

Coastside Chronicles

A Publication of the Half Moon Bay History Association

Autumn 2025

In This Issue:

San Francisco Safe from “Invasion” from Half Moon Bay	page 1
1917 : The Coastside Goes To War	page 3
World War II: The Military on the Coastside	page 5
First Person: Interned During World War II.....	page 8
Daily Life on the Coastside During World War II	page 10
War Cake : A Tale of Shortages and a Small Victory	page 12
President’s Message	page 13
Autumn Program—Sea Glass: A Local History	page 13
In Memoriam	page 14

HALF MOON BAY
HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

From food to shoes to gasoline and tires, goods were rationed to support the war effort, and people adopted the phrase “use it up, wear it out, make it do—or do without.”

The World Wars and the Coastside

We celebrate Veterans Day each November 11 to honor all veterans of all American wars. That day of remembrance was established in 1919 and called Armistice Day, to commemorate the end of what was then called the Great War—what we now call World War I. World War II followed two decades later, and Armistice Day became Veterans Day after that war ended.

This edition of the Chronicles offers a glimpse into how the world wars affected the Coastside, from the World War I draft, to secret World War II military installations, to internments of local families.



1916: San Francisco Safe from “Invasion” from Half Moon Bay

—Bill Scholtz

World War I was raging in Europe, and the United States was vigilant.

This account is from a May 15, 1916 article in the Press Telegram of Long Beach.

During World War I, San Francisco was fairly well protected. The military had troops stationed at the Presidio, big guns lining the coast, and the ability to mine the Bay. The weak link was the small town of Half Moon Bay. Half Moon Bay has long wide beaches with sections lacking high cliffs. An invading force could land many troops on our shores and march right up to San Francisco with little or no opposition.

The declaration that San Francisco was safe was based on a simulated surprise attack on the city from the woods west of Lake Merced. Two battalions of the Coast Artillery Corps defeated ten companies of the National Guard, who were posing as invaders. But the city would be safer if they stopped the invasion before it started.

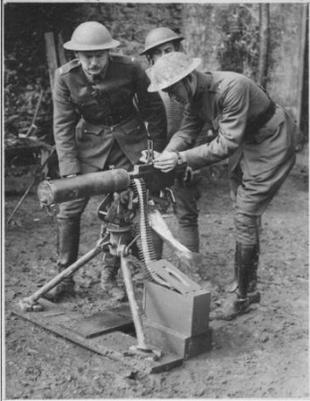
Studebaker to the Rescue

The Chester N. Weaver Company, the local Studebaker dealer, offered use of their vehicles in case of invasion.



Studebaker cars and trucks for 1917 (Courtesy of Automotive Timelines)

The military decided to run a test without warning. At 3:30 a.m. on the 18th of March 1917, a call was sent to the dealership to have the vehicles ready at the Presidio at 7:30 a.m. Twenty cars and two trucks arrived at the appointed time with drivers. 85 members of the Tenth Company, Coast Artillery Corps and two machine guns piled in and drove off toward San Mateo. From there they headed over the hill and into Half Moon Bay. They arrived in a record one hour and



1917 Browning machine gun (Wikipedia)

fifteen minutes and quickly set up their defenses. The test was a resounding success.

The cars offered a highly flexible way to get a few troops to the coast quickly. The Ocean Shore Railroad would be used to deliver many troops and equipment shortly thereafter.

Another Way to Protect San Francisco from the Direction of Half Moon Bay

A San Francisco man, John R. Steel, invented a mine that he claimed could kill a regiment. He said it wouldn't take many of them planted on the Half Moon Bay roads that invading armies could use on their way to San Francisco. The mines were to be triggered electrically. They weighed 280 pounds and used a combination of steel balls and poisonous gas. The balls could cover a radius of 200 yards and the gas a radius of 1000 feet. He chose a gas that, unlike the ones being used in Europe, didn't dissipate quickly. Apparently, he was more than happy to sacrifice the residents of Half Moon Bay to protect San Francisco. Thanks Mr. Steel.

If Steel's mine was not going to protect Half Moon Bay and the Coastside, investing in Liberty Bonds would. A newspaper campaign by the government was aimed at farmers, saying that their farms could be attacked if we couldn't win the war in Europe. Even the Coast Side Comet carried the ad. "Your farm shelled, do you think this never could happen? ... If we do not win the war, it may happen here."



