

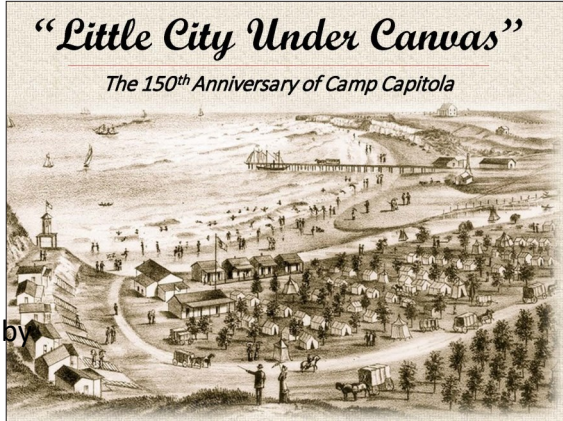
Capitola Sunset

Winter 2024

410 Capitola Avenue

News, Events & Information

2024 Exhibition — “Little City Under Canvas” The 150th Anniversary of Camp Capitola



“Little City Under Canvas” - This was how the *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel* described the new resort which opened at Soquel Landing on June 18, 1874. Nestled within Monterey Bay, this yellow stretch of beach at the mouth of Soquel Creek, bracketed high fossil-laden cliffs, became one of California’s first beach resorts.

Our 2024 exhibition celebrates the sesquicentennial of the opening of Camp Capitola by its founder Samuel Alonzo Hall. The new exhibition will premier on March 16, 2024 and run through December 29, 2024.

The exhibition will trace how S.A. Hall got the idea for the resort, what he sold to pay for its establishment, why he named it Capitola, and how he built it into one of the most popular seaside resorts on the West Coast.

The exhibition will also recount the history of the seaside resort idea, and in what ways Camp Capitola followed, or, in what ways it diverged from the model which evolved at the first “modern” seaside resorts of 18th century England. The exhibition documents the evolution of Camp Capitola from its beginning to about 1900, when it started to be called simply ... Capitola.

100 Years of the Venetian Court



Register of Historic Places in 1987. Despite repeated damage from storms, the Venetian endures and has become one of Capitola’s most beloved icons.

In 2024 we also celebrate the centennial of the Venetian Court. These charming stucco dwellings were built upon the site of the 1870s Italian fishing village at the base of the wharf. The Venetian was placed on the National

The book, *Venetian Court—Capitola’s Unique & Charming Seaside Resort* by Melanie Shaffer Freitas is available at the museum bookstore.



The admission free — Capitola Historical Museum at 410 Capitola Avenue, next to the railroad trestle, will open March 16, 2024 and remain open through December 29, 2024 - every Friday through Sunday from noon until 4:00 p.m.

831-464-0322

capitolamuseum@gmail.com

Past newsletters available on our museum website

UPCOMING EVENTS

2024 Volunteer Training

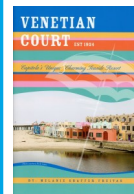
February 2024

Date to be announced

Public 2024 Exhibition Reception

Saturday March 16 from 11 am to 2 pm at the Capitola Historical Museum

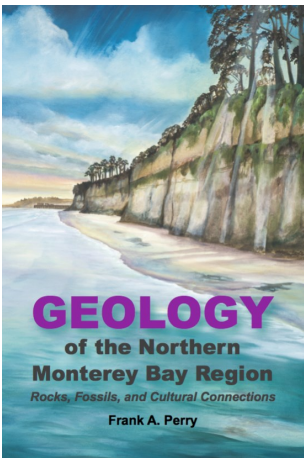
Refreshments will be served.



To order books while the museum is closed over the winter season, you may email us with your order at

Capitolamuseum@gmail.com

“Bringing Local Geology to Life” by Frank Perry



Did you know that people used to mine gold on Twin Lakes beach? That there used to be a steel mill on the bluff at Manresa? Or that some of our local fossils are types found no place else in the world?

