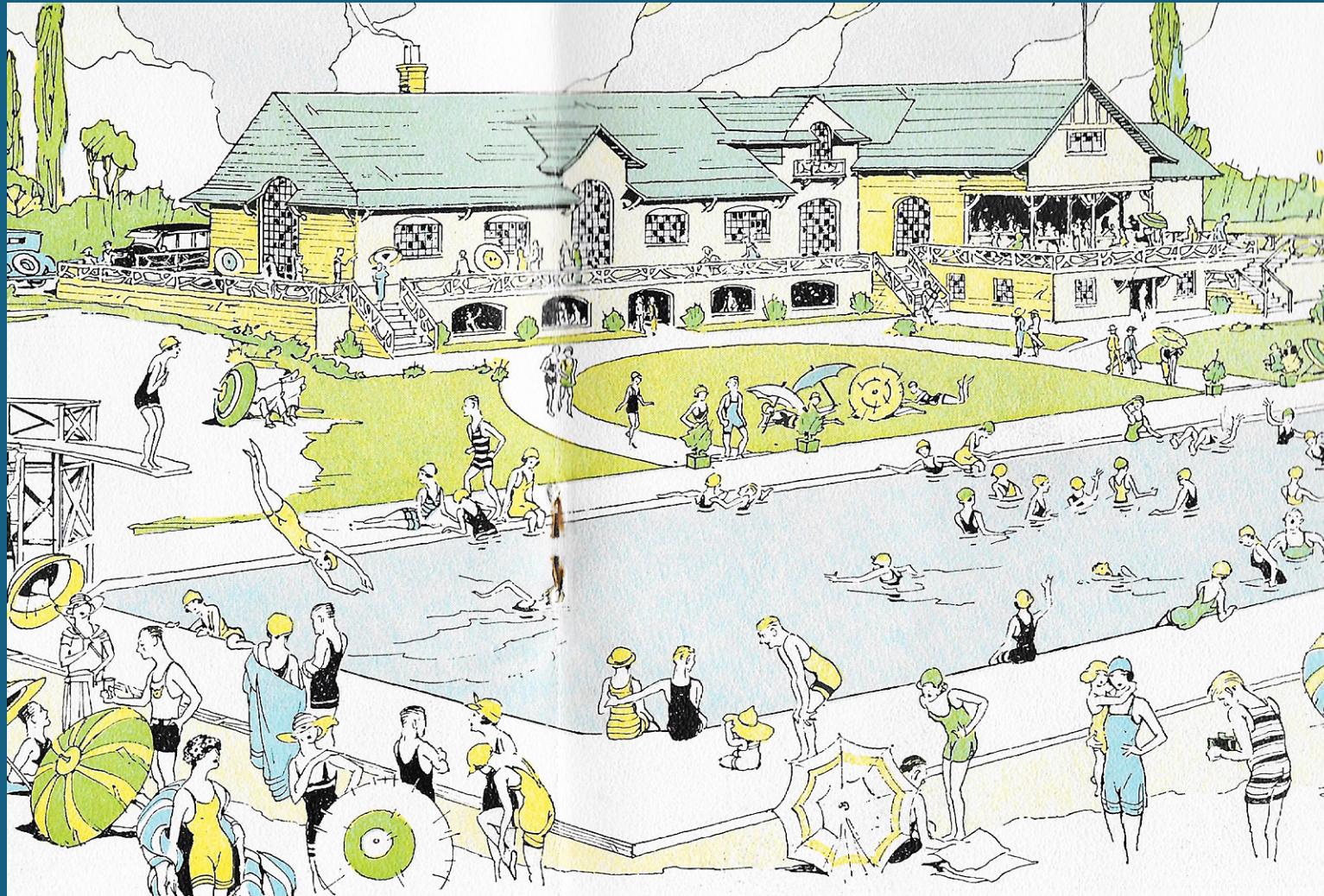
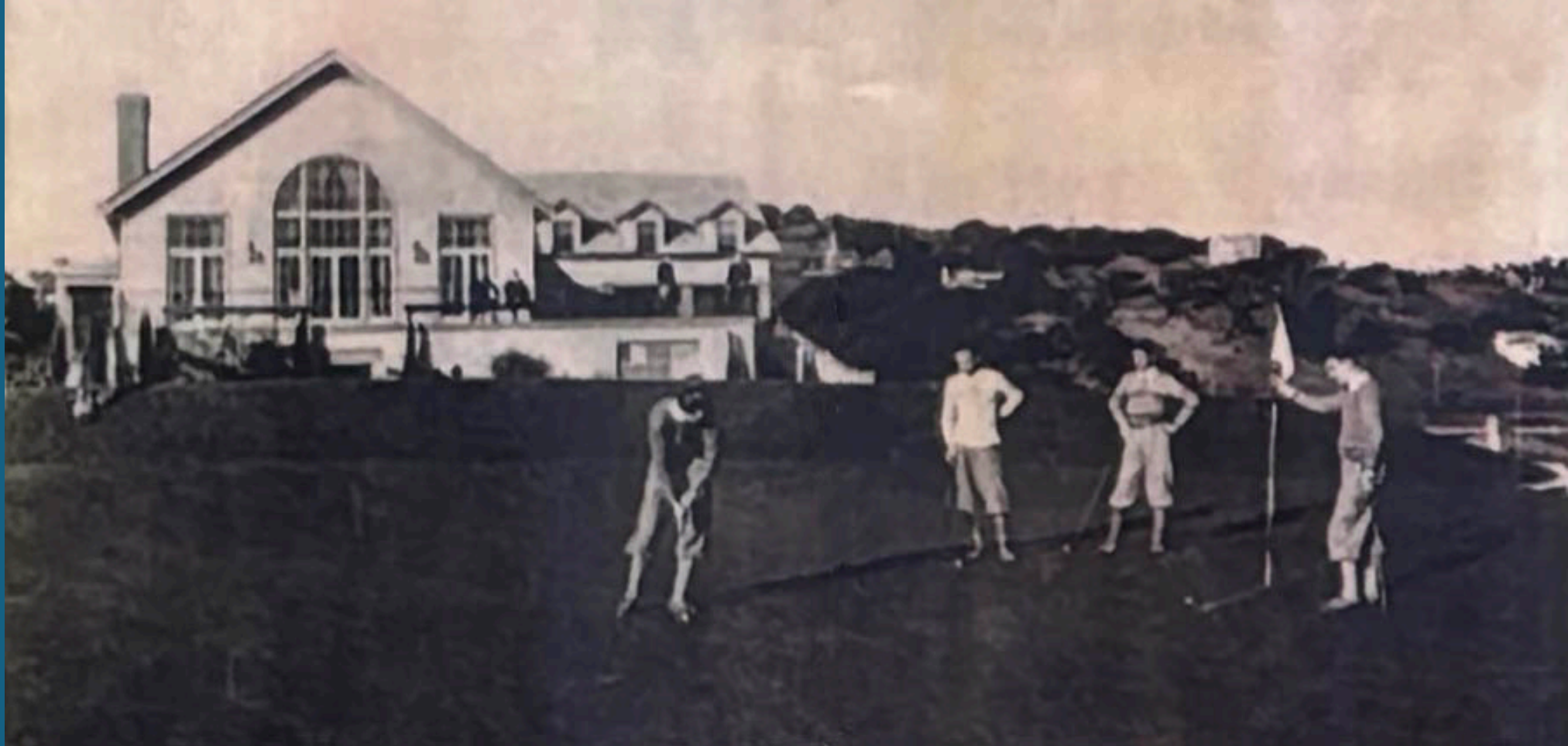


