

Capitola Sunset

SPRING 2020

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

"Providing a future for our past"

CAPITOLA—Then and Now

Each year the Museum hosts a new exhibition. This year's theme is "then and now." How has Capitola changed through the years? What things have stayed the same? "It's a fun topic—one I think visitors will enjoy," says curator Frank Perry. "Every exhibition has its challenges," he said. "For this one it was trying to narrow down the choice of historic photographs from the many in the Museum's collection." While some may look familiar, Frank tries to showcase ones that have not been used much in previous exhibitions. A few are recent acquisitions that have not been seen before.



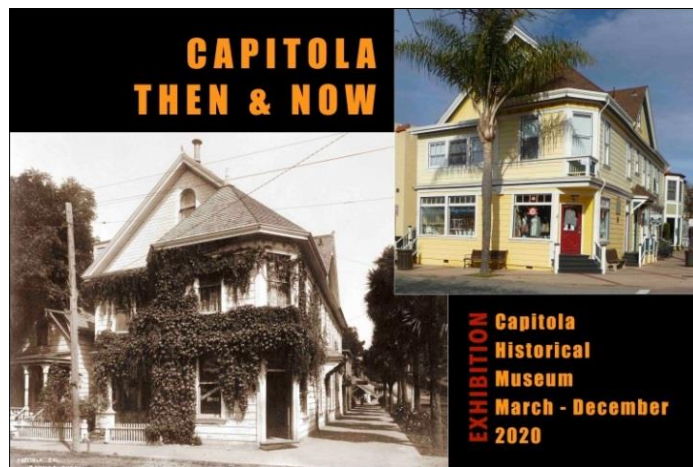
The Red & White Grocery at the corner of Capitola Avenue and San Jose Avenue in the 1930s was located right next to the Capitola Post Office. Capitola Avenue was the main street in Capitola before business shifted to 41st Avenue.



This recent image shows that the focus of business in Capitola Village has shifted more towards tourism with shops featuring clothing, souvenirs, beach accessories, art galleries and gift stores.

In addition to the main exhibition, we are continuing to feature a display on a local family each year. This time we are featuring two families: the Nutter family and the Pawla family.

No "then and now" exhibition would be complete without a nod to changes in technology. Frank decided to focus on Capitola's telephone history, from the 1880s to the present. "The Museum has some fascinating antique phones and directories in its collection, and this is a splendid opportunity to display them," says Frank.



The public is invited to the opening reception on Saturday, March 14, from noon to 2:00 p.m. There will be refreshments and the opportunity to visit with board members and the curator. The exhibition will run through the end of the year.

The exhibition is dedicated to Ronald Graves, who passed away last fall. Ron was a long-time member of the City Council and loved Capitola history:



Ron moved to Capitola in 1966, although he had been visiting here since childhood. In 1968 he was elected to the City Council and served for nearly 31 years. He played a vital role in shaping the development of the town while preserving its character and charm. He loved Capitola history and had an incredible memory for people, places, and events. In 2017

the Museum interviewed Ron for the Capitola Memories Project. To watch, search "Ron Graves Capitola" on YouTube.

The Capitola Pharmacy

The Museum has several historic signs in its collection, including the carved Bandstand Restaurant sign displayed in last year's exhibition and the railroad station sign displayed before that. Recently, Angela Marshall donated a sign advertising the Capitola Pharmacy. She was given the sign by a homeowner in Santa Cruz who was remodeling an old house and found it inside the wall. Jay Topping of the Scotts Valley Historical Society encouraged her to contact the Capitola Historical Museum.



Capitola Pharmacy is pictured here in an early photograph at the corner of Capitola Avenue and San Jose Avenue. Harry Hooper's house is also seen here on the bluff above the California Fish Market.

The Capitola Pharmacy was established in the early 1920s by pharmacist D. Brainard Dunn. Ownership and location changed several times, but it remained on the first block of Capitola Avenue into the 1970s. After Mr. Dunn died in 1932, it was managed by his wife, Lulu, who also served as Capitola postmaster.

