Thoughts from Babbie Dreyfus

People of my age, or older (is there anyone older?) who lived in Mill Valley before 1915, might remember that there was a small establishment built into the group of redwoods on the left of the road between West Blithedale and the Old Mill. It was known as “Agazzelow’s” and was owned by a pleasant man of approximately that name, who sold soft drinks, gum, candy bars and so forth to the local children and the weekend hikers, most of whom went up the Elpea steps on their way to the varied beauties of West Marin. Mr. Agazzelow not only provided refreshments, but he made nice little hanging baskets of latticed hazel wood sticks. At one time there was hardly a house in Mill Valley that didn’t have a fern or two in one of those little baskets.

The weekend hikers were not the only vigorous walkers in those days. It astonished me now that the whole population of Mill Valley walked almost everywhere it had to go. There were a few (possibly four) carriages for hire at the station, but unless it was raining, or one were heavily burdened, or very fashionably dressed, they were not much used. We all walked, men to trains, women to the store or the movies or on visits, and children everywhere. My brother and I, at six and seven, walked from Helen’s Lane to Gardner Villa at Park and Miller to a small school run by a German woman named Fraulein Harriman, and later to her school at West Blithedale and Eldridge. At nine and ten we walked from our house to the Upham house on Loved Avenue (where the Canepa house is now) to go swimming.

This unavoidable walking explains, of course, why there were so many flights of steps in all parts of Mill Valley. The early residents loved the views from the hills, but didn’t have cars. They HAD to have shortcuts.

I wonder how many teenagers today would consider HIKING to Muir Beach (we called it Big Lagoon) to go swimming? To my generation it seemed like a perfectly reasonable (as well as the only) way to get a day at the beach. And some even hiked to Stinson (we called it Willow Camp).

The first car that came into our family was my brother’s Model-T Ford roadster with overhead valves, whatever they were, and by that time I was sixteen and there were more cars around, though not many belonging to teenagers. When I think of going up and down Wildomar between Molino and Helen’s Lane in that car, my hair stands on end. I wonder what the world would be like if nobody had ever invented the combustion engine? On that note I leave you.

Published By
The Mill Valley Historical Society
375 Throckmorton Avenue
Mill Valley, California

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About The Cover —
“Camping at Mr. Schmidt’s” is the title of this wonderful old sepia print in the library’s History Room. Camping in Mill Valley in the 1890’s and early 1900’s was a primitive outdoor adventure for some, a civilized extension of city life for others; a simple tent in the wilderness for some, a semi-permanent, platformed summer home complete with linen, silver service and candles for others. Rounds of parties progressed from one lantern-rimmed site to the next in warm, wooded country-summer Mill Valley.

The Mill Valley Historical Society is grateful for the cooperation of Thelma Percy and the Mill Valley Library. The editor is grateful to the Ottmans — Bud and Dorothy, Henri Bousy, Jack Barnard, Fred Sandrock, Edgar Shiley and Mary Ker for providing the content, advertising and design of this ninth Historical Review.
Cascade Canyon
from
Mill to Millions
by Henri Bousy

In pre-historic times the area of Cascade canyon in its primeval forested state must have rivaled Muir Woods in magnificence. Judging by the present “rings” of lush second growth that have encircled the stumps of the ancient parent redwoods that once flourished on the canyon floor, the canyon must have been darkened by a mantle of colossal Sequoia sempervirens.

The stream that gouged the canyon out of the flanks of Mount Tamalpais still flows the year around. It originally flowed in great abundance but it has been tamed and largely diverted to domestic uses. Over
existence the creek has created some dramatic features, such as the series of shallow pools eroded into the bedrock now called the "Three Wells." It created a site that was distinctive enough to be designated as one of the parks when the city was incorporated. Upstream from the "Three Wells" the waters drop from ledges in the rock formation creating the falls that gave "Cascade" canyon its name. Those cascades and the surrounding area were also preserved as a natural public park when Mill Valley was founded.

