Editor's Note...

This year's feature article touches on the ancient controversy of The Old Mill and its true history. Rick Mason, of Mill Valley Parks and Recreation, has done an outstanding and thorough job in researching how Reed's Mill came to be, and the documenting of its restoration as it stands today.

Frederick Sandrock, an old friend of the Historical Society and prolific volunteer, follows with a perspective of Mill Valley's early climbers and their quest to be the fastest to the top of Mt. Tam. Following the most direct of routes, these fanatics climbed up the half mile high peak in a half hour.

Next, we have an article by Jonathan Jacobs, who provides additional background on the jewel of this year's walk, The Redwood Lodge. Also, if you are lucky enough to sign up for one of Jonathan's two guided "architectural" groups this year, you will enjoy many of the special features he will highlight along this year's route.

My appreciation to all the board members who have made this year's Review happen (again) and for their dedicated efforts and patience. My thanks to the library for the use of their photos.

— Marc Bruvry

Our Cover...

The Old Mill, 1890. At right: the Old Mill and Cream, 1920.

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Our Cover

From a tape...
Reed's Mill
The story of the Old Mill and of its reconstruction in 1991

From a tape of the speech dictated by Rick Monroia in March 1992

It took years but the City of Mill Valley recently completed the historical reconstruction of the Old Mill. It is by far the most important historical preservation project ever undertaken in the city. In the course of the project both facts and artifacts were unearthed shedding a new light on the Mill, its operation and its builder, John Reed.

The research began early, sifting through historical photos and reviewing a dozen or so books published on Marin's early history. It became apparent that John Reed's historical trail had long gone cold. The most recent photograph was from the 1880's; 30 to 40 years after the site had been abandoned. The earliest published account of Reed's life was from that same period and few references agreed on many facts. It became apparent that to determine even the simplest things—when was the mill built, when did Reed die, how was the mill used if it was used at all—all the information had to be accumulated on Reed's life and times. Of course, there is supposition, deduction, debate; but that is the joy of history. As close as I can figure, here's the story.

John Thomas Reed was born in 1805 in Dublin, Ireland. All the history books agree on that. At 15 he accompanied a seafaring uncle around the horn to Acapulco. In Mexico he learned the language and customs. Acapulco was a major shipping port for the Spanish. A seaman could easily find work on ships supplying its far flung interests in the new world. We lose track of Reed's adventure for about 5 years. Then he signed aboard a ship named the Maria Ester traveling North to California. Reed reportedly stopped in Los Angeles and inquired about land. But at the time all the land grants were taken up by Spanish soldiers for cattle and Reed continued north on the Maria Ester. In 1826, the ship's log shows Reed entering San Francisco Bay.

The Bay at the time had seen 50 years of Spanish settlement. The first Spanish ship, the San Carlos, sailed into the bay in 1774. While anchored off Angel Island, the ship was met by rafts filled with Miwoks from Sausalito. Two years later an overland expedition from Guadalupe made up of settlers and military men arrived from Los Angeles and founded Yerba Buena in the sand dunes of what is now San Francisco. One of the members of this first band of settlers was a man named Jose Sanchez. Sanchez became the first commandant of the Presidio. Although the bay was far removed from the rest of Mexico, its value as a safe port and its strategic military importance encouraged its settlement. The Russians were moving down the coast after otter pelts, and also met Sanchez's daughter, Hilaria after Sanchez's daughter, he bought a boat, and he named it The Hilaria after Sanchez's daughter. He built a little shack in Sausalito, making him the first English speaking resident in Marin County. The year was 1826. He also began a regular ferry service to Yerba Buena, which made him first in having a scheduled ferry service on the Bay. What he ferried on his little sailboat was water and firewood and building materials to rebuild came from what is now Larkspur. The entire tract of land became known as "El Corte Madera del Presidio", or wood cutting place for the Presidio. This tract included part of what is now Mill Valley although there is no evidence that the Spanish cut timber here.

