



UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

Northern California Chapter
Society of Architectural Historians

The Newsletter

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Enlist Now for Tour of Historic Mare Island Navy Yard

On Saturday, October 12, NCCSAH members will have the opportunity to tour the National-Register-listed Mare Island Navy Yard, in Vallejo. The all-day event begins with registration at 9:30 a.m. accompanied by coffee and pastries.

The 3 to 4-hour tour sets out from the smithery, the oldest building on the base (1856) and currently home to the Mare Island Artifacts Museum. Barbara Davis, librarian for the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation, will lead us through several sites, including the Commander's Mansion and the base chapel with its remarkable Tiffany glass windows--the largest collection of Tiffany on the West Coast.

Also on the route we will visit the granite dry dock, which the National Register documentation describes as, "one of the most remarkable pieces of masonry construction in California." Because of the size of Mare Island, we will caravan in our cars from site to site, giving us the opportunity to view the exteriors of a variety of industrial and ware-



View of Mare Island Navy Yard from across Mare Island Strait. Photo: Ian Berke

house structures from all periods of the navy yard's history, as well as the naval hospital and a row of Classical Revival officers' quarters. There will also be the chance to view other structures (exteriors only) not part of the regular tour on our own. We will take time out for a box lunch, on the grounds.

Cost of the tour for members, including lunch, is \$30. The nonmembers cost of \$50 includes a one-year membership in NCCSAH. Sign up now, using the order coupon on page 8.

Mare Island The West Coast's First Navy Yard: 142 Years of Service Pass in Review

Recognition of San Francisco Bay's strategic importance, particularly once millions of dollars in gold began to flow through the port, caused the United States to establish the West Coast's first naval base and ship yard. Until the war with Mexico, the U.S. had a small Pacific squadron of four ships to protect American commerce. After the war that number increased to fourteen.

In 1852, Commodore John Drake Sloat headed a commission charged with finding a site in the Bay Area suitable for a navy yard and then to proceed with planning and construction. On the recommendation of the Sloat commission, the U.S. government purchased Mare Island, in 1853. Commissioned the following year, the navy yard went on to serve the nation, through peace and war, until its closure in 1996. Today, it is the site of new residential neighborhoods, and much of its stock of historic buildings is finding new and diverse uses.

1854-1865

William P.S. Sanger, engineer for the Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks, who had overseen construction of the Navy's first dry dock, at Norfolk, Virginia (1831), drew up the original plan for Mare Island. In August of 1854, Commander David Glasgow Farragut became the first commandant of the new base and with civil engineer Daniel Turner began to implement the Sanger plan.

Turner oversaw construction at Mare Island until 1860. Ten buildings (and the cemetery) remain from this time. The registration form for the National Register listing notes, "Rarely in California or elsewhere in the United States can one encounter a group of industrial buildings of such



*David Glasgow Farragut,
Mare Island's first
commander*



Building 46, the former smithery, dating from the earliest period of construction at Mare Island (1856 and alterations over time), today is home to the Mare Island Artifacts Museum. Photo: Barbara Davis

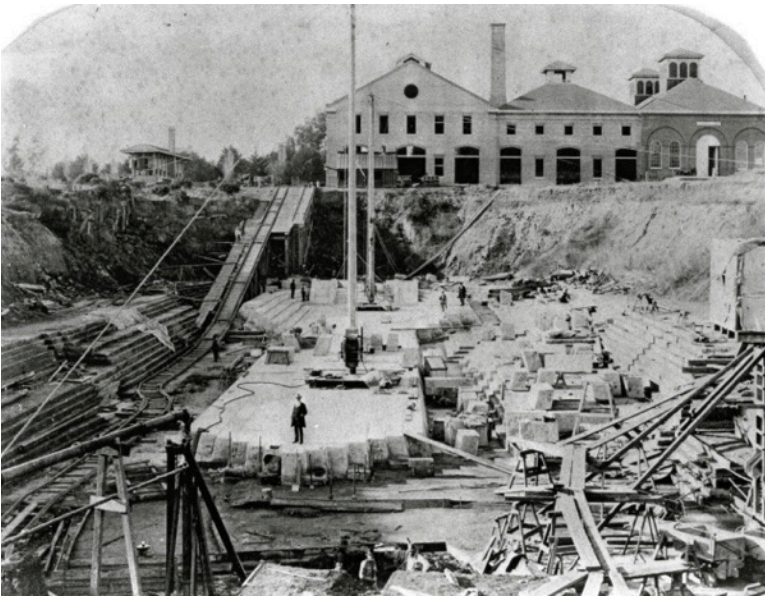
antiquity and relative integrity in such a confined area." They wear the denticulated cornices, broken pediments and sandstone ornamentation of the Classical Revival style preferred in federal architecture of the time. The buildings' structural system consisted of massive load-bearing brick walls with arched openings and wood posts, beams, girders and trusses.