The native Indians must have revered the canyon. They must have been awed by its forest cover and grateful for the abundance of game that it sheltered. The clear stream provided them with abundant fresh water and fish for the catching. The remnants of the Indian trails in the canyon is evidence of the early importance of the area for their culture and to their survival.

The first white settlers brought a new set of values for the exploitation of the resources of the canyon. The first of these, John Reed, was so impressed by the force of the creek that he selected its banks as the site of his mill. The felling of the virgin timber may date from that time in 1936, when Reed considered this land as part of his "Corte Madera del Presidio" rancho and proceeded to cut wood for the uses of the presidio in neighboring Yerba Buena. The demand for lumber must have continued and been accelerated by the needs of the new city during the gold rush and the period of growth that followed the influx of population into San Francisco.

The local lumber must have been quickly exhausted and the canyon area reduced the denuded hillsides and scattered stumps. This devastation of the land may have restricted its usefulness and made it suitable only for grazing by cattle. The original Mexican land grants in California were so vast and the terrain so wild that the borders between ranchos were vague and arbitrary. Although the boundaries of Captain W. H. Richardson's Rancho San Anselmo and John Reed's Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio were contiguous in the Mill Valley area they had never been clearly delineated. As a result, John Reed built his mill in a wild canyon which he believed in good faith to be his property. After California statehood in 1850, as the area was being divided among the heirs of Richardson and Reed, it became imperative to define the boundaries. Following a bitter legal struggle, the border separating the two ranchos was set along "Widow Reed Creek" bordering Mill Avenue. The land west of the creek was designated as

Top photo: Throckmorton past Josephine. Above, the Luqueau Family resting by the 3 Wells (Cascade Drive) after a hike to Muir Woods. A bit farther down the trail they pose by the Old Mill, 1900. At right Albert Giesche raises a flag on the top of Mt. Tamalpais with Ernest Hunter, Sr., right center on rock; Mr. Otto holds his umbrella and Fred and Charles Runyon, left, with caps. The man directly in front of A. Giesche is not identified. June 21, 1891.
"Rancho Saucelito." This decision placed Reed's mill and Cascade canyon on Richardson land. The rancho passed from Richardson control to that of his manager, Samuel Throckmorton, who divided the original 19,000 acres into smaller ranches which were leased out as dairy farms.

Reminiscent of the pastoral era of Mill Valley is the studio and home of Richard and Ann O'Hanlon at 616 Throckmorton Avenue. The property, which extends up the hillside to Lovell Avenue, was formerly a dairy farm owned and operated for years by the Tony Freitas family. Tony's son won fame as a national baseball player. In the days before milk delivery routes, the neighborhood children used to come to the ranch each evening to fill a pail with fresh milk for the next day's drinking.

The O'Hanlon's purchased the property in 1942. It totals about 16 acres and includes a small barn, now the O'Hanlon teaching studio, which boasts the original 18" wide redwood flooring. The small farmhouse, now much enlarged, is the family home. Other buildings on the property are the homes of Mrs. O'Hanlon's brothers.

Cascade Canyon was wrenchingly altered from its rural past in 1889 when Samuel Throckmorton's daughter, Susanna, signed over 3,400 acres of the former Richardson estate to the San Francisco Finance Company to settle a debt of 100,000 dollars. The land was the site of the future Mill Valley. Located west of Miller Avenue and following Old Mill Creek it made Cascade Canyon the "cradle" of the future town.

Officers of the finance company under Joseph Green Eastland, formed the Tamalpais Land and Water Company to "develop" the property. An engineer, Michael O'Shaughnessy, was hired to plan the streets, survey the building sites and design the water and sewer systems. The first auction of lots was held on an open and sunny location in Cascade Canyon large enough to hold the crowd of 2000 bidders. The 6 acre site was reserved by the company and donated to the public as a park. As it included Reed's old mill it was called "Old Mill Park."

