

Features

Many visitors to Olompali take advantage of the picnic area just east of the historic buildings. More active visitors will find excellent opportunities for hiking on the slopes of Mt. Burdell, with great panoramic views of the Petaluma River basin and hills beyond.

Until funds become available to implement development plans, facilities will remain limited. When the trail system is complete and linked to other public trail systems, park visitors will be able to hike from Olompali to the Pacific Ocean.

Burdell Mansion

The remnants of three earlier buildings are contained within this structure: the late 1830s Camilo Ynitia Adobe, an adobe add-on from the 1850s, and the 1866 Galen Burdell clapboard ranch house. All of these structures were incorporated into one opulent, stucco-covered mansion completed in 1913. The mansion was destroyed by fire in 1969, exposing the remains of the old adobe walls. The shingle-covered shelter that now protects these fascinating remains was constructed to prevent further weathering of the historic adobes until funds become available for permanent protection.

Burdell Garden

Mary Augustina Burdell travelled to Japan in 1874 to provide her garden with exotic plants, decorative bronze cranes, ceramic pots, and a staff of Japanese gardeners. It was a traditional Victorian garden complete with fountains, brick walkways, and gazebos.

The Burdell Two-story Frame House

Built by Galen and Mary Burdell in the 1870s, this building was substantially altered during the 1950s by the Jesuits, who used it as a dormitory. Today, it serves as the Ranger Station.

Burdell Barns

This well-preserved structure is actually two barns. The older one, with a white cupola, is an excellent example of early 19th century rural architecture. Carefully-crafted mortise and tenon joints are visible throughout. The "newer" rectangular barn off the west corner of the original dates back to around 1882. Associated ranch buildings include a blacksmith shop, a saltbox house, and a ranch superintendent's house.

Kitchen Rock

This large boulder is located southeast of the original Burdell Barn and contains numerous mortars of varying size. It was used to pound acorn meats into a fine flour for preparation of acorn mush, an important staple of the Miwok. Many people would gather near the stone, not only to prepare food, but also to socialize.

Coast Miwok Village

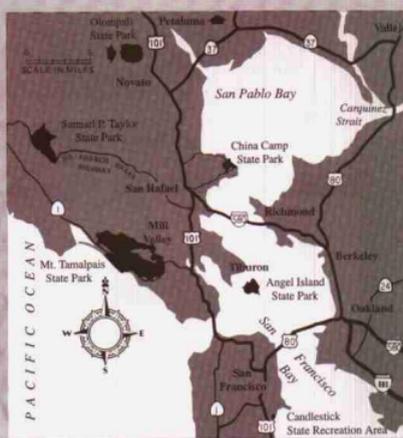
This re-construction of a Coast Miwok village began in 1994 with the help of the Coast Miwok descendants. The village will be used as an interpretive and educational site.

Please Remember:

- Bicycles are not permitted on the hiking trails.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash (6-foot maximum) and are not permitted on the hiking trails.

If you would like to help preserve Olompali State Historic Park, please contact The Olompali People, a nonprofit cooperating association that has been with the park since 1982. Their address is: P.O. Box 1400, Novato, CA 94948.

Olompali State Historic Park
P.O. Box 1016
Novato, CA 94948
(415) 892-3383



California State Park Information

For information about State Park hours of operation, fees, annual passes or specific park regulations, you may contact your nearest State Park. Please check the front of your telephone directory under State Government, Department of Parks and Recreation.

For general State Park information, contact the Public Affairs Office at P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001 or call (916)653-6995.

For camping reservations call MISTIX at (800)444-7275.

For a catalog of State Park merchandise or for a listing of all State Park publications and videos, write to California State Park Store, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001 or call (916)653-4000.

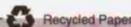


CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

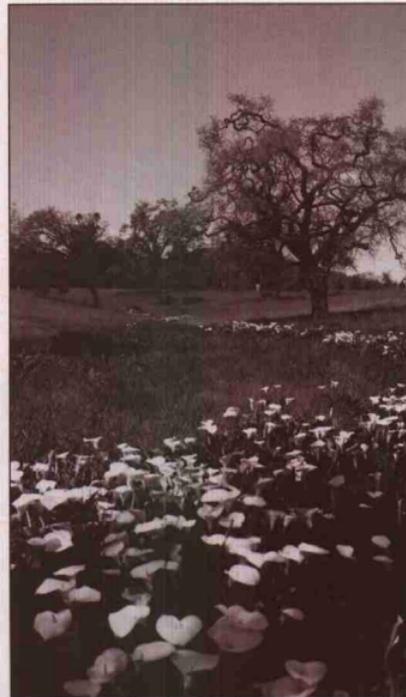
PETE WILSON
Governor

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Secretary for Resources

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Olompali State Historic Park



