

Moments in Time

SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FALL 2007

Galilee: Matthew Turner Brigantine & Sausalito Harbor

GALILEE — Queen for an Era

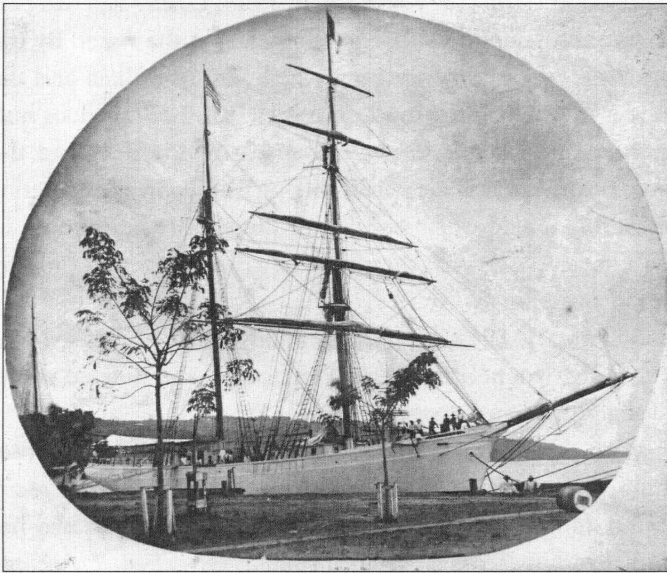


PHOTO: SHS COLLECTION

The Galilee in Tahiti circa 1900.

Galilee, the fastest and finest west coast brigantine of the late 1800s, was built in Benicia in 1891 by innovative ship builder Matthew Turner. The beautiful wooden ship fulfilled her destiny as the “Queen of the Pacific” for almost forty years. The second phase of her life, retirement from the sea, began in Sausalito around 1936 and continued for more than half a century. *Galilee*, named by missionaries traveling aboard to the South Pacific, was and remains inspirational to seamen, shipbuilders and countless more Sausalitans fascinated with the town’s maritime history.

PERIOD AT SEA, 1891–1933

Galilee was the last built of the three speedy packets of Matthew Turner’s Tahiti Packet Line, which sailed from San Francisco to Papeete between 1891–1896. Besides *Galilee* the line included *Tropic Bird* and *City of Papeete*. Not simply cargo carriers, they were also designed for passengers and light freight such as mail and perishable fruits. *Galilee* set two records on her maiden voyage, 19 days from San Francisco

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GALILEE HARBOR— A Work in Progress

By early dawn on August 4, 1980, the big demolition tractor had punctured the roof of the great hulking structure near the foot of Napa Street. By 10:00 AM, it had pushed it over, chewed it up, and carried it away. A small knot of Sausalito police and city officials stood across the street watching. By noon, the demolition of Bob’s Boatyard, the one-time hub of a lively boat building/artist community on Sausalito’s north-central waterfront, was complete.

The outcry that followed was dramatized in the county press by a photo of artist Diane Karasik. Narrowly escaping from her live-work studio in the upper reaches of the doomed building, she clutched her possessions and paintings as she fled.

The waterfront community called the demolition a blatant violation of due process—a product of secret agreements between city hall and the property owner who had engaged and paid for the Grange Wrecking Company. For its part, the city pointed out that it had formally condemned the building as a public safety hazard and given the occupants—Karasik and an undetermined number of fellow lodgers and boat workers—ample notice to vacate. Reportedly, Grange had even rented rooms for the dispossessed in a nearby motel.

In the end, Diane Karasik received a sizable settlement for her losses. The waterfront won a restraining order preventing the city, which owned the nearby Napa Street Pier where the nucleus of the Napa/Mono Street community was concentrated, from demolishing it. And in the process, the boatyard defeat was transformed into a rallying cry—one that ultimately led to the formation of Galilee Harbor.