The source of the water supply for the new town was Old Mill Creek. A reservoir was created behind an earthen and concrete dam near the junction of Throckmorton Avenue and Cascade Drive. It was the first of several constructions hindering the flow of the creek. The reservoir survived until the recent year of the big drought when, ironically enough, it was drained to
O'Shaughnessy also designed a series of roamans with steps for access between cross streets where the canyon was too steep for cross streets. Three sets of stairs are still in use from Cascade Drive, Cascade Way, another set opposite Josephine and a third near Marion Avenue.

If lumber had been the primary resource of the canyon and pasture land the second, the third was certainly its natural beauty and salubrious climate. The lots that were purchased in 1890 were ideal campsites during the dry summer months and were used as such by the new landowners who were anxious to escape the cobblestones and amenities of urban life in San Francisco and trade them for the dust and primitive discomforts of camp life. Tents were quickly erected under the second growth redwoods and families set up housekeeping along the banks of Old Mill Creek from which businessmen could commute easily to their work in San Francisco by the train that came to Throckmorton. Traveling to a communt train to Sausalito and then by ferry to San Francisco. By 1893 summer homes and cottages were being erected to replace the tents and tents.

Platforms of the vacationers. Some of the homes were quite substantial and decorative in the "Victorian" style popular in the city. One of these permanent dwellings is the handsomely preserved Victorian at 382 Throckmorton, across from the Mill Valley library. The diagonally placed porch and the fashionable trim are architectural features that indicate the care and fine craftsmanship that went into these early houses.

The early homes were identified by names, some descriptive, some humorous, some capricious but all distinctive in the era before numbers came into general use. The brown shingle house at 440 Throckmorton was known as "the Orchard," from the many fruit trees that surrounded it. Originally a "Queen Anne" style cottage built in 1890, it is much modified and remodeled since the 1920's. A Miss Giesecke, visiting the house in 1954, claimed that her brother, Walter Falch, one of Otto's sons, graduated in engineering from the University of California. He became a partner in the architectural firm of Falch and Knoll and designed the Mill Valley city hall. It is interesting to think that the octagonal tower on the city hall was inspired by the recreation of the tower on his family home.

The Kingswell home at 418 Throckmorton was built in 1891 in a classical revival style. It included in the Victorian anthology "Here Today" as an example of elaborate period architecture. It was the home of an ex-supervisor and businessman from San Francisco. It has been an apartment house for many years.

The block of land along Cascade Drive between Josephine and Eugene had belonged to Jerome Stanford, a nephew of Leland Stanford. He built the "Queen Anne" style cottage built in 1890, it is much modified and remodeled since the 1920's. A Miss Giesecke, visiting the house in 1954, claimed that her brother, Walter Falch, one of Otto's sons, graduated in engineering from the University of California. He became a partner in the architectural firm of Falch and Knoll and designed the Mill Valley city hall. It is interesting to think that the octagonal tower on the city hall was inspired by the recreation of the tower on his family home.

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All the homes built in the 1900's were not patterned after the elaborate Victorian architecture that was fashionable at that time. Many homes of distinction and originality were designed by architects to suit their individual aesthetic or that of their clients. One of the most reliable and innovative of the designers was the San Francisco architect, Willis Polk. He planned the home at 455 Throckmorton for his client, Gustav Marcus, a wealthy German immigrant. Mr. Marcus was a wholesale diamond merchant and president of the California Diamond and Jewelry Company of San Francisco. The home was built in 1893 and named "Waldrub," or "Forest Rest." One of the unique features of the house is the balliard room with a raised dais for spectators two steps above the floor level. The mantelpiece over the fireplace bears the carved inscription, "Wilkommen in Waldruh" and is dated 1896. The Polk design has been much admired as the entrance to the house was originally on Cascade Drive where pillars still mark the location. A deck has replaced the broad porch and double entrance doors of classical colonial style that was a characteristic of the architect's design.

In 1933 the home was purchased by Walter Schoenung, an engineer residing in the Philippines, as a summer home. Much restoration had to be done to the house by the Schoenings on their return in 1945. The home at 276 Cascade was also designed by Willis Polk in the colonial revival style with an entrance between two large pillars on the right of the entrance on Eugene. A cottage, built between the stables and the house, was the home of the Eloeesser daughter and her husband and is still in use today.