Liberty Bonds Ad from the Coast Side Comet, April 19, 1918

1917—The Coastside Goes to War

—Bill Scholtz

Imagine opening the county newspaper and seeing your name in it for the first time, and it's next to a draft number. That's what happened to a few hundred Coastside residents in July of 1917. And this was just the first round. Each of the nearly 4,000 male residents of San Mateo County between the ages of 21 and 31 were given a unique number.



Draft numbers being pulled by Secretary of War Newton Baker (Courtesy of the National Archives)

A couple of weeks later the names are back in the newspaper, this time with the lottery picks next to the name. The draft board had picked those 4,000 numbers out of a hat, one at a time. The first number to be pulled was that of Frank Francis Cunha, of

Half Moon Bay. Frank was a Teamster working for Alvin Hatch. This likely means he was driving teams of oxen to haul lumber down the hill.

Another name on the list was Narciso Di Grazia, 25, a native of Lucca, Italy. He had likely been recruited from Italy to grow artichokes or Brussels sprouts. At this time, he had his own farm in Lobitos.

A third person on the list was Wilson Brownlow Barnes, 29, of Pescadero. Wilson was born in Frisco, Illinois. He was in Pescadero as an agriculture student working for R. E. (Rensselaer) Steele. R. E. was the owner of the Cascade Ranch Dairy.

Next, the first 269 men from the county were ordered to show up San Mateo City Hall on a Monday morning at 8 a.m. for a physical. Little by little all the men on the list would be called. After the physicals were done each person was listed in the paper with either a pass or fail. All three men passed their physicals.

The next step was to figure out if there was an exemption or not. Exemptions were awarded to people having an essential skill for the war effort, such as a teacher, a clergyman, farming for the food supply, or railroad workers. Exemptions were also given to people with personal hardships, such as sole family providers. The final exemptions were given to conscientious objectors.

The next time the men were in the paper, it was to show if they had been granted an exemption. They were either listed as “Drafted” or “Exempted or Discharged”. Frank Cunha was listed as “Exempted or Discharged”. No reason was given, but under dependents for his draft card, he listed his wife and baby. They may have also considered his job in the lumber industry as essential.

Narciso Di Grazia was “Drafted” even though he listed his mother, father, and sister as dependents. They may have considered artichokes and Brussels sprouts as not essential to the war effort.

Wilson Barnes was also “Drafted” even though he listed his mother as a dependent.

Narciso and Wilson then made the paper when they were listed among the first 182 San Mateo County men officially drafted, and finally on September 20th when they were among the first 137 men shipped out for training. The



Sargeant Wilson Barnes (Find-a-Grave)

day before that, the 137 men had received a great send-off at the San Mateo train station. The high school band provided entertainment. The September 20th edition of the San Mateo News Leader read:

“Before departing Wednesday each of the drafted men was given a small package arranged by the Chamber of

Commerce. Each package contained three packages of cigarettes, five packages of cigarette tobacco, one can of pipe tobacco, two packages of gum and one-half a pound of candy.”

They boarded the 11:04 a.m. train for San Francisco and then on to camp at American Lake.

From the first time the names appeared in the paper at the end of July, until the first wave was shipped out, it was just two months. This wave would be followed by more waves. Ultimately the draft age was extended to 45 and an estimated one in ten Coastside men, about 200, would be in the military. Of the 4.8 million men who enlisted across the country, 2.8 million were drafted and another 2 million volunteered.

The families of those who served hoped that the announcement of their being shipped out was the last time they were in the newspaper. If they showed up again, it would likely be because they were wounded or dead.

Another Coastsider who went to war was Antone “Mac” Dutra of Mac Dutra Park and Dutra Funeral Home. Mac enlisted in the Navy on March 3, 1918 and



Antone “Mac” Dutra
(HMB History
Association
Collection)

served for a year. He kept a diary with an entry almost every day until the end of 1918. He was on the lead ship on convoys across the Atlantic Ocean. In his diary he listed the dates, ships, miles, and number of troops (between 32,000 and 61,000) for the five convoys he was on.

Narciso Di Grazia survived the war and was naturalized, thanks to his service.

Wilson Barnes didn’t fare so well. He was stationed in Belgium and France. On October 3, 1918 his regiment was fighting in the Meuse–Argonne offensive, one of

the most important final offences of the war, when he was killed in action. It was just over a month before the Armistice. He was initially buried in France, but his body was later moved back to Illinois where his family was from.

Six other Coastsiders lost their lives in the war:

Glen H. Robinson, 25 of Pescadero, native of San Benito County, was killed in action on November 1, 1918 in Belgium, only 10 days before the Armistice.