When John Reed entered the Bay in 1826, he applied for leave from the Maria Ester and began his quest for land in the farthest reaches of the Mexican Empire at that time. The original Jose Sanchez came north on the expedition from Mexico and became commandante of Yerba Buena and was followed by his son, also named Jose Sanchez. This Jose Sanchez had ten children and John Reed became friends with his sons and also met Sanchez's daughter, Hilaria, who at that time was 14 years old.

Somewhere around that time, he bought a boat, and he named it The Hilaria after Sanchez's daughter. He built a little shack in Sausalito, making him the first English speaking resident in Marin County. The year was 1826. He also began a regular ferry service to Yerba Buena, which made him first in having a scheduled ferry service on the Bay. What he ferried on his little sailboat was water and firewood and building while the Inuits hunted. On the way back hunters and their catches were retrieved.

In 1812, there was an earthquake that destroyed many of the adobe buildings in Yerba Buena. Lumber to rebuild was in short supply in the dunes, but there were accessible stands of timber across the bay. The materials to rebuild came from what is now Larkspur. The entire tract of land became known as "El Corte Madera del Presidio", or wood cutting place for the Presidio. This tract included part of what is now Mill Valley although there is no evidence that the Spanish cut timber here.

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materials for Yerba Buena as well as passengers, who were predominantly market hunters for meats, skins and tallow, and explorers. At that time, 1826, the Mission in San Rafael had already been established for over a decade. It was thriving, but the isolated Mission in Sonoma was having problems with Indian uprisings.

This is when Reed explored the bays and inlets making the first soundings and navigational charts. He was in search of resources; products to sell in Yerba Buena — firewood, lumber, fresh meat, hides, tallow and fresh spring water. These foods were transported regularly across the bay. This must have become a vital link between the isolated missions and settlements and Yerba Buena. Reed, with his ferry service, must have become a familiar face to many people, some of whom would affect his future.

But Reed’s ultimate goal was to buy land; so he applied for a grant for Sausalito. This was denied, politely but forcibly, citing that the land was needed for military purposes. That tract of land was 19,000 acres extending from the top of Tamalpais to the Marin Headlands on the Golden Gate.

Still vigorously pursuing land, Reed spoke to Sanchez to learn where a young man might find good farmland. Sanchez had been a founder of the mission in Sonoma 15 years before so he told Reed of the rich black soil there. He believed that area had the best prospects for farming.

Reed acted on this advice by going to San Rafael, where he talked to Father Aramos, who gave him cattle, wheat seeds and farm implements. After receiving these, he headed north to what is now Cotati. (Rancho Cotati) There he built himself a little palazuela, which is a small tule thatched hut, and started raising wheat and cattle.

Unfortunately for Reed, he was right on the route the Indians used to go to the clam beds in Bodega. They took offense to his presence and they burned his crops and killed his cattle. This loss of virtually everything drove him out of Cotati and back to San Rafael to Father Aramos, who now made him Mayor Domo which was sort of an executive in the Mission. He stayed in this position for less than a year.

Also during that period, 1829-31, the log of the Maria Ester showed Reed taking short trips along the coast to trade. Now he returned to Sausalito, where he built another lean to and where he used his boat, The Hilaria, to re-activate his ferry service. Reed was saving his money during this period. There are records that in 1833 he “bailed out” a ship named the Loriot which had been accused of poaching otters. There were very strict Spanish regulations about tariffs on otter pelts. Any ship entering the Bay was responsible for these tariffs regardless of where they had been taken.

Through some sort of misunderstanding all the otter pelts went to General Vallejo. Eventually, however, the bail was returned to Reed. In effect, it seems that by paying the Spanish tariff for the English, Reed gained ownership of the pelts. (The Hudson Bay Company was also around, and the ship is thought to be English because the “Super Caro” was a man named Thompson.) One might wonder where a person who had recently had as much bad luck as had Reed would find money to bail out a ship. It was probably through his associations, for Reed had some powerful connections in the area. His fiancée’s father was Commandanté of the Presidio, General Manuel Vallejo was a friend, and his friend and neighbor, Richardson, was the Port Commissioner.