To *Galilee*’s critics—and there were many—the plan was not only environmentally unsound, but could play into the hands of developers. Even to some supporters, it seemed highly improbable. The city was already anxious to demolish the Napa Street Pier, clearly a public liability, and wanted the occupants there to vacate. In fact, it took 16 years and multiple setbacks before the Phase I permits and start-up funding

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to Tahiti and 22½ days on return, a straight windward haul. As summarized in Mordecai benHerschel's "The Ballad of the *Galilee*:"

*A record coming home was broken
As if Neptune's soul had spoken, no
Sister ship could hold a token To the Galilee
Her bold name on the transom did they see.*

Galilee's reputation was built on beauty as well as speed. Of the 228 ships built by Turner, *Galilee* was deemed the loveliest, "a real thoroughbred." An article written in 1899 in *The Rudder* described her as follows: "She has invariably out-sailed and out-pointed every vessel with which she has ever been in company, and has long had the reputation of being the smartest sailing vessel out of San Francisco."

The design of the "Queen" was only one of many extraordinary innovations pioneered by Turner. Rather than following the traditional brigantine model, he built his ships long and sharp forward and full and short in the stern. He was warned that his brigantine would "pitch and dive into the water and be always wet." But this did not turn out to be so and his sleek ships traversed the Pacific with enviable grace for decades.

By the early 1900s, steam ships were beginning to compete with the great sailing ships of the previous century, but *Galilee's* reputation for speed kept her in service well into the steam era. She was recruited in 1905 by the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institute in Washington to conduct a magnetic survey of the Pacific Ocean. A "wood-built, non-magnetic sailing vessel" was called for in the proposal.

"The steel rigging was replaced with hemp and by removing as much ferrous metal as possible the vessel's deviation was reduced to nearly nothing so the scientists could observe and determine the deviation caused by the earth's magnetism." She completed three Pacific Ocean expeditions for Carnegie ranging in length from 10,000 nautical miles to 35,000.

When Matthew Turner died in 1909, *Galilee* was sold to the Union Fish Company and converted to a three masted ball-headed schooner. She carried cod fish from the Bering Sea to the cod fish cannery on Belvedere Island for over a decade. After serving a final two years in the tuna fishing industry, she was sold into retirement.

PERIOD IN SAUSALITO, 1936-1987

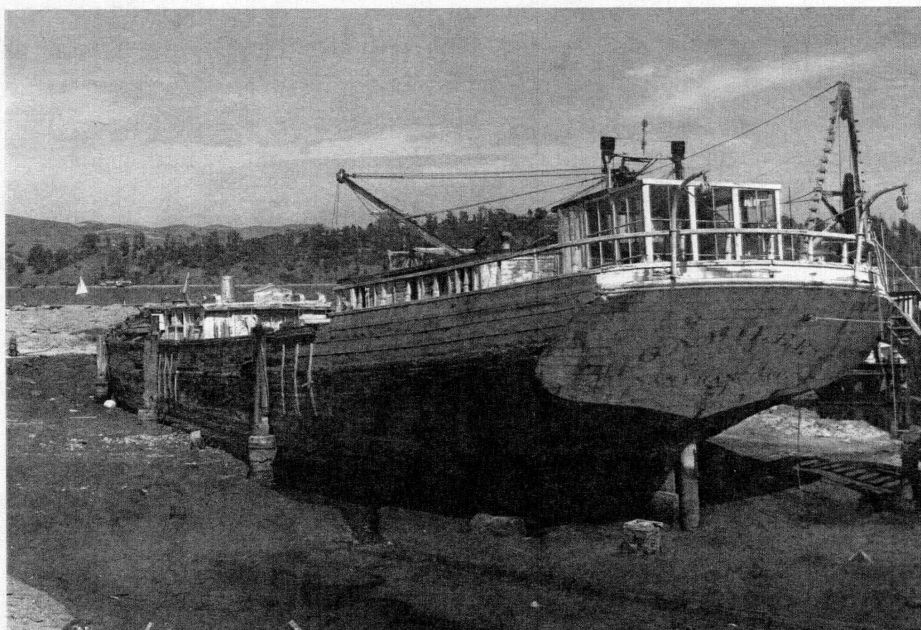
Over *Galilee's* half century of retirement, several owners lived aboard her. British Captain John Quinn, who purchased *Galilee* in 1936 and brought her to Sausalito, spent weekends and vacations there with his family. "Old San Francisco gas lamps illuminated her by night and pots of flowers cheered her appearance by day," the *Marin Scope* of 7/22/75 quoted an earlier account of that period. Quinn gave up ownership in 1958, and *Galilee* temporarily lay abandoned until photographer Walter Leaskin and his family bought her and lived aboard until 1962.