Olivo Tonin, 22 of Pescadero, native of Italy, was killed in action in France on July 28, 1918.

Clifford E. Bell, 17 of San Gregorio, was the only casualty born and raised in the Coastside. He died on October 24, 1918 in France of pneumonia.



Guiseppe Besana, 23 of La Honda, native of Italy, was killed in action in France on September 27, 1918.

Private Clifford Bell
(FamilySearch.org)

Pietro Natali, 37 of Half Moon Bay, native of Lucca, Italy, was killed in action in France on June 5, 1918.

Amedeo Parenti, 27 of Half Moon Bay, native of Lucca, Italy, was killed in action in France on September 29, 1918.

Our sleepy Coastside communities hadn’t known war before World War I. That’s not to say that no one on the Coastside had seen war. A little over a quarter of the population had been born in Europe where war was much more common.

The war introduced many of Coastsiders to the world outside our small community, not just for those who served, but for their families and friends who followed news about the war closely, hoping to see their loved ones again.

However, this was only a dress rehearsal for what was to happen during World War II.

World War II: The Military on the Coastside

-- Ellen Chiri

World War II began in Europe in 1939 with Germany's invasion of Poland. The military coalition known as the Axis included Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan. They were united in their forms of government in which a small group held absolute power with few political checks.

The United States supported the primary Allied powers—the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China—but officially remained neutral in the war.

Until December 7, 1941.

Early on that Sunday morning, many Coastsideers were at breakfast with the radio on. Shocked silences fell as a newscaster announced that the Imperial Japanese Navy had attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i. The attack crippled or destroyed American battleships and airplanes and killed more than 2,000 people.

On December 8, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war against Japan; he declared war against Germany and Italy three days later.

With the United States at war, the Army, Coast Guard, and Navy soon arrived to create a system of vigilance to guard against threats and the quiet, sparsely populated Coastside quickly changed.

The need for vigilance was reinforced when, on March 1, 1942, a Japanese submarine fired on the Standard Oil Company tanker SS William H. Berg southeast of the Farallon Islands.

Pigeon Point Light Station, operated by the U.S. Coast Guard, became a strategic location to watch for suspicious activity or threats against the coastline.

In July of 1942 the Coast Guard established the Coast Guard Beach Patrol of servicemen on foot and on horseback. The patrols' duties were to report any enemy ships, to prevent any landing from them, and to prevent communication between the coast and enemy vessels. Beach Patrol stations were established at the Wavecrest Inn, now Cameron's Pub, and in Pacifica at what is now known as Sam's Castle.



Coast Guard beach patrol (Courtesy of JQ Oeswein)

Military units were established up and down the coast. The Wavecrest Inn became housing for officers; nearby land was acquired in 1942 for use as an anti-aircraft radar site. In 1943 Camp Miramar was established when the Army commandeered the Palace Miramar hotel and the Miramar School and built barracks to house infantry units. In Half Moon Bay, the Army housed troops in the now-gone Occidental Hotel on Kelly Avenue.

Point Montara Lighthouse property housed the military, including K9 Corps and a mobile artillery unit. At Half Moon Bay State Beach, a two-gun mobile battery was manned by the Coast Artillery Regiment under the command of the Harbor Defenses of San Francisco. An Army Infantry platoon was stationed in Pescadero.

Because Coastside locations were closer to the Pacific theater of war than any other in the continental United States, the Army planned to build an airfield at Princeton—fighter planes taking off from the airfield would be able to intercept enemy aircraft before they could reach inland targets.

Rina and Italo Pacini farmed artichokes on the land targeted for the airfield. They were surprised by the order to leave their home and farm, but they packed their belongings and farm tools, rounded up their horses, and left.

The California State Highway Department built the airfield for the U.S. Army on the land in 1942. Today it is known as Eddie Andreini Sr. Airfield, officially Half Moon Bay Airport.

The airfield was the base for planes towing targets for the Point Montara Anti-Aircraft Training Center, where novice anti-aircraft gunners fired at towed targets using live ammunition.



*Recruits training on anti-aircraft guns at Point Montara, 1943
(Courtesy of JQ Oeswein)*

Flying the PQ-14 towed-target aircraft were Shirley Ingalls Thackara, Mary Logan Leatherbee, and Mildred Toner Chapin. They were part of the secret volunteer civilian pilots' organization Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).



*Shirley Ingalls Thackara, 1943, Women Airforce Service Pilot
(Courtesy of JQ Oeswein)*

Gun emplacements were established up and down the Coastside to protect the entrance to San Francisco Bay, and observation bunkers were created to provide sighting for the guns in case of attack.