Our building is 100 years old!

Come along as we tell its story in historic photos
and tales tucked away in dusty files!



The Belle Monti Country Club, the cornerstone of the Belmont Country Club Estates completed in the fall of 1925, was the first piece of the grand enterprise of Lee Monroe, Arthur Lyon and Lawrence Miller, San Francisco real estate developers who saw the potential for a “little Hillsborough” in the hills south of San Mateo.



Two golf courses were promised over the 1,000 acres that Monroe, Lyon and Miller acquired for Belmont Country Club Estates, one 9-hole and one 18-hole, but apparently only six holes were ever finished. This photo appeared in a sales brochure published in 1926.

**EVERYBODY IS
DOING IT IN**

**BELLE MONTI
COUNTRY CLUB**

**How
About You, Kid?**





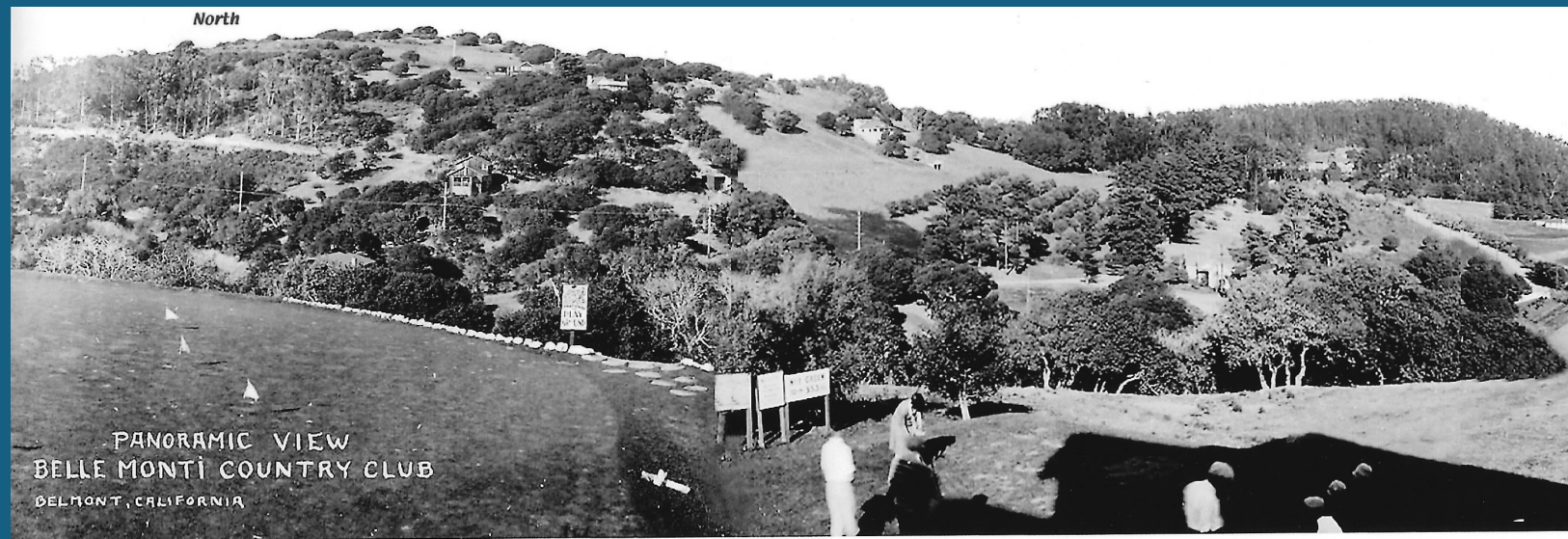
This map was the centerpiece of a hand-printed brochure for the sales campaign. Those of you who live near the church may still see “Belmont Country Club Estates” on your property tax bill. If you do, your land was included in the subdivision that was intended to extend almost all the way down to El Camino Real.



