A Message from our President

This yearly publication, the result of thought and creative effort by members of the Mill Valley Historical Society and its supporters, speaks for itself with each issue. You will enjoy this one, I'm sure, just as so many have enjoyed earlier issues.

Since the Mill Valley Historical Review speaks for itself, let me speak for the Society today by listing the activities which are organized and conducted by MVHS member volunteers:

- Gathers, catalog, and preserves the records and memorabilia relating to the City of Mill Valley, Marin County, California, and environs.
- Provides means for the dissemination of this material to the public.
- Acquires and contributes historical memorabilia and information to the History Room at the Mill Valley Public Library.
- Furnishes and trains docents to oversee the History Room during specific hours when the library is open.
- Actively engages in collecting oral histories from local residents. These histories are transcribed and maintained in the History Room. The original tapes are also on file.
- Conducts a yearly Walk into History which takes place on Sunday of each Memorial Day weekend. Small groups are led in 15-minute intervals, over a course that changes each year. Approximately 30 guides are trained each year and equipped with books of information about the area traversed.
- Researches, writes, and produces guides' books for the yearly Walk.
- Publishes both a Newsletter (May 15 and October 11), and the Mill Valley Historical Review, which this year contains five articles and many pictures of historical interest.
- Conducts meetings. Six of these meetings, held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of a month in the Gallery of the Mill Valley Public Library, are presented. Each of the meetings features a speaker discussing a topic of interest with the members. Meetings are free to those desiring to participate and are well attended.
- Holds a Pot-Luck Dinner in the Fall for members, who provide home cooked dishes. New Board Members are installed and there is entertainment. In 1988, Chris Chater presented her new film Steaming up Tamalpais—in which her magic transported us back to Mt. Tamalpais in 1918.

We unabashedly seek the membership of people who would like to participate with this constructive, friendly group.

Paul de Fremery, President
Mill Valley Historical Society

Letter from the Editor

This year's edition of the Review was made possible by dedicated members of our society. Thank you, Carol Batts, for your typing; thank you, fellow members, for your in-depth research of the articles (these folks deserve applause); and thank you, the many people, who respond so warmly to our requests of “What do you remember about...?” Special thanks to The Mill Valley Library, who again supplied us with memorabilia and photographs, which allow us to “see” the past as it was. I hope this issue will help you enjoy our Walk into History this year, with a little more insight of what it was like in those early days.

— Marc Briery
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- Marc Bravery

When you reminisce about the good old days in Mill Valley and mention is made of lovely Sycamore Avenue, two fine families come to mind—the Legers and the Weissichs. A Leger daughter (Camille) married a Weissich son (Otto).

Camille Leger Weissich Folker was born in San Francisco and came to Mill Valley in 1909 with her parents, Maurice and Pauline Leger. Maurice was born in French Algiers, his wife in southern France. He had a fine tailoring establishment...
I also remember Easter their large garden. We flowered basket with our nan then there were dozens of boiled eggs hidden around. "Nana and Gramp's was lovely. Sweet peas grew all fence, roses, hyacinths, hydrangeas, bachelor buttons, wisteria, daffodils, and tulips throughout the garden. I pick flowers for us to bring teachers. He very carefully thorns on the roses so we our fingers.

"I could go on and on with memories..."

Contributors:
Camille Folker
Frances Pettit
Carol Budds
Loren Freeman

Bottom photo: The back garden


in San Francisco. They lived at 15 Sycamore and moved to 23 Sycamore in 1915.

The Weissich family can be traced back to 1540 in Germany. In 1852, Otto Weissich's grandfather came to California to work the gold mines of Big Oak Flat in Tuolumne County. His father, William Otto Weissich, was a founder of the Western California Fishing Company in San Francisco. William and his wife, Augusta, came to Mill Valley to make their home at 97 (now 99) Sycamore in 1911.

Camille and her sister, Juliette, both graduated from Tamalpais High School. Otto Weissich, his brother Theo, and their twin sisters Marie and Carolyn were also Tamalpais graduates.

Camille tells about those early times at the Weissich home on Sycamore Avenue when it was the scene of many wonderful times for the young people living in the area. The Klyces, Bagshaws, Burbecks, Berts, and Manns were among the many families who gave parties for their children, but the Weissich home was special. William Otto and Augusta delighted in entertaining guests in their spacious social hall with its hardwood flooring and built-in benches. This was the era of the horse and buggy (1914) so when the young people attended a party, they started out from house to house gathering a group as they went along. Never did they walk alone. Parents were always on hand as chaperones and older brothers and sisters looked out for the younger ones.

