

Newsletter March 2019

JOIN THE MUSEUM!

IT'S EASY JUST [CLICK HERE](#)

**LOTS OF BENEFITS PLUS YOU WILL BE SUPPORTING
YOUR MUSEUM**

Museum Events

Marin History Museum Lecture Series



March 28 7:00 pm Elks Lodge
1312 Mission Ave., San Rafael

Shipwrecks of Marin, presented by Brian K. Crawford

Marin County is a graveyard of ships. Its steep rock-bound shores, treacherous currents and frequent fogs have been the doom of hundreds of ships for over four hundred years. Local historian Brian K. Crawford has done extensive research fleshing out the details of famous wrecks from contemporary accounts and identifying more than a hundred wrecks not documented elsewhere for his comprehensive new book, *Shipwrecks*

of Marin, just released this month.

Many of these tales are full of danger and heroism, of pathos and high adventure. Terrified passengers cling to overturned steamers or clutch at rocks in the pounding seas. Seamen clamber up cliffs to escape certain destruction. The vessels range from Spanish treasure galleons to garbage scows, clipper ships to floating dry docks.

If you love ships and the sea and tales of danger and adventure, or if you just want to know more about the many wrecks that dot our coasts, you will find this illustrated talk endlessly entertaining. The books will be available for signing and purchase.

\$10 suggested donation. Free entry for Elks with ID card.

San Rafael Elks Lodge at Mission Ave at C Street in San Rafael. 1312 Mission Ave.

Look for hidden driveway. Parking is in the rear of mansion. Follow one-way signs.

Please RSVP info@marinhistory.org • www.marinhistory.org • 415-382-1182

Coming Soon...

SAVE THE DATE!

APPRAISAL DAY

May 4th, 10 am - 2 pm at the Marin Center Exhibit Hall



MHM & Michaan's Auctions invite you to gather your decorative arts, books, antiques, heirlooms, vintage collectibles, treasured fine art and small furniture and bring them to be appraised.

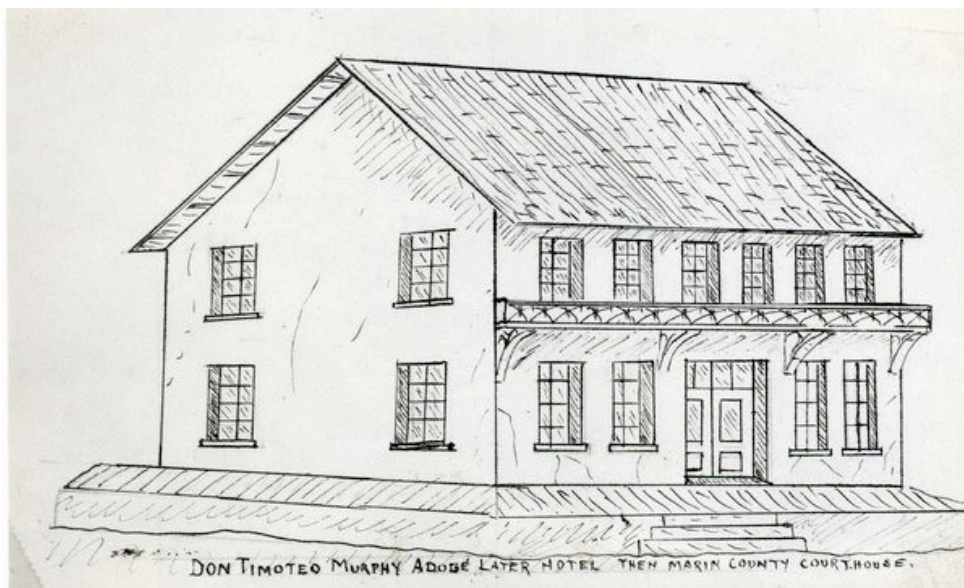
Feature Article



The Irish in Marin...

