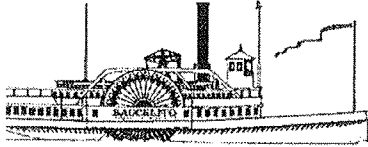


Moments in Time

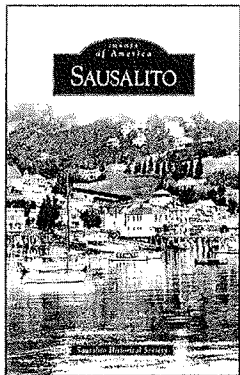
SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • NOVEMBER 2005



SHS Publishes New Book

We are proud to announce the publication of our new 128-page illustrated history of *Sausalito*. It is beautiful, affordable and up to date and we hope members and their friends will enthusiastically support SHS by purchasing this book through us.

The Society took on the commitment



to write *Sausalito* one year ago in cooperation with Arcadia Publishing, which specializes in local histories around the country. Hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into the creation of the visual layout and text. Every photograph in the SHS collection was studied and others were gleaned from outside sources such as the California

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10% DISCOUNT ON SAUSALITO

If you redeem your addressed copy of this Newsletter to the Ice House, you may purchase up to 3 copies of our new publication *Sausalito* at a 10% reduction.

DRAKE'S LOST HARBOR an historical footnote



Locals were not shy about trespassing into Fort Baker at the East Gate. Photo circa 1888.

Recently, while leafing through the pages of a new 400-page volume by Brian Kelleher called *Drake's Bay*, I encountered a new reference to the infamous "Plate of Brass" that Drake refers to in his memoirs about his stop on the Pacific Coast. It is called the "Sausalito Plate"! Always intrigued that the first English contact with the New World was in present-day Marin – not on the eastern seaboard as one might expect – I had never heard that Sir Francis Drake might have careened and repaired his ship the *Golden Hind*, right here on our shore.

Fortunately, this intriguing reference is footnoted in the book so it is possible to explore where the claim to have seen a "Sausalito Plate" originated.

First, the story: In 1892, a young girl

in her teens is summering with her family in a rented home in Wildwood Glen, the wooded valley above Caledonia Street accessed by Glen and Cazneau Streets. Grace Landers and her mother, an Englishwoman, decide to go on a picnic. They pack a lunch and walk through the downtown and along the road that leads toward the present site of Fort Baker. As they walk up the road from Old Town they pass a two-story house and then come to a gate. They enter the military grounds on a walking path.

Grace and her mother hike through the oak trees that still grow on the bluff. She recalls passing the old Sailors' Graveyard located above Tide Gauge Beach. In a clearing near it her mother notices a plate embedded into

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Drake's Lost Harbor

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a tree and points it out to her daughter who, 64 years after the experience, clearly recalls seeing on the plate the name "Francis Drake," the year 1579, and an English sixpence attached to one corner.

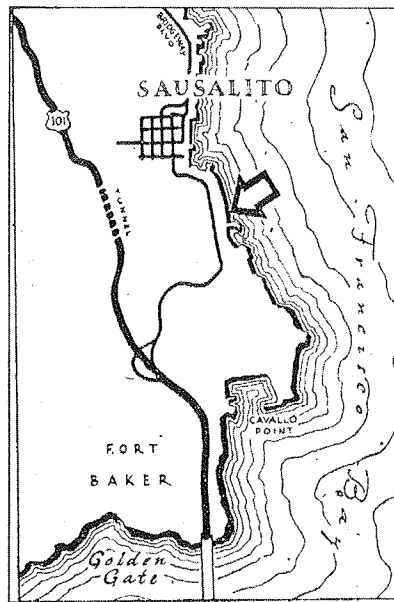
This tale is pasted together from several sources, including the information in *Elizabethan California* (which I found at the Fairfax Library). It refers to an interview with Grace Landers in 1956. The source for the story in *Elizabethan California* was an article in the *Oakland Tribune* of November 1956. The research librarian I contacted at the *Tribune* found the article in less than an hour and within two days it was in my mailbox.

The *Oakland Tribune* article corroborates the 1956 interview with Grace Landers. A childhood friend who was visiting with them the summer of 1892 confirms Grace's story when she recalled in her late 70s: "I remember my visit to your vacation home in Sausalito in 1892 and your mother telling of seeing Sir Francis Drake's plate on a tree in Sausalito, way out on the Point overlooking San Francisco Bay."

But why would Grace Landers wait until 1956, 64 years after the sighting, to speak out? The *Tribune* article answers this as well. Ms. Landers was married to a George Limback when, in 1936, the alleged "Plate of Brass," which was later proven a hoax, was found next to Highway 101 near San Quentin. She wanted to tell her story about the "Sausalito Plate", but her husband refused to allow it, saying she would get caught up in unwanted publicity. After her husband died in 1954, Grace went to the Bancroft Library to report her 1892 experience. The information was recorded and

resides in the Bancroft files.

