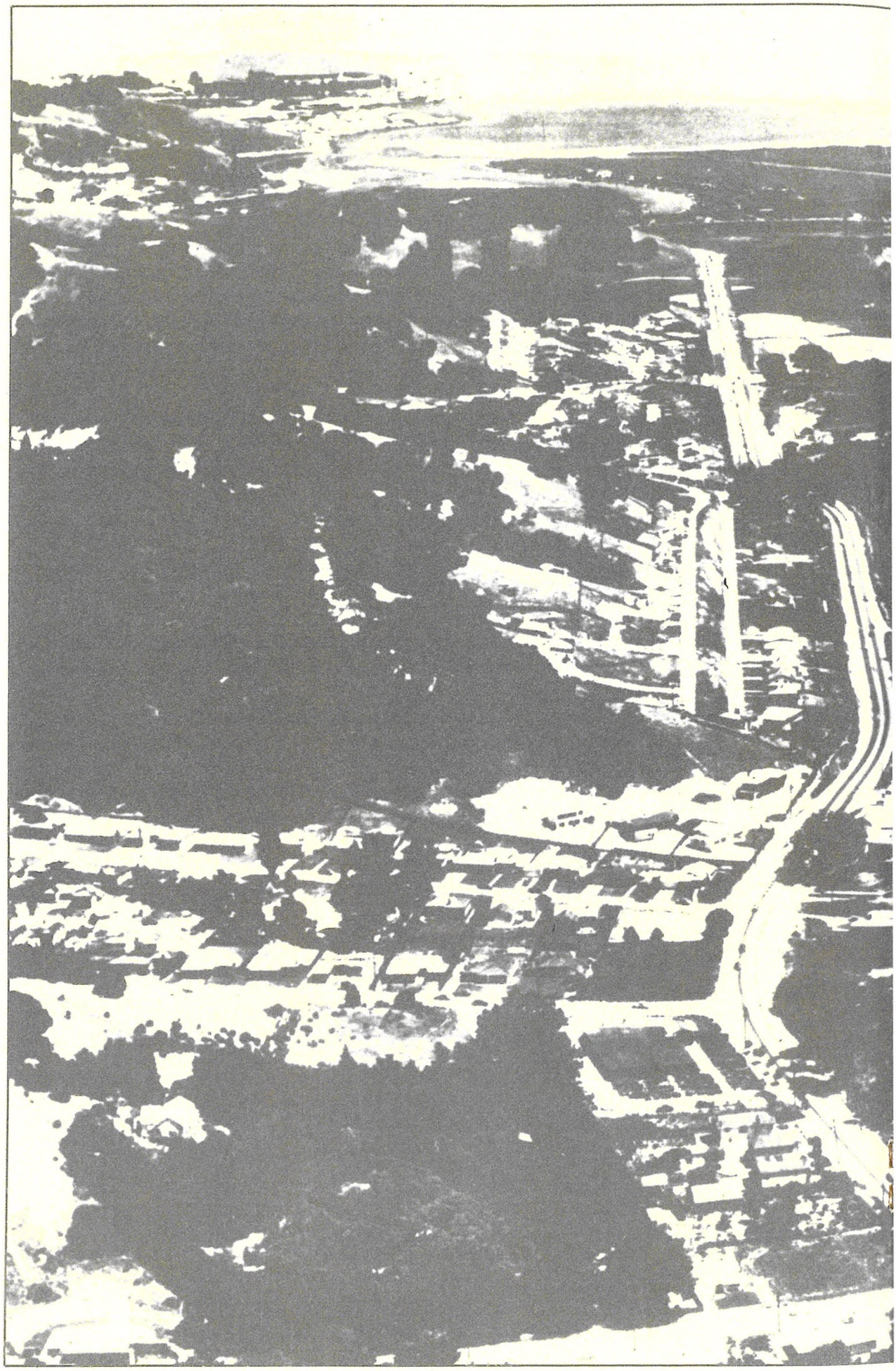
(When Mr. Jung died, the children in Mrs. Farr's class made decorated bricks and made a planter in his honor around the stump of a big tree).

Ashley's sons roller skated through the hallways, swung out over the the playground on a rope from C.T. Edmundson's back yard, played tag on the school's roof, broke windows with errant baseballs, and learned from a staff of dedicated teachers.