The Birth of St. Vincent's School for Boys

On January 10, 1853, Don Timoteo Murphy's friends gathered at his San Rafael adobe to witness his last will and testament. Rich in land, cattle, sheep and horses, Murphy split his estate between his brother Matthew and nephew John Lucas. Perhaps to ensure a warm welcome at the Pearly Gates, he deeded 317 acres to Archbishop Joseph Alemany to "aid in the establishment of a Seminary or Institution of learning." To protect against ecclesiastical dithering, Murphy added a caveat: if the school was not built within two years, the grant would be voided. The Irish Giant signed his name at 2 a.m. January 11th, lapsed into unconsciousness and died two days later.

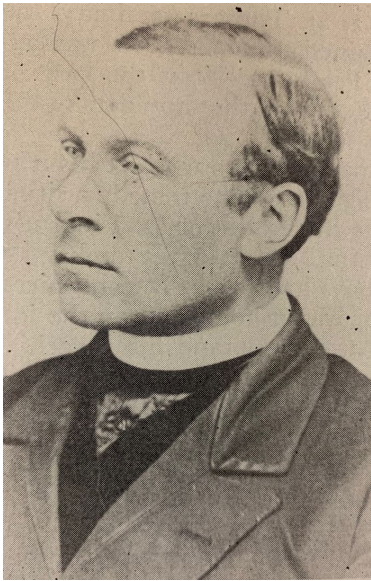


Murphy Adobe Source: MHM

Archbishop Alemany let a year pass before taking action on the Irishman's grant. The inconvenient property was twenty-five miles from San Francisco, reachable only by boat followed by, depending on the season, a dusty or muddy horseback ride. Eager to build a cathedral on California Street, Alemany had neither money nor attention to devote to the project. But, he reasoned, the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent ran an orphanage and school for girls. Perhaps they could be persuaded to take on the challenge.



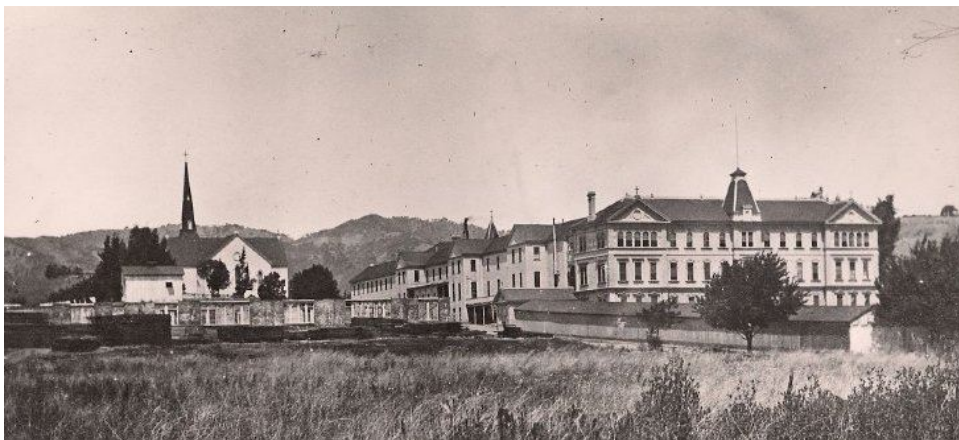
Sister Francis McEnnis (1812-1879) soon journeyed north selecting a knoll on which to build the school, funded by a near miraculous \$5,000 (\$138,000 in 2017). On January 7, 1855, four days before the land would have reverted to Murphy's heirs, St. Vincent's Seminary opened. By July, the Seminary hosted ten girls. Unfortunately, the isolation and lack of a local priest forced the sisters and their charges to retreat to San Francisco.



Source: *One Hundred Years an Orphan*, John T. Dwyer

Archbishop Almaney next sent 14 boys from the Market Street Orphanage along with Father A. R. Maurice to the newly renamed St. Vincent's School for Boys. By the end of 1855, 28 orphans and 40 day students studied at St. Vincent's.

In June 1859, Father Louis Lootens became director. During his tenure, the orphanage and school thrived. Lootens built gardens, a chapel dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary and a 140-bed dormitory-classroom building. The good father's achievements left many convinced that Lootens, not Sister Francis or Father Maurice, had founded the school. By 1890, the City of San Rafael had dedicated Lootens Place, between 3rd and 5th, in honor of Father Lootens and his service as pastor to Marin and father to St. Vincent's orphaned boys.