The graffiti-covered oddity north of Montara State Beach is such a bunker. It was an artillery-fire control station, originally covered by a hill.

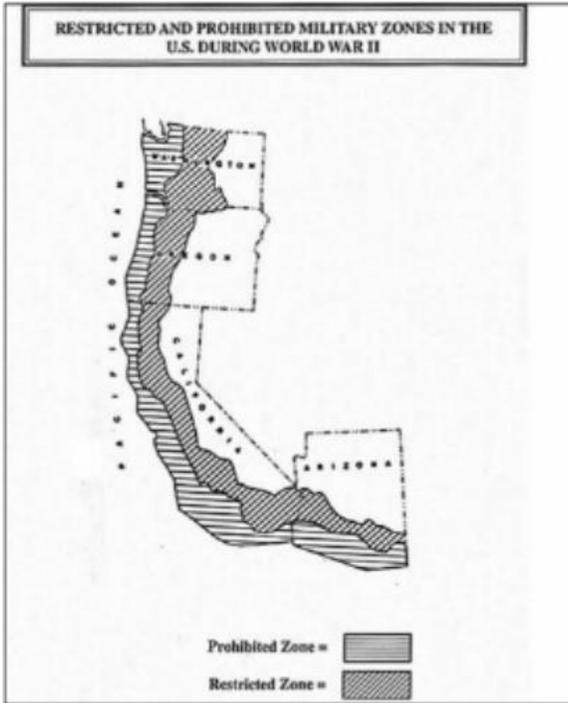


Courtesy of JQ Oeswein

Soldiers inside the bunker detected any ships offshore and telephoned location information to a plotting room, where the crew calculated coordinates and sent firing data to the guns.

Internments and restrictions

In February 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. The order authorized the Secretary of War to identify certain areas as western military zones, enabling the removal and incarceration of people of Japanese, Italian, and German descent.



*Prohibited zones extended the length of the west coast; restricted zones were established inland
(Courtesy "Una Storia Segreta", Lawrence DiStasi)*

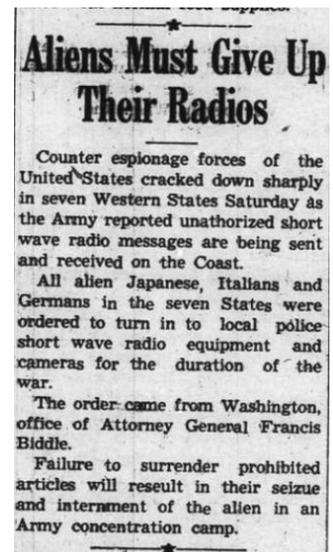
The greatest impact of the incarcerations on the Coastside was, by far, on families of Japanese descent, including those who were American citizens. People were notified that they must leave their homes with very little notice and with few belongings, often just a suitcase for an entire family.

Many were sent to prison camps inland, but some were incarcerated at [Camp Sharp Park](#) in Pacifica. The former Depression-era relief camp opened in 1942 to house "enemy aliens." People of Japanese, Italian, and German descent were confined there.

Coastside residents who weren't incarcerated as enemy aliens were subject to curfews and limitations on travel. People's homes were searched for "contraband," including cameras and radios and flashlights. Violating the new rules could result in arrest.

In a 2008 interview with author June Morrall, Moss Beach native Elaine Martini Teixeira remembered, "Sometime in the first part of 1942, before my brother left for service in the U.S. Army in October, government men came to our home in Moss Beach... They proceeded to search the house. We did not see a search warrant, or anything else, to indicate they had official status to be there. Maybe during the war it was not necessary, and I am sure my parents did not ask about it. We were all rather afraid... Finally, after quite some time, my brother reminded the G-Men that he had enlisted in the service and would be leaving for the Army Air Force. He asked: Did they feel my Dad would send messages to the enemy so they could sink a ship that would be taking his own son to Europe to fight?...

The government men had no answer for my brother's question. They left and we never heard from them again."



*Half Moon Bay Review
January 8, 1942*

In a 2017 Half Moon Bay Review interview, Bruno Giusti recalled when Highway 1, then Main Street, became a great divide. Japanese families were taken away, and Giusti recalled his Italian family being ordered to move to the east side of the road. No "enemies of the state" were allowed to live on the west side. History Association founder Dave Cresson noted, "Italians had bakeries and farms at the west side of Highway 1 and couldn't go to them."