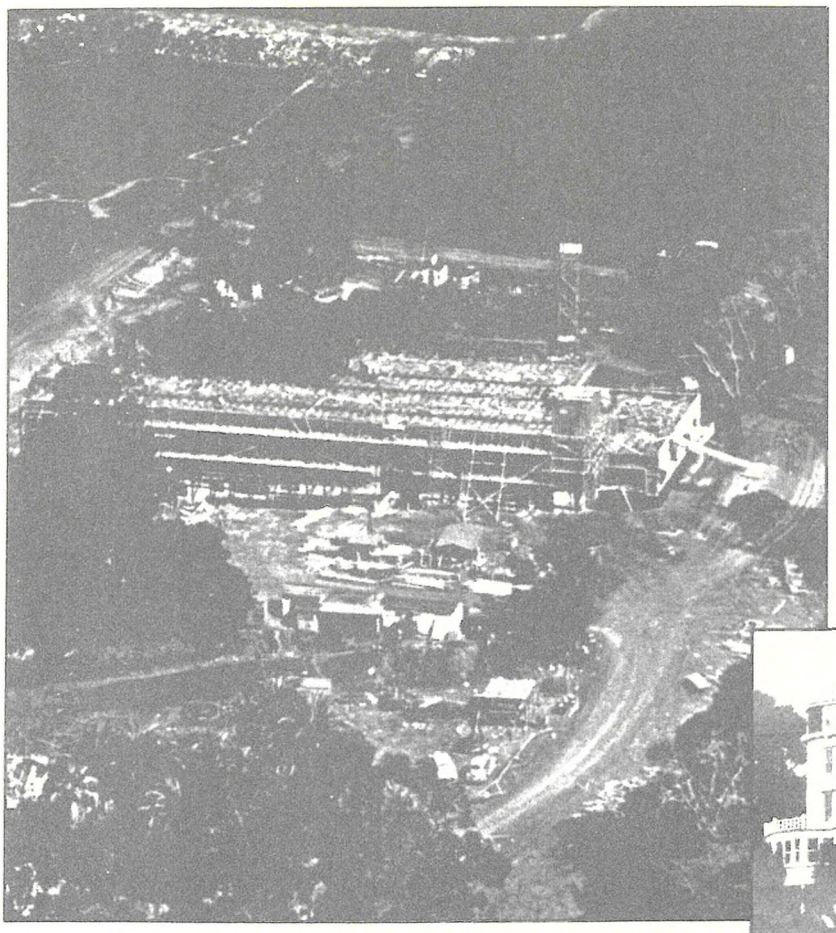
Among them: Ed Allen ("he made school an instrument of learning instead of an instrument of torture); Miss Dughi ("all the boys were in love with Miss Dughi"); Mr. Chesnut ("he used to throw stuff; he was great"); Mrs. Giampaoli (she wasn't as strict as Miss Mibach"); Miss Mibach and Mrs. McMahon ("they were more than teachers; they shared with us").

The school is closed, but it lives on in memory.

AERIAL VIEW OF GREENBRAE CIRCA 1950

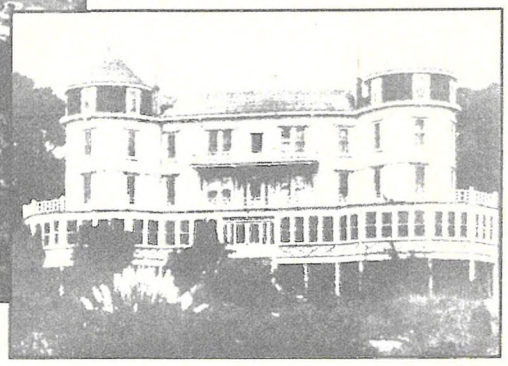


Note the start of Marin Catholic High School. Manor Road was built out, as well as lower Greenbrae homes. All else remained open hillside.



Early construction of Marin General. 1950

The Bon Air Hotel, original structure on the hospital site.



Marin General Hospital

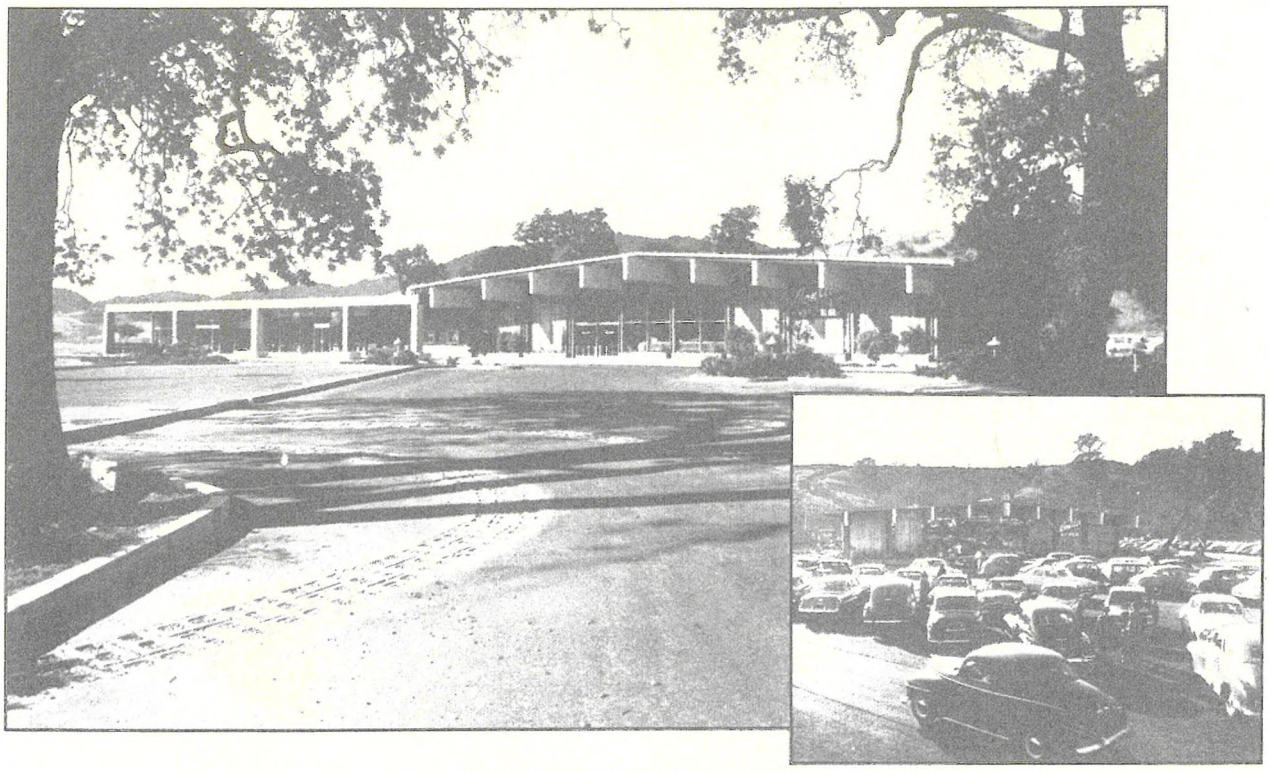
As Marin County grew in population, it became clear that its two general hospitals, in Ross and San Rafael (now closed), could not handle the patient load. By the mid-1940's many veterans were returning from the war, the postwar baby boom was just beginning, and the county was in dire need of a new hospital facility. In 1949 voters approved $800,000 in bonds—enough to bring in federal and state aid for a total expenditure of $1,976,000.