In the early 1940s it was purchased by Sherwood H. Rodgers and became known as Rodgers Capitola Pharmacy. The pharmacy closed in the early 1970s after Rodgers died, but in 1974 Howard Robinson opened a new "Capitola Pharmacy" at 506 Bay Avenue. Robinson closed his pharmacy in 1996 and joined the staff at Longs Drugs (now CVS Pharmacy).



The historic sign is a reminder of the many "Mom & Pop" drug stores that we used to have around the county. Nearly all have disappeared in recent decades, replaced by big chain stores such as Rite Aid, Walgreens, Costco, and CVS.

Of particular interest is the phone number on the sign: GR5-0518. The seven-digit phone numbers came into use in 1954. Letters were used supposedly to make the numbers easier to remember. "GR" stood for "Greenwood." In 1963 the letters were replaced by their corresponding numbers, and GR5 became 475. Based on the phone number, the sign dates from the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Note the arrow pointing to Capitola. It is quite likely this sign was hung in Soquel, perhaps at the corner of Soquel Drive and Porter Street, to advertise Capitola's "friendly drug store."

Six Sisters Down Under

By Madeline Horn

Is this a coincidence, or an imitation? Madeline Horn, who has been helping organize the Museum's collections, was recently on the other side of the globe in Napier, New Zealand. She came upon something that looked very familiar—a row of six Victorian homes called the Six Sisters facing the ocean, just like in Capitola Village! The homes were commissioned for the six daughters of a prominent businessman in the late 19th century and miraculously survived a catastrophic earthquake that leveled the town in 1931. Napier is now known for the Art Deco style in which the town was rebuilt following the earthquake.



The Six Sisters down under in Napier, New Zealand (above) and the Six Sisters in Capitola pictured below. Coincidence or imitation?



IMPORTANT DATES

February 29, 10:00 to Noon
Volunteer Orientation in City
Council Chambers

March 1, Noon

Soft Opening of *CAPITOLA—Then and Now*

March 14, Noon to 2 P.M.

Grand Opening of *CAPITOLA—Then and Now*



The Wharf Lives On

By Dean Walker

I heard concerns from a number of people during the first week of January about the Capitola Wharf. It was closed to the public New Year's Day after heavy surf damaged piles under the small boat hoist area. Immediate repair work was quickly pursued though such that by January 9 locals and visitors alike were once again able to enjoy access to the iconic structure that is indelibly associated with Capitola.

The wharf is clearly one of the jewels in the crown of the city. A case could be made for it to actually be the most historical non-natural feature of Capitola. Such a claim, however, would have to allow for the unlikelihood that there are any remnant piers or planks of original construction.

The wharf has survived for over 160 years, but not without formidable challenges. Storm swells have been its primary nemesis, with fire disasters much less frequent. Its early history goes back to 1857, when Frederick Hihn, the energetic landowner and developer of early Capitola, contracted for the building of a serviceable wharf.

First known as Soquel Landing, by the 1870s the wharf had been lengthened considerably and was the site of busy export activity. Primarily lumber, but also other goods including leather, paper, and farm products were transported down Wharf Road to be loaded onto steamships bound for San Francisco. With the advent of local railroad transportation though, the shipping industry declined and by the 1880s and 1890s was being replaced by bustling fishing operations. An Italian fishing community became established at the base of the wharf, and the Monterey Bay was vigorously worked with their fleet of boats into the early 1900s.



An early image of Soquel Landing shows a ship loading lumber. From Soquel, freight was transported along Wharf Road, reaching the end of the wharf on the rail car seen here. Note the fishing boat davits to the left & the people sitting in the row boat hamming it up for the camera.