Old photographs are the best record of the changes that occurred to *Galilee* over decades. In 1948, *Galilee* still had two masts and maintained her regal presence on the water. By the late fifties, the masts were gone, the bowsprit broken and the rudder invisible in the mud. In the 1970s, the enormous hull emptied and filled with the movement of the tides and the deck boards cast shadow patterns on the enormous interior bulwarks. Teredo worms weakened the mighty beams and, in the final photographs, the ship hull is held together only by supportive pilings.

By January, 1962, the Sausalito City Council decided that "the hulk was a health and sanitary hazard" and ordered that it be abandoned and destroyed.

With demolition imminent, new interest in saving something of *Galilee* was born. In November 1962, Belvedere architect John Lord King stepped forward and purchased her from Leaskin "to save her from being destroyed." According to the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 11/20/62, King hoped that she might "form the nucleus of a maritime museum for

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The hull of *Galilee* supported by pilings in the early 1970s. A few timbers remain on the site today.

PHOTO: SHS COLLECTION

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were obtained, as well as the blessing of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the major hurdle to realization of the dream. The story of that struggle is a testimony to grit, persistence and dogged determination.

Early on, Galilee Harbor's David-and-Goliath venture received a major boost. A group of Napa Street Pier supporters—people like Phil and Susan Frank, Annette Rose and Chris Hardman, Chris Tellis, Stuart Brand, and others who occupied the unique world between the Sausalito waterfront and its hills—formed Art Zone, a nonprofit organization that acted as a public relations group. In the words of longtime Galilee resident Tom Hoover, "They let the people on the hill know what was going on down here." They spearheaded the annual "Maritime Day" event, marshaled political and financial support, and lent mainstream muscle to the waterfront's drive for legalization.

As a consequence, they fomented a gathering movement on the hill to replace the old 1973 General Plan (which was friendly to aspiring Marinship office, retail and resort developers) with a plan more in tune with the concept of a "working waterfront." City hall responded with a four-year development moratorium during which the waterfront and Art Zone attended multiple public hearings and actively assisted in crafting a plan.

But the interim period constituted something of a Catch 22 for the Galilee group. "We got stuck in a political quagmire," says Project Coordinator Donna Bragg. "The old General Plan didn't allow residential uses on the waterfront, and the Specific Plan, where we hoped to win provisions for live-work uses, wasn't yet in place. In 1984, with the conclusion of our litigation with the city, and in return for the city's commitment to help us relocate on the waterfront, we made a commitment to actively seek legalization of our community—but that was impossible with the old General Plan still in effect and the Specific Plan still a ways off." The upshot: Galilee got a stay while the Specific Plan was being developed. And BCDC agreed to recognize the Galilee Harbor Community Association (GHCA) as an existing waterfront community prior to the agency's enabling legislation—in effect "grandfathering it in."

However, 1984 proved not to be the happy ending for the planned project. In 1985, Sausalito denied Galilee's Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application under the old General Plan on the grounds that the housing issues hadn't yet been resolved. In 1987, with no quick legalization in sight, and in response to the city's demand that it leave the Napa Street Pier, the GHCA relocated 30 feet north to floating docks leased from a private property owner. (The pier was finally torn down in 1990, following severe dam-

age sustained from the Loma Prieta earthquake.)

In 1988, the Marinship Specific Plan was adopted, authorizing live-aboards on the waterfront under specified conditions, and GHCA submitted its second CUP application. Funding began flowing in. Marin County's Community Development Block Grant program had been awarding annual planning grants to the Galilee Harbor project since 1983. The water portion of the proposed site was purchased with \$25,000 from GHCA members' savings. But 1988 saw another big setback. The BCDC ruled that, since live-aboard boats constituted bay fill, a BCDC permit was required.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF GALILEE HARBOR

An outdoor dinner celebrating Galilee Harbor's purchase of the water parcel of its new harbor, June 1989. In center, Sausalito's then City Manager Mike Fuson, a strong supporter of the Galilee community.

