

**Marin Conservation League
Walk Into (Conservation) History #13
Saturday, March 23, 2013
*Olompali State Historic Park***



Marin Conservation League

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Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin County.

Marin Conservation League Walk Into (Conservation) History # 13

OLOMPALI STATE HISTORIC PARK

MARCH 23, 2013 – 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



Walk Leaders

Gail Wilhelm, Former Novato City Councilmember, former Marin Supervisor, helped protect the adobe by covering it with plastic in 1970, applied for designation of Olompali for listing in the National Registry of Historic Places

Diane Einstein, President of The Olompali People, vice chair of the Marin State Parks Association and a Master Gardener

Nick Tipton, Native American and member of Graton Rancheria

Clint Kellner, Biologist and Vice-Chair of The Olompali People

Susan Stompe, President of Marin Conservation League and a founding board member of The Olompali People

Today's walk

provides an opportunity to view physical evidence of human residency of the site for some 500 years and hear of even earlier human use. Olompali State Historic Park is a site that spans the history of California right here in Marin.

We will see remnants of formal gardens with exotic imported plants and native woodlands with native grasses and vibrant wildflowers.

Other walks MCL has sponsored have focused on the efforts it took by ordinary citizens to save special lands of Marin from development and to conserve them for the public. In some cases Marin Conservation League has played a lead role; in some cases it supported the efforts of others. In any case, no piece of land or shore has come into public hands without a huge cooperative citizen effort to advocate for preservation and, where necessary, raise funds for acquisition.

The critical period for Olompali was during the 1970s. The University of San Francisco owned

the property, but was ready to divest it. A fire in the 1911 mansion, which exposed the Miwok adobe, created hazards that prevented continued leasing of the site. A developer offered to acquire the whole site for a trailer park and condominiums running far up the valley. That spurred citizen activity. An archeological dig went on from 1972 to 1976 and revealed information about the Miwok village of the mid-1500s. Gail Wilhelm applied for and got the site listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The county recognized the importance of the site and offered to acquire half the site if the state put up the other half of the funds. The intent was to deed over the county half to the state. It took Pierre Joske, then Director of Marin County Parks and Open Space, many months to convince the State Parks and Recreation Commission that the site was worthy of state preservation. Acquisition was completed in 1977. In 1981 it was designated a State Historic Park.

The support group, The Olompali

1776—Franciscan priests establish missions in Northern California. The Coast Miwok begin to decline.

1400—Olmopali is one of the largest Miwok trading villages in Marin

1823—El Camino Real traverses through Olompali

1852—Camilo Ynitia sells most of his property to James Black, Marin County Assessor

1863—James Black's daughter, Maria Augustina, marries Dr. Galen Burdell (San Francisco's first dentist). The couple receives Olompali as a wedding gift. They begin development of their land in the 1870s. Spring flowers still bloom from bulbs they planted.

1942—The widowed Josephine Burdell sells the property. A string of owners follow.

1972—Olmopali accepted into the National Registry of Historic Places

1967—Businessman-turned-hippie Don McCoy leases Olompali for his commune, "The Chosen Family."

1932—Olmopali designated California State Landmark No. 210

1843—Governor Manuel Micheltorena of Alta California deeds Camilo the Rancho Olompali, making him the only Native American on the northern frontier of Alta California to secure and keep a large land grant.

1863—Camilo, the last Hopyu (leader) of the Olompali, dies. After his death, his two daughters Maxima and Maria purchased a part of Rancho Sanel in the Sanel Valley of Mendocino County, and moved there with their husbands and helped found the town of Sanel, later named Hopland.

1966—The Grateful Dead live at the Rancho.

1977—The State of California purchases Rancho Olompali and makes it a State Historic Park in 1981.

1834—Olmopali leadership passed to Miwok Camilo Ynitia (native name Hueñix). Adobe houses were replacing Miwok kotchas.

1846—"Battle of Olompali", causing the only casualty of the June 26 California Revolution, the "Bear Flag Revolt."







1911—Burdell's son, James Black Burdell, encases his parents' home with its adobe in an elaborate mansion. Rancho Olompali becomes a popular destination for prominent San Franciscans.

1969—An electrical fire gutted the mansion. The walls of the original adobe survive.

1876—Paintings of Olompali Miwoks created by Louis Choris during Russian expedition

1879—Sir Francis Drake lands on a Marin shore he names Nova Albion

6000 BC - Archaeological evidence of human habitation at Olompali

People, was formed in 1982. Plans to protect the historic structures were curtailed because of state policy not to invest in park projects unless there was a Park General Plan. The Olompali People raised \$75,000 and hired Royston, Hanamoto, Alley and Abey of Mill Valley to do a plan in conformance with state requirements. The Plan was completed in 1987 and accepted by the State Parks and Recreation Commission July 1988 with the required environmental review.

As stated in the General Plan, "The purpose of Olompali State Historic Park is to preserve and interpret for the public the prehistoric sites and features associated with the Coast Miwok village of Olompali; and to preserve, interpret and restore where feasible, the remaining historic sites associated with Olompali's Mexican and American periods." "The major objective is to create an interesting place that tells the story, attracts people, preserves significant historic resources, and is compatible with the surrounding environment."

Wildflowers of Olompali: L—Chocolate Lily (*Fritillaria affinis*), R—Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja affinis*).



Photo credits: David Hofmann, Philippe Vieux-Jeanton

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