Again he applied for the Sausalito land grant. He was denied. He came to the conclusion that one must be a Mexican citizen in order to obtain land. So, he became a Mexican citizen, and two months later, applied for the Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio. It was smaller, about 6,000 acres, but it was all the land from Millwood through Larkspur Corte Madera, Tiburon, Belvedere, Strawberry and the land around the east side of Richardson Bay.

One of the conditions of Land Grants was that the land be occupied; so Reed built a small adobe (14’ x 25’) located at what is now the corner of La Goma and Locks Lane. Again, he tried farming. He planted an orchard, raised grain and ran his 60 horses and 400 head of Mexican cattle on the land around his home. Mexican cattle were small and scrawny. They were used primarily for tallow and leather. Business, however, was excellent because of a style change that took place in Europe. People discovered that shoes were more comfortable if there was a heel for the right foot and one for the left. This created an immense demand for new leather shoes. Many shiploads of California leather went to Europe to fill this demand.

In 1833 John Reed sent to England for dairy cattle, foreseeing a demand for milk which the Mexican cattle could not provide. In 1836 there are records of Reed again becoming a Mayor Domo in San Rafael to help with secularization. This had been ongoing for 20 to 30 years in the southern Missions, but was only now coming north. Secularization was the shift of properties from the priests to a civil authority and the distribution...
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In 1836 after 10 years of courtship, John and Hilaria were married, and Reed got his land grant. He began to develop the site in Mill Valley, including the construction of the mill, which must have been an ongoing project that took a number of years. We know from our own experience in the reconstruction that this was laborious and painstaking work. Even using mechanized equipment, which wasn't available to Reed, it took us two years to complete. It is fair to assume that the construction of this mill took two or three years. It would take at least a year to hew the wood into square beams and at least another year to erect it. Realizing the scope of Reed's activities, it is certain that the work wasn't done by Reed alone. He most probably had a group of workers under a foreman whom he supervised while attending to his other activities.

These other activities included: Running a ferry service; Operating salt piles and a quarry in Tiburon; Making bricks; Working on a larger adobe home; Constructing a large dock near Tiburon for large ships.
with their deeper draft. Operating two grist mills and trading with the Russians. Accounts show him trading 300 elk hides, 20 bear skins and 200 cow hides for ammunition, guns and two mill stones.

These stones almost certainly must be the stones that were many years later found in a well at the La Goma property and given to the Outdoor Art Club, where they can be seen today. They are small stones of the sort that were intended to be turned by animals rather than by the power of water, and it seems probable that they were used at La Goma rather than at The Old Mill. It was there that the grain crops were raised, and transporting the grain to and from the mill on Cascade Creek would have been a waste of time and effort.

Reed's livestock holdings had continued to grow. There were now 3,000 head of cattle, 600 horses and about 1,000 sheep.

By this time, he had three children. John Joseph was born in 1837, Hilarita in 1839 and Marie Inez in 1841. The whole family lived in a 14' x 25' adobe; so there is good reason to think there was a lot of pressure on John Reed to build a bigger home.

We also discovered underneath the mud silt (That's the course of timber that lies on the ground) there were three courses of timber underneath it. Reportedly the mill was driven by an undershot wheel. Other words, the water passed under it, not over it. This report is supported by those additional beams we found, because in order to get such a force of water to push the underside of a wheel, the water must be run through a narrow trough. If there is room at the sides for the water to bypass the wheel, it will thereby leave the wheel idle. Those beams we found were those that formed one side of the trough.

A mill such as we are describing also needs a mill pond to store water for use when the stream's flow is
Ille probably was in operation at the
site. It is unknown how much was
sold to others, but the mill's primary function was to supply
wood for Reed's house.
In 1842, there began 14 months
drought. Hilaria Reed is said to
have reported that John was out
in this heat and fell off his
table as the result of sunstroke. He
was taken back to his smaller adobe
here his condition worsened; there
applied the treatment of the
ne-bleeding. Unfortunately, the
people who started the bleeding
[^] didn't know how to stop it and John
bled to death at the age of 37.
Hard times followed for Hilaria
and the family. In 1846, during the
Bear Flag Revolt, Fremont's troops
ually came through the Reed
which as they chased the Mexicans.
Hilaria went back to Yerba Buena.
Children were educated at
ission Dolores in San Francisco.
At the time of the Bear Flag
there was an American ship, the
portsmouth, was in port, keeping an
 Ин on things. It was reported
for the construction of
ifications and look-out towers on
성이 Island. So it was after Reed's
we find the first reference to
pping in this valley. There are
ing reports of logging, but none
be tied to this valley until 1849.
was building a mill here. The gold
was creating an immense
and for wood in San Francisco.