The Civil War underlined the strategic importance of Mare Island. The Pacific Squadron protected shipments of gold from San Francisco that were crucial to the Union cause, and the navy yard had the task of keeping the ships in good repair. To secure the navy yard, a contingent of Marines was assigned to Mare Island. They became a permanent, though largely separate, presence on the base.

1866-1897

The return to peace and ensuing demobilization, including reduction in naval power, ushered in a new phase in Mare Island's history. The U.S. disposed of more than two-thirds of its fleet of over 700 ships, as the nation turned its attention inward to healing the wounds of war and rapid industrialization. Reflecting the reduction of forces, there was relatively little ship repair work at Mare Island in the period, 1866-1897.

Conditions peculiar to Mare Island also affected the level of activity. Accusations of corruption and inefficiency plagued the base during the 1870s. Newspapers reported irregular hiring practices, jobs being handed out as politi-



Civil engineer Calvin Brown initiated construction of the West Coast's first dry dock (1872). Photo: Mare Island Artifacts Museum

cal favors to incompetent workers. Wages were twice the prevailing wage at East Coast yards, and the Navy was reluctant to send ships to Mare Island for repair, because the base had the reputation of dragging out work.

Relative to other periods of significance there was less construction on Mare Island in the years 1866-1897. Yet some notable structures date from this time, including the first stone dry dock on the West Coast, the base hospital and the Marine barracks and prison.

Boston-educated civil engineer Calvin Brown oversaw this development during two periods, 1862-64 and 1869-81. During the hiatus, in private practice, his work included construction of a dam for Spring Valley Water Company on the San Francisco Peninsula. Brown first came to Mare Island following postings with the Navy at Kittery, Maine, and Norfolk, Virginia.

Congress appropriated \$2 million for construction of a drydock at Mare Island, in 1872. This large undertaking was not completed until 1891. Constructed of dressed Sierra granite, it stands at a width of 122 feet by 508 feet in length and a depth of 32 feet. It is Brown's most noteworthy work at the navy yard.

Construction of a base hospital and a Marine reservation began after the Civil War. Brown designed the naval hospital (1869), the first on the West Coast. The brick structure was three stories plus attic with a Mansard roof. An earthquake in 1898 that caused widespread damage on the island destroyed it.

Brown also oversaw design and construction of the base headquarters, in 1870. It is a two-story Renaissance Revival brick building that the National Register documentation says is "the most enduring symbol of the base and is easily recognizable as a product of this period, despite substantial additions made in later years."

The Marine base, developed independently of the navy yard, saw construction of a large barracks in 1871 (not extant) and the Marine prison, 1895, greatly enlarged in 1901 and 1909. From a group of handsome Marine residences of this period, just five remain, only one (the earliest) in its original location, the Marine Officers' Quarters, a two-story 1870 Italianate stuccoed masonry structure, remodeled in 1900.