The Belle Monti Country Club, the anchor and major draw for the sales effort, was the first piece to be completed at a cost of \$65,000. The first event at the country club is believed to have been a holiday party in December 1925. Every purchaser of a lot got a free membership in the club.



A huge “swimming tank” was added on the east side, with a children’s wading pool at the north end, at a cost of \$10,000. From the size of the crowds in the photos, the pool was a great draw. It was filled in by Kaiser Corp. (which purchased the property in 1950) for a parking lot, and that’s how it remains today.



The view of the Belmont hills to the northeast from the veranda of the country club.



The Dining Room of the clubhouse was decorated informally and remains much the same today as it did in the 1927 photo. The columns and the ceiling partitions are unchanged. Although we have no photos, the kitchen appears to have occupied the same space as today's kitchen. Carol Swift Robinson, who lived in the building as a child during World War II, remembers it much as it is now — without the modern appliances.



Foursomes gather at the first tee at the golf course to the west of the Belle Monte Country Club clubhouse. The course itself was known as the Hillcrest Golf Course which was slated to include a 9-hole and an 18-hole course. Reportedly, only six holes of the first course were ever completed.

Above, a couple watch the action on the golf course from the veranda outside the Dining Room. Note that the railings are the same ones today — although they have since been painted many times.





This photo, from the sales pamphlet, is the only known picture of the original ballroom with its stone fireplace. The vaulted wooden ceiling beams, the fireplace and the westside windows are still present in the church Sanctuary today.

The wall sconces with the crossed golf clubs remain in the Sanctuary of the church. Be sure to take a peek.



MONROE LYON & MILLER

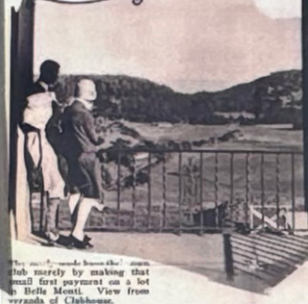
OWNERS & BUILDERS OF BELLE MONTI, APTOS BEACH AND LOS ALTOS COUNTRY CLUB PROPERTIES



Notice the strategic position of "Belle Monti." Only a short distance to San Francisco over State highway. Close to Stanford University, Notre Dame College, Belmont School for Boys; excellent public schools. Overlooking San Francisco Bay; close to Dumbarton Bridge. Commuting time to San Francisco, 37 minutes; auto time, 40 to 50 minutes.



Care comfort characterizes the club life at Belle Monti where neighbors and friends gather.



The view from the veranda of the clubhouse. View from veranda of clubhouse.



A swimming pool right at the doors of the Club for the pleasure of the owner members.



An elementary school near Belle Monti.

From among the oak trees of the ridges that surround the golf course one may enjoy a view of many cities. From this point Berkeley, San Mateo, Burlingame, Millbrae, San Bruno and South San Francisco are plainly visible.

DON'T DELAY—BELLE MONTI PROPERTIES WILL SOON BE SOLD OUT

In a few more months the opportunity to be an original purchaser of choice Belle Monti residential lots will be gone, and the Tract will be completely sold out. A large lot with macadam streets and water and electric connections are included without assessment. To every purchaser goes an owner's membership in a magnificent Country Club, with two clubhouses, two golf courses, tennis courts, handball court, Roman swimming plunge and children's eight-acre playground.

(Right) Arbor Avenue, along which will be built the homes of many happy owners and club owners.



Dame Nature was the architect that prepared this gentle slope for a fairway at Belle Monti.

SUREST AND QUICKEST WAY TO WEALTH

Authoritative statistics show that within the past five years Peninsula property values have increased from 200% to 300% or more. But it is within the coming five years that the greatest developments are scheduled to take place: Merging of San Francisco and San Mateo Counties; building of 125-foot highway down the Bay, to be the finest in the State; the building of deep water channels to Redwood City, with attendant new industries and cheap rapid transit, which is bound to follow. These factors, together with rapidly increasing population, and the natural increase in property values, mean

DOLLARS IN YOUR POCKET IF YOU ACT NOW

Surely, you can see every foot of land down the Peninsula gradually creeping up to real and substantial profit. Have the foresight to grasp the opportunity, especially when the outlay is so small, with monthly payments scarcely missed, and you will find that you have, within a short time, built at Belle Monti a real ESTATE worth thousands. And, in addition, you will have a club membership worth hundreds, and an interest in all the club assets—173 acres choice land; an \$80,000 clubhouse; two golf courses; golf lodge; big outdoor swimming pool; tennis and handball courts; fully equipped children's playgrounds, etc.