A violinist lived in rooms above the stables. When they were torn down, he bought the land and built the home which stands there today. The rest of the property remained undeveloped until the 1950's.

Another wealthy German family, the Arthur Eloeesser, built their home at 471 Throckmorton, next to the Marcus home. In 1893. Eloeesser was the inventor and manufacturer of "can't bust em" overalls, a competitor to the Levi Strauss "jeans." The original entrance to the property was a curving drive from Eugene Street to what is now the rear of the house where a living room is located. At one end of this room a raised platform with large windows once provided a view of the mountain long since obscured by neighboring construction and the growth of shrubbery.

The Eloeesser property included half a block of land. There were stables near 565 Throckmorton. Eastland's "Burlwood."
Miss Marie Perine in Cascade Canyon, June 1900.
Rustic style decor popular at the turn of the century built by the Outdoor Art Club.
Giant Red Tree along the creek.
Early camp scene shows, among others, John SporriSt('ood, Daniel O'Connell
the Sausalito Post and Roger Magee at about age eleven.
More of the prevalent rustic furniture in the Mayer home garden (130 Cascade Drive):
Carl Mayer, seated in foreground, his nephew, Albert C. Grooske, standing at right.
Bottom left, Cascade Dam and Reservoir built in 1889.
Eastland gradually disappeared from the railroad station and other enterprises where it was superseded by the new name. Eastland was one of the biggest landmarks in the canyon. In 1883, Bluebird Cottage was built on part of the large estate. It is a miniature of the half-timbered mansion and was intended as a play house and school room for the Eastland children.

Although Barfoot was always considered as a summer home, Eastland retired to it for the last two years of his life. After his death in 1907, his widow moved down the peninsula and the property was sold to the J. F. Meier family. For a number of years it was owned by the A. M. Mercantile Association and operated as a recreation ground for employees of the Emporium. The small house at 585 Throckmorton, reputedly designed by Willis Polk, was originally a sun porch for the rear of the property.

The house at 360 Throckmorton was originally named "Steensway Cottage" for a town on one of the islands off the coast of Scotland. It was the summer home of Mrs. Chas. McCollum, widow of the founder of McCollum Fishing and Trading Company, which processed Alaskan codfish on the west side of Belvedere Island from 1877 to 1906. It was bought by the Union Fish Company. A wing was added to the house in 1929. In 1936, the McCollum family, the owners of the house who also operated a 5 and 10 cent store on Throckmorton Avenue, turned it into a rooming house.

The McCollum family originally owned the four lots bounded by Lowell, Elena, Throckmorton and Corinella Avenues. Part of the property now occupied by a house built by Harvey Klyce, was originally a tennis court. Mrs. McCollum's daughter, Mrs. Charles Runyon, and her husband summered at 161 Lowell Avenue. The two lots at 464 and 466 Throckmorton were bought by a San Francisco contractor for his twin daughters. Adjoining houses were built on the property by Harvey Klyce. The daughters moved into their own homes after their weddings. The large house at 460 Throckmorton was then turned into a residence and a summer home. Later it became a rest home for elderly people. The property at 480 Throckmorton was purchased as two lots in 1890 by a San Francisco attorney named Stange for his two daughters, Fanny and Violet. The sisters planted a circle of redwoods that is still there. The imposing brown shingle house was built in the center of the two lots and was occupied by the couple living in the Klyce home.

The property at 501 Throckmorton was purchased as two lots in 1890 by a San Francisco attorney named Stange for his two daughters, Fanny and Violet. The imposing brown shingle house was built in the center of the two lots and was occupied by the couple living in the Klyce home.

The house at 531 Throckmorton was purchased as two lots in 1890 by a San Francisco attorney named Stange for his two daughters, Fanny and Violet. The property at 501 Throckmorton was purchased as two lots in 1890 by a San Francisco attorney named Stange for his two daughters, Fanny and Violet.