Ground was broken at the Greenbrae site in 1950, and a 104-bed hospital opened in May 1952. Polio was still a dread disease then, and in the first few months of operation, Marin General had 52 patients admitted with polio.

An additional wing was added in 1963, and in 1968 the Community Mental Health Center was built adjacent to the main hospital. With the completion of a major addition in 1989, Marin General has become a major medical facility, with state of the art equipment capable of providing the most complete and exacting medical care. Among its notable features: MGH is one of only a handful of hospitals in the world to provide a totally germ-free environment for the care of highly sensitive patients.

During the years, thousands of babies have been born at Marin General, including one who was something of a celebrity: in 1971 Josef Stalin's granddaughter was born to Svetlana Stalin Peters, then married to an American architect who helped Frank Lloyd Wright design the Marin Civic Center.

Greenbrae went on to provide even further medical care for the community. To support Marin General, in 1950 a group of physicians established the adjacent Ross Valley Medical Clinic, a complete outpatient medical facility (recently dissolved, with Marin General expanding its scope of services within the structure). In 1968-69 the 12-story Tamalpais Residence Center was built at a cost of $10 million. The luxurious 55-bed life care facility, considered to be one of the finest of its kind, is a familiar landmark in Marin.



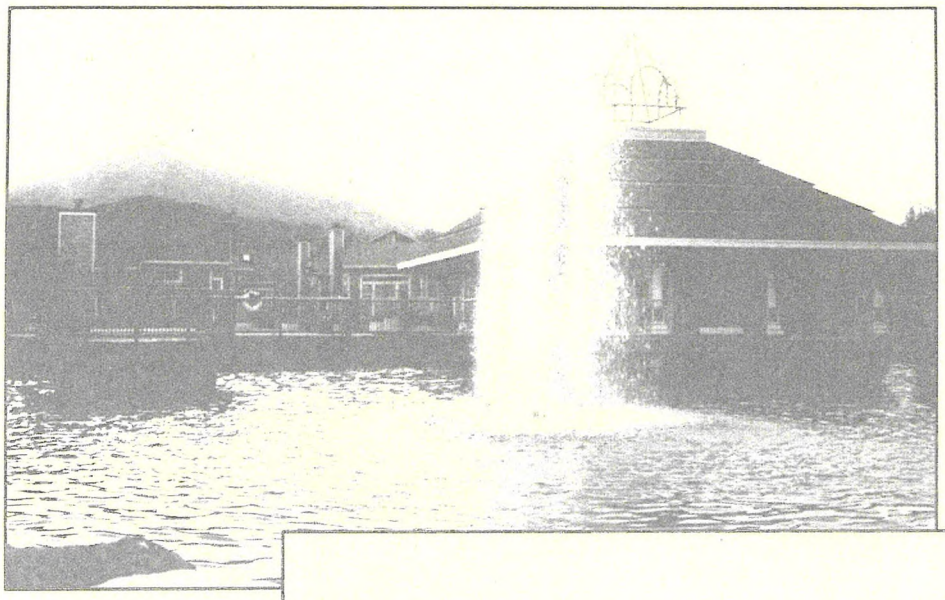
Glamorus Bon Air Center. 1952

The Bon Air Shopping Center

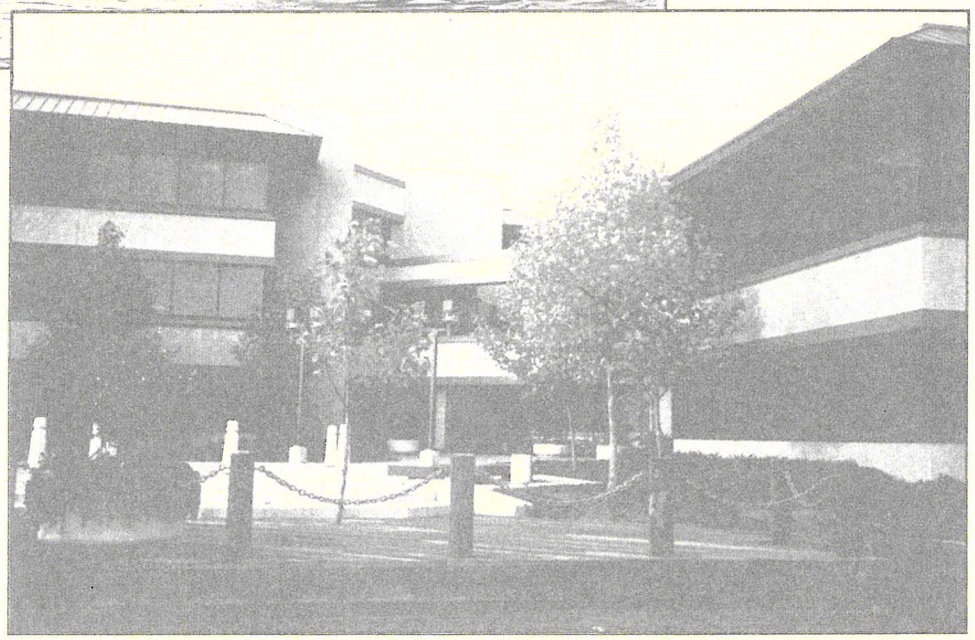
Residents of the fledgling community created the need for consumer goods, and the Schultz Co. was, of course prepared to satisfy those needs. Soon construction was started on a shopping center directly across from the Greenbrae homes along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Naturally, the most essential need was food, so on Nov. 2, 1952, the Bon Air Super Market opened its doors with much fanfare. Located at the north end of the center, the market owned by James Kilpatrick was at the time the most modern grocery operation in Marin. Soon followed Bon Air Hardware, the Greenbrae Salon of Beauty, La Grande Laundry and Dry Cleaning, a barber shop, and John De Vries Draperies. The Schultz Co. also moved its offices into the center.