For nearly 50 years I have been collecting stories involving local geology and its relationship to the historical development of the region. Since retiring as Capitola Museum curator in 2021, I have been gathering these stories into a book for general audiences titled *Geology of the Northern Monterey Bay Region: Rocks, Fossils, and Cultural Connections*.

I was an Earth Sciences major in college, so it has been fun returning to my geological roots and combining it with my love of local history. Local rocks and landforms have heavily influenced the historical development of Santa Cruz

County. Just think about Capitola. It would not be located where it is were it not for the creek, the cliffs, and the beach—all geologic features. Our mild climate is due in part to the ocean and mountains. And many of the disasters in local annals, such as floods and earthquakes, are of geological origin.

While my desire to do a book on local geology goes back several decades, I struggled for a long time trying to decide on the best approach. Should it be presented as a geologic history, as a field guide, or what? I finally decided to make each chapter on a different topic, sharing what I found to be most interesting. There are chapters on minerals, rocks, soil, water, fossils, earthquakes, and many other topics. There are also two field trips in the back, a list of resources, a glossary, and an index. I am glad I did not try to write this back many years ago. By waiting until now, it has enabled me to infuse the book with more personal stories and experiences.

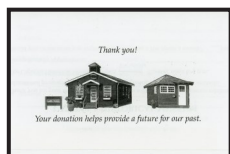
I am indebted to the many friends and family members who contributed in various ways. Some read all or part of the manuscript and made helpful suggestions. The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Art & History (MAH) generously provided access to artifacts, specimens, and photographs. Local artist Maia Negre let me use her beautiful painting of the New Brighton Beach cliffs for the cover. The book is 295 pages, has 140 illustrations, and will be available, for a \$25.00 donation, when the Capitola Historical Museum reopens for the 2024 season on March 16th.

The Geology of Capitola According to Frank Perry

Capitola is underlain by sandstone bedrock that formed at the bottom of the sea some 3-5 million years ago. Some of this rock can be seen along the coastal cliffs. The geography of California was very different at that time. All of Santa Cruz County was under water, and an arm of the sea blanketed San Joaquin Valley. We know this because of fossils of marine animals found near Bakersfield, in the Kettleman Hills, and in Santa Cruz County road cuts and creek beds.



Photograph courtesy of Frank Perry



DONATION ENVELOPE—In each quarterly newsletter we provide a donation envelope to help support ongoing museum projects. Since this year the museum is assisting the Capitola Wharf Enhancement Project with an historical timeline sign for the Capitola Wharf, you are welcome to specify on your donation check either a donation for the wharf timeline sign or our ongoing museum projects. We thank you for your support.

Donations

A big thank you to those who gave generous donations to the museum in the last quarter of 2023:

Margot Bauer
 Kathy Bell
 Yvette Brooks
 Peter & Susan Canepa
 Calvin Cornwell
 Nancy Davis (*memorial gift for Georgette, Pricilla and Etta Mae*)

Craig & Mimi French
 William H. Gray, Jr.
 Jean E. Lawrence
 Anna Mork
 Paul Parsons
 Dave Peyton
 Pfothenhauer/Wilshusen Family

Barbara Reding
 Carolyn Swift (*memorial for Tony Gualtieri – former City of Capitola Council member*)
 Jerry & Robynn Walters
 Ken Wood



Campo del Mar

“The History of Campo del Mar”



During 2023 the museum purchased ten pieces of the rare Campo del Mar porcelain made in Capitola between 1945 and 1952.

Mojo Interrupted by Niels Kisling

JoJo’s Mojo was interrupted on the first Sunday in January. He stepped outside his home to ride his bike to The Village, and it was gone. Someone had stolen his bike in the night. JoJo called me very early that morning, which is unusual for him. He said, “My New Year’s luck is off to a bad start.”

I gave him the phone number for the Capitola Police so he could report the theft. After we hung up, I made a few phone calls. By two o’clock a text arrived on my phone telling me to show up in Esplanade Park at 4:30 for a special surprise.

