

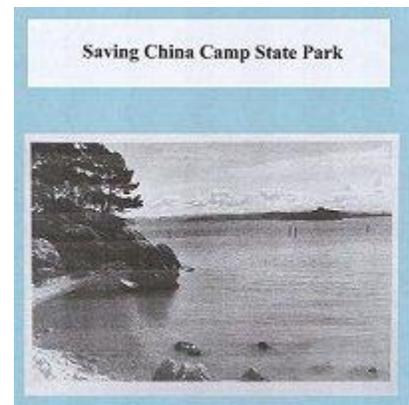
# China Camp - Past, Present, Future?

- [China Camp Article](#)
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## The History

*Please note: Most of the links contain photos of newspaper clippings that are quite old. The old photos do not scan well and the print is often hard to read. If you have an original newspaper clipping or other material that you would like to share, please contact the Peacock Gap Historian at [historian@peacockgaphoa.org](mailto:historian@peacockgaphoa.org)*

China Camp is the name of a historical Chinese fishing village on San Pablo Bay, and is also the name of the large state park that surrounds and protects this unique village museum. While the fishing village has been a feature of the Bay for almost 150 years, the park is relatively new and the story of its founding pits a young suburban housewife against a giant oil company. It is an exciting story that will be told in these pages, but first, a history of China Camp, the wild space that is now the park, and the development of the nearby residential areas.

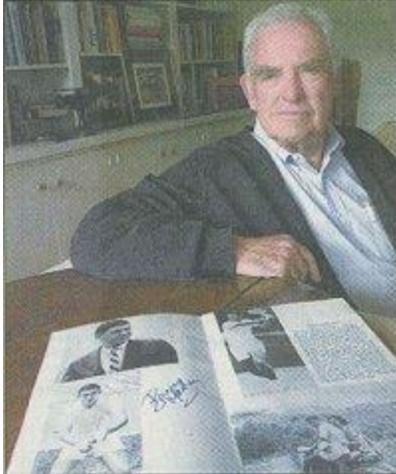


China Camp became a transportation stop for Chinese migrants seeking work on the railroads starting in the mid 1800s. By 1870 when the railroads were completed and Chinese laborers needed other work, some migrants who had been fishermen in China settled in China Camp and began a shrimping operation that was successful for many years. Large-scale shrimping ended in the early part of the 20th century, with some families hanging on until the 1930s. The catch was reduced due to the increasing sedimentation of the Bay due to development and infill, and the introduction of bass, which eat shrimp, to San Pablo Bay in 1910.

[China Camp by Richard Dillon 1972](#)

[China Camp History by Jerry Rumberg 1969](#)

[China Camp Land Ownership Records](#)



Residential development in the surrounding areas began in the 1950s and continued in earnest into the 1960s. Several developers with plans for not just homes and condominiums but a golf course, shopping centers, a small boat harbor, an equestrian facility, world-class tennis courts and other amenities in and around Peacock Gap were actively pursuing their projects.

[Marin This Month article 1960](#)  
[Memories colorful as a peacock, Marin IJ](#)

By the late 1960s concerns arose about the extent of development and the possible destruction of the extensive open space that made Peacock Gap such a special place to live. Proposals were made to create a park and to have specific areas designated as wildlife refuges.

[China Camp, Novato Fund Pleas Endorsed, Marin IJ 1968](#)  
[4 Parks' Status May Be Changed, Marin IJ 1971](#)  
[A Chance To Blend History With Recreation, Marin IJ Editorial](#)



The pace of development slowed significantly between 1965 and 1971 while a sewer system that carried effluent into the swift current of San Pablo Bay was installed. After that, building resumed and plans for expansion into the wilderness areas were revived. Alarmed at the prospect of losing open space and the view of the surrounding hills, a few residents banded together to try to slow the pace of development and ensure that the land was preserved as a park.

[A Park for East Marin, Pacific Sun 1970](#)

Continue to: [Creation of the Park](#)