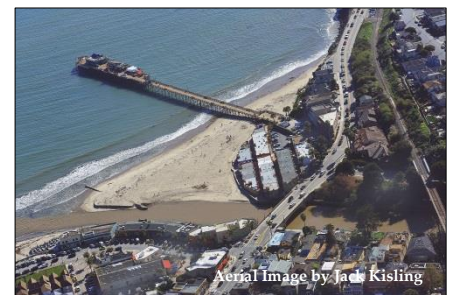
Commercial fishing was repetitively hampered however by the havoc of powerful waves, and there were many wharf closures through the 1900s. Innumerable repair jobs have been done to the decking and support structures. Eight months of renovation in 1981, which included the replacement of 70 piles, ended a two year closure. Subsequently the infamous El Nino 1983 winter storm tore 25 feet off the end of the wharf. At that time marine engineers were consulted and came up with a new design for a narrowed wharf end, thought to better withstand wave action like the bow of a boat. Nevertheless, the sea has continued to take a toll. Further major work was required in 1999 and 2002, and the past few years have continued to see recurrent brief closures.



This image from February 1983 was taken from Deasy Rotary Park just hours before the storm took 25 feet off of the end of our beloved Capitola Wharf.

Life hasn't been easy for the wharf, but it has prevailed in its survival and the preservation of its character. At one point an idea emerged to construct a new wharf at the end of Monterey Avenue. And some will recall in the 1970s various private entrepreneurs proposing development of the wharf into a major tourist attraction, with multiple restaurants, retail shops, and parking for vehicular traffic. The thinking was that if it could be done in Santa Cruz and Monterey, then why not in Capitola?

We are fortunate to have a place where one can stroll out on a bit of the Monterey Bay and enjoy beautiful views in all directions. Our picturesque wharf



is an important part of Capitola's identity. It's a source of recreation and an object of fascination for many. Indeed, many Capitola Museum visitors ask for directions to the wharf. We can be comforted by the fact that substantial funds have been supported by a voter approved bond measure. Extensive wharf rehabilitation, presently in the planning stage, will begin in a year or two. Long live the wharf!

A Tale of Two Grandmas

By Frank Perry

I only knew one of my grandmothers: my father's mother in Oakland. When I was very little, she would drive down to Santa Cruz in her big green Oldsmobile that my uncle bought for her. She didn't call it a car, or auto, instead it was "the machine." Until just a couple of years ago, I thought this was just her own quirky name for it. While researching an article for the Soquel Pioneers, however, I discovered that "machine" was a common synonym for automobile in the early 1900s. In 1931, for example, a *Santa Cruz Evening News* article on traffic fines said, "Carlton Lamarr of Capitola paid \$2.50 for operation of a machine with faulty headlights." There are dozens more examples of the term in old papers.

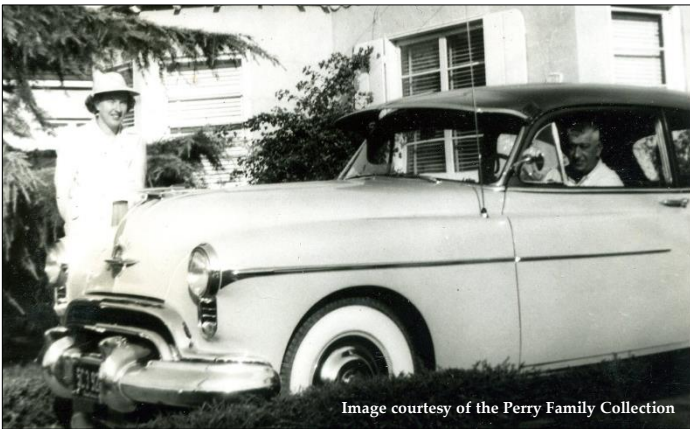


Image courtesy of the Perry Family Collection

Pictured here is Grandma Perry's 'machine,' a 1950s Oldsmobile. Imagine what driving to Santa Cruz from Oakland was like back in the early 1950s. There was probably less traffic, but more adventure.

My other grandmother, who was born in 1878 and died before I was born, had an even quirker relationship with cars. According to my mother, she called the family car "the rig" — a term from the horse and buggy days.

Being deaf, she thought it was not safe for her to drive. Of course, horses could be dangerous too. The reason why she was deaf was because she hit her head when she was thrown from a buggy by a bolting horse. That was in 1914, four years before the family arrived in Capitola. She also went by the nickname Libbie instead of Lizzy because "tin lizzy" was a nickname for the Model T.

