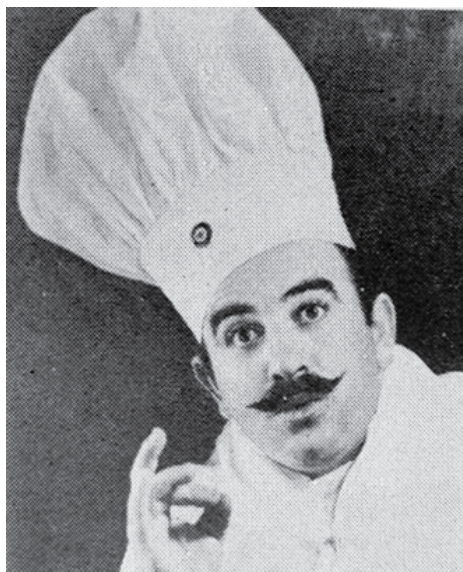




Tales of Glen Ellen

The Glen Ellen Historical Society, Glen Ellen, California

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Chef Cardini, pioneer Glen Ellen restaurateur.

Londonside's Chef Cardini

In this first installment of stories from an earlier Glen Ellen, Gregg Montgomery tells how he met Chef Cardini — one of our local gastronomes who, with Juanita Musson and M. F. K. Fisher, set the tone for Glen Ellen as an eclectic epicurean destination.

MY FIRST VISIT TO GLEN ELLEN WAS in 1969. At that time I was living in Sacramento, and visiting this little hamlet was a refreshing break from my usual central valley routine. I made several trips to Glen Ellen that summer, making new acquaintances and familiarizing myself with this little town and its surroundings. It was during one of those visits that I was taken by friends to an old resort spot that locals frequented for live music and food. It was called Londonside.

Though this old resort had obviously seen better days it was quite inviting with beautiful knotty pine interior, large windows that over looked Sonoma creek, stuffed animal heads hanging on the walls, a nice pool table and real good Mexican food. It felt somewhat like a hunters lodge with a 60's twist. I was quite comfortable there as I was used to hanging with musicians and long haired types. There was an immediate connection with this young Glen Ellen crowd and this rustic venue. There was a female country/folk singer that night who was very impressive. It was only much later that I learned that it was a young Kate Wolf that we had seen.

At 20 years and living downtown— going to City College while washing dishes at a local restaurant by night— it became very clear that Sacramento was not really working for me. City life seemed so stifling after these visits to Glen Ellen. Change was definitely in the air. Little did I know

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MAPPING THE LAY OF THE LAND

IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS we can not only learn where things are at, we can find out how we learned they were there. Bob Curtis and Arthur Dawson will present the tenth in our current series of historical conversations at Mayflower Hall at 2 in the afternoon on Saturday, March 9th— this one on how the maps of Sonoma Valley were drawn in the first place, and by whom.

Bob, widely considered the dean of Sonoma County surveyors, has spent a half century explaining how the land is measured and what we may learn from the maps that result. Arthur, who wrote the popular book *Stories behind Sonoma Valley Place Names*, will help us to understand how the features of these maps were originally identified.

The first task given General Vallejo upon his arrival was to map out the future city of Sonoma, which he did with a simple pocket compass and line. As majordomo of all the vast northern reaches of Alta California, Vallejo then began redistributing the lands that had belonged to the Missions. This required the drawing up of *diseños*, simple and picturesque watercolor sketches, to accompany applications for land grants. These primitive maps more or less described the boundaries and major characteristics of the land grants.

As the great ranches were further divided into farms, after Alta California became part of the United States, boundaries were walked together by neighbors as they agreed upon such identifying benchmarks as streams, blazed trees and rock outcroppings. Soon surveyors were called in to make a more accurate and permanent measure of the land.

These were fascinating men who typically combined a highly trained technical mind with the hardy frame of an outdoorsman, having to live off the land being measured.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES NOW COMING DUE

HAPPILY, MEMBERSHIP in the Glen Ellen Historical Society has increased to the point that we're now having to standardize our record keeping. Rather than paying annual renewals on the anniversary of having joined— which can happen any time of the year— the board has decided that dues will be due at the same time of the year for everyone.

To make this easy for all of us, please send your renewal in a prorated amount for the current year as soon as possible. If you had renewed last year from January to March send in the full \$25 amount, or \$15 for students and seniors. If you had last renewed from April to June, send \$18.75, or \$11.25 for students and seniors. If you had last renewed from July to September, send \$12.50 or \$7.50; and if you had last renewed from October to December, send in just \$6.25 or \$3.75. This will put us all on the same page eventually. *Thanks!*

Be sure to include your address and phone numbers, and an email address— we're planning to begin sending a digital version of *Tales of Glen Ellen* to those who would prefer to receive it by email rather than through the post office.

And thank you so much for supporting us. Remember, we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your donations in any amount are tax deductible.



Glen Ellen then: a detail from the 1867 Bowers map shows the original Agua Caliente land grant. Can you recognize some of its features?

Londonside's Chef Cardini

then that within a year and a half I would be living right next door to Londonside, in Hippy Hollow.

It wasn't long afterward that I arranged to take a Civil Service exam to become a P.T. trainee at Sonoma State Hospital, and by November of '70 I was living in Glen Ellen and began looking for a rental. Londonside had many cabins to the south stretching along the creek side, as well as a few dwellings on its north side. Most all of these cabins were intended for summertime use only, but at this point Londonside was no longer a functioning resort.