There was always a piano to provide music for dancing and the Klyces even had a Victrola. Camille was an accomplished musician; she played at these parties, as did Mrs. Mann. On rare occasions, Hattie Krausgill, sister of Walter, the popular bandleader in Larkspur, played for them.

At eleven o'clock refreshments were served: punch in the punch bowl, cake and ice cream, bonbons and the ever popular mottos (little candies with sayings.) It was great fun to toss a motto to a favorite girl or boy!

One celebration of particular note was Earl Thacker's birthday party with a written invitation to be acknowledged. Camille asked permission to attend. Her father said yes on the condition that she learn to play the Blue Danube Waltz. Quite a challenge! But she did it, and to this day when the Blue Danube is played, Camille remembers that party.

A generation later the Weissich grandchildren entertained their friends at equally festive parties in the same room. The gracious Augusta, whose family was obviously of great importance to her, knew us all and greeted each child by name. And there may still be a few would-be Shirley Temple's from the 1930's in Mill Valley who remember their tap dancing lessons from Miss Clarabelle Hamilton who taught tap dancing, toe dancing, and ballet in the Weissich's social hall.

The youngest Weissich grandchild, Frances Marie Pettit, recalls the entire family gathered there at Christmas, year after year, until there were four generations. "The living room with the Christmas tree and presents was closed off until Santa Claus arrived. Only then were we allowed to see the tree, greet Santa, and open our presents.
“I also remember Easter egg hunts in their large garden. We each had one large filled basket with our name on it, and then there were dozens of colored hard-boiled eggs hidden around the garden.

“Nana and Gramp’s garden was always lovely. Sweet peas grew along the front fence, roses, hyacinths, pansies, violets, hydrangeas, bachelor buttons, lilacs, wisteria, daffodils, and tulips bloomed throughout the garden. Gramp used to pick flowers for us to bring to our teachers. He very carefully cut off all the thorns on the roses so we wouldn’t prick our fingers.

“I could go on and on with my happy memories...”

Contributors:
Camille Folker
Frances Pettit
Carol Budds
Mill Valley was growing! Following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire the little community became a temporary haven for refugees from the City. Soon many of the summer families moved to the village permanently.

It was evident that Mill Valley needed another school. Summit School, which was built in 1892 and enlarged in 1900, was bulging at the seams.

The March 15, 1907, issue of the RECORD-ENTERPRISE said that something must be done to alleviate conditions that existed in the Mill Valley School District. Citizens' opinions were needed. Parents and interested parties were invited to a meeting at the school house. An election was to be held on 30th of March of that year to decide whether the school district should issue bonds for a new school, as well as make additions and repairs to the old Summit School.

The front page of the RECORD-ENTERPRISE on March 29, 1907, read: "Our school facilities at present are not adequate, and would be a disgrace to any town of this size and especially prosperous Mill Valley, the town which has every reason to set the pace for every community in the State this size. This condition, fortunately, is not due to any lack of public spirit on the part of the people, but is the natural outcome of an abnormal influx of population without a corresponding increase in school facilities."

The article went on to say, "For several years past, and especially during the last year, our population has increased by leaps and bounds and the school has been insufficient to meet small increasing demands. The present sch
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The March 5, 1907, issue of the RECORD-ENTERPRISE said that something must be done to alleviate conditions that existed in the Mill Valley School District. Citizens' opinions were needed. Parents and interested parties were invited to a meeting at the schoolhouse. An election was to be held on the 10th of March of that year to decide whether the school district should issue bonds for a new school as well as make additions and repairs to the old Summit School.

The front page of the RECORD-ENTERPRISE on March 29, 1907 read: 'Our school facilities at present are worse than inadequate, they would be a disgrace to any town of this size and especially prosperous Mill Valley, the town which has every reason to set the pace for every community in the State of this size. This condition, fortunately, is not due to any lack of public spirit on the part of the people, but is the natural outcome of an abnormal influx of population without a corresponding increase in school facilities.'

The article went on to say, 'For several years past, and especially during the past year, our population has increased by leaps and bounds and the school moneys have been insufficient to meet steadily increasing demands. The present school is badly in need of repairs and additions. It is now accommodating twice the number of students it was built for and naturally the conditions are far from being ideal. Go to the schoolhouse tomorrow afternoon and vote for the bond issue! Does this sound familiar? The election was held on the appointed day with 894 votes cast. The bond passed with 152 votes cast in favor of issuing bonds in the amount of $25,000.