The landscape of Mare Island underwent a significant transformation, beginning in 1868, the year Commodore James Alden assumed command of the navy yard. At that time only a few trees, native species including live oak, toyon and buckeye, marked the mostly flat terrain. Alden encouraged captains to bring back



Headquarters office building (1900). Photo: Barbara Davis

shade, fruit and ornamental trees from their ports of call. As a result, the island became a veritable arboretum. A small park bears his name to honor his contribution to Mare Island's cultural landscape.

1898-1918

The election of President William McKinley ushered in an era of U.S. naval expansion that accelerated with the Spanish-American War (1898). The workforce at Mare Island nearly doubled to 1700, and its munitions manufacture

provided tons of ordnance for the conflict. With war's end, the nation had become a colonial power, particularly in the Pacific, and naval strength was essential to defend overseas possessions.

Congress appropriated funds in 1898 for expansion and improvements at Mare Island. Much of that went to repair or replace thirty-two structures, including the hospital and fourteen unreinforced masonry officers' quarters, severely damaged by an earthquake that struck the base on March 30 that year. Lt. R.C. Hollyday, public works officer, who came to Mare Island from the naval base at Puget Sound, in 1897, oversaw both reconstruction and new construction.

Incorporating the lessons of the earthquake, Hollyday designed major industrial buildings of non-load-bearing brick walls with steel frames. He replaced the officers' quarters with twelve wood-framed residences in Colonial Revival Style (1900). W.W. Poindexter, an architect based in Washington, D.C. who specialized in military hospitals, designed the Beaux Arts replacement hospital. Hollyday oversaw its completion, in 1901.

President Theodore Roosevelt's commitment to the concept of a two-ocean navy, and Woodrow Wilson's preparedness effort (1916), greatly stimulated ship building. During the 19th century, the Navy contracted with private industry for construction of most of its warships. Following the war with Spain, the Navy permitted yards around the country to com-



Building 386-388-390 (1922). Example of curtain wall construction, standard for industrial structures on Mare Island after World War I. Photo: National Register, Wes Gibson MINSY

pete with private yards for contracts. Prior to 1900, Mare Island launched just eight ships, mostly tugs for work at the yard. Over the next eighteen years, through World War I, the yard built thirty ships. These included one battleship, the *California*, and sixteen destroyers.

To service an enlarged Pacific fleet, the Navy made improvements to shipyard shops, storehouses, dry-docks and shipways at Mare Island. In the 10 years following the Spanish-American War, seventeen officers' quarters, eight civilian employee residences and eighty-three workshops, storehouses, offices and miscellaneous structures were built.

A number of improvements to existing facilities occurred in the period through World War I. These include the addition of ventilating monitors to existing shops, the upgrade of lighting, water and fire protection systems and the conversion of the central power plant from coal to oil fuel. Waterfront improvements provided new berths, a new ferry slip, and construction of a large drydock (#2). A major annex to the headquarters building was made in 1917.

Of the three civil engineers who oversaw construction at Mare Island from the war with Spain through World War I, it was Carl Carlson who proved the most innovative. Working during the world war and after, Carlson, a Swedish immigrant who studied engineering at Case School in Cleveland, introduced steel or concrete framed curtain wall construction with large areas of glass. He took his cue from auto factories, exemplified by the work of Albert Kahn, as they suited assembly line techniques in naval construction at that time.



Colonial Revival Commandant's House (1900) replaced earlier structure demolished following earthquake in 1898. Photo: Ian Berke

A particularly noteworthy building of this period, and very much a standout on Mare Island, is a shingle style chapel, St. Peter's, by architect Albert Sutton (1901). Sutton was trained at Berkeley and worked for a time with Charles Peter Weeks in San Francisco. The great treasure of St. Peter's is its twenty-nine stained glass windows, twenty-five of them from Tiffany Studios. Installed over a thirty-year period, they honor various groups and individuals. It is the largest collection of Tiffany windows on the West Coast.

1919-1938

The defeat of Germany in 1918 reduced the need for naval forces in the Atlantic, but Pacific rivalry between Japan and the U.S. intensified in the post war period. In July 1919, the Navy transferred half of the fleet--185 ships--to the Pacific. To accommodate the increase, Congress funded work at an array of facilities up and down the coast, from Puget Sound to San Diego, including waterfront improvements and a major expansion of shipbuilding capabilities at Mare Island.