The main building and most all the cabins had fallen into disrepair over the years and at this point were simply used as live in rentals. Located on Warm springs Road only a half mile from down town Glen Ellen, it was an easy walk to Londonside. What better place to start looking, I thought. I began knocking on doors, asking the locals if they knew of any available rentals. Most everyone living in this area was extremely laid back and unpretentious. It felt like I had known these people for years; no one seemed to have a problem with me approaching them.

I was told by one fellow to go talk with Cardini. "Cardini?", I asked. "Yeah, he owns all these places" as he pointed towards his house. As it turned out my timing was perfect. A tiny little cabin that sat right at the edge of Sonoma Creek was being vacated by a young woman who was joining Stephen Gaskin's Caravan to Tennessee. This young woman was literally packing up her VW van as I approached. Standing beside her was a portly heavy set man with a grand mustache. It was Jack Cardini, my soon-to-be landlord.

Jack Cardini, or Chef Cardini as some might remember him, was a well known celebrity here in the Bay Area in his day, a classical Italian style chef who began his career preparing meals on luxury liners that cruised both the Caribbean and Pacific. After WWII he became a very successful restaurateur in the city of Oakland. His popularity grew over the years, and in the mid 50's Jack was offered his own hour-long cooking program on Bay Area and Sacramento television stations.

At some point in the late 50's Jack moved to Glen Ellen and opened his restaurant in what is now the London Lodge. His popularity continued to grow and "Cardini's" became a favorite destination for visitors. Jack became quite established here in Glen Ellen and over the years acquired many pieces of property along Warm Springs Road, including the aging Londonside Resort.

Sadly, Chef Cardini suffered a major stroke in the mid-60's and his famed career came to an abrupt end. I was told by friends that he barely survived this event and ultimately lost most of his assets. In the end however the Chef did retain his own home, a few adjacent rentals and the old resort of Londonside with all its rustic cabins.

The Chef was a very gentle, soft spoken man who would never have a bad word to say about a soul. He was not the kind of man who would ever pressure you for rent money if you were a little late with your payment. And though he was obviously self conscious of his physical limitations; speaking slowly and struggling at times to find the words, he loved it when you would engage in conversation about his life. One thing I'll always remember about the Chef was how much he still thoroughly enjoyed cooking, sharing with others, and of course, eating. Occasionally he would invite a few of us over to his house to have a tasting of something he had just prepared.

There was one holiday when the Chef invited four or five of us over for a meal. I remember how pleased he was when we all showed up at his door. I think it was extremely important for him to share this food he had prepared for us even though we were just his renters. After all, cooking for others had been his life. He proudly escorted us into his kitchen. Sitting on the table was a beautifully prepared duck. On the stove top sat an entire ham. Reaching into the oven the Chef quickly pulled out another duck or ham, or maybe it was a turkey. I don't remember exactly, but there was enough food for an army. At the end of our meal Jack was just beaming with pride. Chef Cardini was still at the top of his game.

Rita Booth and Jerry Fortner were running Londonside at that time and the Chef really had no interest in its operation. I think he was happy that he didn't have to get involved. The Chef put a lot of faith in his tenants and granted these renters a lot of freedom to do as they thought best with these old structures. I think he must have felt that the goings-on at Londonside and the surrounding cabins were somewhat out of his control. It was a very loose and free-form environment at that time. No rules, no worries, no problems. And the Chef was cool with that too. To this day I don't believe I've ever met a kinder or gentler man than Jack Cardini.



L. E. Ricksecker, a Sonoma County surveyor.

A LAY OF THE LAND

There is, for example, an amazing photograph of Jasper O'Farrell with a pistol in his belt and a swarthy, heavily bearded countenance that is characteristic of the trade.

We will learn about Alphonzo Benjamin Bowers, a local school-teacher who created the first full map of Sonoma County in 1865 for his students. The atlases that followed in 1877 and 1898 were surveyed by Thos. H. Thompson and then by L.E. (Lucius Edgar) Ricksecker, city engineer of Santa Rosa. These three publications illustrate the story Bob and Arthur will tell of how and by whom the valley was settled and put to work towards the end of the 19th Century.

A New Officer has Come on Board

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS gained a new member and officer at their annual retreat in January, when Charles Mikulik became our first cultural resource officer. Charles is a graduate student in the Cultural Resource Management program at Sonoma State University.

His relationship with us began a year ago when he began to focus upon the Glen Ellen area while doing research for his graduate thesis. In addition to reviewing and organizing our own archives, which include many historic documents and artifacts, he will begin cataloguing cultural resources in and around Glen Ellen; if any development is planned that may affect these resources he will be authorized to review them.

This means Charles will help us to identify and protect the special features that make our area historically significant. This includes the Chauvet Hotel, Jack London Village, the Arnold Drive and O'Donnell Lane bridges, General Wagner's Cannon, and the Devil's Rest swimming hole.

*Come hear & see our
tenth public presentation*
**MAPPING THE
LAY OF THE LAND**

SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH, AT 2:00 PM
in Mayflower Hall at the Community Church
5311 O'Donnell Lane in Glen Ellen.

Admission is free— *but come early.*

THE GLEN ELLEN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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