

**Press Release – For Immediate Distribution**

**January 20, 2011**

**From:** Anne T. Kent California Room, Marin County Free Library

3501 Civic Center Dr. Suite 427

San Rafael, CA, 94903

Phone: (415) 499-7419

Contact: Laurie Thompson, Librarian

**Anne T. Kent California Room, Marin County Free Library**

**Unveils re-designed Website featuring Local History Database**

The Anne T. Kent California Room of the Marin County Free Library proudly announces their redesigned website and searchable local history database at

<http://californiaroom.marinlibrary.org>.

The database provides digital access to nearly 1,000 historic images, oral history interviews, and newspaper articles. More resources will be added on an on-going basis.

The historic image collections transport viewers to another era, illustrating such topics as: the devastation caused by the 1906 Earthquake & Fire; Boxer Billy Shannon's Villa in San Rafael; silent movies made by the California Motion Picture Corporation once located in the Sun Valley neighborhood of San Rafael; Camping in Samuel P. Taylor Park in 1889; Golden Gate Bridge Construction; the May Day Celebration at the Tamalpais Centre in Kentfield, 1909-1912; the History of the Marin County Free Library; the History of the Mountain Play on Mt. Tamalpais, 1913-1972; Muir Woods National Monument; Historic Marin County Railroads; the History of San Quentin State Prison from the collection of former Prison Doctor, Leo Stanley; and much more.

The oral history section, incorporating over 80 of our 400 interviews with Marin County pioneers, politicians, artists and citizens, includes complete audio recordings as well as transcripts. You can hear former State Senator Peter Behr discuss how the Pt. Reyes National Seashore was saved from development. Marion Hayes Cain, long-time director of the Mountain Play Association, tells the story of this 98-year Marin County tradition. Did you know that the site of Drake High School was once Cordone Gardens, a 30-acre fruit and vegetable ranch? Marius Cordone tells the story in his 1979 interview.

Much of Marin County's early history is documented in its local newspapers which commenced publication in 1861. A pilot project to digitize a sampling of "Marin Journal" newspaper issues

from 1861-1866 and 1919-1920, is a special feature of the California Room's new database. Using optical character recognition (OCR), users may now search for and retrieve hundreds of articles. We are currently seeking grants and donations to digitize more historic Marin County newspapers.

You can also explore early Marin County history via our inter-active Rancho Map documenting Marin's 21 original land grants.

A special section of the website tells the story of the construction of the Marin County Civic Center designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, including period photographs and audio excerpts from Wright's speeches to the people of Marin in 1957 and 1958.

Follow us on Twitter @annetkentroom to receive updates on the collection, programs, the digital archive, and local history.

The Anne T. Kent California Room, Marin County Free Library, was established in the mid 1930s by County Librarian, Virginia Keating. It's an archive dedicated to collecting and preserving information on local, regional, and state history with a strong emphasis on the history and culture of Marin County. Resources include photographs, oral histories, biography files, maps, books, directories, voter registers, local newspaper clippings, documents and ephemera.