At the time of the election, the trustees were Messrs. O. C. Cappelman, Clinton Folger and J. J. Newbegin. In April of the same year, M. M. O'Shaughnessey was elected to the board. It was felt that his background in engineering and planning would give great assistance in the proposed building. This is the same O'Shaughnessey who later became engineer for the City of San Francisco and the Hetch Hetchy water system.

With an eye to the future, deeds were signed by Mr. and Mrs. Harry A. Scott and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Proctor for purchase of the Scott property on Elm Avenue. (Mr. Scott taught auto shop for many years at Tamalpais High School.) Shortly thereafter, in 1910, a bond issue passed. Joint financing was with the school district and the federal government. The new $100,000 school at Old Mill would move to Old Mill School; and Summit School would be demolished.

The architect was Walter C. Falch, the same architect that designed the Mill Valley City Hall. Peter Sartorio, contractor, was the successful bidder. James Chestnut was hired as the inspector.

The new edifice, said to be one of the most up-to-date schools in the Bay Area, was finished with wings containing classrooms extending back on both sides. In the corner of the V was the

continued on page 8
You are invited to attend the graduation exercises at Tamalpais Park Elementary.

8:00 P.M. (Present at auditorium)
Date Jan. 24, 1942

Graduates:
[Names listed]

Our School Patch

Tamalpais Park School • October 1912
You are invited to attend the graduation exercises at...
Tamalpais Park Elementary School

[Signature]

Date: Jan 24 1940

You are invited to attend the graduation exercises at...
Tamalpais Park Elementary School

[Signature]

Date: Jan 24 1940

Graduation Program

Wednesday, 8 P.M.
January 24, 1940
at Tamalpais Park Elementary School

Program of Graduation

MILL VALLEY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Wednesday, 8 P.M.
January 24, 1940
at Tamalpais Park Elementary School
continued from page 5

The new building opened September 8, 1939 with all the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in the district in six classrooms. There were two empty classrooms, a music room, a special room for dental and health observation, the principal's office and the office of the Superintendent. The school, however, was not dedicated until December 15th due to the delay in the shipment of blue drapes for the auditorium.

The dedication exercises, planned by Mrs. Melva Schroe, President of the PTA, were presided over by William A. Marcus, Chairman of the Board. Colors were advanced by Troop 1 of the Mill Valley Boy Scouts and Troop 2 gave the Pledge of Allegiance. The glee club and community sing were led by Carleton Peters, music teacher of the school. The invocation was pronounced by Dr. Lynn T. White of the Community Church. Greetings were brought by Henry Green, Superintendent of Schools for Marin County, Rev. K. Fillmore Gray of the Methodist Church and by Mill Valley Mayor T. F. Bagshaw. Following the dedication address by F. H. McIntyre, Assistant Regional Director of the PWA, the school was accepted by Roy R. Huffman, Superintendent of the Mill Valley School District.

In 1967 the original old Tamalpais Park School, built in 1908, was torn down, as it did not come up to the state fire and earthquake standards. The 1934 addition remains today with a few alterations and a new facade. Park School now houses kindergarten through fifth grades and together with a fine educational program, it is noted for the annual Spring Art Show, fund raising Walk-a-thon, and its auditorium with hardwood floors and full stage which is available for community use.

To many of us who attended the various Park Schools, memories are refreshed of a happy childhood in Mill Valley. Miss Maguire has lived in Mill Valley since 1910, when she was seven years old.

Contributors:
Mill Valley Public Library
Mill Valley School District
Charlotte Osborn
Mr. Ross

S. Edna Maguire was a homemaker who will soon be celebrating her lively tales of California history. She was born in Lowell, California, a mining town in Nevada County where her father worked in the mines.

Later her family moved near Marysville where she finished grammar school. She then went on to Berkeley High School which she finished in three years while managing to be the first girl elected to a student body office. Miss Maguire's teaching career started as a principal and teacher of a rural school in Marysville with 35 students and nine grades. She rode his to school ten miles each way.

Her first teaching position was at Larkspur where she taught from September 1920, she was elected as a school board member. She retired from teaching in 1946 and has lived in Mill Valley ever since.
S. Edna Maguire was an educator and historian who will long be remembered by Homestead and Tamalpais Park School pupils for her lively tales of California gold country. She was born in 1888 in Lowell, California, a mining town in Nevada County, where her father worked in the mines.