The property at 531 Throckmorton was purchased as two lots in 1890 by a San Francisco attorney named Stange for his two daughters, Fanny and Violet. The property at 501 Throckmorton was purchased as two lots in 1890 by a San Francisco attorney named Stange for his two daughters, Fanny and Violet.
reopened it as a summer hotel complete with tennis court, a glass enclosed dining room that seated 100 guests and a black carriage and horse to meet the guests at the station. The venture was not a financial success. Harvey Klyce remodeled the building and it was reopened as a spa by Ernest Steele, a real estate developer and member of the board of the Tamalpais Land and Water Company. Blue mud baths were provided for therapy in the basement area. The building, which had 25 guest rooms, a basement, mail and upper floors and an attic, was equipped with an elevator for the residents. When this failed a Dr. Fritz from San Francisco used it as a sanitarium for his patients but this was a financial failure as well. The building, empty except for a caretaker, burned to the ground in 1913.

The elevator shaft still exists under the present house on the site at 519 Throckmorton which was built for Carl Symonds in 1926.

At one time it was contemplated that the commercial center of Mill Valley would be located near Old Mill Park and a spur of the railroad was extended from Dowd's stalled to the site of the present library along Throckmorton Avenue. The tracks never ran as far as the site of the old hotel and were never used. They were removed in the 1920's when the street was paved.

Captain Melvin Staples, a sea captain traveling between San Francisco and Hawaii, visited Mill Valley in the summer and was so enamored of the area that he bought a 50-acre parcel at the 1890 auction. The land ran from Cascade to Monte Vista and included the area of 277 Cascade where he built a home and called it "Vivace," around 1905. Two years later he brought his brother's five orphaned children from Hawaii to live there and retired from the sea to raise them. Captain Staples was the first tax collector for Mill Valley after it was incorporated. He also served as the second town marshall and while in that office had the prisoners construct rock walls on his property. He was a close friend of Harvey Klyce who named his son, Melvin, after Captain Staples.

Besides its resources of lumber, clear water, beauty and climate, Cascade Canyon was also the source of the "blue" stone that was used to construct walls, walkways, steps and foundations all over Mill Valley in the 1890s. The quarry for this stone can be seen opposite 422 Cascade Drive.

There are many important houses in this area whose architects are not known but which contribute to the rich diversity of styles. The large house at 146 Cascade known as "King's Castle" was built from plans ordered through a Sears Roebuck catalog. It contains 3000 square feet and includes a wine cellar. The lot was purchased in 1890 by a buyer named Hudson. In 1892 it was bought by Anton Michalak, a San Francisco wine merchant, for ten dollars in gold coins. By 1902 it was sold to a Mr. Liebman who hired Harvey Klyce to build an additional 2000 square feet onto the building. The property changed hands in 1917, 1919, 1948 (when it was bought for $11,000) and again in 1949. Generations of children have played King of the Mountain on the spiral steps cut into the boulders of the redwoods in the grove of over eighty trees.

The large house at 516 Throckmorton was built in 1909 for the Edward Michels family in the fashionable brown shingle "California style." Mr. Michels, a San Francisco tax attorney, was one of the organizers of the Mill Valley Burro Company. The company owned 27 burros which were provided for trips up Mount Tamalpais at 25 cents per hour or $1.50 per day.

A model of this house was on display at the Mill Valley Council Chambers in city hall. The exterior appearance of the house has been altered by the addition of a deck and a shelter but the interior remains virtually the same. As the commercial heart of Mill Valley retreats further into the suburban shopping centers, Cascade Canyon retains the peace and serenity that attracted the first summer settlers and eventually persuaded them to make this beautiful area a setting for permanent dwellings almost a hundred years ago that were, and will be, an architectural heritage today and for generations to come.
Along the Pipe Line

by Fred Sandrock

Below, Cascade Lane, the first of the three flights of stairs that make up the step part of the Dipsea. Bottom, heading down to Mine Woods through the Mine Ridge Cut, c. 1915. Note the Pipe Line on the trail bridge ("Trestle"). This site has been filled in and is now Panoramic Highways. Nancy Skinner Collection.