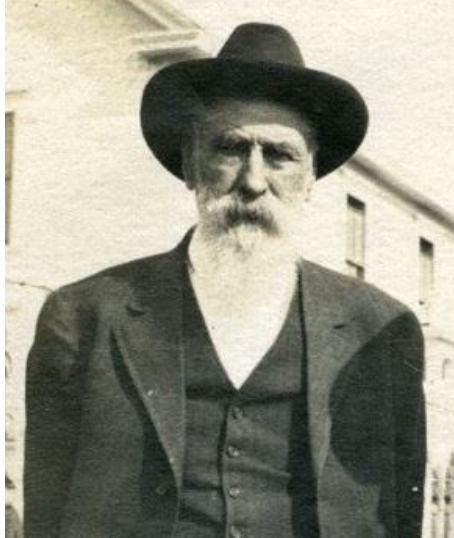


Source: MHM

By Jo Haraf

Faces of Marin

George Dillon
(1826-1906)



Source: Tomales History Museum

Clams brought George Dillon of County Killdare, Ireland from Missouri and across the plains to the Marin coast. In 1859, he and his wife Matilda, and eventually nine children, settled on 906 acres of ranch land on Tomales Bay, producing milk and butter for the San Francisco market and cultivating the once-famous Bodega red skin potatoes.

In the 1880s, with the North Pacific Railroad coming to Tomales, four miles to the east, George thought tourists would want to see the mile-long sandy beach at the mouth of Tomales Bay. He built a hotel and dining room at Dillon Beach and ran a stage coach to the station. One wonders if Irish seafood chowder was on the menu – made with cream, potatoes and clams from his own beach.

In 1906, after his son Joseph tragically shot himself, Dillon sold the hotel to the Keegan family with the understanding that the property would always be called Dillon Beach. He died shortly after in Petaluma.

By Susan Cluff

Peter Donahue (1822-1885)



Source: Tiburon Landmarks Society

Peter Donahue was a machinist on a gun boat in Peru when he jumped ship to join the Gold Rush. Arriving in San Francisco in 1849, he started a machine shop with his brothers that later became Union Iron Works. He then founded the first gasworks company for street lights (forerunner of PG&E) and in 1860, the first crosstown street car line (now Muni).

About 1869, Peter began buying and building railways in Sonoma and Marin, then served only by stagecoaches and schooners. After a rival railroad bypassed San Rafael, Donahue built a railroad branch from Petaluma to San Rafael in 1878 and in 1884 completed a freight and passenger rail and ferry terminus at Point Tiburon.

An investor in the San Rafael Hotel with his son Mervyn, Peter built a palatial mansion on Lincoln Avenue with murals of all the places his railroads went. He didn't get to enjoy it long, he died after inspecting his rail yards on a rainy November night.



Mechanics Statue
Source: Susan Cluff

Donahue's son erected the Mechanics Statue in San Francisco in his father's memory. The bronze depicts five men struggling to punch a hole through a metal plate. At the base are symbols of Donahue's professions: an anvil for the foundries, a propeller for shipping, and the driving wheel and connecting rod for his railroads.
By Susan Cluff

John Reed (1805-1843)



Reed's adobe house c. 1890 after being destroyed by fire.
Source: Mill Valley Public Library, Lucretia Little History Room

Born in Dublin, Ireland, John Reed came to the Presidio of Yerba Buena (San Francisco) at the age of 21. After a failed attempt to settle land near present-day Cotati, he built a home in Sausalito in 1832 and began a ferry service across the bay. He named the boat Hilaria after the Presidio Commandant's daughter, whom he would marry in 1836. John became a Mexican citizen and received the first land grant in Marin, Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio, where he built a sawmill (Old Mill) to supply lumber to the Presidio. The Reeds, raising four children, built an adobe home in what is now Corte Madera and by 1843 their ranch had 2,000 cattle and 200 horses. John Reed died at the age of 38 when his friends severed an artery in a failed attempt to cure him of pneumonia with a phlebotomy. The Rancho was eventually divided between his three surviving children.