Another piece of information from the *Tribune* article clarifies an issue historians have always had about the Sailors' Graveyard. Today the site is



PLAQUE HERE? — This map shows the spot (arrow) remembered by Mrs. Olive Limback as the place she saw Drake's famous "Plate of Brass".

very flat — flatter than one would expect for a graveyard on a bluff. When Grace (Landers) Limback told her story in 1956, she aroused the interest of an Oakland historian, Albert Norman, who came to Sausalito in search of the site. His research showed that in the 1940s, the local Lions Club had leveled the graveyard site to create a recreation area. (Several years ago Historical Society members found remains of benches and horseshoe pits at the site). The general area was also heavily altered by the construction of the sewage treatment plant in the early 1950s. The photographs Mr. Norman took of the area are believed to be in the files of the California Historical Society. We are searching for them.

Did Ms. Lander's plate exist? Could Sausalito's Old Town Cove - like Drake's Bay, Bodega Bay, Bolinas and San Quentin - be considered a possible site of Drake's toehold on the Pacific Coast in 1579? Could the plate that the young girl saw in 1892, embedded in an oak tree, still be there, now encased in the ancient oak? Or was it destroyed during construction of the sewage treatment plant?

Research will continue as long as the mystery lives. A curious reader will find a footnote, then a dusty book in a neighboring town library and finally a yellowed newspaper from the 1950s, and, who knows what next? Somewhere out there is the real "Plate of Brass" which Sir Francis Drake himself described in his memoirs. Perhaps it rests on a Sausalito hillside or a West Marin headland. Maybe you'll be the one to find it.

Or perhaps it's better the actual site is never ascertained. Maybe, just maybe, the unsolved mystery is a better story.

By Phil Frank

Reminder

HISTORY'S MYSTERIES

Be sure to follow up on reserving your tickets for Phil Frank's benefit video/slide presentation at 7:00 PM on November 17 at the Bay Model. Each ticket is \$20.00. Please send checks to SHS, P.O. Box 352, Sausalito, CA 94966



SAUSALITO VOICES

MARGE BRADY—SAUSALITO'S FIRST WOMAN CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

The Sausalito Historical Society is fortunate to have a growing collection of audiotaped interviews of many of its long-time residents. As part of our recently revived Oral History Program, we will be sharing the stories of some of the people who have been interviewed. Marjorie Bacon Brady, who died at age 90 on July 23, 2005, is the subject of our first SAUSALITO VOICES feature.



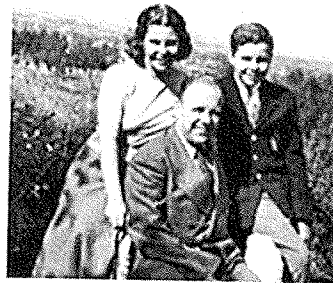
Marge Brady moved to Sausalito in 1956, after her husband, Brookner Brady, retired from the army. Two years later, in 1958, she became the first woman elected to Sausalito's City Council. Marge's 1987 interview focuses on her campaign and on the accomplishments of the City Council during the term she served on it.

Before Marge ran for election, people didn't really campaign for office in Sausalito. Instead, according to Marge, "The men of the town simply decided who they wanted to have run and then went ahead and elected them." Marge and her supporters put an end to all of this, holding campaign coffee hours where Marge described her vision for Sausalito to small neighborhood groups. When the votes were counted, Marge had received more votes than any other candidate.

Marge speaks proudly of the Council's decision to approve the acquisition of several underwater lots between Ondine's and the old Valhalla, saving that stretch of waterfront from development. She also describes how the Council, despite fierce opposition from property owners, who felt they should be able to do whatever they wanted with their property, adopted Sausalito's first Master Plan, and enacted Sausalito's first sign ordinance and first tree ordinance. The famous Sausalito sea lion was also installed on the waterfront while Marge was on

the Council and small lots were purchased throughout Sausalito for use as neighborhood playgrounds.

Marge tells us that she enjoyed the business of helping to run the city, but she speaks candidly about disliking conflict and contention, and reports that she sometimes wished people who appeared before the Council "would go away and let me run the store." She also offers an anecdote that underscores the complications of being a woman in political life in the



The Brady Family in Bulgaria - 1949

late 1950s. After Council meetings were over, her fellow Council members would regularly retire to a neighborhood bar for a beer. Marge, however, would only join them if her husband was available to accompany her. Brookner, she reports, did not approve of her being in a bar without him.