INVESTMENT REQUIRES AS LOW AS \$10 PER MONTH
BANK AT BELLE MONTI



The former Ralston home at Belle Monti. Now the Notre Dame College.

At the first tree. What an inviting prospect for the beginning of an afternoon of sport!



Spanish architecture lends itself appropriately to the San-Geronimo hills at Belle Monti. Photograph of Mrs. Morton's home near the clubhouse.



A commodious dining room, with excellent service, is a feature greatly appreciated by the owner members.



The first allotment of homesites sold well with Monroe, Lyon and Miller using modern marketing techniques (free beer, hot dogs and a country club membership for every buyer) that had worked in Los Angeles.

Note that the developers are now calling the community—not just the development—Belle Monti.

Also, it's pretty clear that some of the photos used in brochure were not taken locally.

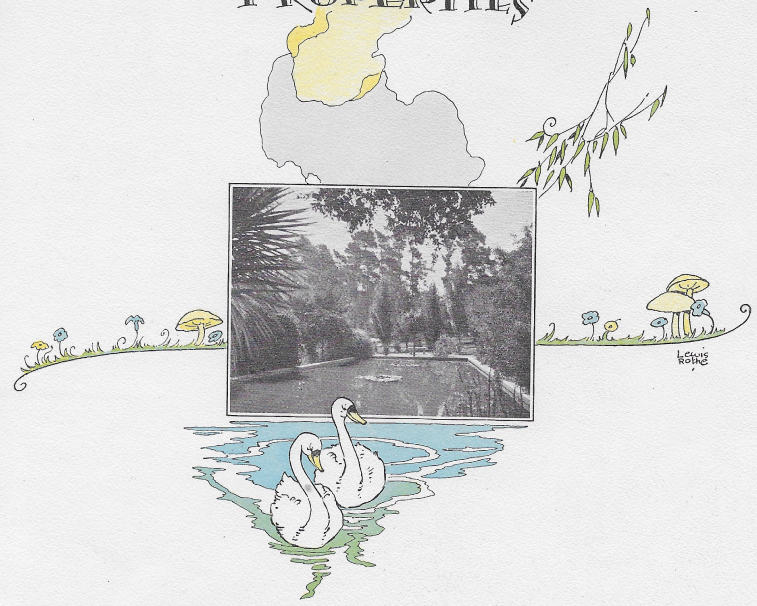
What do we know about Lee Monroe, Arthur Lyon and Lawrence Miller, the San Francisco entrepreneurs who saw a real estate bonanza in the hills south of San Mateo in 1924? Not a great deal other than they were extravagant in their vision of an upper-middle class community of vacation homes and cabins. All three are memorialized with street names in the city that was to become Belmont in 1926.



We do know that there was a fourth partner, whose name never appears anywhere in the real estate promotion or on street signs. His name was Joseph Greenberg, who may have had to remain in the shadows because of the Jewish tint to his name. We found him in a handwritten ledger that recorded the stock ownership of the corporation. So, 100 years later, we are delighted to celebrate Greenberg along with Monroe, Lyon and Miller.

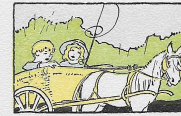
"The Happiest Homes in All Creation
Are Homes Surrounded by Recreation,"

BELMONT Country Club PROPERTIES



BELMONT COUNTRY CLUB PROPERTIES INC.
* SALES EXECUTIVES, *
ENTIRE FOURTH FLOOR - 912 SUTTER ST. SAN FRANCISCO.
MONROE - LYON & MILLER,
REPRESENTATIVE OWNERS.

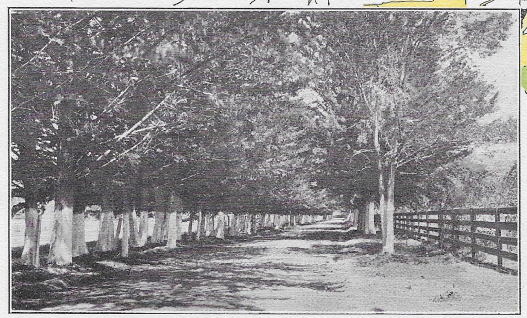
The developers spared no expense in presenting Belmont Country Club Estates as a premier investment. This brochure was printed on linen vellum with gold leaf! (And with more photos that don't look particularly local!)



"Delle Monti"



LIFE is filled with endless joy,
To those who play betime,
For in their work from day to day,
They intermingle thoughts of play,
Which help them in their climb.
And when some problem taxes hard,
Their energy and strength,
They play the game with greater stress,
And holler "fore" with eagerness,
And so win out at length.
But to the man who works and works,
Without some recreation,
A hardship added to his load,
Becomes a rock in labor's road,
And off his ruination.
It is a fact none can deny,
That everything we do
In some sure way connects itself
With something lodged on childhood's shelf,
And guides our actions thru.



Here is the ideal place to ride
Or spin until you're satisfied.

WHAT is the BOOK VALUE of BELLE MONTI?