Despite the accident, she was much more comfortable with a horse and buggy than a machine. It is not quite true to say that she didn't drive. In case there was an emergency, the family felt that she should at least know how to drive. So once each year, I forget whether it was Christmas or New Years, the family would watch as she would start the car, drive it out of the driveway onto 30th Avenue, turn left onto Portola Drive, and then drive in the other driveway and back to the house—a trip of about 1,000 feet.

Won't you Join Us?

By Pam Greeninger

This year the Capitola Historical Museum's Community Tuesday Fundraiser Event at the Shadowbrook Restaurant will be held on **Tuesday, March 17**, which just happens to be St. Patrick's Day. This is a great opportunity to dine at Shadowbrook, celebrate St. Patrick's Day and support your Capitola Museum. A special menu including a traditional Irish meal will be available that night in addition to all the usual delicious dinner selections.

The Museum Board is excited to invite you to join us for our 4th Annual Community Tuesday Fundraiser. Bring your friends and neighbors! The Capitola Museum will receive 33.3% of all food and beverage sales for those diners letting them know they are dining for the Museum. This will be the fourth year we have participated in the Community Tuesday program. Last year a total of 37 guests dined for the Capitola Museum and we received \$540.47. We can't think of a more fun and easy way to raise money—gathering with friends and enjoying a delicious meal at Capitola's very own Shadowbrook Restaurant.



Get there any way you can, but don't expect "The Duck" to come and get you. Rumor has it that Brad Macdonald sank it in the kelp beds off of first jetty back in the 1950s. Today's shuttles are pictured below.



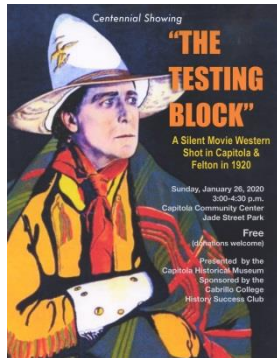
Make your reservation TODAY! Call 831-475-1511 and let them know you are dining for the Capitola Historical Museum. We hope to see you there!

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the Shadowbrook Restaurant by dining for the Capitola Museum at the Community Tuesday Fundraiser to be held on March 17, 2020.

Screening of *The Testing Block* a Huge Success

By David Peyton

There was standing room only for late arrivals to the free showing of the silent movie western, "The Testing Block." The event was hosted at the Capitola Community Center on January 26. A gathering of nearly 150 enjoyed the presentation of the "old-time movie" filmed in and around Capitola 100 years earlier. A fake frontier town made up of facades was built near the wharf and some views of the Italian Fishing Village can be seen in the film. Additional filming was done in Felton and Ben Lomond, while other scenes were filmed in Southern California.



The movie, starring silent film actors William S. Hart and the glamorous Eva Novak, takes place during the California Gold Rush. It features a classic story of an outlaw who decides to settle down, marry his sweetheart and raise a family only to be threatened by an old gang member who conspires to break up the couple and marry the beautiful heroine.

Museum curator, Frank Perry gave an introductory talk on the making of the movie and the role Santa Cruz County played during the silent film era. The audience appreciated the slides of past movies filmed in the area along with Frank's accompanying stories. In addition, the museum had on display some silent film items and photos.



In front of a packed house, Frank Perry gives a talk before the screening of *The Testing Block* explaining the film's locational scenes along with the history of silent film production in Santa Cruz County.

Many thanks for the impromptu efforts of museum board members Dean Walker and Josh Henshaw for their quick-thinking to 'lower the lights, please.' They covered the auditorium windows using nearby exercise mats to block the remaining afternoon light, making the room just right for a movie.

With bags of popcorn in hand the audience was treated to an hour of "old fashioned high entertainment" accompanied by a ragtime sound track that followed the ebb and flow of the film perfectly, and provided the occasional cue for those of us who had been momentarily distracted and lost in the story line.