That was the bad news. The good news, however, was that Galilee's Environmental Impact Report was certified in 1990. That same year, the Sausalito Planning Commission, after 15 public hearings, approved the project, followed by unanimous City Council permit approval, subject to public access and affordability requirements. However, yet another setback loomed. In May, 1991, BCDC sued GHCA and 52 individuals for violation of the bay fill prohibitions of the McAteer-Petris Act—but by July agreed to stay litigation while GHCA applied for BCDC permits. BCDC's issues? "It had a lot of issues," Donna Bragg says, "but a major one was that you couldn't commence the project until all the funding was completed. For us, that was almost tantamount to denial." Much negotiation and compromise followed, but what emerged was an agreement to build the project in four phases, with separate funding for each. In 1988, the Marin Community Foundation had provided monies to option the purchase of the upland portion of the project site. In 1992, it awarded \$250,000 for purchase of the property. In 1998, it provided a construction loan for Phase I.

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PHIL FRANK REMEMBERED

Docenting with PHIL FRANK 1991-2006

I had the unique experience of docenting at the Sausalito Historical Society with Phil for 15 years. He was a regular on Wednesday mornings where, in his own style, he held court with whomever dropped in.

Enter Phil at 10:00 AM with a rush of energy and a bottle of pure orange juice and a glazed donut. Usually, it would sit there on the table untouched as he began multi-tasking: telephoning people, filing, sorting, researching a pet project. Then the visitors would filter in and he would answer their questions, simultaneously pulling files for their project and his own.

Phil had a reverential love of Sausalito history and he knew a tremendous amount about it. The details stuck to his memory in miraculous way. It was as if he relived the past thereby doubling his pleasure in living in the present. In the tradition of great story tellers, he passed on this animated history to others. A research task was recreation for Phil and an adventure for those who shared it with him.

It was the people who came in that Phil loved the most. He gave everyone equal attention—the locals with a question about their home, magazine writers, TV personal, professional historians. It didn't matter; he always knew something to share from his vast reservoir of knowledge and that sharing delighted him. It was this joining with others that I found so endearing.

Another characteristic of Phil's docenting were his impeccable manners. He treated everyone with respect and courtesy and actually took particular delight in irascible, ranting misfits.

And as far as I could tell, he and the community who dropped in on Wednesday mornings had a mutual and unconditional love for each other. It was fun, for example, to bring in found artifacts and give them to Phil for the Historical Society. He loved to hear the stories about each one (and he remembered them) and he never turned anything down! To him, it was all treasure—from family histories and photo albums, parts of old ferries, anchors and boat models, to pianos, publications and clothing.

In addition to his inexhaustible knowledge, including many beloved, obscure corners of Sausalito history, Phil was a creative leader (and I am speaking about just within the history