BELLE MONTI CLUB

ASSETS

18-HOLE
GOLF COURSE \$240,000

9-HOLE
GOLF COURSE \$103,400

COUNTRY CLUB
BUILDING
SWIMMING TANK
TENNIS COURTS
CHILDREN'S
PLAYGROUND
ACTUAL COST

\$101,817

BELMONT MUTUAL
WATER COMPANY,
to insure water at
company's cost,
tanks, pumps, etc. . . . \$45,253

TOTAL . . \$490,470

LEDGER

NO RED INK

Developers agree to deliver free and clear
of all incumbrances the golf courses
club house, completely improved, to every
purchaser of a building site
in Belle Monti for

\$ 5 D and
O \$1.25
W
N per
week

Total purchase price as
low as \$300

THIS INCLUDES OWNER'S
MEMBERSHIP IN EVERY
BELLE MONTI ACTIVITY

TRY AND DUPLICATE THIS
ANYWHERE

WHEN THIS CLUB HAS 1000 ACTIVE MEMBERS (WHICH THIS DRIVE WILL PRODUCE) EACH MEMBERSHIP WILL HAVE AN ACTUAL VALUE OF \$490.47 IN THE CLUBHOUSE, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE VALUE OF THE BUILDING SITE (AT LEAST \$300.00). WE OFFER YOU A \$790.47 VALUE FOR AS LOW AS \$300 AT \$5.00 DOWN AND \$1.25 PER WEEK.

FIGURE IT OUT YOURSELF	1000) \$490,470.00
VALUE OF OWNERSHIP	\$490.47
WHAT WE ASK FOR LOT	\$300.00
WHAT YOU GET FOR \$300.00	\$790.47

HURRY! THIS OFFER SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL HURRY!

The lots are beautiful, some are wooded, some have marine view. There's no red tape. Drive down the highway to Belmont and turn in at Belmont Canyon Road. DRIVE TO THE CLUBHOUSE, a representative will show you the club and property and make out your membership card.

JUST BRING \$5, YOUR GOLF STICKS AND SWIMMING SUIT

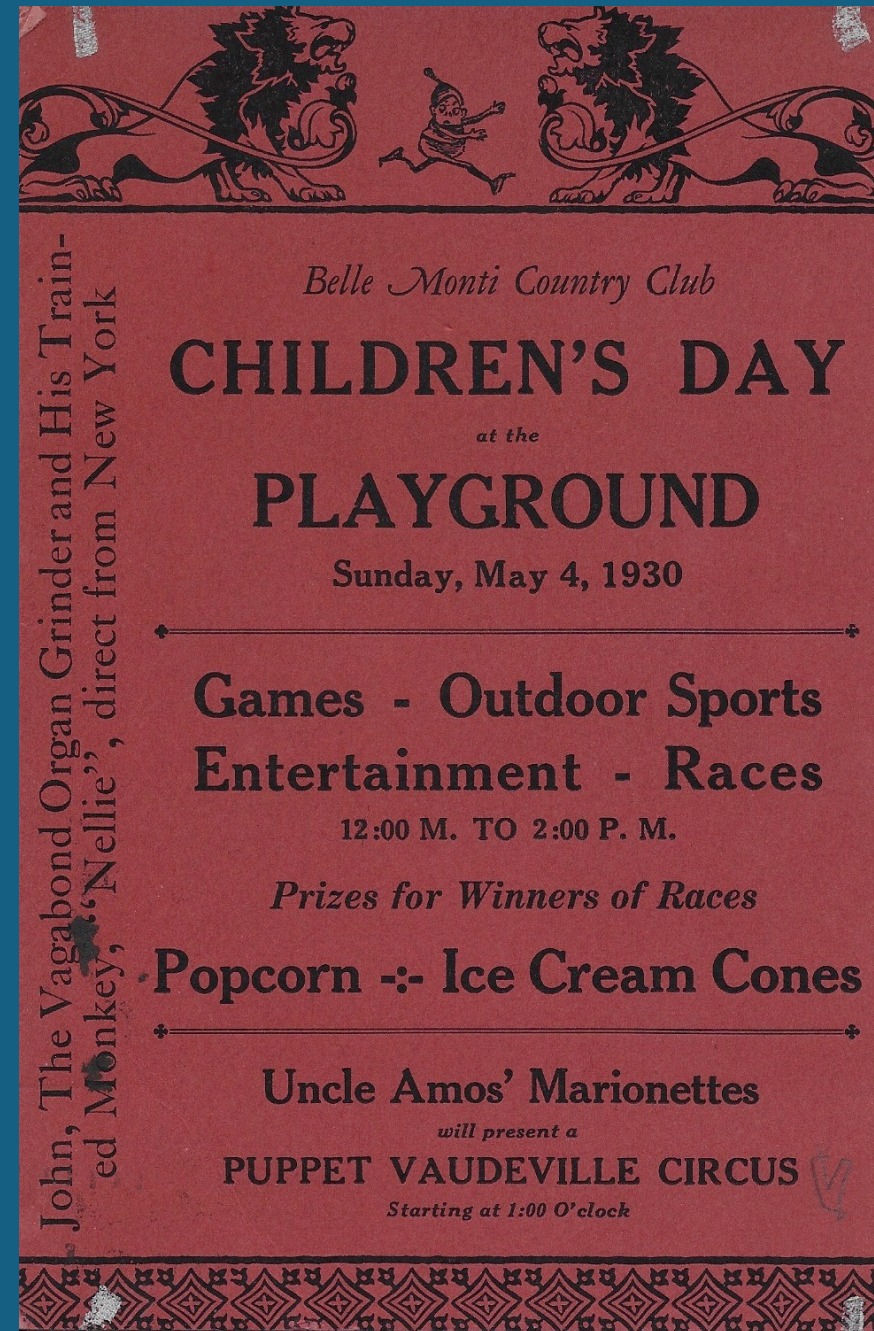
"The three entrepreneurs would have been better advised to have invested less in the glammers of promotion and more in the necessities of paving and utilities for their new customers," Ria Elena Dewing wrote in *Heritage of the Wooded Hills: A Belmont History*.