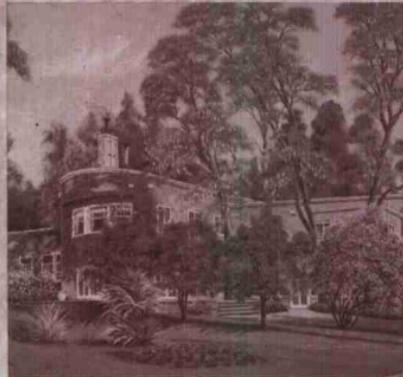
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Welcome

Olompali State Historic Park, on the east-facing slopes of the Marin Peninsula, overlooks the Petaluma River and San Pablo Bay. The park is 2 1/2 miles north of the City of Novato and thirty-five miles north of San Francisco on U.S. 101. The park entrance is accessible only to southbound traffic from Highway 101. Northbound vehicles should continue north past the park and make a safe u-turn in order to travel south and enter the park.

This 700-acre park features several historic buildings, including the Camilo Ynitia Adobe, registered as a California Historical Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to historic sites and buildings, the park offers beautiful views of the coast mountain ranges, the Petaluma River basin and San Francisco Bay.

Visitors enjoy hiking on trails through the natural scenery of the countryside. Other activities include picnicking, horseback riding and touring the historic grounds.



History

The name "olompali" comes from the "lost" Coast Miwok language and likely means "southern village" or "southern people." The Coast Miwok inhabited at least one site within the area of the present-day park continuously since about 500 A.D. Nature's abundance provided these people with shellfish from the bay, acorns from the oaks, game from the hillsides, and birds stopping along the Pacific Flyway. Perhaps because of this abundance, the Miwok village at Olompali seems to have been one of the largest in what is now Marin County. By 1300 A.D. it was a major Miwok trade center.

Archaeologists have found tens of thousands of artifacts within the area of the present-day park. Perhaps the most spectacular of these discoveries was an Elizabethan silver sixpence dated 1567. It was found in a soil layer deposited (according to carbon dating analysis) in approximately 1600 A.D., roughly the time of Sir Francis Drake's landing in Marin County. The coin is presently in the collection of the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley and is thought to be one of the earliest known artifacts representing contact between European and North American Native American culture.

During California's mission period, 258 Olompali Indians were baptized. Though this process may have been well-intended, the cultural disruption of missionization, coupled with disease, starvation, and imprisonment, brought about a high death rate among the Miwoks that quickly and almost completely destroyed them as a people.

In October 1843, General Mariano Vallejo petitioned the governor of the Mexican province of Alta California to grant two leagues of land (nearly 8,900 acres) at Olompali to Camilo Ynitia, a Christianized Olompali Miwok. Ynitia was the last "hoipu" or head man of the Olompali village. He traded wheat with the Russians at Fort Ross and

livestock with the Mexicans at Sonoma. His land grant was later confirmed by the U.S. Land Commission, making Ynitia the only Native American in northern California to have such a land title confirmed.

During the "Bear Flag Revolt" in June 1846, a brief, but violent skirmish took place between a troop of American Bear Flaggers and a Mexican force gathered at Camilo Ynitia's adobe. Several men were wounded and one man was killed, the only fatality associated with the Bear Flag Revolt. The fight was later popularized as "the Battle of Olompali."

In 1852, Ynitia sold most of his land to James Black, the county assessor, who later became one of the largest landowners in Marin County. Black gave the ranch to his daughter, Mary, upon her wedding in 1863 to Galen Burdell, a prominent early San Francisco dentist.

The Burdells, and eventually their son, James Sr., made major renovations at Olompali, transforming it into a palatial country estate, including a 26-room mansion, complete with a Victorian formal garden. Most of the existing structures were built by the Burdells in the late 1800s. The Burdell garden, with its brick-lined walkways, conservatory, water fountain, gazebos, lily pond, exotic plants, and rock work made Rancho Olompali a showpiece home in the area.

The estate remained in the Burdell family until 1943, when it was sold to Court Harrington. A short time later, Harrington sold the property to the University of San Francisco, which initially used it as a Jesuit retreat.

During the 1960s, the University of San Francisco "sold" Olompali several times. Each time, the

buyers defaulted and the property reverted back to the University. The various owners rented the ranch to various people. Their most famous tenant, the rock band Grateful Dead, lived here in 1966. One of their record album covers features the oak-covered hillsides of Olompali. During the Grateful Dead's brief stay, the ranch became a gathering place for San Francisco's rock musicians. Icons such as Janis Joplin and Grace Slick visited Olompali.

Don McCoy, a local businessman-turned-"hippie," leased Olompali in 1967 and turned it into a utopian or hippie commune for a group known as "The Chosen Family." The group had 23 core members, but attracted as many as 100 followers. A fire, in 1969, caused by faulty electrical wiring, destroyed the Burdell mansion, forcing the commune members to move out.

An archaeological excavation during the 1970s revealed the rich significance of the site. The excavations raised public awareness that the "thread of history" could be lost if the property was developed for residential use. The State of California, together with Marin County, purchased the property in 1977 to preserve it as a state historic park.