The text was correct—it was quite a surprise! A small group of key ‘village people’ were gathered with Gerry Jensen seemingly in charge. The news travelled very quickly that morning and I would soon learn that a Random Act of Capitola Kindness was about to unfold.



JoJo rides his new bike home. The smile on his face says it all.



‘Sno-Jo’ at the top of Carson Pass

Chief Andy Dally approached JoJo with a shiny, new bike and said, “JoJo, I think we found it. Is this your bike?” It only took JoJo a few seconds to figure out that he was at the center of this act of kindness. The warmth of his gratitude quickly spread among everyone.

Carson City, Nevada — Days after his birthday party on November 6th, JoJo left Capitola to spend a few months in Carson City. Most people go someplace warmer in the Winter; not him. JoJo finds warmth from within in Carson City—warming his heart by helping his long-time friend Jeanne Welton every year. While he was gone, I volunteered to fill in for JoJo in his role as defacto job site supervisor for the wharf rebuild project. During his two-month absence, I sent him regular updates complete with progress images.

JoJo came home on December 28. Coincidentally this was the same day his beloved Capitola Wharf took another beating from mother nature. It’s good to have him home again and keeping an eye on the Cushman crew rebuilding our wharf. They, no doubt, know JoJo is watching... *Continued on page 8*



Botanical Enthusiasm – Victorian Sea Moss Collecting



By Deborah Osterberg



Mounted sea moss sheet
Capitola Historical Museum

In the mid-19th century Victorians were obsessed with collecting natural history specimens. The exploits of well-known naturalists like John James Audubon inspired an interest in science and the exploration of nature. Birdwatching, shell and fern collecting, and even taxidermy became popular hobbies. The interest in such pursuits also sprang from Romanticism, the artistic and intellectual movement which emphasized a deeper appreciation of the beauties and spirituality of nature. One natural history craze of particular attraction to ladies was the collecting and preserving of a type of seaweed known as sea moss. By the 1870s the British sea moss craze reached Santa Cruz County.

The aesthetic appeal of sea moss played a role in the hobby's popularity with ladies. Scientifically an algae, known as *Chondrus crispus*, sea moss came in a dizzying array of shapes and colors and their often lace-like appearance was considered beautiful. Most importantly, sea moss collecting was considered a socially acceptable endeavor for women. According to Nathan Schmidt of Indiana University

... its mixture of science and leisure provided an in-between space for women who were interested in science to participate in the scientific community without being perceived as flaunting strict Victorian gender roles.

Ladies spent hours collecting, drying, and mounting sea moss specimens on cards, in frames, or in scrapbooks. Those with an artistic bent, turned fragments of dried sea moss into intricate, sentimental mementos in the shape of wreaths, crosses, and other religious motifs. Creating sea moss art demonstrated a lady's patience, skill, and, most importantly, her refined sensibilities.

Sea moss collectors strolled the beach at low tide. The best time for collecting the most delicate moss was from the latter part of May through September. The beaches of Santa Cruz County had the reputation of having not only more varieties and species of sea moss than any other part of the California coast, but also the best specimens.

After rinsing with salt water, specimens were floated on tins till dry. The moss was then placed on mounting paper and the branches trimmed and arranged in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Sometimes coloring was added. The mounted specimens were layered between blotting paper and placed in a press capable of exerting up to fifty pounds of pressure. When pressed the moss exuded a gelatinous substance which acted as a natural adhesive, attaching it to the mounting sheet. Dried in this manner, the sea moss specimens were not only successfully mounted, but also relieved of their pungent odor.

Sea moss collecting appealed to all strata of society. The fact that Queen Victoria made a seaweed album as a young lady further popularized the pastime. Several Santa Cruz area stores specialized in selling cards and albums for the sea moss collector.

SEA MOSS BOOKS
AND CARDS
FOR NEW YEARS!

From 2 Cents to \$2 Each.

Elegant Hand-Painted Books
and Cards on Fancy Board.