The corporation foundered under the weight of lawsuits and liens from utility providers and unhappy customers. They tried to use the country club as leverage by opening it to well-heeled locals, but the next group of properties was never brought to market.

Belle Monti Country Club was still viable in May 1930, according to this flyer for a Children's Day at the Playground, but the corporation was seriously underwater and undercapitalized after the stock market crash of 1929.

In the early '30s, the mortgage was foreclosed on the clubhouse and remaining property. The building stood shuttered and in disrepair through most of the 1930s, and rumor has it that it may have served as a house of ill-repute!

For a brief moment in 1937, the city of Belmont negotiated to buy the property but dropped out when it proved to be too pricey!



EXTRA! WAR!

Chronicle Home
Carrier Service
All San Francisco area
homes are served with
this paper by the
Chronicle Home
Carrier Service.
Delivered by
the carrier.
No extra charge.
Delivered promptly.

San Francisco Chronicle
THE CITY'S ONLY HOME-OWNED NEWSPAPER

FOUNDED 1895—VOL. CLIII, NO. 146 CO. SAN FRANCISCO, MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1941 DAILY 5 CENTS, SUNDAY 10 CENTS

COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURES		
	High	Low
San Francisco	60	40
San Jose	61	39
Los Angeles	70	48
Seattle	51	32
Portland	51	32
Local Forecast	Fair, showers from 10 to 12.	

JAPAN ATTACKS U. S.!



25 YEARS AGO TODAY
IN S. F. HEADLINES

**LOYD GEORGE ACCEPTS
BRITISH PREMIERSHIP**
CONVICT WALKS OUT AT
SAN QUENTIN... SEA-TO-
STA STEAMER LINE ELI-
NAICED TO COBE RATES
STREET CARS HERE
CARRY MORE PASSENGERS
THAN IN L. A.

HERE'S EVERYDAY TOP
HEAD NEWS! More Robt.
Burns Panatela de Luxe have
been smoked than all other
high-grade panatelas com-
bined. And more and more
young men are finding in this
smooth smoking, smooth look-
ing favorite just the combina-
tion of suave distinction and
sheer smoking pleasure they
seek.

Try a Robt. Burns Panatela
de Luxe today. Judge it by
appearance... judge it by
smoking satisfaction... and
you'll discover why it is the
world's leading panatela.

Robt. Burns Panatela
de Luxe 10¢
The Sophisticated
of Cigars

Hawaii and Manila Bombed; Chute Troops Off Honolulu!

**Bulletins
HONOLULU, Dec. 7 (AP)—**A naval engagement is in progress off of Honolulu, with at least one black enemy aircraft carrier in the action against Pearl Harbor defenses.

Some aerial attacks are in progress in the area near Honolulu. At 10 a. m. Honolulu time today, the Japanese reported that they were in contact with the U. S. Navy. The Japanese reported that they were in contact with the U. S. Navy. The Japanese reported that they were in contact with the U. S. Navy.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 (AP)—The White House announced at 3:35 p. m. (EST) today that the army had just received word that an American vessel, believed to be a cargo ship, had been sending out signals of distress apparent from San Francisco.

The Time
War planes were coming out of the sky in the Pacific. When first reports were received that the Japanese "warship" machine, it was 2:25 Monday in Manila.

**Eyewitness Reports Sound
Of Terrific Cannonading
In Pearl Harbor Area**

HONOLULU, Dec. 7 (UP)—Parachute troops were sighted off Harbor Point today.

By EUGENE BURNS
HONOLULU, Dec. 7 (AP)—At least two Japanese bombers, their wings bearing the insignia of the Rising Sun, appeared over Honolulu at about 7:35 a. m. (Honolulu time) today and dropped bombs.

The sound of cannons firing comes to me here in Honolulu as I telephone this story to the San Francisco Associated Press office.

Reports say the Japanese bombers scored two hits, one at Hickam Field, air corps post on Oahu island, and another at Pearl Harbor, setting an oil tank afire.

Shortly before I started talking on the trans-Pacific telephone, I saw a formation of five Japanese planes flying over Honolulu.

The sound of cannonading coming from the direction of Pearl Harbor has been continuing for an hour and a half. So far, there are no reports of casualties. No bombs have fallen in Honolulu itself, so far as I could determine before making this call.

There is much commotion going on, with planes in the air and anti-aircraft firing. The citizens of Honolulu have been cleared from the streets by military and naval units, assisted by



THIS IS WHERE IT STARTED: The Japanese yesterday attacked Hawaii and all naval bases in the Philippines. Japanese troops were also reported en route to Thailand.