Later her family moved near Mariposa where she finished grammar school. She then went on to Berkeley High School in three years while managing to be the first girl elected to a student body office.

Miss Maguire's teaching career started as a principal and teacher of a rural school in Mariposa County, with 35 students in nine grades. She rode horseback to school ten miles each way.

Her first teaching position in Marin was in Larkspur where she taught first grade. In September 1920, she came to the Mill Valley School District as a teacher-principal of Homestead School. (One of the teachers who taught under her in 1923 was Blanche Jackson, still a Mill Valley resident.) Miss Maguire stayed at Homestead until 1927 when she took the same position at Tamalpais Park School, now called Park School.

After 20 years as teacher-principal, she gave up the principalship and taught as a primary teacher.

She held the reins of the school in her firm grip, and the naughty student well remembers the crack of the ruler on the hands. When she was disciplining and administering the school, her brown eyes sparkled.

Before the days of the electric bell system, Miss Maguire would stand on the top step of the stairs leading to the school building and call the children to class by ringing by hand the old school bell. Then the children would line up by class and enthusiastically salute the flag before marching into their classrooms.

At one point of her many years in Mill Valley,
Miss Ma guire lived with the family of
Eunice Quedens (Eve Ar dene) and be came
a close friend of the girl who was to
become a screen and television actress.

During her many years in the teaching
profession, Edna Ma guire was active
with the California Teachers Association
and the National Education Association,
being very instrumental in getting
the tenure law passed in California.

She was a member of the Mill Valley
Blithedale Rebekah Lodge and a past
president of the Mariposa Parlor, Native
Daughters of the Golden West as well as
actively working with the Camp Fire
Girls and the PTA.

With all these activities, Miss Ma guire
still had time to take summer courses
from the University of California, of
which she was a graduate, and other Bay
Area colleges. Her credentials entitled
her to take any position in the State
school system from kindergarten to
superintendent.

In 1956 the Edna Ma guire School
opened and once again her name became
familiar to the students of Mill Valley, as
all seventh and eighth graders from the
total school district attended "Edna Ma guire".

After her retirement from the public
school system, she continued to teach
part-time in various private schools in
the county. During the last years of her
life, she stayed with her niece, Katherine
Gratton, in Santa Rosa, the Mill Valley
Rest Home, and a convalescent home in
Santa Rosa.

Florence Chase, now retired after
teaching first grade at Park, Alto, and
Homeschool Schools, did her student
Teaching in Edna Ma guire's classroom.

She fondly remembers:

Her desk was piled high with the
children's papers, waiting to be checked.
Because she was a teaching principal, the
school phone was on her desk. Frequent
phone calls interrupted the classroom,
but not class. With one hand on the
phone, the other on the math, history,
geography, literature, spelling or science
book, she carried on her conversation as
one-by-one each student responded to her
vibrant command. "NEXT" by popping
up and reading a paragraph. By after-
noon, the topnotch of her beautiful mass
of dark brown hair had slipped down to
the side of her head. The children may
have been secretly amused but they con-
tinued to respond to the familiar, "NEXT!".

Contributors:
Mill Valley Public Library
Mill Valley School District
Katherine Gratton

Edna Ma guire with her class, 1928.
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Homes, and a convalescent home in
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Today as you drive along East
ithedale Avenue toward the center of
town, look to the left as you approach
ycamore Avenue. You will see a brown
ingle Gothic revival style building
estled among three sycamore trees on
ycamore Avenue side and a very
ge large cedar tree on the corner. This is
one of three still existing early churches in
Mill Valley, and the only one still used as
a church today. The other two are
located on Summit Avenue; one was the
original Catholic Church, the other the
ongregational Church. These are both
used as apartment buildings today.
In 1906, William Abbott, a book-
keeper with the Methodists Book Con-
cern of San Francisco, came to Mill
Valley. He saw a need for a Sunday
School and obtained the use of the new
oor Art Club for classes at 2:00
m. every Sunday. Classes were also
held at the IOOF Hall (formerly the Hub
Teatre) located on Throckmorton
venue and Madrona Street, and at the
asonic Hall. Soon visiting ministers
were invited to hold church services
ollowing the Sunday School classes.
August, 1907, Mr. Abbott asked
reverend A. T. Needham of San Rafel
to conduct regular services, and the
ethodist Episcopal Church of Mill
Valley was formally organized with
reverend Needham becoming permanent
pastor for the next two years. Mr. Abbott
became Superintendent of the Sunday
School, and that same year the Ladies
id Society was organized. It was later
own as the Women's Society of Chris-
tian Service.
By 1909 two lots were purchased from
Fred Bagshaw, one of Mill Valley's early
pioneers. Services were held in a plat-
tform tent until 1913. However, during a