Over the years the centrally located Bon Air Center grew and changed with the times, and for many, the Center became the focal point of the community, a place where its citizens would meet one another over the produce, or under the hair dryers. A major event was the introduction of Petrini's in 1964. (Until that time there had been Petrini meat markets in San Francisco, but this was to be its first venture into the full-service grocery business; even to this day, the Greenbrae store is one of the chain's most successful operations). In 1985 the Center was both expanded and given a major facelift. This ambitious undertaking included the addition of a Longs Drugs, a quality clothing store, major restaurant, plus numerous other retail operations selected for the services they provided the community.

Times change, and with them trends, but longtime residents still reminisce about the friendly advice pharmacist Henry Bracco would distribute for their bodily ailments at their favorite gathering spot, the Greenbrae Pharmacy (which had replaced the closed Bon Air Super.) Where kids hung around waiting for their hero, legendary Joe DiMaggio, to casually drop in, as he often did, to visit his pal Henry. They still never cease to be amazed at how Curly over at the hardware store could solve every household problem. Or the good times to be had at The Refectory restaurant, with its lively music and huge steaks. These places and their owners no longer are a part of the Center, but they will be remembered fondly.



Meeting center
and pool,
Cape Marin.
1991



Office complex with water views. 1991

The Final Phase: New Homes, Offices

At the same time as the shopping center expansion, the open fields which ran from behind the Center to the Corte Madera Creek and had previously been inhabited primarily by jack rabbits and the ubiquitous Greenbrae Bowl, were slated for new life.

Deciding to concentrate its business interests on its already developed holdings, the Schultz Co. sold the 27-acre parcel. Eventually developers Laderman and Lohr undertook a three-stage project, which commenced with the construction of a $30 million office center on seven acres, complete with an upscale Italian restaurant.

Phase 2 of the project was a two and three-bedroom townhouse complex, followed by the construction of 129 single family detached homes. At this writing, the project is ongoing and the homes are creating a further extension of the Greenbrae community.

Historical Points Of Interest

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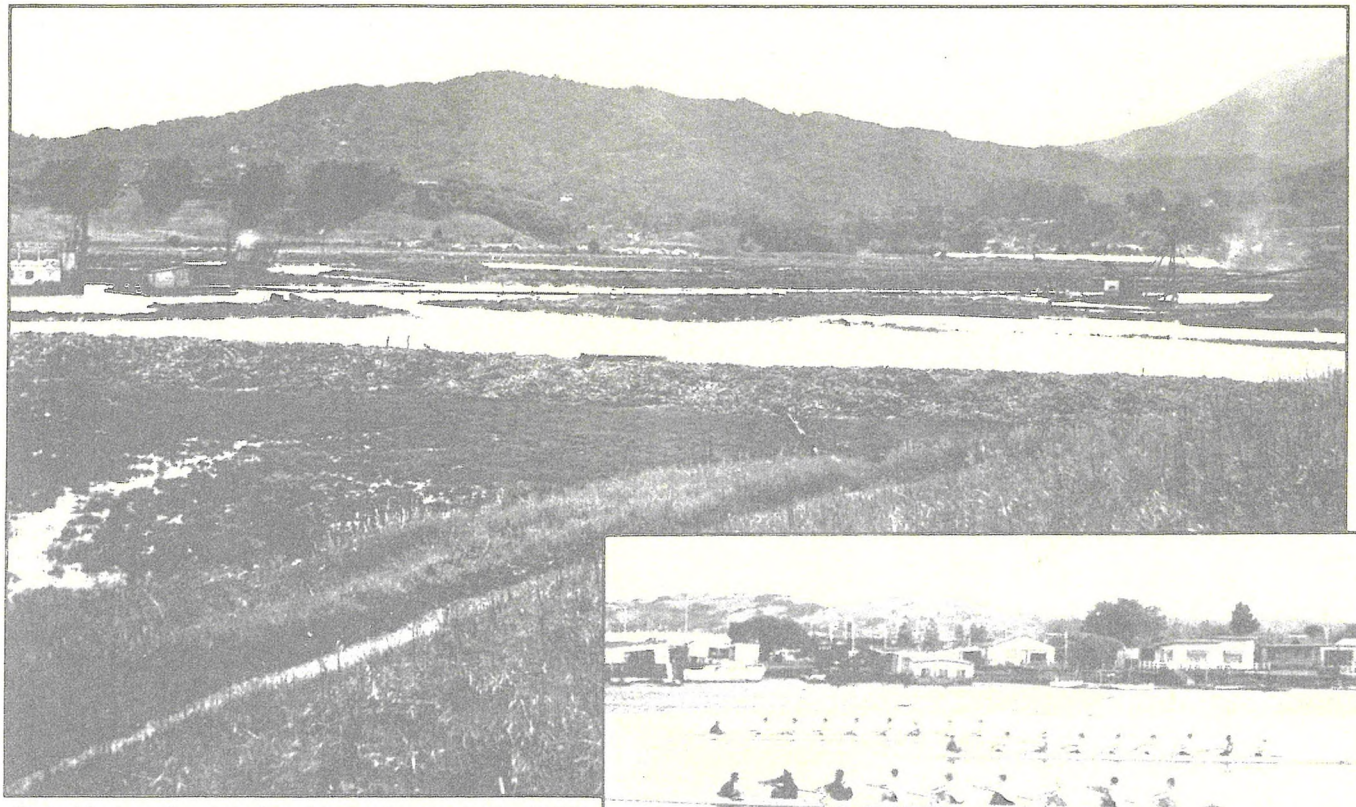
Remnants Of Greenbrae's Past



