



1909 Kentfield May Day "Sack Race"

Last year at this time, our Marin History photo featured the lovely May Day 'Fairies and Flowers' of San Rafael's West End School. This year a more lively and rambunctious crowd is pictured celebrating the holiday with the always-hilarious 'sack race'. The unknown photographer captured the moment that the lead runner is plummeting to the ground as his closest competitor looks on with interest, while completely airborne, truly 'a moment in time.' May Day has been celebrated for thousands of years in many different ways, though large community gatherings like this seem relegated to the past. An April 4th San Francisco Call newspaper article reported that the town of Kentfield was planning a large, countywide gathering, not only to celebrate May Day, but also to break ground for the newly proposed Marin Stadium & Clubhouse. The land was donated by Mrs. Adeline Kent to build a sports stadium, clubhouse, "swimming tank", athletic grounds, racetrack, meeting rooms and theater that would come to be known as *The Tamalpais Centre*.

Festivities for the day included May Pole dancing, athletic games and contests for men, women and children, two baseball games, military drills by the Mount Tamalpais and Hitchcock military academies, a brass band of 40 pieces, and refreshments for all. Extra trains were scheduled for the day and estimates of the crowd were more than 4,000 total with over 1000 school children participating. The day's concluding attraction was a "balloon ascension" and "parachute drop" that thrilled the crowd. Mrs. Kent, mother of Congressman and conservationist, William Kent, used a "silver shovel" to officially break ground that day for the \$12,500 clubhouse and by October of that year the *The Tamalpais Centre* was in operation. The theme of community involvement and a dedication to "healthy pursuits" was the driving force behind the Tamalpais Centre's mission which had been established, "to meet the social needs of our time and place...wherein all of us working together may more fully enjoy the life granted each of us."