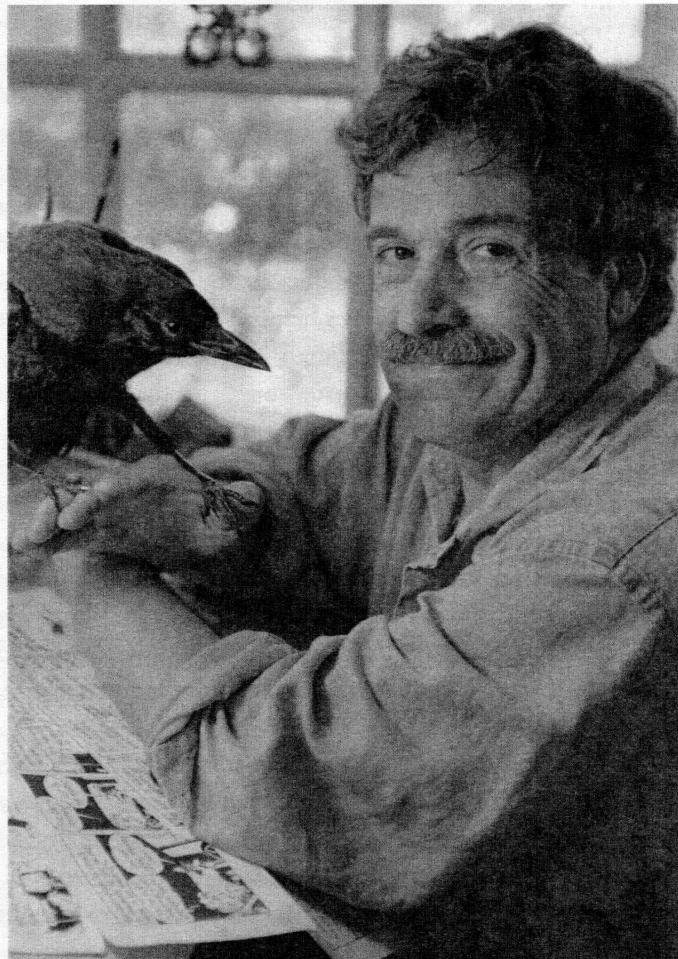


PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUSAN FRANK

community . . .) He always knew what he wanted to do and with whom. On occasion, he would enlist my help while in the history room. "Please call so-and-so. His phone number is . . . (Phil's phone book was in his head) and tell them I could use help tomorrow at 3:00 PM down at the Ice House." It seemed he would take on any project. He would design it, build it (oh, the tool boxes!), paint it and/or enlist video cameraman Todd Osborn to film it. Yes, we definitely are having fun now! The results were enjoyed around the community in the form of exhibits, lectures and comic video tales of discovery.

In my life, long before meeting Phil, I had traveled extensively and met widely differing people: maharajas, heads of state, earls and princes, sheiks, admirals, film and opera stars to mention a few. In my experience, Phil was the prince among princes. You and I, we are very fortunate to have known him and to have shared in his passion for history, for fun, and for life. That one liner from Casablanca says it best: "Here's looking at you, Phil."

—Jeanne Fidler

FRANK HISTORY

Phil contributed cartoons on historic themes to True West magazine starting in 2003. Following are excerpts from the tribute to Phil published in the Nov/Dec 2007 issue.

That our mailman didn't hoard some of the crazy packages we got from Phil Frank always surprised us. Luckily, he was a man with morals, because each envelope was quite a beaut . . .

The mailman stuffing packages into a cactus or that gruesome cowboy scaring our secretary were just a few of the inventive ways Phil addressed his parcels to us, containing his

latest batches of "Frank History" cartoons. Those envelopes are among the greatest treasures in our archives. . . .

Recalling Phil's first comic, "Frankly Speaking," published in Michigan State University's *State News* during the late 1960s-70s, a college contemporary wrote how "his work . . . was required reading every morning; and it is only a mild exaggeration to say there was at least one Phil Frank cartoon posted in every dorm room or student apartment on campus." That comic, for which Phil earned \$5 apiece, ended up getting syndicated in 350 campus newspapers.

Phil was no stranger to California state parks; the park service named him an honorary park ranger in 1989. He worked with the park service to preserve 19th century Fort Baker that protected the entrance to San Francisco Bay. Fort Baker borders the city of Sausalito . . . a city that gave him a Lifetime Achievement Award and honored him with a "Phil Frank Day."

In Sausalito, kids and adults knew him as "Mr. History." His enthusiasm for the history of Sausalito was infectious and the kids had a blast being driven around town in his old car, going shopping at the local thrift stores for props for skits about Sausalito history and simultaneously learning first hand about history.

As history curator for the Bolinas Museum in the 1990s, Phil was the bridge that brought together the descendants of the earliest settlers and old ranching families at a time when it seemed like much of their heritage was being destroyed. "Anybody can glean history from books or documents, but Phil has skill and patience, and his interest is genuine. That makes people trust him, so they share their firsthand memories and family stories with him," wrote Ralph Camiccia, the past president of the Board of Directors for the Bolinas Museum, in a nomination letter to recognize Phil for his work in the Marin County communities of Sausalito and Bolinas.

Phil's love of his own local community and the historic West overall, was a true and honest love that colored all of his comic commentaries. As Phil worked daily to capture the spirit of the Bay area, we remain thankful he still had wit enough to create his humorous takes on the Old West for us.

Frankly, we'll miss you, Phil.