Calling Cards for New Years,
With Marine Scenes and Sprays of
Sea Moss—Just the thing to
send to Eastern friends.

Scenes or Mottoes painted or printed
to order.

☛ We carry an extensive assortment,
and are constantly manufacturing new
designs.

DEALERS SUPPLIED.

All Sizes and Kinds of Cardboard
and Paper in Stock.

OWEN BROS.,
Art Printers and Manufacturing Stationers,
No. 5 Walnut Avenue,
(Basement Unity Church.)
d127-11

Santa Cruz Sentinel
December 29, 1888

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Capitola Historical Museum

The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* even advertised that “card board for mounting sea moss” could be obtained at their office. Several ladies advertised their sea moss collecting paraphernalia and their own sea moss creations in local newspapers. Among the Santa Cruz area sea moss vendors were Mrs. D.V. Pringle, Mrs. Margaret Roth, Mrs. E.O. Owen and Mrs. J.F. Parker.

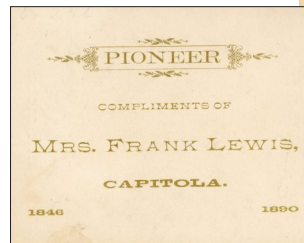
One year Mrs. Parker gathered nearly one thousand pounds of moss by paying young boys \$1.50 a day to harvest it. San Francisco establishments, including the Cliff House, placed advertisements in Santa Cruz newspapers offering to pay youngsters to gather sea moss.

It is little wonder that sea moss collecting was one of the favorite pastimes enjoyed at Camp Capitola. In 1892 a lady visitor to the camp hailing from Vermont noted that “*Capitola has a very fine beach and everything a pleasure seeker could ask for. I have found many lovely shells along the beach and some very fine specimens of sea moss.*” At one of the hugely popular masquerade parties held at the Capitola Skating Rink and Dance Pavilion that same year, Miss Josie Shaw won the prize for “*handsomest costume, [a] sea moss album.*”

Not only camp visitors, but Camp Capitola residents also pursued the hobby. In April 1890 Mrs. Frank Lewis, proprietress of the Hotel Capitola, hosted a reception for the Society of California Pioneers including two hundred members of the visiting Society of California Pioneers of New England. Mrs. Lewis prepared four hundred souvenir sea moss cards for the pioneers and presented them upon her guests’ arrival at the railroad depot.

An exhibition of Santa Cruz sea moss was sent to the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. It was none other than F.A. Hihn, owner of Capitola, who spearheaded the committee in charge of coordinating the display. According to the April 1, 1893, *Santa Cruz Surf* the display consisted of

Sea moss card by Mrs. Frank Lewis, proprietress of the Hotel Capitola—Capitola Historical Museum. As a child Mrs. Lewis was Patty Reed, survivor of the ill-fated 1846 Donner Party.



... an oblong case of French plate glass in which the sea weeds and mosses are arranged upon a four-sided form covered with white satin. There are seventy-seven varieties of sea weed and moss in the exhibit, besides one large and fine specimen of sea fern ... Surmounting the case is a display of abalone shells ... and one is engraved with the name of Santa Cruz .

Though the popularity of sea moss collecting mostly petered out after 1900, the specimens and souvenirs which remain have found a new importance. In a 2020 *Guardian Magazine* article entitled, “*What Victorian-era Seaweed Pressings Reveal About Our Changing Seas,*” Laura Trethewey described how the study of hundred- and fifty-year-old sea moss specimens are being used by today’s scientists to help answer questions about our changing marine ecosystem. In 2016, Kyle Van Houtan, head of the Ocean Memory Lab at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, decided to sample the tissue of some sea moss specimens he happened across.

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The lab's analysis of these 19th century algae pressings provided information on the Monterey Bay's historical cycle of upwelling currents that oscillate between cooler and warmer phases. This work extended our knowledge of California currents back to the 1870s. It also revealed how this important cyclical shift between warm and cool currents is breaking down today as a result of human-caused climate change.