I learned more about Marge when I attended a public memorial service for her held in Sausalito in October 2005. Family members told of

Marge's experiences in Bulgaria, in the late 1940s, where her husband had been assigned as military attaché. Bulgaria had come under Soviet control at the end of World War II and tensions between the Bulgarian government and the United States were running high. The villa in which the Bradys were living was eventually nationalized, and the Bradys were evicted. In a letter read at the memorial service, Marge proved her coolness under fire when she wrote about giving a dinner for 80 people the night before moving from the villa. Amazingly, she managed to find something romantic in the situation, describing the party as a "farewell to summer and farewell to an era".

After concluding her term on the City Council Marge enrolled at the University of San Francisco, obtaining a degree in political science in 1967. Thereafter, she appears to have enjoyed life out of the public eye, studying French with a group of friends, walking in the Sausalito hillsides, and taking off in her sports car "to see the great blue heron." Marge continued to support women candidates for the City Council, however. At the memorial service current City Council member Amy Belser reported that Marge and her neighbor, Anne Grace, gave a campaign coffee for Amy when she first decided to run for the Council.

By Betsy Stroman

SHS PUBLISHES NEW BOOK

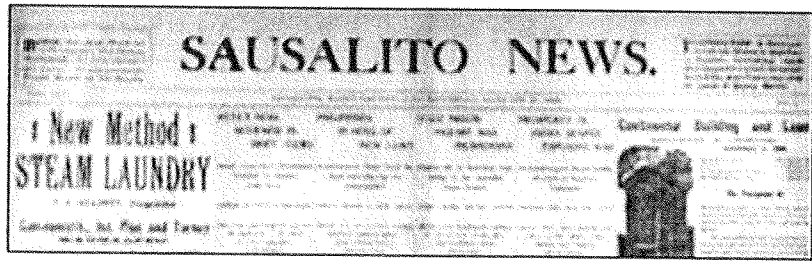
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Historical Society, Bancroft Library, Northwestern Pacific Railroad Historical Society, San Francisco Maritime Museum and the Sausalito Woman's Club. The book features many photographs not included in the well-known book by Jack Tracy, *Moments in Time*.

There are six local contributing authors: Margaret Badger, SHS Vice President and finishing editor of *Sausalito*, who wrote the chapter "Rancho del Sausalito"; Larry Clinton, a contributor to the chapter "Habitat Houseboats"; Phil Frank, whose name appears on four chapters, including "Old Town, New Town, Downtown", "Where Temperance Never Caught On", "Habitat Houseboats" and "Quirky, Contrarian & Creative" about local Sausalito characters; Charter Kays who wrote "To the Bay in Boats"; Wood Lockhart, SHS Board Member, who wrote "Ferryboats, Trains and Traffic", and Carle Nolte who contributed the chapter "93 Ships in 1,311 Days" about Marinship.

As well as photographs, the book includes artwork from the Society's collection at each chapter heading, and, importantly, the text is skillfully edited by Doris Berdahl, also an SHS Board member, to produce a delightfully readable story.

The SHS benefits from all sales of the book, but especially those sold by SHS at the Ice House (Open 11:30-4 except Mondays) on Bridgeway (opposite Poggio's) and at our events. Please help spread the word to your friends and neighbors of the perfect gift for the holidays. Retail is \$19.99 plus tax. Come see it for yourself! We hope you love it!



SAUSALITO: 100 YEARS AGO IN 1905

WINTER

January 14 The *San Rafael Journal* reports that "yesterday noon there was a great scattering of vagrant dogs on B Street in this city. Frightened canines tore up the streets, ran through stores, climbed fences, hid in ash barrels and dodged behind telephone poles---reason: Charles Bright, poundmaster of Sausalito, had just got off the train for a visit to some friends here."

SPRING

April 1 *An Original Poem by Eva Benton, age 6*

Oh Acacia, Acacia, Acacia
Blooming by my gate.
When I reach the shore
I can smell its sweet perfume.

There is where my mother dear
Rests and waits with anxious heart
Until I reach the shore.

When I am tying my boat
I can smell the perfume
Of the roses by my cottage gate.

April 15 As stated before, the *Sausalito News* objects to all kinds of gambling, yet it is truly amusing to sit back and watch some of those who made the biggest howl against the pool rooms. One of these blustering oppositionists shut up like a clam the moment one of the pool room men rented a house of his which had been vacant for some time.

SUMMER

July 8 The Glorious Fourth was well observed in Marin County this year — yet the list of accidents and misfortunes was practically nothing. In Sausalito particularly we have cause to be very thankful. The day passed off without an accident of any kind, and even the drunks were conspicuous by their absence.

August 5

Demand Relief From Benzine Wagon Fiends

An important meeting of prominent citizens was held Thursday to discuss ways and means of enforcing the existing county ordinance prohibiting the use of automobiles on certain narrow and dangerous roads.