—Meghan Saar
True West

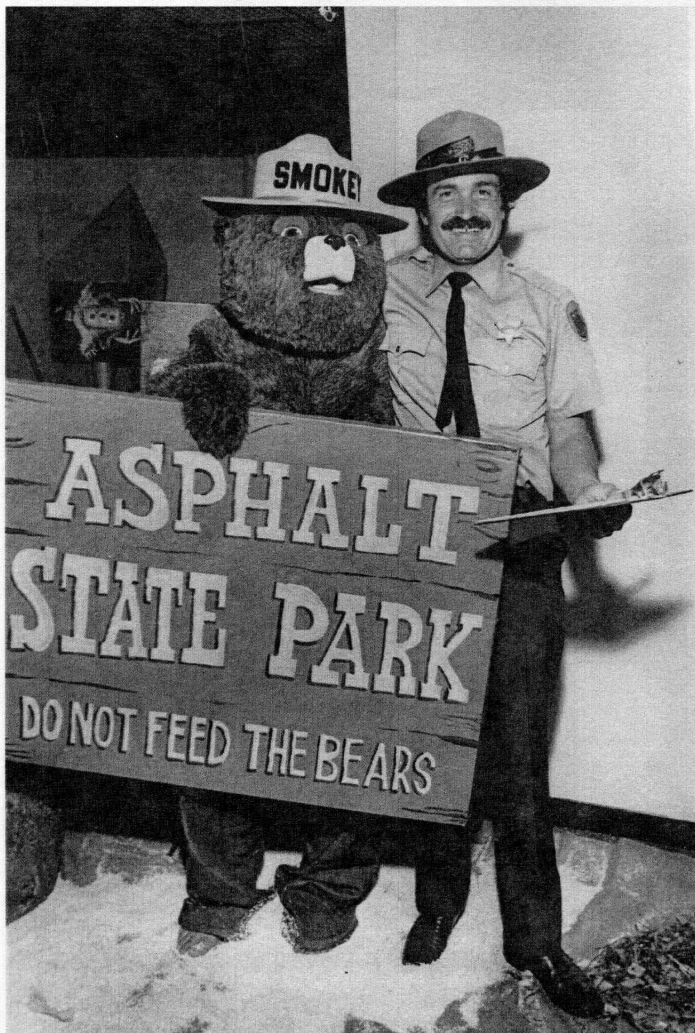


PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUSAN FRANK

Phil role-playing a Park Ranger for satiric Asphalt State Park, circa 1980.

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Sausalito.” He was supported by the director of the Maritime Museum, Karl Kortum, who had gone over the *Galilee* with King and “was as enthusiastic about the project as he.”

A few landmark events determined *Galilee’s* ultimate disposition. Habitation was ended in 1962, but no aggressive action was taken to destroy her. In fact, a campaign was mounted to preserve parts of her. Although John Lord King did not live long enough to create a marine museum in her hull, in 1975, long-time Sausalitan and boat-lover Ron MacAnnan (owner of the Trident-Ondine building) became decisively involved.

MacAnnan, working with Kortum and Harry Dring of the State of California and Aquatic Park, convinced the City of Sausalito to let him “chain saw” off a 20’ section—the whole stern—for restoration. MacAnnan volunteered the machinery and labor, along with Herb Madden who loaned a tractor loader and Barry Hibben who negotiated the use of a crane, to remove the transom, barge it across the bay to San Francisco, and heft it up onto land. Today, the restored stern of the *Galilee* is on display outside the Maritime Museum thanks to MacAnnan’s efforts.

In the mid-1980s, the Benicia Historical Society and the Benicia Historical Museum Foundation negotiated with Sausalito to remove “by sawing” the bow of *Galilee* and, in another Herculean engineering effort, successfully moved it to Benicia where it presently rests under a tin roof at the Benicia Historical Museum.

Call of the Sea, a local organization founded in 1985 with a vision to build a New *Galilee* and to provide “education before the mast,” three years later won from the City of Sausalito a site on which to build the New *Galilee*.

As for the rest of the hull, the remaining beams can still be seen resting in the mud where she put down anchor in 1936 north of Napa Street. Harold Sommers, Sausalito’s veteran seaman and maritime historian, reports that the original rudder is still perfectly preserved under the mud.

Is *Galilee’s* future still unfolding? Some are dreaming of one day uniting the bow and stern. The activists of Call of the Sea are realizing the mission of *Galilee* as first envisioned in their New *Galilee* project. Their schooner *Seaward*, docked at the Bay Model, is a successful educational and sea-adventure program in the tradition of tall ships.

Galilee was an iconic sailing ship beloved for her beauty, her speed and her utility. Her legacy may still be emerging.