Corte Madera Creek before Marina homes built. 1950's

Redwood crew plies creek today. 1991

Corte Madera Creek

In the 1880's scows and steamers such as the "Ida" and the "Tamalpais" busily plied the creek to Ross Landing (later named Kentfield), hauling cargos of hides, tallow, rough lumber, swine and cattle. At that time the creek was a reasonably deepwater river and Ross Landing was the embarkation point for San Francisco.

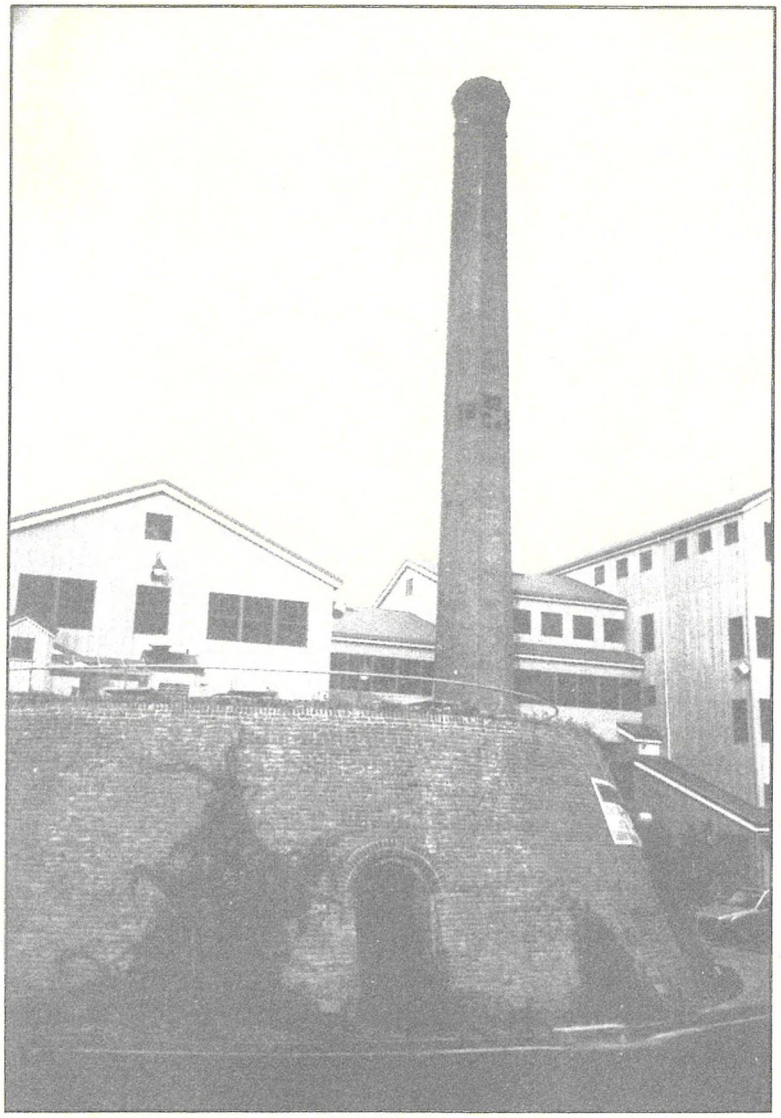
In those days small schooners brought wood and water down the creek for thirsty, booming San Francisco. That, in a sense, was the beginning of the death of the creek. The wood taken off the adjacent hills loosened the top soil and the creek gradually became a slough—mud at low tide and only a little water at high tide. Finally, the waterway was no longer suitable for transportation purposes.

Railroad Trestle

The last vestige of the days of freight travel on the Corte Madera Creek is now a dilapidated collection of old timbers spanning the mouth of the creek. When the railroad came to Marin in the 1880's, the creek channel had to be kept open for freight. The original trestle and steel lift span for a single track was built as part of the San Francisco and San Rafael Railroad between Tiburon and San Rafael in 1884. It was operated henceforth by the San Francisco and Northern Pacific Railroad.

In 1917 a hand-operated wooden drawbridge called the Boscule Span was built just west of the train trestle for highway traffic. Prior to that time, traffic crossed the creek 4 or 5 miles to the west on a fixed wooden bridge. The wooden bridge was removed in 1960 when the present high level structure was opened to traffic.

At present the trestle remains forlornly dormant, but who knows, someday rapid transit may come to Marin, and it will once again be revitalized as a major form of transportation within the County.



1991

Remillard Brickyard

In 1889 the Remillard family, who had established brickyards in several Bay Area locations, purchased 150 acres of the "old Porter Ranch"in eastern Greenbrae.