After the naval disarmament treaty of 1922 among the great powers, the Navy sank, scrapped or decommissioned more than a million tons of combat vessels. While little ship building occurred at Mare Island during the period 1923-1932, the yard continued to perform ship repair and serve as the principal West Coast supply depot. To support that role, improvements were made to the channel in the bay and Mare Island Strait. Existing yard facilities were upgraded, modernized and repaired, and new buildings were added in the Shipyard South area.



During World War I, Mare Island had become a major West Coast submarine repair facility. The yard expanded its sub repair base during the years following the war and received its first contract to build a submarine in 1925--*Nautilus*, launched in 1930. From that point on, Mare Island played a growing part--right through the Cold War era--in the development of a modern submarine fleet.

By 1930, a buildup of naval forces by Japan, Italy and Germany led the U.S. to increase shipbuilding activity. During 1929 and 1930, Mare Island launched two heavy cruisers. President Franklin Roosevelt greatly boosted naval ship building beginning in 1933. The yard turned out three de-



Albert Sutton designed St. Peter's Chapel (1901), which contains 25 Tiffany windows (illustration below). Photos: Ian Berke

stroyers and three subs between 1936 and 1939.

From 1926 to 1928, a program to modernize and expand naval hospital facilities included the addition of a five-story L-shaped reinforced concrete wing to the 1901 hospital. It was the first major building in Mission Revival style on the island. Just before the start of World War II, completion of a second wing essentially duplicated the 1928 addition. The expansions positioned Mare Island to become a major treatment center for World War II casualties.

1939-1945

Employment at Mare Island Navy Yard reached 9000 during the First World War. With peace and disarmament, the workforce fell to 2250, in 1925. As war again threatened in Europe, the number rose to 6000 by early 1939. At its peak, in 1945, Mare Island employed 41,053 workers, 21% of whom were women. During the war the yard built 19 submarines, 31 escort destroyers and 301 landing craft, and excelled in repair of damaged ships.

Beginning in 1938, Congress voted funds for improvements at all Navy yards. Once the nation entered the war, the need for swift mobilization to fight a two-theater conflict led to rapid development of the Navy's shoreside facilities. Much of the wartime construction at Mare Island were temporary wood frame buildings, mostly barracks. None remain intact. Perma-



The smithery, Building 46, houses the Mare Island Artifacts Museum. Photo: Ian Berke

nent structures, including warehouses and industrial shops, with few exceptions, stressed function over style. Other projects expanded existing buildings.

Austin Willmott Earl, a San Francisco consulting civil engineer, designed many of the major projects in the years 1939-1945. Canadian-born and Berkeley-educated, Earl was a senior designer for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and chief design engineer for Alameda's Posey Tunnel.

Earl designed an L-shaped administrative office building that wraps around the 1870 headquarters. The three-story reinforced concrete structure faced in red bricks makes a contextual gesture to the historic building, but with a "decidedly Streamlined Moderne composition".

Post-War

The Cold War era saw both expansion and contraction at Mare Island. The hospital and the prison closed, and the Marine presence was reduced. Shipbuilding virtually ceased. However, the yard continued its notable role in the repair and development of submarines--now nuclear--a role first undertaken during World War I.

As late as 1988, Mare Island was the second largest navy yard in the United States with a workforce around 10,000. When the Base Realignment and Closure Commission placed the yard on the closure list, in 1993, 5800 civilians worked there. It officially closed three years later. In 1997, Mare Island Naval Shipyard entered the National Register, and the City

of Vallejo selected Lennar, a Florida-based housing builder, as master developer for reuse of the 1500-acre site. Lennar began construction of four new residential neighborhoods in 2004.