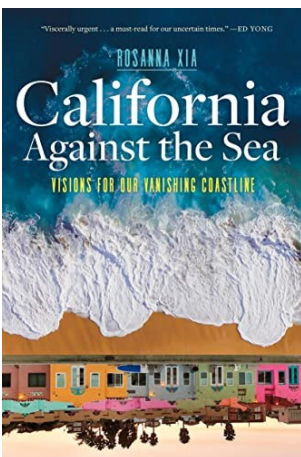
Santa Cruz Natural History Museum

According to Kathy Ann Miller, curator of algae at UC Berkeley's University Herbarium, "*Seaweeds, which we think of as fragile and gooey, hold history in their tissues.*" Wouldn't those Victorian ladies, once barred from pursuing careers in science, be proud how the product of their sea moss collecting "*hobby*" is now a vital component in modern climate research.



New exhibition at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History - "*The Curious World of Seaweed*" - January 6 through March 3, 2024

The exhibition shares surprising stories highlighting Indigenous peoples' and women's connections to seaweed and examines its vital role as the base of the food chain.—Museum at 1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz —



***California Against the Sea: Visions for our Vanishing Coastline* by Rosanna Xia — Review by Emmy Mitchell-Lynn**

Capitola takes the stage in *LA Times* journalist Rosanna Xia's recent book, *California Against the Sea: Visions for our Vanishing Coastline*.

Xia's knack for hands-on journalism lends itself credibly as she takes the reader on a journey along the coast of California, where the ever-changing climate is threatening to dismantle our familiar ways of life. Focusing on the lived experiences of those who engage daily with the struggles of sea level rise, erosion, and storm intensity, she investigates how different coastal communities and experts are coping with the challenges of coastal decay.

By consulting with scientists, indigenous communities, engineers, homeowners, legislators, activists, and politicians, she incorporates a breadth of viewpoints that all coagulate to reveal one certain, pervasive reality—the climate is changing, and therefore, so is our coastline. But even more to the point, what we do with that information is up to us, and our decisions will ultimately determine our outcome.

The cover of the book features an inverted photo of our own Venetian Court Hotel paired with imagery of turquoise waves and whitewash crashing against the sand— an iconic aesthetic which Xia revealed she had presciently chosen prior to the catastrophic storms of January, 2023 which put Capitola in the national spotlight. "It became even more relevant, even more symbolic of the burgeoning crisis we face," she told me during her book talk event at Bookshop Santa Cruz this past October.

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Our Wonderful Volunteers — by Dave Peyton

With the beginning of a new year and just two months away from the opening of another annual exhibition we say thank you to all our volunteers who made 2023 a major success. Volunteer docents put in 530 hours over 10 months welcoming nearly 9,000 visitors to the museum. A handful of tireless volunteers assisted the curator with a series of summer and fall city-wide special events, including the Capitola Classic Car Show, the 40th Art & Wine Festival, and the Beach Festival Lighted Nautical Parade. On June 6, 2023, the City of Capitola put on a lovely Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at Zelda's for all city-wide volunteers. As usual, the museum brought the largest contingent of volunteers.

The museum's entry in the Beach Festival's lighted parade captured a third-place finish (along with a \$500 donation for the museum) with a depiction of the Capitola Hotel in all its 1929 fire destroyed glory. Also volunteer Owen Lawson and Museum Board member Emmy Mitchell-Lynn in 1880s bathing costumes and float pilot, and Board member Brian Legakis joined the curator on board the float. Volunteers Barbara Winston, Dee Jimenez, Ron Kustek, and Niels Kisling and Museum Board members Roger Wyant, Emmy Mitchell-Lynn, Brian Legakis, and Juliette Thompson also provided behind-the-scenes support building the float.