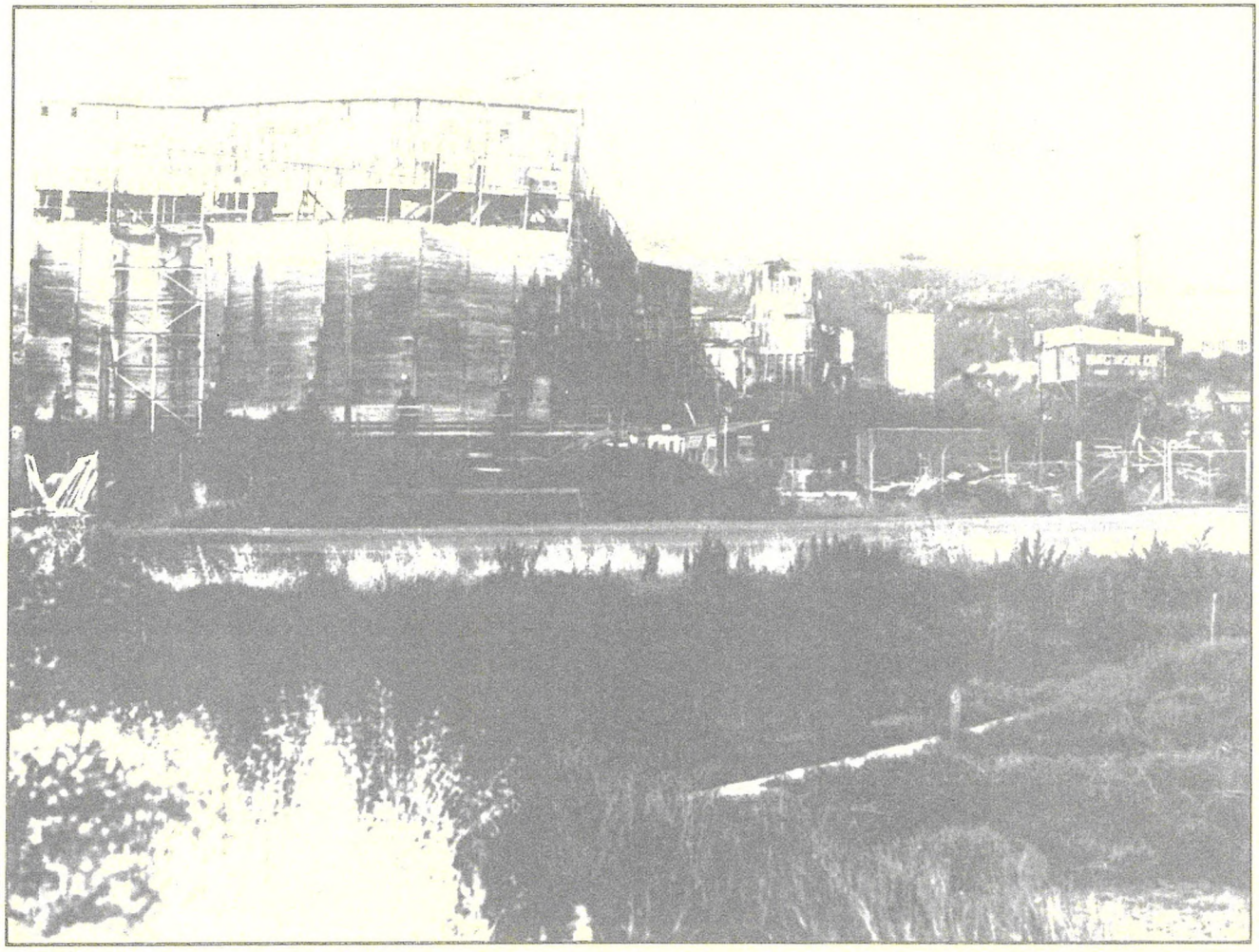
Clay from the flatland lying between San Quention Prison and Highway 101 was fired into brick and shipped to San Francisco on five company scow schooners. Remillard bricks helped rebuild the City after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The kiln operated 24 hours a day during the summer months and fired a minimum of 500,000 bricks.

The Remillard land was a self-sustaining community during its peak years. There were homes for the management, cabins for the brick makers, a cookhouse, stable and blacksmith shop as well as land set aside for vegetables.

In 1903 Pierre Remillard died, leaving control of his vast empire to his wife and daughter Lillian, who later became the legendary Countess Dandini. She was responsible for closing down the brickyard in 1915 and later selling a large portion of the land to the future owners of the Hutchinson Quarry.

In 1978, the kiln was declared a State Historical Landmark and added to the National Register.

Today the kiln, recognizable by its tall octagonal-shaped smokestack, has been transformed into an office complex that showcases an elegant French restaurant.



1972

Hutchinson Quarry (Larkspur Landing)

For years motorists were amused by the sight of a large lopsided structure that appeared to be lurching drunkenly alongside the eastern side of Hwy. 101. While the building has disappeared, it once played an important role in Marin's history.

In 1924 the El Cerrito-based Hutchinson Co. discovered there wasn't enough rock in its existing quarries to meet the growing demand. The Greenbrae site was found to be ideal, for it afforded plenty of rock and was near water for barging to other locations around the Bay Area. In 1930 the edges of Treasure Island were fortified with huge rocks shipped from the quarry to support the fill for the Golden Gate International Exposition. The quarry rocks were in demand when access roads were needed for the Golden Gate Bridge. Millions of yards of material were removed from the property.

In 1974, the quarry bunker, which had been leaning haphazardly for fifty years (much to the delight of artists who found the structure a favorite subject) was razed to make way for Larkspur Landing. The land was annexed to the city of Larkspur and the gaping hole created by a half century of dynamiting and digging for rock has been transformed into condominiums, townhouses, apartments, a hotel and shopping center.