First Person: Interned During World War II

--Naomi Imamura Patridge

This article is a transcription of a 2015 recording by former Half Moon Bay City Council member and Mayor Naomi Imamura Patridge.

I have done a lot of research on many of the internment camps, especially Topaz. That is where we were relocated. I found that it was interesting that a lot of people did not know about the internment. I originally came from Pescadero. Our family had a large farm which my Dad farmed.

Father lost all of that. It was hundreds of acres and lost everything, the house, everything, because he was not there to make payment to the bank for the properties. A lot of Japanese people lost all their property and belongings because they had no way of paying the bank loans.

My Mom got a message, and she didn't understand because she didn't speak English. She found my father and was told that we needed to be at the Williamson store with one suitcase. And we had a family of five people, three kids and two adults. For those of you who don't know Pescadero, prior to the war it had a lot of Japanese families/farmers. It had a Japanese school, it had a Japanese temple, the Buddhist temple, and it also had a dojo.

Our number was 21855. Every family had a number that they had to put on themselves and on all their belongings. From the Williamson store, we were taken to Tanforan Racetrack from April to September 1942.

I think the reason the government chose the racetrack was the convenience of the enclosure of the racetracks. It was totally enclosed and you could house people there, even if it was in the horse stalls.

We were very fortunate because we had a family of three kids. We got one of the newer stalls that did not have horse manure in it and was whitewashed. All the

other horse stalls that didn't house families were not even cleaned—they were whitewashed over the horse manure. As people were being held there for a long time, people were starting to get sick, getting diarrhea because of the health conditions.

When we were there, the families were asked three questions. Depending on how you answered those three questions determined where you were going to be placed, either in a high security camp or just a regular camp. And the people that said that they were still loyal to Japan went to the high security camps.

From Tanforan Racetrack we went to Topaz, Utah by train. The windows were all blackened, so you didn't know where in the heck you were going. We were there from September 29, 1942 to October 11, 1945. When we got to the barrack there were no furnishings. There were no walls. You had to get straws to make your bed.

The government had no foresight that with so many people being interned, the bathroom facilities were not going to be enough to accommodate so many of us. There were community restrooms and showers with no privacy. Since there were no sewer systems or septic system, the sewer drained in the ditches along the barracks. They had planks so when you went across you had to be careful so you didn't fall into the sewer.

One of the things that they did in the camp was they had block government. Every block governed themselves, which I think was good because in this way they could handle whatever problems that they were having in the barracks.

There were 12 barracks in a block and we were in block 25. In every block there were a laundry room they called

latrines and showers and a dining hall. But in the restrooms, there was no privacy. There were no stalls. So, it was just open. It was embarrassing.

In the camp it was not a nice, pleasant kind of environment. There was a high security wall with barb fence, and there were towers where guards stood with guns.

They did shoot a little girl in Topaz. When that happened, the block government people decided to start nursery schools because the little kids had nowhere to go and nothing to do. I was one of the ones that did go to the nursery school. They were going to take pictures of us, so since we didn't have any clothes my mother hand-sewed our clothes, and she made her own patterns.

I don't know if you know about Japanese culture. We are very proud, respectful people and we take death as being respectful. So, during that time, there were a lot of Japanese elder people who did commit suicide. And it was not frowned upon. It was an honor because they were not going to be a burden on anybody. They respectfully felt that they needed to go to peace.

I think one of the hardest things was the weather that we endured. It was 106° in the summer and 30° below in the winter and the wind was horrific. You would take one step forward and blow back two.

We did not have great food. We had liver and mutton. As you know, Japanese like rice and vegetables. They did have some gardens, but I don't think we had much rice. To this day I love liver but I hate lamb, because it was not lamb, it was mutton. It was old stuff.

Everybody had a job. My father was a cook. I'll tell you, he was a great cook when he came out. And he was a great baker. I have never seen anybody take a roll of dough for pies and roll it out one time and it was perfect.

My brother was born in the camp. When he was an infant he pulled hot water off the pot-belly stove and he was scalded. Because he was a boy, and this is what

my mother said, they did all the surgery and grafts on his face, but not on his neck or on his arms. So, to this day he still has that scar.

One of the things that I remember the most about the camp is the baseball games on Sunday. Maybe that's why I have that love for softball—baseball—to this day.

I know that everybody really suffered, but I don't think anybody suffered as much as the Japanese when it came to the war and the loss of their property, their money, and all that. A lot of people have never been able to recoup that. My Dad never was able to recoup all that he had.