Other mills included Robert,
Parker, Botts & McCormick's steam
mill in Sausalito and The Baltimore
& Fredericks Trading Company's
steam mill in Baltimore Canyon.
Larkspur, (also on the Corté Madera
del Presidio property).

inadequate to drive the wheel.
Evidence of such a pond is still found
in the creek where timbers are lying
about that were probably used in the
sluice gates which were either closed
to hold water in the pond, or opened
to direct water toward the mill wheel.

An 1880 photo shows more timbers
in the creek than can be found now.
Other discoveries? Contrary to
many reports that the mill was
constructed with manzanita pegs, we
found oak pegs as we disassembled
the structure.
Other clues to the actual
construction of the mill were notches
in the upper support members on the
middle bent and the lower purlins,
there being the pieces that make up
the flooring of the mill. We found
notches for the yoke of a saw.
So the mill was not run with a radial
saw; it was an oscillating saw.

We reconstructed the yoke to fit in
those notches. They are the two
vertical timbers in the middle of the
mill. We interpreted all the notches in
the purlins to have been made to hold
tracks that ran parallel to the long
dimension of the building. Thereby in
operation, a wheel would pull a log
on a track through an oscillating
derical saw. The process was very
slow. It took a long time to slab up
the timbers for Reed's veranda.

The Rebuilding

During our construction we
made some interesting discoveries as
we excavated the footing of the
foundations. We found what I called
"The Mystery Log", a piece of hewn
timber with pegs and notches that
held some apparatus for the mill. Its
use would probably become obvious
if the equipment that was in the mill
could be reconstructed.
We also discovered underneath
the mud sill, (That's the course of
the mill that lies on the ground) there
were three courses of timber
underneath it. Reportedly the mill
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A mill such as we are describing
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The location of the mill wheel hasn't been determined. We have found through historical photographs in the 1880's & 1890's there was a rag wheel located between yokes. We put the yokes back in and are in the process of reconstructing a rag wheel to be installed. The rag wheel had numerous wooden pegs on it, similar to the workings of a clock. As the saw oscillated up and down it would take one click or bight on this wheel, which would draw the carriage with the log into the blade.

**Reconstruction**

The project began around 1984. I had been Park Supervisor for about two years, and had been inspecting the structure. It was in terrible shape. The whole thing was racked towards the creek. All the members were beginning to decay to the point that the main beams that support the parapets of the floor were sagging. The reconstruction efforts in the thirties used fir instead of redwood and it was almost completely decayed—to the point you could literally put your hand right through the beams. The roof had been changed. A tree had fallen in the sixties through the roof and had broken the two large 48 foot beams that support the roof. They were replaced by 24 foot beams, which put all the load on the center of the structure. So it was failing there as well.

I brought the city's engineer, the building inspector and the director of parks and rec down to take a look and to figure out what we could do. Their immediate response was to condemn it. That wasn't going to work. Or, fence it off. We decided that we were going to undertake a reconstruction project; An historical reconstruction of The Old Mill.

The next step was funding. We tried applying for a grant through the Historical Preservation Act which was extremely difficult because the grants are very competitive. They deemed us ineligible for a grant because the historical significance of the site had been altered by past preservation attempts. We, of course, argued that this was the oldest standing mill in California, that the majority of the timbers were the original, and that it was definitely worthy of some State funding. They agreed, but at that time there were no available funds. So, we regrouped and went to the City Council. They saw the importance of this to the community and, fortunately, they funded the project.

The project architect, Dan Peterson, drew up some specifications. His first effort was to document the structure. He went and measured every timber, every elevation, and drew up plans so that when we disassembled the structure we could reassemble it exactly the way it was—historically accurate. One thing that was changed was the peak of the roof which was destroyed in 1965. It was installed with a steeper pitch than it originally had, but with the original number of courses of shakes on top.

