



Tales of Glen Ellen

Glen Ellen Historical Society • PO Box 35, Glen Ellen CA 95442 • Spring Issue 2011



HONORING MFK

GLEN ELLEN HAS ALWAYS been well known as a writer's sanctuary, and is famous for its literary luminaries—each of whom have contributed to the style and character of this extraordinary region. This especially includes Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher, whose dozens of books throughout the past century established and celebrated the appetite for a good life well lived.

Her writing—and her practical, sensual approach to foodstuffs and kitchen activities—had a significant impact upon the later careers of Julia Child and Alice Waters. These three women, whose mutual respect and friendship deepened over the years, had each brought their explorations and discoveries of French cuisine back to the West Coast to develop what eventually came to be known as California cuisine.

Writing under the name MFK Fisher (perhaps due to her mother's habitual signature as EOH Kennedy), Mary Frances' approach to language was as direct and uncompromising as was her appetite and approach to life. Each sentence of hers is always an adventure for the reader, with sudden bursts of passionate candor that share

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Be Sure to Come to Our SPRING PRESENTATION A TOWN HALL OPEN MIKE SHOW & TELL

SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH, AT 2:00 PM
Mayflower Hall at the Community Church
5311 O'Donnell Lane in Glen Ellen.
Admission is free.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BRAND NEW— AN OLD-FASHIONED TOWN HALL MEETING

OUR SPRING PRESENTATION AT MAYFLOWER HALL on Saturday, April 30th, will depart from the panel discussions of the recent past. Instead, we are inviting neighbors who have been longtime residents of Glen Ellen to come and tell stories of what it was like in those fabulous days before this Now.

We'll be using the town-hall open mike format, with a roving portable microphone that allows people to speak from where they are sitting. Speakers will each have five or ten minutes to tell a few stories about the Glen Ellen they remember, and there will be time for a few questions and comments by others before the next speaker is introduced.

Family photographs and memorabilia may be brought for sharing, with the opportunity for them to be projected onto a screen at the front of the room while they are being described. They will also be scanned and digitized for sharing with friends who could not attend.

If you plan to speak, please contact Jim Shere at 935-3663 to reserve your ten minutes or so of fame. Like all previous presentations, this event will be taped for eventual distribution on DVDs—once we have found someone who can digitize the tapes.

A BOOK ABOUT US

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS of the region are now being gathered for a book titled *Around Glen Ellen*, which is planned for publication next year by Arcadia Publishing Company as part of their *Images of America* series. Helen Weber is spearheading the project, with the assistance of GEHS Director Jim Shere, and many photographs from our archives will be included.

However, many more of them would be much better. Local families are being encouraged to search through their own collections to find any snapshots of earlier Glen Ellen places, events and people that they believe should become immortalized in print. Write us at PO Box 35, Glen Ellen CA 95442—or email us from our new website at www.glenellenhistoricalsociety.org—describing what you have, and we'll take it from there. This is a great opportunity to get Glen Ellen into the bookstores of museums everywhere.

Helen grew up in Connecticut on a lovely old farm that was built in 1740, where she first developed a love of local history. After her children had grown she moved to Glen Ellen, and quickly developed an interest in our local history. Poking through books and online historical sources, and knocking on many doors, she has pursued and discovered many long-forgotten stories about the town and its people. Helen is excited about this project, and eager to begin—with your help.



J. H. "Uncle Jim" Albertson, chief driver on the Sonoma-Lakeville stage run.

Hard Travelin' Times

WE HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED several issues of *Bear Flag Breezes*, a periodical published by the Sonoma Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West during the 1940s. They are filled with news of the organization and its members, and articles written by John Pierre Serres, editor of the *Breezes* and a founding member of the Sonoma Valley Historical Society. What follows is a verbatim reprinting of one of his articles:

The first white men blazed El Camino Real. This was used by the Padres in 1823. History tells us that Lt. Revere landed at the Embarcadero and came up to Sonoma from there. Prior to the inauguration of steamer service to Sonoma Valley, passengers and freight were transported by sailing vessels of small tonnage. Capt. Wm. Green, father of our own Louie Green, was master of the sloop "Merlese" in 1850. Capt. Green later retired from active service on ships and entered the shipping business with two more vessels of greater tonnage, the *Hamlet* and *Marguerite*.

Stofen Brothers operated the sloops *Gazelle* and *Alice Stofen*. These two lines plied regularly, carrying cargoes

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A Report from the Board— GEHS GETS SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

WE RECEIVED THE PRESIDENTS' AWARD for Special Achievement at the Sonoma County Historical Society's annual meeting March 27th in Santa Rosa, in recognition of what has been accomplished with the help of many people over this past year. It has been an exhilarating time, with lots done—and still lots more to do.

With the successful launch of our FaceBook Page and our new website at www.glenellenhistoricalsociety.org, our attention is now upon increasing public interactivity. Our town hall Spring presentation, and the publication of *Around Glen Ellen* slated for next year, each encourages participation from as many people as possible. Everyone knows something about our history; now we invite you to share what you know with us.

The inventory of our archives at Jack London Village has been almost completed, and can soon be made available for research. Labor is being donated for remodeling the hallway photo exhibit there, scheduled for this Summer. We are now looking for donations of lumber to complete that work.

Work on the Roberts/Serres Collection is continuing as well. Local historian Peter Meyerhoff is joining us in a detailed examination of the medicine cabinet Joseph Hooker had carried into the Mexican-American War, while Jim Shere begins to focus upon the 19th Century Watriss letters and diaries from that collection.