Popular meeting ground for Boardwalk residents. 1991

GREENBRAE BOARDWALK

Ark communities are a unique development in the Bay Area. Surprisingly, most Greenbrae residents are not even aware of their waterside neighbors—which is perfectly fine with this independent community which fiercely protects its privacy.

A world unto itself, the Greenbrae Boardwalk is bordered by Corte Madera Creek, the Bay, Corte Madera Ecological Reserve and Hwy. 101. Residents live in a composite of 50 different dwellings, many with unusual pasts; most were originally located on sites elsewhere, and were floated to the Boardwalk for a variety of reasons.

In the 20's the focal point of activity was the men-only 50-50 Club (which stood for share and share alike as far as fun and work went). The group of San Francisco tradesmen who formed the club came to hunt and fish and drink on two separate arks that contained a bunkhouse and club room.

As time wore on Boardwalk residents put down planks connecting the burgeoning little community to dry land. The original boardwalk was simply planks stretched lengthwise and nailed at each end giving a springboard effect when walked on. The challenge was to try to run the length of the planks without falling off.

In 1940 the Boardwalk's largest and most notable landmark, the Rod and Gun Club, successor to the 50-50 Club was built. Potluck dinners, Christmas and St. Patrick Day parties were regular events at the club.

When the Schultz Co. purchased the land west of the freeway from the Catholic Church in 1946, arks that had been located along the creek in Bon Air were asked to move. The train trestle drawbridge was opened and the homes were floated to their present site east of the freeway.

Loyalty to the Boardwalk remains strong, with several fourth generation families still living there. Although many of the arks have been altered over the years, the arched roofs and shiplap siding of many are still visible. Some are mounted on the original barges on which they floated; others have been perched on stilts above the high water line.

Sharing a common life on the water has bonded the little community together, not only to maintain their area from the ravages of the elements, but also to fend off outside forces. In the 1960's they successfully prevented the removal of 19 houses when the creek channel was dredged as part of the flood control project. One hundred feet were sliced off neighboring Wood Island to spare the Boardwalk homes.

Facts About Greenbrae Today

Population:

1,200 households in single family dwellings
1,200 households in apartments, condominiums

Location:

17 miles north of San Francisco, 40 minute commute time

Education:

Ross Valley Nursery School, Bacich Elementary School,
Kent Middle School (all Kentfield),
Redwood High School (Larkspur),
Marin Catholic High School, College of Marin (Kentfield).

Shopping:

Bon Air Shopping Center (Petrini's, Longs and 48 specialty shops)
plus nearby shopping centers: TheVillage, Corte Madera Town Center,
Larkspur Landing, Kent Woodland Center

Transporation:

Golden Gate Transit, Larkspur Ferry

Medical:

Marin General Hospital, Community Mental Health, Marin Hearing and Speech,
Bayside Convalescent Hospital

Fire Protection:

Kentfield and Larkspur Fire Depts.

Police:

Marin County Sheriff Department and Twin Cities Police Department

Utilities:

Pacific Gas & Electric, Marin Municipal Water District

Churches:

St. Sebastian's Catholic Church, Latter-day Saints

Housing Options:

Single family dwellings, town houses,
condominiums, apartments, houseboats

A Special Place To Live

From the early days of the Miwok Indians to the present, Greenbrae has always been regarded as a highly desirable place to call home. Its hilly terrain not only provides shelter from chilly ocean breezes and fog, but offers magnificent vistas of the San Francisco Bay and Mt. Tamalpais. Generally, temperatures are moderate, and vary little from season to season. Except during the rainy winter months, sunshine usually prevails most of the year.

Established as a suburban housing community, Greenbrae has no industry, thus the air is clear and healthy. Its residents' pride in their well-built homes is obvious, as is the care given to the mature greenery that enriches the hillsides.

As time goes on, Greenbrae residents have increasingly appreciated their choice of location for its centrality and proximity to both San Francisco and other areas in Marin County. Situated at the intersection of Marin's main artery, Hwy. 101 and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, it avoids much of the ever-growing traffic congestion that has beleagured the County. Greenbrae commuters undoubtedly have one of the most enjoyable modes of transportation practically at their doorstep in the Larkspur Ferry. Not only is it an easy walk to catch these sleek vessels, but the Golden Gate Transit also provides convenient feeder bus service as well.

A model community requires a topnotch education system, and Greenbrae has the distinction of being part of one of the most exemplary in all California. Its youngsters are enrolled in the Kentfield School District schools and attend Bacich Elementary from kindergarten to sixth grade, and Kentfield Middle School seventh through eighth. Both schools consistently rank in the top percentile in statewide test score ratings. High school students attend nearby Redwood High or Marin Catholic, both of which have equally impressive ratings. As a result, Greenbrae has become a much sought after community for young families who want their children to have a consistently high level of education.

Shopping and health care conveniences also contribute to the fabric of Greenbrae. While closeby shopping malls provide excitement, the hub of Greenbrae is the Bon Air Center, which offers more in the way of necessities to its residents. One of the most successful stores in the Petrini Market's chain is the focal point of the Center, with Longs Drugs and a host of smaller shops providing goods and services that range from barber shops to wearing apparel, specialty coffees to needlepoint.

When it comes to medical services, Greenbrae is the focal point for all of Marin County. In 1989 Marin General Hospital, a full service health care facility, completed a $32 million state of the art addition that is a model of sophisticated health care-giving. Nearby are numerous physicians' offices and laboratory facilities. Perched atop the adjoining hill is The Tamalpais, a full-scale life care retirement facility.