A "Mare Island Progress Report", dated January 2013, posted on the Lennar Mare Island web site (<http://lennarmareisland.com>), notes that environmental cleanup is 65% complete. More than ninety businesses that provide 2100 permanent jobs occupy 3.2 million sf of commercial space, including more than fifty historic buildings that Lennar has rehabilitated for new uses. Hundreds of residents call Mare Island home, and about 1500 students and recreation seekers make use of the island.

The Mare Island Historic Park Foundation, established in 1995, seeks to preserve and present to the public the history of Mare Island Navy Yard through tours and educational programs. It maintains a museum and oversees four of the most historic buildings on the base. <http://www.mareislandhpf.org>

Content for this article was drawn from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Mare Island Historic District, prepared by JRP Historical Consulting Services with PAR Environmental Services, Stephen D. Mikesell, Stephen R. Wee, David S. Byrd/Mary Maniery. January 22, 1996.

What's in a Name? A Horse, of Course

Juan Manuel de Ayala, commanding the ship *San Carlos*, entered San Francisco Bay on August 5, 1769. For the next forty-four days, he and his crew explored the far reaches of this remarkable inland sea, charting and naming many of its features. He called the island near the northern extremity of the bay, *Isla Plana*, flat island, and claimed it for the king of Spain.

An apt description of the topography though it was, that name gave way to another, in 1835. According to the tale told, a barge carrying livestock across Carquinez Straits foundered in a squall, casting the horses and cattle overboard. A white mare, said to be especially favored by General Mariano Vallejo's wife, swam safely to shore on the island and was recovered days later. In gratitude, Vallejo called the place *La Isla de la Yegua*, Mare Island.

A Misty, Moisty Morning Greeted Residence Parks Tour



Edward Anderson greets NCCSAH tour at his St. Francis Wood home. Photo: Ward Hill

It was a persistent marine layer--unusual for springtime--that greeted participants, on April 27, in the NCCSAH tour of San Francisco's most distinguished residence parks. Located near the west portal of the Twin Peaks street-car tunnel, the 100-year old garden suburbs of St. Francis Wood and Ingleside Terraces feature detached houses set on ample lots.

NCCSAH board member Richard Brandi led the morning tour of St. Francis Wood, which included a look inside a Colonial Revival style house designed by Henry Gutterson and an English cottage style house designed by Masten & Hurd. Last year Richard published *San Francisco's St. Francis Wood*.

After a sit down lunch at the Lakeside Café, which gave the group of twenty-two a bit of a respite and the opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues, Woody LaBounty led



Woody LaBounty directs group's attention to Ingleside Terraces house designed by William Curlett & Sons (1913). Photo: Ward Hill

the tour through Ingleside Terraces. Woody is a founder of the Western Neighborhoods Project, dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the city's west side. Last year he published *Ingleside Terraces: San Francisco Racetrack to Residence Park*.

Our thanks to Edward Anderson and Paul Hill for sharing their St. Francis Wood homes with us and, of course, to Richard and Woody for leading interesting and informative tours.

A footnote: According to one participant's pedometer, the group logged in seven miles!

Carey & Co.

Alice Carey, president of Carey & Co., has announced her retirement from the firm, coinciding with its 30th anniversary.

"When I began the firm in 1983, I had many aspirations, but I had no idea of the great adventure that lay ahead. As I look back 30 years later, I am both extremely proud and truly awed by the wonderful projects we have completed, and the trust that our valued clients have placed with us."

Over the last five years, Alice has gradually turned over management of the firm to her two partners, Bill Sugaya and Nancy Goldenberg, who, she is confident, will carry on the company's good work in the field of preservation architecture. Here's wishing Alice a long and happy retirement, and Bill and Nancy much success.

Other Events Of Interest

San Francisco Heritage Lectures

Thursdays, 6 p.m.

August 8 *Juxtaposition and Transformation: Shaping the Image of the City.* SPUR 654 Mission St.

September 19 *Landscapes for a Modern City: Church & Halprin.* 50 UN Plaza

October 17 *Sunset for the Masses: The Influence of Henry Doelger.* St. Anne of the Sunset, 850 Judah St.