I knew that we were going to need an incredible amount of wood to do the rebuilding; so during this whole period any time a redwood came down in town, the wood was salvaged and stockpiled along Cascade Drive. Even with that, there wasn't enough wood for the project.

I purchased some wood from Larry Carson, who was building a house on Laurel and Cascade. For his building, he needed to remove several redwoods. I purchased 5 trees from him and was intending to use them for the five long beams. They were bought in 50 foot lengths and brought down to the park to be hewn on site for main beams of the structure. But these trees were all second growth. All the wood in this canyon is now second growth and, funny, it is all about 160 years old, which would correspond to the period when John Reed was milling wood here for his house. Anything small was of course left and became the trees we see now. When a second growth tree, a very vigorous, rapidly growing tree, is attached to a decaying stump it is easy for the decay to get into the main trunk of the new tree. So, all the trees that I bought from Larry Carson had what we call pith rot, or decay in the center of the log, and couldn't be used for the long beams. I could salvage enough out of the wood to make all of the knee braces, the roof rafters, and the diagonal braces on the lower structure, but I still had to find the 48 foot pieces for the long dimension of the structure.

The person who was doing a lot of the hewing on the project was Larry McCance, who runs a company called Palmer Creek Hand Hewn Wood Products in Healdsburg. He located some trees near Ukiah in Mendocino County and purchased one large double trunked tree. Out of that one tree came the four logs. If you look at the end, they are not "boxed heart". In other words, the pith of the tree does not run down the center. They are what is called "tree of heart center", which is much more structurally stable than "boxed heart" wood. In that case we deviated from John Reed's original. His were all boxed heart, which is probably why they lasted only 150 years—this will hopefully last longer.

Everything was pre-assembled by Larry McCance. All the mortises and tenons were cut up there and the whole thing was pre-assembled at his uncle's vineyard in Healdsburg. It all arrived here on a truck and was assembled by boom truck. It took probably two years to mill all the wood and this was using chain mills. Also much of the milling was done in Bolinas by a local—Dave Downing and then hewn, or given a hewn texture, by Larry McCance. It took McCance six or eight months to cut all the mortises, tenons and pre-fit the structure in Healdsburg. After delivery it was assembled in only three days.

The stump right next to the mill itself, which now has two 90 foot second growth redwoods on it, was probably used by Reed as a spar pole and blocks and tackles put up in there to erect the structure. The beams themselves, the large 48 foot beams, weigh about three tons in each piece. So it was a monumental feat for Reed to assemble at that time with oxen and block and tackle. The most difficult beam is the one nearest the creek as it is so far out from the axis of the spar.

Dave Downing milled a majority of the wood. He milled to 13 inches square, and then McCance Hewed it to 12 x 12. Dan Peterson, in Richmond, was the architect.
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THE CUSHING TRAIL

by Fred Sandrock

In 1873 the road to Blithedale led to the sanitarium and resort hotel of Dr. John Cushing. Here, many happy campers found an abundance of rest and recreation. In addition to creek-side wanderings, one could engage in tennis, croquet, and the customary evening parlor games. But it was the climb up Auld Tam via the Cushing Trail that lured the energetic.

Barry Spitz, in his 1990 classic, Tamalpais Trail, lists Tom Borschel's 1987 record climbing time as 30 minutes and 32 seconds from Lytton Square to the fire lookout. One Alfred Pawley at 1 hour and 10 minutes, "The Fastest Time on Record...made without a rest." The pair had come up from Blithedale. Still earlier on December 6, 1884, Ebenezer Knowlton, legendary professor from Boys' High School (renamed Lowell in 1894), led a group of sixty-six boys to the summit. Most likely, they tramped up from Tamalpais Station, renamed Kent, Kentwood and finally Kentfield. James Rolph was the first to sign in at one hour flat! Rolph, to be known affectionately as "Sunny Jim," went on to become San Francisco's popular mayor for 19 years.