"All aboard this time machine for points north . . ."

Scene: Foot of San Francisco's Market Street
Date and Time: A Summer Sunday, 1931 A.D. 6:30 A.M.

Legions of depression-weary "weekend warriors" anxious to escape the fog-enshrouded city are purchasing tickets for such bucolic places as Baltimore Park, Cazadero, Fairfax, Glen Ellen, and Larkspur. But most of those wearing 16" boots are headed for Mill Valley. Their early Northwestern Pacific ferry could be the CAZADERO, EUREKA, SAUSALITO, or TAMALPAIS. Promptly at 6:45 the boat departs for Sausalito, that picturesque little Seaside town of little willows. One-half hour later they bound one of the modern, owl-eyed steel electrics for a 7:32 arrival in Mill Valley.

Mt. Tamalpais with its timbered and chaparral-covered slopes is their destination. Most of the hikers are carrying the descriptive map folder, "Hiking in Marin," courtesy of the NWP, and know well the numerous approaches to the Mountain. Some of our trampers head straight up Bernard Street with its 180 steps leading to Summit Avenue and the Tamalpais Trail, the shortest route to East Peak and the Tavera of Tamalpais. Others direct their feet up Cascade Canyon to join the Tenderfoot, Zigzag and other trails. Most, however, are bound for the infamous Steps hard by the Old Mill. After stepping up 671 times they reach Edgewood Avenue at Sequoia Valley Drive.

At this juncture a group of German speakers peels off and continues on the Dipsea and Cow Trails to their clubhouse, the Touristen-Verein built in 1912. Others head for Muir Woods and Joe's Place, Stinson Beach, and the roadhouse and surf at Big Lagoon.

The main group, by now strung out, turns up Edgewood where it soon passes the Belvedere Reservoir and Dam (Mill Valley Reservoir). Here the Pipe Line Trail begins. This reservoir was begun on May 13, 1904, when the Mill Valley Water Company entered into a contract with the Belvedere Land Company. Within five years intakes were built on Fern, Laguna, Spike Buck, and Rattlesnake Creeks, all tributaries to Muir Woods' Redwood Creek.

The first section of the gravity flow line consisted of 12,008 feet of eight inch riveted steel pipe beginning with the Lower Fern Intake, elevation 997. This line became the Pipe Line Trail, the most traveled and fondly remembered of all approaches to the Mountain. Where it crossed Mine Ridge (Trockmorten Ridge) became the site of the Mountain Home Inn in 1912. Our hikers continue up this historic trail as it snakes its way through cool redwoods and ferns. At 351 Edgewood a group of "Schweizers" will climb some eighty-five steps to their Swiss Club Tell.

They pass the junction of the Tenderfoot Trail which today will take you down to 477 Cascade Drive. It was Mill Valley's Jan Mountjoy of 422 Cascade who spearheaded a successful campaign in 1980 to save this route from urbanization. Jan and Bob now reside in Trinity County.

Shortly another contingent will break away. They are members of the California Alpine Club turning up slope to their lodge built in 1924.

After a good hour of brisk hiking covering two and one-half miles, the first leg of the day's outings has been accomplished. We have arrived at Mountain Home and the trestle, the hikers' bridge over the recently dismantled Mountain Railway, ice cold lemonade is on tap and the hikers are refreshed and refueled for more serious tramping to the summits, slopes, and camps on the Mountain.

In April, 1985, the new Mountain Home Inn opened for business to continue the tradition of welcoming hikers.

The leaking Mill Valley Reservoir was taken out of service on September 28, 1967, and replaced with a five million gallon steel tank. Burrowing gophers had been a serious problem causing losses totaling 50,000 gallons a day. At first water was sold at the specified rate of 20' per 1000 gallons, delivered at the Mill Valley city limits on the county road — Camino Alto. The pipe lines were abandoned in December of 1972.

Today only a fragment of the original Pipe Line Trail survives. But what relics and memories remain: Lengths of pipe, valves, stanchions, and the most obvious, the well-beaten trail, evidence not of erosion but of millions of pounding boots.