Each year we recognize a handful of volunteers who often go above and beyond expectations. Please join us in thanking the following volunteers for all they do to support and enhance the museum visitor experience. Docents Patrick White and Kris Houser routinely volunteered to work 3-4 shifts a month at the desk, often taking shifts at the last minute when other volunteers are unable. Their willingness to wholeheartedly support the museum sets an important standard. Long time volunteer and past board president, Niels Kisling continues to provide all around support with newsletter contributions, coverage at the desk (usually to fill a last-minute opening), and involvement with special events.

The grounds surrounding the museum receive periodic maintenance and cleaning from city crews, but volunteer Steve Kayser regularly watches over the museum landscaping. Watering, trimming, weed pulling, and painting and repairing the window boxes are some of the responsibilities taken on by Steve with our gratitude and thanks. Steve now proudly wears his gift this year from the museum, a new ball cap with the logo "*Plant Parent.*" Board member Emmy Mitchell-Lynn and Youth Board Representative Juliette Thompson spent many hours assisting the curator with cataloging, filing, sorting, and storing, and general behind-the-scenes care of artifacts and collections.

Many of our wonderful volunteers also give their time, talent, and treasure to other organizations. Museum volunteer Kate Clark, who is a long-time volunteer at the Evergreen Cemetery in Santa Cruz was recognized during the recent History Forum Awards Night for spearheading an effort to clean and repair over 650 gravestones and monuments. Kate brings her sense of commitment and purpose to our museum, and we are grateful recipients.



Kate Clark

Opportunities abound for those who wish to become Capitola Historical Museum volunteers. We recruit year-round but make a special effort prior to the March opening of our new exhibition. Docents do not need detailed knowledge of Capitola, its history, or the surrounding area because we provide such training once they sign up as volunteers. If you or anyone you know has an interest in volunteering at the Capitola Historical Museum, please contact us at capitolamuseum@gmail.com or call the curator at 831-464-0322 to request a volunteer application. We look forward to hearing from you.

**FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK**



This lovely six year old dressed in seaweed was Dave Peyton's Mother, Colleen, on a visit to Capitola in 1936. Note the Venetian Court in the background.

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Newsletter published by the
Capitola Historical Museum

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Identifying Capitola as one of the places that has been hit hardest by the rapid changes we're seeing on our coast, she designated the entirety of Chapter 2, "Our Vanishing Coastline", to Capitola itself. Xia sought insight through local author, geologist, and oceanographer, Gary Griggs, whose expertise has been hard-earned through over 50 years of examining and documenting the successes and failures of all types of human-built defenses against the sea. He distills our coastal problems into two categories: communities built on coastal bluffs, and communities built on ancient wetlands, both of which have required extensive engineering to maintain thus far. This was true even before the climate crisis was upon us, and is especially true now as we face the confluence of a shifting environment with the mosaic of unsustainable infrastructure that defines our human world, especially that which is constructed along the California coastline. The ultimate point that's made in this chapter is that we don't need to resign ourselves to doomedness. Though our abatement tactics (think seawalls and cliffside reinforcements) may be futile, other solutions do exist, but it's a matter of reaching a collective reckoning where we're all willing to accept the necessary sacrifices we'll have to make in order to preserve our beautiful coast for generations to come.

We have all shared in the misfortune of bearing witness to the damage of our beloved wharf, and a significant portion of this book focuses on the ever-increasing costs of defending our homes and landscapes from the sea. For those who are weary of buzzwords like "climate change," rest assured, the facts and reflections featured in this book are relevant to everyone. Regardless of your background, you'll be thankful for the perspectives this book has to offer.

Mojo Interrupted by Niels Kisling — *Continued from page 3*

The Party Never Ends — JoJo is still living his 80th birthday dream. Since he was gone for two months, we just recently spent three hours on a rainy day opening all his birthday cards. I carefully read each one to him and we created a list of his well-wishers. Too numerous to share here, JoJo wants to thank everyone that gave him cards, gifts, birthday money, and those who came on November 6th to make his party the biggest public birthday celebration Capitola has ever hosted.

JoJo enjoying the album of historic Capitola photographs presented to him by the Capitola Historical Museum.