heavy storm the tent was blown down
and once again services were held at the
ub Theatre. The fith pastor, Reverend
J. B. Chynoweth, then raised enough
money in seven months to build the
church as we know it today. The
building was dedicated in the summer of
1913 by Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes.
Shortly after the completion of the
new church, the growth in membership
required additional space and ground
was excavated under the building for the
neat room. In 1915 a church parish-
sonage was purchased at 10 Carmelita
venue. The sanctuary was completely
odeled in 1935 at a cost of $12,000,
plus some donated labor. Wesley Hall,
the social hall, kitchen, and
room, was built in 1940. As a fund
raster in those days the women of the
church prepared and served meals to
ommuters coming home from San Fran-
cisco on Friday evenings. It is told that
by Sunday the aroma of corned beef and
cabbage still lingered. For a time in the
1940's crowded conditions existed at Park
School and a first grade class used
Wesley Hall.

As the community and church con-
tinued to expand, the church could not
accommodate their needs. In 1954, a
five acre site at the other end of Sycamore
ycamore and Camino Alto) was pur-
ished from Mrs. T. J. Sewall, and a new,
92,000 church was completed on the
marsh lands site in 1959. The East
ithedale Avenue church was sold to
the Assembly of God the same year. For
all of its 76 years of age, the church still
retains its fine original characteristics.
William D. Boyce, Chicago publisher and traveler, was seeking a difficult address in old London. A boy approached him and asked, "May I be of service to you?" Mr. Boyce told him where he wanted to go, the boy saluted, and said, "Come with me, sir," and led him to the desired spot. Like the typical American tourist, Mr. Boyce reached in his pocket and offered the boy a shilling. The boy promptly replied, "No, sir, I am a Scout. Don't you know about the Scouts?" Mr. Boyce told him where he was very near, sir. I'll be glad to show you the way." The lad then led him to the office and offered the boy a shilling. The boy did, and added, "Their office is back to the United States. So began U. S. Scouting in 1910.

In those early days, Scouting sought to develop manly boys by means of military discipline. The young "soldiers" who made up this first patrol were Arwin Heckman, Vincent Donnelly, Stanley Helmore, Benton Smith, Paul Riemer, Herbert Polier, Allen Tobin, Donald Wesser, Donald Burbeck, Charlie Lacey, Lytton Barber, Herbert McRae, Charlie Shine, Walter VanArkJlg, Bert McMetzony, Alan Boyle, Fred Bagnshus, and Fred Santos. The first Scoutmaster was B. W. Boger. Another early Scoutmaster was Sgr. Samuel W. Cox from Fort Baker. He was a colorful and vigorous leader who had a way with boys and could borrow army equipment for outings.
In 1919, Mill Valley's Scouts received a wonderful gift in the form of Scout Hall. George and Maria Billings decided the land and building at 177 East Blithedale to the Boy Scouts of America, Mill Valley Council. The original directors were R. E. Swenningen, H. L. Harkins, and Leighton Robinson.

Scouting in Mill Valley reached a peak in enrollment in the 1960's. During this period, Scout Hall hosted Troops 1, 2, 28, 34, and 77, with associated Cub Scout packs and Explorer units. Today, only Troops 1 and 77 survive.

In 1970-71, Scout Hall was improved and modernized by the Mill Valley Lions Club, making it more attractive and serviceable to the groups using it.

Through the years many adults in Mill Valley have contributed much to scouting. Ten scouters have been awarded the Silver Beaver by the Marin Council for distinguished service to boyhood. They are: 1938, Roy Ibach; 1939, Thomas C. Nelson; 1956, Harvey Chapman; 1958, Prentiss Goldstone; 1960, Percy Stange; 1962, Fred Drexler; 1965, John R. Barnard; 1966, Louis Wayers; 1967, Richard S. Goldsmith; 1971, George William Billings; 1986, Victor Savden.

The original function of Scout Hall is not known. The site is thought to have been occupied by a saloon known as McGinnis' Tavern at the turn of the century. It may also have been the location of a saloon as a laundry or a library suitable with access to Mountain View Avenue. By 1919 it belonged to the Keiler family and then donated the property to the Boy Scouts of America.

Scout membership card dated 1927.