People have asked me, do you think this would ever happen again? And I say yes. And let me tell you why. We have media and social media that puts fear into people. And fear does lots of things. We've seen it happen here in Half Moon Bay. And fear, no matter how much you try to correct and get information out, never happens unless the fear is gone, and until we can get rid of that emotion, this can happen again.

You can sit and think all the things that have happened, but I don't hold any grudges, basically because my Mom and Dad didn't. If they probably did, I probably would have.



*Tanforan barracks, April 1942
(Photo by Dorothea Lange, Wikipedia Commons)*

Daily Life on the Coastside During World War II

--Ellen Chiri

The war affected daily life on the Coastside in many ways. Civilians became Civil Defense volunteers; rationing changed everyone's shopping habits; entertainment focused on war themes.

Civil Defense

Coastside air raid drills and blackout exercises were held in case it became necessary to prevent enemy aircraft from identifying targets by sight. In his 2005 book *Coastside in the 1940s* James Jenkins recalled, "There were unannounced practice air raid drills. One time my family was having a Sunday night supper with friends...The siren wailing left no doubt that this was the air raid drill. We had to turn off all lights. They called it a blackout... All of us kids were packed around the bay window and were peeping around the shades when Tony the Air Raid Warden came by. He tapped on the glass because we were letting light past the curtains...At nighttime if you were coming into town on Highway 92, there was a manned checkpoint at Hilltop where you turned off the headlights on the car. You were allowed to use parking lights past that point."

Ron Duarte recalled Pescadero blackouts. "...you had all your blankets covering the window so you couldn't see your lights from outside. There were no street lights here then. You had to keep all your houses buttoned up, so it was black outside at night."

Rationing

The war caused shortages on the home front. Military needs came first and the need for materials and supplies rose dramatically, affecting availability. Goods such as coffee, cooking oils, rubber, and sugar became limited as the war expanded to locations that produced them. From food to shoes to gasoline and tires, goods were rationed to support the war effort and people

adopted the phrase "Use it up, wear it out, make it do—or do without."

Fresh meat was in short supply and the canned meat product Spam, a shelf-stable and easily transportable source of protein, became ubiquitous. And it became legendary—a wartime ode describing Spam weariness noted "...armies on their stomachs move, and this one moves on Spam. For breakfast they will fry it; for supper it is baked; for dinner it goes delicate—they have it pat-a-caked. Next morning it's with flapjacks, or maybe powdered eggs—for God's sake where do they get it? It must come in by kegs!"

As agricultural workers joined the military or moved to industrial centers, the resulting labor shortage risked the food supply for both the military and for civilians. To help sustain the food supply, 1942 agreements between Mexico and the United States created the Mexican Farm Labor Program, also known as the Bracero Program.

To fairly distribute goods that were in short supply, the government issued ration books. Each book contained stamps that determined how much of which products the holder could buy.

AGE	SEX	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	OCCUPATION
36	F	127 lbs	5 Ft. 6 In.	Housewife

WARNING
This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell it to any other person, or to use it or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods in accordance with regulations of the Office of Price Administration. Any person who sends a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it. Persons who violate rationing regulations are subject to \$10,000 fine or imprisonment, or both.

LOCAL BOARD ACTION
Issued by _____ (Local board number) _____ (Date)
Street address _____
City _____ State _____
(Signature of issuing officer) *Book IV*

(Courtesy of Larkin Evans)

Red ration stamps were for meat and fat products; blue stamps were for processed goods such as canned food. Ration books also contained stamps for non-food items like gasoline and shoes.

Gasoline ration stamps were identified alphabetically. An “A” sticker on a car entitled the holder to three gallons a week, intended for non-essential driving.

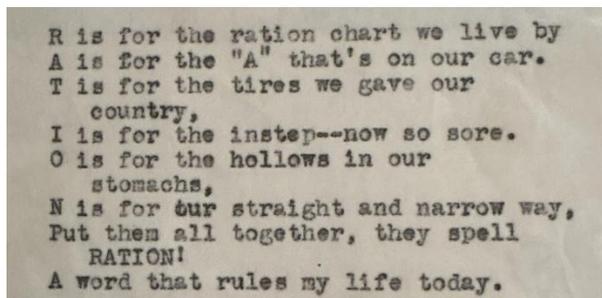


From “Ration Bored” (Courtesy Walter Lantz Productions)

“Is this trip really necessary?” became a catchphrase, reminding people that gas and tires were critical to the war effort.