So many recreational opportunities abound in Marin County, and for Greenbrae residents they're mostly close at hand. Mt. Tamalpais beckons hikers to its endless trails, as do the Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate Recreational area. San Francisco Bay and ocean beaches lure sailors, windsurfers and sunworshipers. Runners and bicyclists find endless paths right outside their front doors.

Tennis, anyone? Size up the local Ross Valley and Mt. Tam Racquet Clubs, or any one of 15 other private tennis clubs in Marin. For public play, a number of courts are available at College of Marin and Redwood High School. Swimmers can take the plunge at any of the above facilities, as well. Golf, skiing in the Sierras, plus many other outdoor activities are so readily available, that it's a wonder anyone has time for work.

Combine all of these factors and it is easy to see why Greenbrae has become such a desirable place to live. Compared to many other areas, the turnover of homes is considerably smaller; many residents have enjoyed their homes for 20 years and more.

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GREENBRAE OR LARKSPUR– WHERE DO I LIVE?

Many Greenbrae residents are unaware that they are actually residents of Larkspur, even though they have a Greenbrae mailing address. How did this unusual situation come about?

In the early 1950s, the Schultz Co. saw an opportunity to create more housing in Greenbrae by annexing the undeveloped portion to Larkspur. The city in turn saw an opportunity to broaden its tax base. Incrementally, uninhabited annexation began.

Thus a confusing crazy quilt pattern emerged. Because portions of Greenbrae had already been developed, and because many existing homesites were adjacent to vacant lots, the boundary that separates incorporated and unincorporated Greenbrae runs around houses and up and down different sides of the street. In some blocks, houses in the middle of the block can be in Larkspur, while neighbors on each side receive their services through the county.

All in all, nearly half of Greenbrae's roughly 1,200 households are in Larkspur and there isn't a clear and discernible pattern to which is where.

As generally as can be described, Greenbrae extends from Hwy. 101 westerly to Manor Road, and from Sir Francis Drake Blvd. north to Bret Hart Drive. Even that description has wide discrepancies at points.

Given this odd situation, Greenbrae maintains its identity for several significant reasons. The physical lay of the land defines its borders and gives it a singular presence. All of Greenbrae comprises County Service Area Number 16, a taxing entity which provides for maintenance of landscaping. Likewise, all of Greenbrae is served through the Kentfield Post Office, regardless of whether or not it is incorporated. And finally, all the children of Greenbrae go to schools in the Kentfield School District.

About the Greenbrae Property Owners Association

By Past President Ted Canon

The Greenbrae Property Owner's Association (GPOA), a non-profit corporation, was formed in 1948 by the early residents of Greenbrae, with jurisdiction over the first subdivision, as well as any contiguous subdivisions subsequently developed in Greenbrae. Among other powers, the corporation was qualified to accept from the Schultz Company power to administer Covenants, Codes and Restrictions (CC&R's). In 1970, the Schultz Company assigned all rights to enforce and administer the CC&Rs to the GPOA.

The Board of Directors of the GPOA consists of eleven volunteer members from the community.. The Board is charged with the management of the community's affairs. Today the Board's primary task is management of the maintenance of the common landscaped areas of the community. However, the Board assumes numerous other responsibilities including architectural review, administering the CC&Rs, maintaining a liaison with City and County government and private special interest groups, and generally being an action group to respond to needs of the community. The Board also publishes a quarterly newsletter called the *GREENBRAY*.

The Greenbrae Community has four entrances on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, three public park areas, and numerous median strips which contain extensive landscaping. The entrances, parks and landscaped median strips provide a unique and complimentary appearance to the Greenbrae neighborhood. The Schultz Company had, for many years, maintained these common areas. However, in 1970, upon assigning its right to administer the CC&Rs to the GPOA, the Schultz Company halted their efforts in this regard, passing the task on to the GPOA Board.

In 1971, the Marin County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution establishing County Service Area No. 16, whose purpose was to provide local park and recreation facilities and services, including maintenance of common areas in Greenbrae. The City of Larkspur consented to the inclusion of their incorporated territory within the County Service Area. An election was held and the residents of Greenbrae voted to impose an assessment on their

property taxes to maintain the area. In 1989 residents voted to increase the assessment to the present level, which ranges between $45 and $75 per year per parcel. The actual amount of funding collected each year is pursuant to budgets prepared by the GPOA and reviewed and approved by the County.

In 1975 the GPOA and the County of Marin entered into an agreement whereby the GPOA agreed to administer CSA #16 under the direction of the Marin County Board of Supervisors.

The GPOA Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is a committee of GPOA Board members responsible for reviewing development and improvement proposals including fences, decks, additions, new construction and related construction matters. In addition to reviewing plans for proposed improvements within the community, the ARC maintains a liaison with the Kentfield Planning Advisory Board, and the Planning and Building Departments of both the County of Marin and the City of Larkspur.

The other concerns of the community are handled by one of three other active committees: Community Liaison, Safety and Nuisance. A representative of the Board is assigned to monitor nearly all of the private and governmental activities which may have an effect on the community. The safety committee responds to complaints concerning traffic and safety of our children. The nuisance committee is assigned the task of abating hazardous and unsightly conditions and noise-related nuisances.

In addition to the standing committees of the Board, special committees are formed to address specific activities. At this time, one committee is reviewing alternatives to replace the fence along the Sir Francis Drake Corridor, and another is starting planning of what hopes to be an annual community picnic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author/editor wishes to thank the following for their invaluable support and sharing of information.

The Anne Kent California Room, Civic Center Library
Marin Independent-Journal, especially Beth Ashley
Niels Schultz Jr., The Larkspur Heritage Committee
Marin General Hospital
Cover design and artwork by Dennis Redmond
Layout and production by Pat Williams and Christine Cram