**Bolivia Gets
Lease-Lend
35 Cars of Nazi
Wounded Daily**
WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 (AP)—The United States signed a loan-lease agreement with Bolivia today that will provide for the delivery of 35 cars to the Bolivian government. The cars are to be used for the transport of wounded soldiers from the Bolivian front.

**FDR Calls Cabinet;
Army and Navy Ordered
To Battle Stations**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 (AP)—The President decided today after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and Manila to call an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet for 8:30 o'clock tonight and to have congressional leaders of both parties join the conference at 9 p. m.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 (AP)—Japanese airplanes today attacked American defense bases at Hawaii and Manila, and President Roosevelt ordered the army and navy to carry out undisclosed orders prepared for the defense of the United States.

The White House said Japan had attacked America's vital outposts in the Pacific—Hawaii and Manila—at 3:20 p. m. (EST) and that so far as was known the attacks were still in progress.

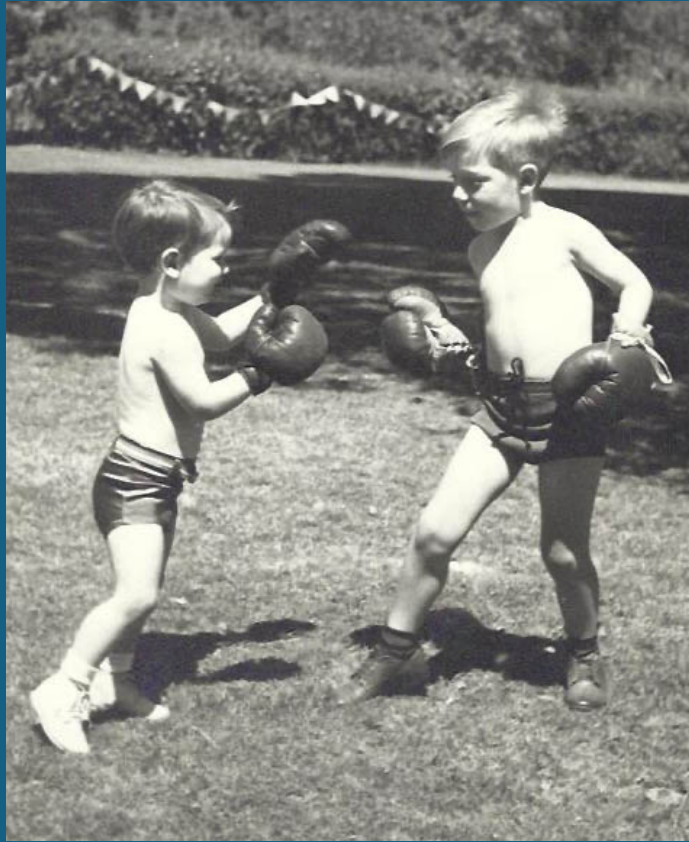
Announcing the President's action for the protection of American territory, Presidential Secretary Stephen Early declared that so far as is known now, the attacks were "made wholly without warning" when both nations were at peace—and were delivered within an hour or so of the time that the Japanese Am-

The attack on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, 1941, opened a new chapter in the life of the long-shuttered clubhouse. It was acquired by the military for use first as a boarding school for children whose parents were deployed.

The school isn't mentioned in any of the written histories of Belmont, but a "graduate" of the school — George Swift — returned to Belmont in 2022 and called the Belmont Historical Society to ask if they had any information about it. They didn't, but a note was left in the Belle Monti Country Club file about that call.

George Swift and his sister, Carol Swift Robinson, both in their 80s now, remember their time in Belmont during the war and were happy to talk to us about it.

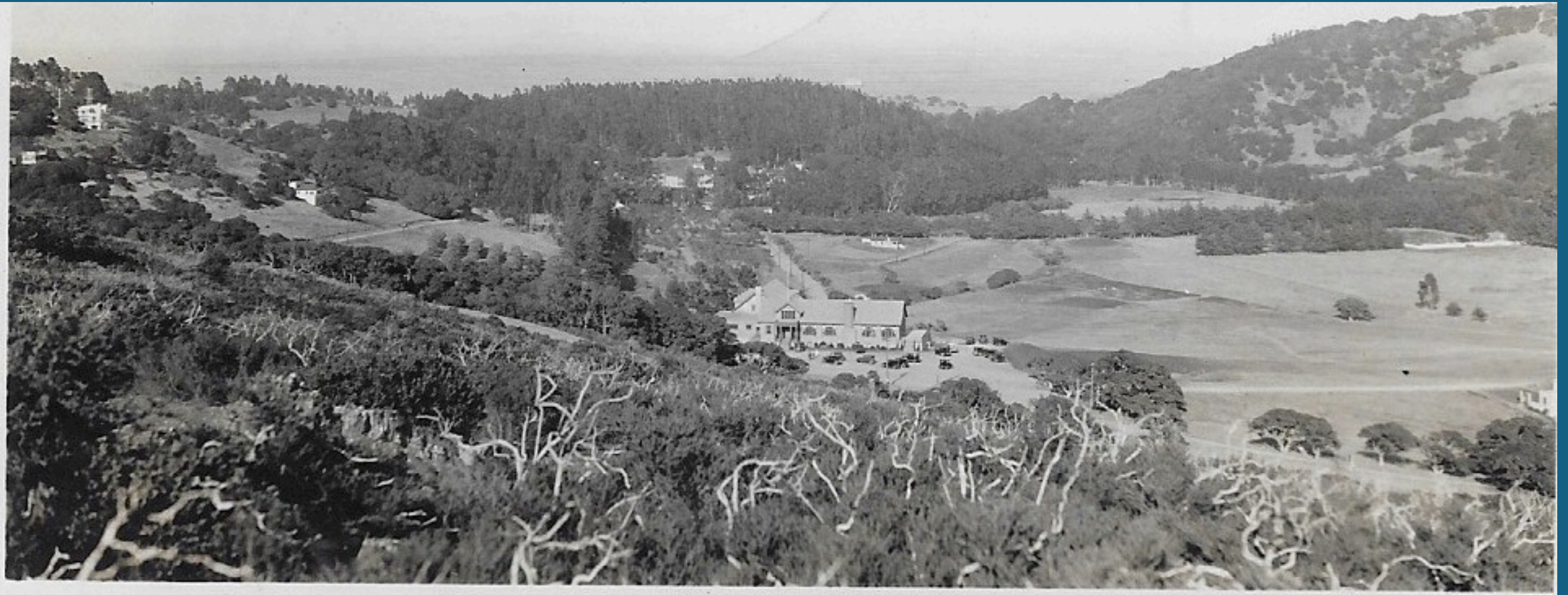
George Swift (on the left) learning to box at the former country club turned boarding school.