A “B” gas-ration sticker was worth eight gallons a week, enabling people to commute to work. The “C” sticker was issued to people whose cars were essential to their livelihood, such as farm workers, construction workers, physicians, nurses, and priests.

An unknown poet created this ode:



Courtesy of Larkin Evans

As the poem suggests, the “straight and narrow way” was at least partly because whiskey was becoming

unavailable as distilleries started producing industrial alcohol for wartime needs such as antiseptics, antifreeze, and synthetic rubber.

In Pescadero, however, Frank Duarte was ahead of the game. Tess Black’s book *Duarte’s Tavern: Where friends meet since 1894* tells us, “Not long after he’d bought the business...the whiskey salesman had offered to sell him a whole truckload of quality liquor. Frank...decided it might be a good investment...By imposing his own ‘rationing’ strategy, he made that truckload last until the end of the War.”

Entertainment

The Half Moon Bay movie theater’s matinee was a must for kids. They fidgeted through the newsreel, laughed at the cartoon antics of Tom and Jerry or Mickey Mouse, and were spellbound by hits like “Flash Gordon and the War of the Planets.”

On Saturday nights the top ten songs of the week came over the radio airwaves. Big bands like Guy Lombardo played, or Tommy Dorsey, who “...might have the new hot singer, Frank Sinatra,” James Jenkins recalled.

Ella Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby, and the Andrews Sisters were other top stars, with upbeat songs like “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy” and sentimental ones like “I’ll Be Seeing You.”



Frank Sinatra on stage with Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra, 1942 (Image Public Domain)

War Cake: A Tale of Shortages and a Small Victory

--Mary Ruddy

This story is fictional, but the War Cake recipe is real. Using no eggs, butter, or milk, this type of cake was popular during wartime shortages.

There was fear in the air as the woman walked along Main Street to Cunha's Market. There were so many military men stationed at the Occidental Hotel or walking around town. She didn't know what those uniforms meant or what they were doing, but they reminded her of her life in the old country when you didn't know when those uniformed men might turn against you. She would get her shopping done and hurry home!

She had an account at Cunha's and sometimes—depending on who was on duty—she might get an extra bit in her canvas bag. She nervously checked her pocketbook again to be sure she had her ration book, with blue stamps for goods like canned food, and red stamps for meat and dairy. Today she only wanted two cups of a whole grain flour like rye or whole wheat. She still had dried fruit, honey from her garden beehives, and some lard she'd clarified after they had butchered their last pig. She almost had everything to make little Joey's birthday cake!

The government had requisitioned many foods for use with the military, and other items like leather and scrap metals... all for the military. Her husband had explained all this and told her that her vegetable garden could now be called a Victory Garden. She didn't know why this was special as she and all her friends had kept vegetable gardens for many years. They exchanged extra harvests and canned as much as possible. Some people with cows could even make butter, take it to a store for sale, and be paid in ration stamps.

The woman understood that much of the food grown on the Coastsides had to be used for the war effort, and she knew that after her Japanese-American neighbors were taken away, their land grew nothing but weeds.

She had learned to use evaporated milk, or dried skim milk with 1-2 teaspoons of melted fat, to replace fresh milk. Or to use 1/2 teaspoon of cornstarch instead of 1 tablespoon of white flour, which was a requisitioned item for the military. She kept all vegetable and meat trimmings to boil into a broth, and her stews were made with mostly beans for protein. And she grew her own special beans to share.

Her husband and she had saved up ration stamps so that they could celebrate, as always, their young son's birthday with a cake. This was her small Victory!

War Cake

1 cup brown sugar or molasses, apple sauce, honey or corn syrup
1-1/4 cups water (or substitute clear juice)

1/3 cup shortening, lard, vegetable oil, or mayonnaise (in any combination)

2 cups raisins or apricots or any dried fruit

2 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ground cloves

1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg or allspice

1 tsp. salt

2 cups whole wheat or barley or rye flour. Substitute 1 cup with oats to save flour.

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. baking powder

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour an 8-inch square pan.

Combine sugar, water, shortening, raisins, spices and salt; bring to a boil, lower heat, simmer 3 minutes then remove and let cool to room temperature.

Sift together flour, soda and baking powder into a separate bowl. Add flour mix to raisin mix until just combined (stiff batter). Pour batter into pan and bake 45-60 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool before serving.

President's Message

—Bill Scholtz, President

The Postcards to the Future program is a creative initiative led by Make It Main Street, in partnership with the Half Moon Bay History Association. The program invited members of the Coastside community to imagine and express their hopes, stories, and artwork for the future of Half Moon Bay by creating personal postcards. These postcards debuted at a reception in the Coastside History Museum and will continue to be displayed until the end of November. Please come and see the display soon!