FALL

October 7 Mrs. Frank Findley and Mrs. Clay Miller have returned from their trip to San Jose.

December 2 The launch *Speedy*, plowing her way through the terrific storm of Wednesday morning and carrying all of the San Francisco papers for Marin County, became lost in the driving rain and was wrecked on the rocks north of Fort McDowell, on Angel Island. The papers did not reach this side of the bay until afternoon.

Compiled by Joe Troise



SHS SPACE REORGANIZED

The history rooms have been reorganized with the goal to create a larger area for research and a defined office area. The smaller entrance room will provide exhibit space while the larger room is dedicated to our extensive files, research desks and the office. Several valuable maps have been framed and put on permanent display.

SHS RESPONDS TO PHOTO REQUESTS

We not only have used our extensive collection of photographs as the backbone of our recent publication *Sausalito*, but we frequently respond to requests from the outside. An example was a recent article in the *Independent Journal* entitled "Gushing Over Fountains" which shows a rare photo of Plaza Vina del Mar elephants bearing flagpoles on their backs at the



VINA DEL MAR ELEPHANTS

1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition. The poles were eventually removed because their weight was literally breaking the elephants' backs.

IMPROVED COMPUTER SYSTEM

A new computer and software will arrive soon to help us better manage our computer-related activities and promises to open up endless possibilities for research and data management.

BOOKKEEPING STREAMLINED

Our bookkeeping has been painstakingly reviewed, reformed and formatted allowing us to carry out a clear accounting every month and to plan our future budgets with reliable data.

MARIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

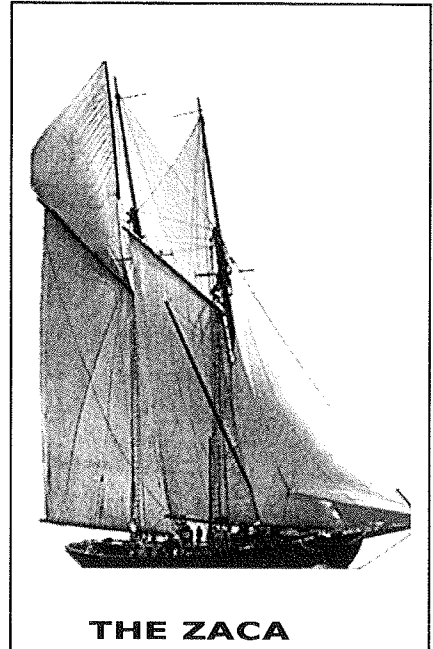
SHS is working with the Marin County Historical Society to put on display our collection of Victorian furniture and Sally Stanford's piano. The items would be on permanent loan in a commodious and accessible space available to the public.

VOLUNTEERS ENCOURAGED

We encourage reliable and motivated members to consider volunteering at SHS. If you are interested, we may be able to match you to a project of your liking. For example, the Oral History Program is looking for volunteers to interview long-term Sausalito residents. Training will be provided. If you have a specific interest in the Oral History project, please call Betsy Stroman, the Oral History Coordinator, at 331-1464. For any other general volunteer interests, please call 289-4117 and leave a message.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Luther Green donated a copy of his documentary film "In the Wake of the *Zaca*, the Remarkable Adventures of a California Schooner" as well as a beautiful poster of *Zaca*.



A copy of the recent Channel 5 "Eye on the Bay Area" broadcast on the history of Sausalito Houseboats has been donated to the Society and is available for viewing. Phil Frank is among those featured on this program.

MERCHANDISING COMMITTEE

This newly formed committee is working hand-in-hand with the Ice House staff to create more space in the front entry room for the sale of merchandise. Our new book *Sausalito* is featured along with other items that we hope will bring more financial self-sufficiency to the Ice House.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members:

With the resumption of this Fall 2005 edition of the Newsletter, we are delighted to share with you the many new developments of the year. Our accomplishments are directly related to the knowledgeable, hard-working Board with which I am privileged to work. Each Board member is involved in a committee and contributes time to the realization of its objectives. Of the many volunteer organizations with which I have been affiliated, the present SHS has shown the most focus and dedication. We are making the positive changes necessary to preserve, accession and share the history of our unique town and I am proud to be part of this effort. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,
D.J. Puffert

SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Wednesdays and
Saturdays
10 A.M.–2 P.M

Editing and production by Margaret Badger and Betsy Stroman

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

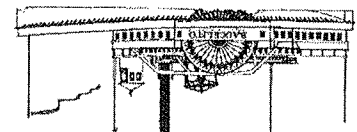
If your newsletter contains a dues envelope, please return it with your membership renewal. Sausalito's heritage preservation depends on your support.



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