—Margaret Badger

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In time all necessary approvals for Phase I fell into place: that of the BCDC Design Review Board (a BCDC settlement agreement was signed in 1996), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the State Department of Toxic Substances Control. The city issued Phase I building permits in 2001.

Now Phase I is almost completed, including the marina with 38 new slips, upland public access, a parking lot area, landscaping, and a small museum in the pilot house of the former ferryboat *Issaquah*. Phase II will be an open-air wooden boat building center. Phase III will replace the current GHCA office with a bait shop, “something like the old Caruso’s.” Phase IV will be a large building, housing a Maritime Service Center, with GHCA’s offices, artist studios and a woodworking and metal shop to service the boatyard.

Today’s *Galilee* Harbor consists of 38 boats and about 75 residents. According to a 1992 survey, 92% are low income.

—Doris Berdahl

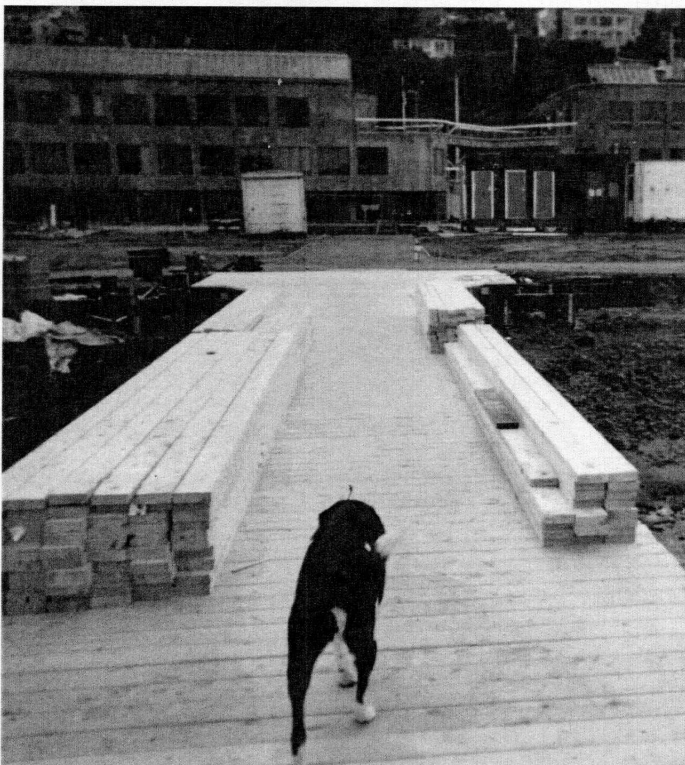


PHOTO: COURTESY OF GALILEE HARBOR

Construction on *Galilee* Harbor’s public access pier (Phase I) began in 2001. *Splash*, companion to a harbor member, explores the new dock.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Sausalito Historical Society collects and preserves art, artifacts, photographs and printed materials that document Sausalito’s history; provides access to the collection for public and academic research; and develops publications and outreach programs to inspire local interest in Sausalito’s history and to educate the visiting public.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

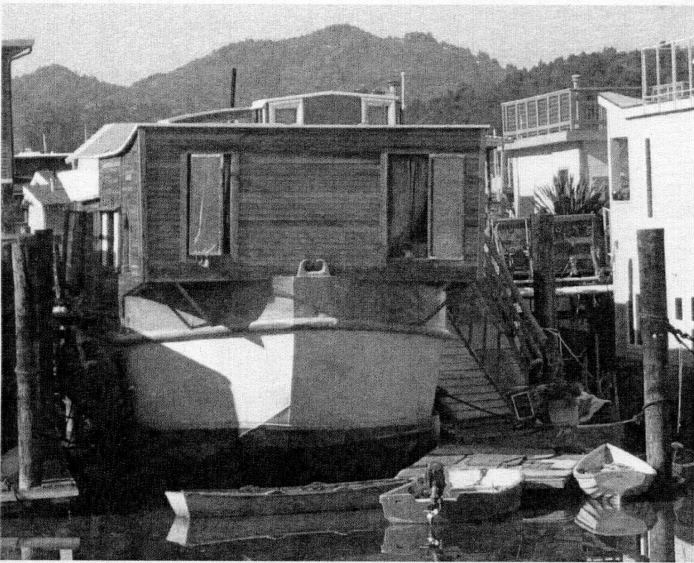
I wonder if any of your readers can help me research the balloon barges which were deployed to defend the Golden Gate against enemy aircraft in WWII.