For the Fall edition of the Coastside Chronicles, we are exploring the theme of “War and the Coastside” — a look at how global conflicts have shaped life along our quiet stretch of California coast. In one of the articles, we mention the diary of Antone “Mac” Dutra. The diary documents nine months of his time in the service along with a description of all five convoys he was involved with. We are looking for military history buffs who would enjoy transcribing the diary. It would be a great gift to the Coastside’s history. If you would like to transcribe it, or know someone else who would like to, please reach out to us and let us know.

Don't Miss Our Autumn Program! “Sea Glass: A Local History”

Tuesday December 9 - 6:00 PM. Half Moon Bay Library 620 Correas St, Half Moon Bay. Doors open at 5:30 PM

Jo Fry will discuss two topics that she is passionate about: history and sea glass. She'll tell us the *why* behind the *what* that washes up on our shores. Hear the stories that sea glass tells about our community's history, and learn where our sea glass came from, and how old it may be. Jo also will share pieces of sea glass from her own collection.

An avid beachcomber and self-proclaimed history geek, Jo is an artist who incorporates local beach-found treasures into her work. She has authored several articles for the Half Moon Bay History Association and Beachcombing Magazine, and she has lectured on sea glass at the Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz Sea Glass festivals. Jo's art can be found online at Ocean Blue Vault-- <https://oceanbluevault.com/artist-profile/JFry/>

Help Preserve Coastside History

The Half Moon Bay History Association is dedicated to bringing together all members of the community, to preserve and share the history of the San Mateo County Coastside from Montara to Año Nuevo. Our history is the lives and works of all the cultures that made the Coastside what it is today, from the times of the earliest Ohlone villages, to the Spanish and Mexican periods, through the early American period, to modern times.



In Memoriam

Stuart Hoffman

It is with sadness that we share the news of the passing of Stuart Hoffman, a great friend and supporter of the Half Moon Bay History Association. Stuart passed away in August after a prolonged illness. He was a member of the Association's first board of directors when the organization formed in 2006. He enthusiastically committed his time and skills to developing and furthering the mission of the History Association.

Stuart came to California as a youngster and settled in Belmont in the 1970s. He became the president of the Star Publishing Company, an internationally known book publisher. He had a passion for local history. That devotion became connected to his publishing business. He published books about histories of San Mateo County, and its cities and landmarks. He published books about the Coastside, including Dave Cresson's walking tour guide, "*Treasures of Half Moon Bay*," and his local history book, "*Half Moon Bay's Turning Points*."

For over a dozen years Stuart gave unmeasured hours of his time and talent to the Half Moon Bay History Association. His contributions to our meetings—and especially to our board planning sessions—were remarkable. He brought his special clarity and brilliance to the issues that growing nonprofits encounter. He was a generous and honorable changemaker for the organization.

Paul McReynolds

Paul McReynolds was a beloved docent at the Coastside History Museum, and we miss his kind presence. He always paid special attention to children—his eyes sparkled as he handed out scavenger-hunt sheets, encouraging even the youngest kids as they searched for images in the Museum. He welcomed visitors warmly, sharing his knowledge with enthusiastic graciousness.

Paul was a retired Pacific Christian College/Hope International University Professor and Administrator. He retired from his full-time faculty position at the end of the 2004-05 academic year but continued to teach for HIU as an online adjunct professor until June 2025.

Let Us Hear from You!

Visit the Coastside History Museum at 505 Johnston Street, Half Moon Bay, CA—open weekends, 10:30am to 4:30pm

Click [here](#) to see our YouTube videos.

Follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HMBHistory/>.

Visit <https://www.halfmoonbayhistory.org/>. Send email to hmbha.contact@gmail.com.

Send mail to Half Moon Bay History Association, PO Box 248, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019-0248 or call (650) 479-1935.

Board of Directors

Bill Scholtz—President, Collections Manager, Oral History Chair	Vicky Mitchell—Vice President, Docent Manager
Dave Olson—Secretary, Treasurer, Facilities Manager	Mary Ruddy—Exhibits Designer / Curator
Ellen Chiri—Communications Chair, <i>Coastside Chronicles</i> Editor, Exhibits Design	Sally Benson—Special Projects Coordinator

Quarterly Programs Team

Brian Novak-McSweeney, Chair

Patti Miller, Co-chair