Carol and George Swift as children at the boarding school.



Carol was 5 and her brother just 2 when their mother, a civilian worker at the Presidio in San Francisco, was told that it wasn't safe for the children to stay in the city (which was expecting an attack like Pearl Harbor). She was told about a boarding school for children of military parents in Belmont, and she took them both there. George was too little to remember much about the school (except that he "didn't like it one bit"), but Carol has clear memories of four dormitories for "big girls and little girls and big boys and little boys" in what was the shower and locker rooms of the country club on the lower level of the clubhouse. Upstairs on the main floor was the kitchen and dining room where a few desks were set up even though, as Carol says, it wasn't much of a school. "By the time, I got to a real school, I was set back a grade because I was so far behind." She recalls 20-30 children there at different times.



The boarding school in the clubhouse (center in this photo from the 1930s) was run by two sisters, Miss Evie and Miss Elsie. Their niece, Miss Ann, did most of the cooking. They put Carol to work doing laundry and watching the younger children. On Saturday afternoons, trips to the matinee for cartoons and westerns at the Belmont Theater offered a break in the routine, and at Christmas neighbors brought presents. “Sometimes, my mother would come down from San Francisco and play the piano for us,” she said.



Classical figurines like this one served as out-of-bounds markers for the golf course.

Turns out that the huge swimming tank was George's favorite place to be. He learned to swim in it as a toddler and, according to his sister, they had to pull him out when it was time to come in.

Carol, on the other hand, hated the pool and preferred to spend her free time watching butterflies on the grassy slopes that once were the manicured greens of the golf course.

When the war ended in August 1945, parents showed up to pick up their kids — everyone but Carol and George, whose parents had divorced during the war. Their mother had remarried and moved to San Bernardino. So, Miss Elsie and Miss Evie piled them into their station wagon and drove south to leave them on the doorstep of their mother and new stepfather.

"He didn't want us," Carol said. "He never did."



This iconic stucco kiosk, across Alameda de las Pulgas from the church, served as a sales office for Belmont Country Club Estates. The city refurbished it in 2014.

Dewing's history of Belmont tells us that during World War II, "the Army, which had an anti-aircraft camp where Nesbitt School is now, took over the building, making it double as an officers' club and a school for the Army's illiterate."

That doesn't square well with the Swift children's account of life at the boarding school, but we do know that after the war, the Army used the clubhouse for weapons research of some sort.

In 1948, the American Institution of Radiation occupied at least the bottom floor of the building and stocked the pool with fish for some of their experiments which remain hidden from history.

Then in 1950 the Kaiser Foundation bought the property to do cancer research. They drained the pool, filled it with dirt and paved a parking lot over it. That's pretty much the way it remains today.



The Congregational Church of Belmont in 1980.

In 2023, the First Congregational Church of Redwood City and the Congregational Church of Belmont merged to create the Congregational Church of the Peninsula which continues to occupy the former Belle Monti Country Club clubhouse, built in 1925.

Kaiser sold the property — the building essentially as it is to this day and more than four acres of land — to the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ in 1953 for \$45,000. It became the Congregational Church of Belmont, fostered by the Congregational Church of San Mateo.

With modest alterations to the original Belle Monti Country Club design, the ballroom became the Sanctuary — which still sports wall sconces with crossed golf clubs! — and the Dining Room the social hall. Downstairs the showers and dressing rooms were converted into a nursery and Sunday School rooms as well as the home for Carlmont Parents Nursery School in the 1960s.

Bob Donovan recalls that the church sold off several lots below the Back 40 on Academy Street in the mid-'60s to pay off the mortgage that (we assume) was taken out to pay back the Conference.



Our building has been a country club intended to entertain the wealthy that housed the children of servicemen and women as well weapons research only to become, for the last 70 years, a church dedicated to comforting the afflicted.

Not a bad 100 years!