By Scott Fletcher

Community Events of Interest

Friday, March 22 5-7 pm
Marin Art and Garden Center

Opening Reception

Kitchen Memories, 1945-1965: Selections from The Kathleen Thompson Hill Culinary Collection

This exhibition presents some of the collection's highlights, from cheese graters to cracker tins to egg beaters. More than just examples of domestic activities, the collection mirrors the cultural and technological history of the country through the years.

Saturday, March 23 6-7 pm
Friends of China Camp

Village Museum

Please join local Historian Marcie Miller for a talk on the first Don of San Rafael, "Don Timoteo" Murphy. His was the largest and most prized catch among the twenty-odd 1834-45 land grants. Standing 6'4" and 350 pounds, Murphy spoke Native Miwok with an Irish Brogue while leading as the strongest advocate for the Marin Natives. Come learn of this larger than life character who helped form early San Rafael through his dedication...and maybe a little scandal.

Friday, April 5 11 am
Moya and Ross Historical Society

The California Supreme Court: Inside and Out

Hear from Ross resident and recently retired California Supreme Court Justice Kathryn Mickle Werdegarr, the third woman ever to serve on the Court, about her experiences under three Chief Justices and four governors over almost a quarter century of service.

For information and reservations contact the Ross Historical Society

IN THIS ISSUE:

Museum News, Events, Feature Article, Faces of Marin, 100 Years Ago, Community Events, and From the Collection

From the Collection



Commemorative plaque in original brown leather case "Presented to Marin County California by the Panama Pacific International Exposition in Recognition of Marin County's Co-operation". Yellow satin lines the inside top of the case where "P. P. I. E." is pressed in shiny gold script. The plaque itself, heavy bronze with a delicate border, rests snugly in yellow velvet. Dated March 11, 1915.

Marin County was featured prominently as one of 58 counties in the fair's "Old Mission Style" California Building. The Marin County pavilion featured an arch of Sausalito stone, columns formed by redwood trees, a large cut-out in the gallery's north wall that provided an unobstructed view of the natural landscape, and several oil paintings and murals.

One such painting from the exhibit, "Baptism of Chief Marin" by Ettore Serbaroli, now hangs in the gift shop at Mission San Rafael. First displayed at the Cliff House following the fair, it was purchased by a church patron for \$400 and moved to the mission in 1976.

Sources: Marin History Museum, Marin Independent Journal, San Francisco Chronicle, calisphere.org

In the News - 100 Years Ago

From the *Marin Journal*

March 1919

St. Raphael's Church to celebrate St. Patrick's day with Good Entertainment

The St. Patrick's Day celebration which takes place Saturday evening March 16th, in Hall Rafael, will introduce a big program of Irish songs and dances by several of the cleverest members of the Gaelic League of San Francisco. The feature of the evening will be the first presentation in Marin county of the "Price of Orchids," a sentimental comedy in one act, first produced with great success at the Cap and Bells club, under the direction of Miss. Mae Francis O'Keefe. It compares favorably with the finest acts in local theaters.

VOLUNTEER JOB OPPORTUNITIES

We can use your help! Have a little time on our hands and looking to help a local non-profit? Please let us know if any of these look interesting to you by emailing info@marinhistory.org or calling 415-382-1182.

We would love to hear from you!

Writer

We are starting to create a lot of content for our eNewsletters, social media sites, and future traveling exhibitions and publications. If you like to do historical research and write short articles, we could use your help.

Editor

Along with writers, we need editors to give the final article its blessing before it goes to print. This volunteer job can be done from home or on site. Let us know if you have that required eagle eye and grammatical tenacity to tackle this job.

Photographer

Capture the moment for us! Your photos of the Museum's special events and exhibitions will be invaluable for public outreach, future fundraising campaigns and our institution's historical record. We could use your help documenting our history!

Don't see your area of interest?

Call us and we work with you to create your perfect volunteer experience!

Marin History Museum - Craemer Family Research and Collection Facility

45 Leveroni Ct Novato CA 94949

Please call for an appointment

415-382-1182

Mailing Address: PO Box 150727, San Rafael, CA 94915

For more information:

www.marinhistory.org info@marinhistory.org