Harold French (1878-1962) was another Tamalpais devotee and habitué. So enthralled was he with environmental concerns, that he even named his son John Muir French! In 1921 Harold wrote the following for the Tamalpais Conservation Club:

My first recollections of woods and mountains...hark back to the summer of "eighty-two" when I "pioneered" Mt. Tamalpais, then known to but few. About Blithedale Inn where we turned, I kidded on
Most likely, they called Station, renamed finally Kentfield. James sign in at one hour flat! affectionately as "Sunny San Francisco's years, 1878-1962) was another habitué. So enraptured mental concerns, that heohn Muir French! In 1921 swung for the Tamalpais of woods and mountains ser of "eighty-two" when I pass, then known as but few, here we tarried, I toddled on

my first exploring trips, sometimes "all by myself," much to the fear of my family, who were more than once alarmed lest I get lost through my woodland waywardness. But the margin of the meandering brook was my deadline, beyond which rose a wall of redwoods, trackless and entrodden, where bears and mountain lions were really and truly lying in wait for bad little boys who didn't mind. Great stumps were butcher-blocks, on which the leaves of thimbleberry and madrone were carved into choice chops and steaks, cutlets and roasts. What a wonderful world unfolded that summer on the banks of Bonnie Blithedale!

Today, the Temalpa (Cushing) Trail is certainly the steepest and one of the most historic routes on the Mountain. It rises 1,600' in 1.5 miles and is recommended only for uphill travel. According to Barry Spitz, "Those who venture onto Temalpa not only receive a fast, scenic trip up the Mountain, but also get to see a little-known treasure, the Sitting Bull plaque."

Facing page: The early road to Blithedale before Mill Valley was incorporated in 1893. Note the lower reaches of the Cushing Trail. The scar visible on East Peak is Devil's Slide. Courtesy Marin County Historical Society. Above right: Aerial view of East Peak, c. 1920. Sections of the Cushing are barely discernible in the lower right-hand corner. The grade of the "Mountain Train," including the famous Double Bowknot, is evident, as is the former Cucamonga Fire Trail, lower center. Ted Wiser collection. As right: The trails make the maps. The Tamalpais Sheet of the United States Geological Survey, Edition of 1897 and surveyed 1894-95, showed three trails: the Cushing, the Bill Williams from West Peak to Bolinas Ridge, and the Old Sled from Ehresty Ranch through Carson Saddle. The Cushing Trail has experienced several name changes: Mill Valley, Summit, and currently, Temalpa. The section depicted is from a 1913 revision. Author's collection.
Redwood Lodge is one of the remaining early Mill Valley houses in Blithedale canyon. It is now nestled in a grove of large redwood trees but when the house was built they were young, second growth redwoods just beginning to replace those logged in the canyon in 1851. Jean Keiler, granddaughter of the original owner, still lives there and on a gray March afternoon she graciously showed me through the house and entertained me with tales of her family, its past residents.

George E. Billings was 17 years old when he came to SF with his family from Cazenovia, N.Y. in 1868. He held several jobs before going to work for the Hall Shipbuilding Yards in San Francisco (the Hall family also had a shipbuilding yard on Bainbridge Island in the Puget Sound area). He must have done well there. In 1874 he married Susanna Maria Hall, his boss's daughter. The couple set up housekeeping in San Francisco.

In 1890 Henry Bridge, a yachting friend, told him about the Tamalpais Land and Water Co. auction advertised to take place in Mill Valley. The two went to the auction together planning to buy property in Cascade canyon. The lots they were interested in were too high a bidder so instead they bought, between them, all the lots along the creek on Corte Madera Avenue from Bigelow (now Edridge) to Winwood Place. Billings purchased lots 206, 207, 208 and 209 for the then grand sum of $2,125. The Billings' at first used the site as a camping place after sailing over from San Francisco. Apparently they enjoyed it very much and built a summer home on the property in the following year, 1891.