Of all of the Mountain's trails, none seems to have a way of turning back the clock as the Pipe Line and its connecting Steps!
"Anxious to escape the fog-enshrouded streets of Baltimore, Carlsbad, Fairfax, 66th boots are headed for Mill Valley. Sold be the CAZADERO, EUREKA, 45 the boat departs for San Anselmo, that picks one-half hour later they board one of the val in Mill Valley.

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illions of pounding boots. to have a way of turning back the clock as Paulist contributed to this article.
First Settlers: Reed and Richardson

by Henri M. Bousy

with Edgar Sliney

The first Anglo-Saxon settler in Marin was an Irishman, John Thomas Reed. Born in Dublin, in 1805, he went to sea with a seafaring uncle at the age of 15. He fitted out the ship at Acapulco where he stayed for six years and learned to speak Spanish fluently. In 1826, he sailed to California and remained there for six years and learned to speak Spanish fluently. In 1826, he sailed to California and remained there for six years and learned to speak Spanish. He was befriended by the commandant of the Presidio, Jose Antonio Sanchez. As a young man of 13, he set out to settle inland north of the San Rafael mission. He received a site seven miles south of the city of Santa Rosa in the Cotati area. The land was outside the jurisdiction of the mission and therefore available for homesteading by Mexican citizens. Not being a citizen he could not acquire land in Mexican California. There was another obstacle to his plans. The land that he wanted was in the coastal strip that the Mexican government had declared a military zone necessary for the protection of the bay against Russian encroachment.

Probably advised by Commandant Sanchez, he set out to settle land north of the San Rafael mission. He chose a site seven miles south of the city of Santa Rosa in the Cotati area. Father Amoree of the mission San Rafael gave him a gallon of brandy and advised him to seek refuge at the mission San Rafael where he stayed until 1832. He returned to Sausalito where he built the first frame house in Marin County. He bought a sailboat which he named, Hilariarita, after the commandant's daughter. Reed used it to ferry passengers across the bay and for carrying fresh spring water from the sources in Sausalito to the Presidio at Yerba Buena. In 1834, Reed became a citizen of Mexico, on the eve of the secularization of the missions. Frustrated in his attempt to acquire the Sausalito peninsula he was, nevertheless, assigned the first Mexican land grant north of the bay. The wilderness of modern Tiburon, Belvedere, Corinthian Island and parts of Corte Madera and Mill Valley became the "Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio," literally, where wood is cut for the Presidio. To process the wood Reed built the first saw mill in Marin County in the future Cascade Canyon. To equip his mill he had to trade the resources from his land: 300 elk skins, 20 bear skins and 200 cattle hides, with the Russians at Fort Ross for a circular saw, a gist mill (probably the origin of the stone now in the yard of the Outdoor Art Club in Mill Valley), flour, guns and ammunition. As his first home on his own land Reed built a one-story adobe, measuring 18' by 30', in the present Locusa area. It was to this house that he brought his bride, the former Hilariarita Sanchez, whom he married on October 12, 1836. That fall he was also appointed administrator of mission San Rafael, a post which he occupied only a few months before he was succeeded by Timothy Murphy and Reed was able to return to his bride and his ranchos. With his lumber interests and the sale of the improved breed of cattle which he imported and raised, the ranchos prospered. By 1840 he was reputed to be running 2000 head of cattle and 200 horses. His family also had increased by the birth of his four children: John Joseph, Hilariarita, Maria Irene and Ricardo. A larger home was needed. He began building a two-story adobe near what is now Locusa and Locke Lane. The hacienda, patterned after the Sanchez adobe in San Mateo where Reed and his bride had honeymooned, was 24' by 45' in size. The walls averaged three feet in thickness, each story had three rooms and the entire house was encircled by a double veranda five feet wide in the accepted Spanish colonial manner. The construction work on both the mill and the adobe houses was probably done by local Indians who also performed the labor of running the rancho and home.