GEHS continues to meet with other organizations such as the Sonoma County Historical Society, the Heritage Network, and the Sonoma Heritage Coalition, keeping ourselves informed while taking an active part in developments throughout the county.

To support all this activity we need membership. If you have not yet become a member of GEHS, or if your annual membership is due for renewal, please take a few moments to send your check to PO Box 35, Glen Ellen CA 95442. The cost is only \$25, or \$15 for students and seniors.

More than money, however, we need your help. Technical skills such as digitizing videotapes and managing our internet presence would be especially useful now. Drop us a line; let's get together.

History is happening, so JOIN THE DISCUSSION!

Become an active member of the Glen Ellen Historical Society today. Come to our quarterly presentations at Mayflower Hall, and visit our FaceBook Page at [facebook.com/glenellenhistoricalsociety](https://www.facebook.com/glenellenhistoricalsociety) or our website at glenellenhistoricalsociety.org. Annual membership is \$25, or \$15 for seniors and students. Send your check to GEHS, PO Box 35, Glen Ellen CA 95442.

THE GLEN ELLEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors: Anne Teller, Marge Everidge, Dorothy Johnson, Angela Nardo-Morgan, Archie Horton, Steven Lee, and Arthur Dawson; Jim Shere, Executive Director.



GOODBY, JUANITA

THIS PAST FEBRUARY 26TH, Sonoma Valley lost one of its very special people when Juanita Musson died. Infamous and outrageous, she had a heart as great as the colorful muumuus that she wore, with a decidedly bawdy and infectious sense of humor.

Stories about Juanita will certainly live on in local memory, as they have ever since the closure of the last of her many restaurants, more than a quarter century ago. Juanita's Galley was famous for hearty, honest prime rib dinners, and for the assorted menagerie of animals that wandered through her dining room—often to the dismay of many and the amusement of many more.

GEHS is interested in hearing the stories about Juanita that, for one reason or another, have yet to be made public. Her wit and wisdom ("eat it or wear it!") should never be forgotten.

RICE — Jack London's Way

WHAT FOLLOWS IN THE PARAGRAPHS BELOW is reprinted verbatim from *A California Cook Book*, compiled by Sarah Williamson back in 1916. Williamson was a San Francisco homemaker who had the unique idea of publishing a cookbook filled with recipes from famous people of the time. The book was recently reprinted by Susan Evind of Santa Rosa, a kindness to historians hungering for a direct experience of the culinary world of nearly a century ago.

"Rice, cooked as American housewives never cook it and can never learn to cook it, appeared on Martin's table at least once a day." Thus Jack London says in the forceful novel that is almost auto-biographical. And this is the way Jack London cooks his rice—I have the recipe by favor of Ms. London, above her husband's signature:

Rice Properly Cooked— First, the rice must be washed thoroughly, which will obviate all stickiness of the kernels when boiled. The proportion of rice should be one to two cups of cold water. The Oriental allows this to stand several hours before setting on the stove. When the saucepan is finally placed on the stove, the fire must be hot and the rice kept boiling until all the water has been absorbed by the rice, and no water remains on the surface.

Then remove to where the stove is not so hot, and let simmer slightly. The cooking of a pot of rice should require from fifty minutes to an hour for a moderate measure. Just before serving, stir softly and carefully with a fork, which loosens the mass into a light and flaky appearance. The kernels should be light, soft, separate.

HONORING MFK FISHER

abrupt insights, at once entertaining and inspiring.

After her children were grown she spent the last twenty years of her life in a home built for her here in Glen Ellen by David Bouverie, which she called *Last House*. Her book of the same title (subtitled *Reflections, Dreams, and Observations*) movingly describes a certain depth in the quality of life that may come with the gradual narrowing of a quantity of life.

On the afternoon of May 14th, from 2:00 to 5:00, there will be a tribute to MFK Fisher at Bouverie Preserve, called *The Art of Eating*. Celebrity chefs and Sonoma wines will be featured, and Mary Frances will receive—at last—her just desserts. For more information, telephone Britt Henke at (415) 868-9244, or email her at rsvp@egret.org.

Hard Travelin' Times

of farm produce and bringing back general merchandise.

In 1874 a company was formed by Captains Jack and Peter Stofen, Captain Green, Mr. Holton and Mrs. Fawnett. They built a stern wheeler called the Sonoma, making three round trips a week, connecting with freight teams and stages. The Sonoma made regular trips up to the advent of the S. V. R. R.

In addition to water transportation, land transportation was carried on by horse-drawn vehicles. Stages were of the transcontinental Concord type, usually drawn by six or eight horses. In wet weather the mud wagon was used, a lighter rig with high wheels and side springs, usually drawn by four horses. The firm of Moore and Woodworth were the owners of the Sonoma stage.

Another stage run was from Sonoma to Lakeville, this stage being from the stables of Corbaley and Harris. Bro. Harris is one of our charter members. Uncle Jim Albertson was the chief driver. Another stage run was from Napa to Santa Rosa via Sonoma. In Sonoma a change of horses was made at the stables of Schetter and Carriger. This stage was a mail and Wells Fargo express. The first express office was on the site of Geo. Breitenbach's harness shop. The fare from San Francisco to Sonoma was five dollars. The express charge was one cent a pound with a minimum of fifty cents.