By 1896 the Mill Valley and Mount Tamalpais Scenic Railway was built and in operation from the depot downtown to the summit. The right of way ran alongside the Billings' property across the creek from Redwood Lodge with a stop on Edridge at what was then the southeast corner of the property. In 1901 the Billings' enlarged the original summer house which they called Redwood Lodge. The Billings' house in San Francisco escaped the 1906 earthquake and fire but the family, like many others, had come to Mill Valley for safety at the time, and, considering the gracious amenities of suburban living offered by Mill Valley, decided to make Redwood Lodge their year-round home. They then made further additions to the house.

Redwood Lodge is a Shingle Style house with some features showing the influence of the Craftsman Style. The plan was originally asymmetrical but since Mr. Billings "liked to add rooms from time to time," according to his granddaughter, Mrs. Keiler, it has also become, over the years, very irregular & picturesque as well. Walter Ractliff of Berkeley was a friend of Geo. E. Billings, "although younger," and was one of the "tennis regulars." He was the architect for at least some, if not all, of the building. The roofs are of the hip type with operable skylights and arched dormers. The front porch has a skylight and bracketed columns. A basement at the rear of the house was used for storage of home canned goods.

The living room and dining room are unpainted redwood paneling (as is most of the rest of the house) with sloping soffits and boxed beams. There is a large Craftsman Style fireplace of clinker brick in the living room and a smaller fireplace of smooth surfaced buff brick in the dining room. An office above adjoins the living room with a spindleswork screen above head height and a panel of glass brick-like lenses above (marked "P H. Jackson & Co., Steel locking frame with reinforced lenses, (Pan. Nov. 22, 1904") that allows natural light to filter down from an operable skylight in the roof of the sewing room above. Both of these features probably date from the 1906 additions. There are handsome, glazed, sliding pocket doors between the living room, the dining room & the open stair well. There are large, almost square windows lining the dining room and the breakfast porch. These windows originally had thumb grips so they could be lifted slightly, then tilted a little so that they would slide into slots in the sills where they were completely out of sight and the dining areas became, in effect, outside dining porches. The stair-case, with its large square newel posts unadorned except for a four-sided convex curve at their top, rises in a stairwell open to the upper floor, turns 90 degrees and ascends into what might have been a "billiard room or game room" in the parlance of the time, the predecessor of our present day recreation or family room. When the family decided to live in the house year-round a master bedroom and bath were added at this level and the room became Mrs. Billings' sewing room.

The house contains a variety of Craftsman Style wrought iron and hammered copper light fixtures typical of the period. Some have glass shades and some have bare bulbs, also typical of the period, although the carbon filament bulbs in use then gave a softer light than bare modern bulbs.

In addition to being in the ship building business, Mr. Billings was also a notable yachtsman. He was a founding member of the Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon. An elaborate gold frame on the living room wall holds an equally elaborate engraved and calligraphed document inscribed to "Commodore Geo. E. Billings," for his services to that organization and also contains a handpainted cameo showing the Nixie, Mr. Billings' schooner, in full sail. There is a handsome photograph of the Nixie in a period, dark, oak frame riding at its mooring in Sausalito with the old houses rising steeply up the hillside behind it. The nameplate from the transom is also hanging in the living room, placed there after Mr. Billings became absorbed with tennis and the Nixie was sold.

A significant feature of the house is its grand tennis court. "George E.," as he was called by his friends and family, built it at his wife's request. According to the family's story, he picked up a racquet to try it out one day and liked the game so much he became a great tennis enthusiast. His enthusiasm is well demonstrated in old photos that show a crowded two story spectators' gallery and a roofed pergola all walled into a circle of young, second growth redwoods. There are nautical looking banners strung along the top wire of the fence and two large U.S. flags stretched between trunks of redwoods—one showing 38 stars and the other 40. One of the famous tournaments seems to be in progress on the court. He had four special lights hung on a line over the court and guests came from all over for the regular Thursday night tennis foursomes and occasional tournaments. His granddaughter remembers the children being allowed to stay up late to chase the balls that were hit over the fence into the Railway right of way (later bought by the Keilers when the
Redwood Lodge, in its park-like setting, is a real Mill Valley treasure. It is still lived in by a descendant of the family that built it and who has preserved its integrity all these years, certainly no small accomplishment in this day and age. We have Mrs. Keller to thank for that.