Capitola Museum Trustee, Emmy Mitchell-Lynn serves popcorn before the screening of *The Testing Block*. Emmy put the wheels in motion last summer by securing the copy of the film from the Library of Congress.

The event was in serious jeopardy just prior to the start when Jade Street Park and the immediate neighborhood had a sewer emergency. The water was turned off at the community center and the restrooms were closed. Thankfully, an intrepid crew from Capitola Public Works came to the rescue—water was back on and restrooms reopened just as the movie was about to begin.

The event was sponsored by the Capitola Historical Museum and the Cabrillo College History Success Club, which secured the film from the Library of Congress. A drawing was held for the popular Capitola Museum calendars, the brainchild of board member Emmy Mitchell-Lynn. The calendar features scenes of Capitola's past. Donations raised at the event will help defer the cost of the film and other event expenses.



Vice President Dave Peyton appears to be explaining to Youth Board Member, Joshua Henshaw, which ticket stub goes in the drawing bucket. From the look on his face, Joshua already knows the answer because he is a teenager and they know everything.

New Brochure Will Help Researchers

From time to time visitors come to the Museum wanting to know how to research the history of their house or how to find out about an ancestor who lived in the area. The Museum's new brochure, *Digging into Capitola History*, summarizes some of the principal resources used by historians. "It's designed to cover some of the basics for beginners," says Curator Frank Perry. The brochure is free and available at the Museum.



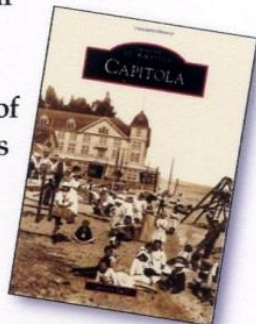
Digging into Capitola History

A Short Guide

Prepared by the
Capitola Historical Museum, 2019

Capitola is a small town with a big history. Founded in 1874, is the oldest seaside resort on the California Coast. It became an incorporated city in 1949 and today has a population of about 10,000. Besides tourism, other industries have included fishing, flowers, poultry, sugar, and fruit. In the early days, redwood lumber from the nearby hills was shipped at Capitola.

At the Capitola Historical Museum, visitors frequently ask how to research people, places, or events from Capitola's past. This short guide summarizes some of the principal resources useful in historical research. These are mostly general resources. This list does not include resources of a specialized nature, such as biographies of individuals or resources on specific industries.



The Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Bruce and Dori Arthur in memory of Ron Graves
Gayle and Joe Ortiz in memory of Ron Graves
Bob and Heidi Smith in memory of Ron Graves
Nels Westman in memory of Ron Graves
Stanley D. Stevens in memory of F. A. Hihn

Steve & Diane Burbank	Michael & Barbara Clark
Diane P. Cooley	Robert & Diana Deacon
Rickey Feldner	Craig & Mimi French
Kathryn & Tony Gualtieri	Marvin Jensen
Nancy Lenox	Cynthia & Bill Mathews
Robert McLean	Roland Morin
Jed & Helen Myall	Gayle Ortiz
Paul Parsons	David A. Peyton
Barbara Reding	Linda Sanders
Laura Smith	Sara Wood Smith
Jerry & Robynn Walters	Richard Wilson
Kenneth R. Wood	
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Moellering	

Recently, the following artifacts were generously donated to the Capitola Museum:

Angela Marshall – Capitola Pharmacy sign
Frank Perry – Hihn t-shirt used in last year's exhibit
Ann Theirmann – Acrylic painting of Capitola Wharf

HISTORY QUIZ: Name this couple parading through downtown Soquel by horse drawn buggy, c1949, while promoting Shadowbrook.



Capitola Sunset is published by:

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Museum Hours: Thursday through Sunday, 12-4 P.M.

Curator: Frank Perry.

Board Members: Niels Kisling (President), David Peyton (Vice President), Pam Greeninger (Secretary), Brian Legakis (Treasurer), Emmy Mitchell-Lynn, Dean Walker and Gordon van Zuiden.
Museum Youth Board Member: Joshua Henshaw.