November 21 *Electrify the Sky: A History of Neon Signs in San Francisco.* Chinatown YMCA, 855 Sacramento St.

\$8 Heritage members and students; \$12 nonmembers

For information and to order tickets: 415-441-3000 x22

www.sfheritage.org/upcoming_events/

Berkeley Architectural Heritage

Lecture and book signing: Lucia Howard, *Living in the Berkeley Brown-Shingle House* Thursday, August 8, 7:00 p.m. 2537 Haste St., Berkeley. \$15, includes pre-lecture tour of the Anna Head campus.

Fall Lecture Series

Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar St., Berkeley

Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

September 26, *The Tiles of California Faience, Berkeley, Cal., 1913-1959*

October 24, *Sitting in Style: The Birth of a New Furniture Design*

November 14, *Progressive Leaded Glass in Turn-of-the-Century America.*

\$15 per lecture; \$40 for series of three

<http://berkeleyheritage.com/calendar.html>

Oakland Heritage Alliance

Summer Walking Tours

Weekends through August

Members \$10; General \$15

<http://www.oaklandheritage.org/events.html>

Oakland Museum of California

Exhibition: *The Bay Bridge*

Oakland International Airport Terminals

Through October 11.

Exhibition: *Above and Below: Stories from our Changing Bay.* Oakland Museum, Through February 23, 2014

www.museumca.org/exhibit/above-and-below

Please use the form on the right to sign up for the Mare Island Tour and the form on the last page for membership dues.

AIA San Francisco

10th Anniversary Architecture and the City Festival

Theme: Unbuilt San Francisco

Entire month of September

Includes S.F. Living Home Tours,

September 28 & 29

<http://www.aiasf.org/programs/architecture-and-the-city/>

National Trust Conference

Preservation at the Crossroads. Indianapolis

October 29-November 2.

www.PreservationNation.org/conference

DOCOMOMO

Saturday, October 5. 7th Annual US Tour Day at locations around the nation, celebrating the modern movement in the US.

<http://docomomo-us.org>

Registration for Mare Island Tour

[please print]

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email address _____

Registration: \$30 members / \$50 nonmembers

Total Enclosed _____

Please make checks payable to NCCSAH and mail to:

Ward Hill
NCCSAH Mare Island Tour
3124 Octavia Street, #102
San Francisco, CA 94123

For more information please contact Ward Hill at whill@pacbell.net.

Prices include box lunch. Nonmember cost also includes one year's membership in NCCSAH. Space is limited; reserve your place now.



UTILITAS • FIRMITAS • VENUSTAS

The mission of the NCCSAH is to further the objectives of the Society of Architectural Historians of which the Northern California Chapter is an affiliate; promote the study and discussion of our region's architectural history and its related fields; visit significant works of architecture; and increase public awareness and appreciation of our architectural heritage. Membership is open to anyone interested in architectural history and its related fields who agrees to pay the annual dues and subscribe to the bylaws of the organization.

NCCCSAH Officers

President, Rich Brandi
Vice President, Paul Turner
Treasurer, Ward Hill
Secretary, Don Andreini
Preservation Officer, Ian Berke

**Remember you do not have to be
a member of the National SAH to
become a member of NCCSAH**

Join or Renew Now!!

Individual \$20.00

Student \$10.00

Make checks payable to NCCSAH

Please send your ideas or comments
concerning The Newsletter to:

Don Andreini

NCCSAH Newsletter Editor

dandreini@sbcglobal.net

To become a member of the Northern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians

or to renew your dues return this form
and your dues check for \$20 made out to NCCSAH
to

Ian Berke, NCCSAH
Ian Berke Real Estate
2824 Clay Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Occupation _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail address _____

For your convenience: Renewing members who sign up for the Mare Island Tour may include their \$20 membership dues in a single check with their payment for the tour. In that case, use the address on the tour registration form shown on page 7.

Coming Attractions - At a theater near you

NCCSAH will soon announce an architectural film festival being planned for next winter. Details will be forthcoming.