In the late spring of 1843, before the house was completed, John Reed contracted a fever or pneumonia. In an attempt to cure him by phlebotomy, a well-intentioned friend severed an artery and he bled to death on January 19, 1843, at the age of 38. He was buried in the cemetery at mission San Rafael and in the 1880's his grave was moved to Mt. Olivet cemetery where records of his burial site have unfortunately been lost.

Under the prevailing Mexican Rancho Corte Madera was split among his children. The 6000 acres which included the Mill Valley area were granted to his daughter. Originally granted to Nicolas Galindo in 1835, the rancho was transferred to the ownership of William Richardson, a partner of Reed's who built the first house in San Francisco and port commander of the fleet in 1836. William Richardson's plans were plagued with business failure. In 1856, selling and in financial straits, he dispose of the Rancho Sausalito to the County. As they were minors his widow timed to operate the rancho.

Reed's first adobe at La Goma and Locke Lane where their first four children were born.

John Joseph Reed (left), son of John Thoma Reed. Photo at right from left:

Carmelita National Garcia (Mrs. John Joseph Reed). Photo at right from left: John Joseph Reed, son of John Thomas Reed. Natividad was the daughter of Hilariarita, widow of John Joseph Reed, son of John Thomas Reed.
In the late spring of 1843, before the house was completed, John Reed contracted a fever or pneumonia. In an attempt to cure him by phlebotomy, his well intentioned friends severed an artery and he bled to death on June 29, 1843 at the age of 38. He was buried in the cemetery at mission San Rafael Archangel and in the 1880's his body was moved to Mt. Olivet cemetery where records of his burial site have unfortunately been lost.

Under the prevailing Mexican law the Rancho Corte Madera was split four ways among his children. The 696 acres which included the Mill Valley-Alto area were granted to his daughter, Inez. As they were minors his widow continued to operate the rancho.

Reed's rancho, in the present Mill Valley area, touched on another Mexican land grant, the Rancho Saucelito, with no clearly defined boundaries between the two. Originally granted to Nicolas Gallardo in 1835, the rancho was transferred to the ownership of Captain William Richardson, a pioneer who built the first house in San Francisco and port commander of the bay, in 1836. William Richardson's career was plagued with business failures. In 1856, ailing and in financial straits, he put the Rancho Saucelito into the hands of an administrator, Samuel P. Throckmorton, and died two months later. Richardson and Reed were considered friends and had never considered the need for a rigid definition of the boundary between their two properties but Richardson's heirs claimed that the Reed mill had been constructed on their property and sued to support their claim. They convinced the court and in 1860 the boundary was established at Widow Reed Creek along Miller Avenue. East of the creek was Reed land and west was Richardson property. Later, the area that was to become part of Mill Valley, was inherited by Throckmorton's daughter, Suzanna. In 1889, Suzanna surrendered 3,790 acres to the San Francisco Savings Union to satisfy a debt of $100,000 against the former Richardson estate. It was on part of this land that included Cascade Canyon that the future Mill Valley was born.

To these two pioneers that Mill Valley owes homage. To John Reed for the "Old Mill," the first settlement and the land east of Widow Reed Creek and to William Richardson for the land west of the creek and the site of Cascade Canyon we are indeed grateful!

John Joseph Reed's Rancho Corte de Madera del Presidio situated on the knoll. Circa 1884.

John Joseph Reed (left), son of John Thomas and Hilaria Reed, with Hugh Boyle, husband of Carmelita Natividad Garcia, who was the half sister of John Joseph Reed. Photo at right from left to right: Maria Ynez Reed (Mrs. Thomas Deffebach), Barbara Silvan, Hilarita Reed (Mrs. Benjamin Lyford), and Carmelita Natividad Garcia (Mrs. Hugh Boyle). Maria Ynez and Hilarita were daughters of John Thomas Reed and Hilarita Sanchez Reed. Carmelita Natividad was the daughter of Hilaria Sanchez Reed and her second husband, Bernardino Garcia. Barbara Silvan was the mother of Clotilde Reed (daughter of John Joseph Reed, son of John Thomas Reed. Photo taken probably about 1859.
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