These 52-foot steel hulled vessels were built in Stockton shipyards, patterned after the barrage balloons used to defend London during the last years of World War I and again during the Blitz. Large lighter-than-air gas balloons were tethered to the barges with metal cables, and acted like a submarine net to entangle low flying bombers, or to force them into higher air space, where they would be less effective.

Approximately 430 balloons defended important areas in California, Oregon, and Washington against low-level attack, according to the *Aerospace Power Journal*.

Today, four of these old warhorses still exist on the Sausalito waterfront, having been converted to residences in Sausalito Yacht Harbor, Yellow Ferry Harbor and on Liberty Dock in Waldo Point Harbor. The present owners of these vessels and I would love to talk with anyone familiar with the use of these barges during the War, particularly any veterans who might have served on them.

Larry Clinton, 331-8865



This Liberty Dock balloon barge was once owned by poet, cartoonist and songwriter Shel Silverstein.

Lecture Series Thrives

MILITARY MARIN

On October 11, Steve Haller, Golden Gate National Recreation Area historian, addressed an enthusiastic room full of local history buffs on the military history of southern Marin. Haller convincingly described the four main periods of military history in the Bay Area: the Civil War, the emergence of the US as a world power around 1900, World War II and the Cold War—they are all built into our hillsides, garrisons, barracks and forts. High interest was found in small details, from why Crissy field closed down to just how the WWII submarine nets opened and closed!

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

On November 8, Mary Currie, Public Affairs Director for the Golden Gate Bridge District for 16½ years, talked to bridge admirers—some of whom remember when the bridge went in—about its 70 year history. The speaker shattered the old myth that the bridge is always being painted: “When they finish at one end they just start over again at the other.” Another interesting note: Significant changes to bridge operation over the years have succeeded in limiting “the worst congestion to the 1960s.” Insights into the complex management of the bridge by a board of directors and ten related agencies challenged the bureaucratic imaginations of all attendees at the lecture. Future projects? Stay on the lookout for the upcoming “zipper truck” and moveable median strip, and more earthquake retrofitting—this time on the towers.

Don't miss out on the fun and learning! Each lecture is announced to you by post card. We look forward to seeing you.

Holiday Open House

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2007

3:00–6:00 PM

PLEASE SEE ENCLOSED FLYER

at the Ice House

Membership and Volunteers KEEP US GOING! Please: call (289-4117) and leave your name and address with your message; or write us at P.O. Box 352, Sausalito 94966, or email to: info@sausalitohistoricalsociety.org

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sausalito has always been a wonderful place to live and is filled with important history that helped develop the mood and surroundings that have become known as the Bay Area. With every day that we are blessed to live here, we contribute to that all important history, whether we're preserving it, or making it.

I was deeply saddened in the past few months with the loss of some of our dear friends: Laurel Burch, a fine and innovative artist and major contributor to keeping the art community alive; Nancy Debruyin, a lady who was a real doer and could warm up anyone's life with her vibrant presence; and Phil Frank, who touched all of us though his enthusiastic involvement with everyone and with everything he touched.

As I look back and remember Colin Covey, Don and Becky Holbrook, the Souza's, the Pieraccini's, Ralph and Anne Flowers, Louise, Louie and Vince Sr. Maggiora, Swede Peterson, Charlie and Clem Merrill, Jack and Janet Tracy, Fritz Perry, Sally Stanford and many others that we have all been fortunate to share this life with, of course I feel saddened that they're gone, but also privileged that we did have a chance to live in a community with such great people and friends.

The setting, the trees, our surroundings are all very special, but it is the people that have always made this town a wonderful community. Let us preserve the memories of those who are no longer with us in body and continue to make history as they did in such a positive manner.

As we approach Thanksgiving, we already have a lot on our plate to be thankful for even before the food arrives! The best Holiday wishes for you and yours from the Sausalito Historical Society. —DJ Puffert, President

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420 Litho Street Wednesdays & Saturdays
Sausalito, CA 10AM-2PM
Tel: 415-289-4117
info@sausalitohistoricalsociety.org

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Contributing Editor: Doris Berdahl
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