

China Camp State Park is located on the southwest shore of San Pablo Bay, just three miles from downtown San Rafael in Marin County. The park is easily reached from Highway 101 and is just a thirty-minute drive from San Francisco by way of the Golden Gate Bridge.

The 1,512-acre park has a variety of natural scenery and some fine trails along San Pedro Ridge. Magnificent panoramic views of the north bay area include San Pablo Bay, the north bay counties of Napa, Solano, and Sonoma, the East Bay Hills, Mount Diablo, Angel Island, the San Francisco Peninsula and Mount Tamalpais.

Maritime influences result in a pleasant and moderate climate at China Camp, while high ridges to the west protect the park from fog that often moves in from the ocean to cover the San Francisco Bay Area. Consequently, China Camp enjoys some of the best weather in the Bay Area. In fact, the park enjoys more than two hundred fog-free days per year.

Popular activities at China Camp include hiking, biking, horseback riding, picnicking, camping, boating, fishing, swimming and windsurfing. The human history of this area adds still another dimension to the park. China Camp Village is especially interesting to artists and photographers.

HISTORY

For thousands of years, this area supported the Indian people we now refer to as Coast Miwok. They maintained permanent settlements here and fished, hunted deer and smaller animals, and collected acorns and other plants for food, clothing and medicine. Their way of life ended during the 19th century with the establishment of Spanish missions. Thereafter, cultural disruption, disease, imprisonment and starvation resulted in a very high death rate.

During the 1830s and 1840s, much of coastal California was parceled out to Spanish Rancheros. Rancho San Pedro, Santa Margarita y las Gallinas was granted to Timoteo Murphy. After his death in the late 1850s, the rancho was subdivided and the area of the present-day park was purchased by John and George McNear in 1868. They used much of the land for grazing, but they also manufactured bricks, quarried basalt on San Pedro Point, and shipped their products by barge throughout the Bay Area.

China Camp, 1889.



China Camp residents, circa 1900.



Abandoned buildings, after 1911 law prohibited Chinese shrimp nets.



Yick Yuen store and clam diggers shed, 1954.



Covered storage for shrimp, circa 1935.



Sorting shrimp in bamboo trays, circa 1930.



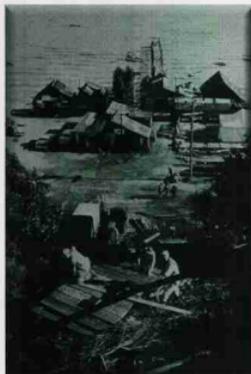
Baskets of shrimp in San Francisco wholesale market, circa 1932.



Weekend crowd, 1930s fishing season.



Quan Hong Quock on steps of his store, circa 1900.



Construction of "Blood Alley" movie set, 1954.

THE CHINESE

The Chinese, like many other immigrant groups, were lured to California by the prospect of mining gold. Other economic opportunities kept them here. China Camp was one of twenty or thirty fishing villages that once dotted the shores of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. Many residents were from the city of Canton, in the maritime province of Kwantung, China. Fishermen by trade in their native land, they gravitated to the industry they knew best.

San Pablo Bay provided abundant resources for their trade. Harvesting grass shrimp came to be their specialty.

*"Over ninety percent of the shrimp netted by these villages was dried on the hillsides behind the camps and then shipped to China—or to Chinese communities throughout the United States. After the 1880s, increasing pressure from competing fishermen led to passage of a series of restrictive laws. Finally, in 1911, the Chinese bag nets—the only efficient nets then known to the shrimpers—were outlawed."**

Despite all this, a few Chinese fishermen managed to continue fishing for shrimp by developing new techniques. During the 1880s, nearly 500 people lived in the Chinese fishing village that was located in what is now China Camp State Park. There were three general stores, a marine supply store and a barbershop. Now, all that remains of the village are a few buildings along the water's edge, with only fragments of foundations to show where homes and shops once stood.

The history of the Chinese and of their culture in California is an integral part of any thoughtful visit to China Camp State Park. Several historic structures have been preserved and an informative museum exhibit makes it easy for visitors to imagine a way of life that has been generally forgotten in California history.

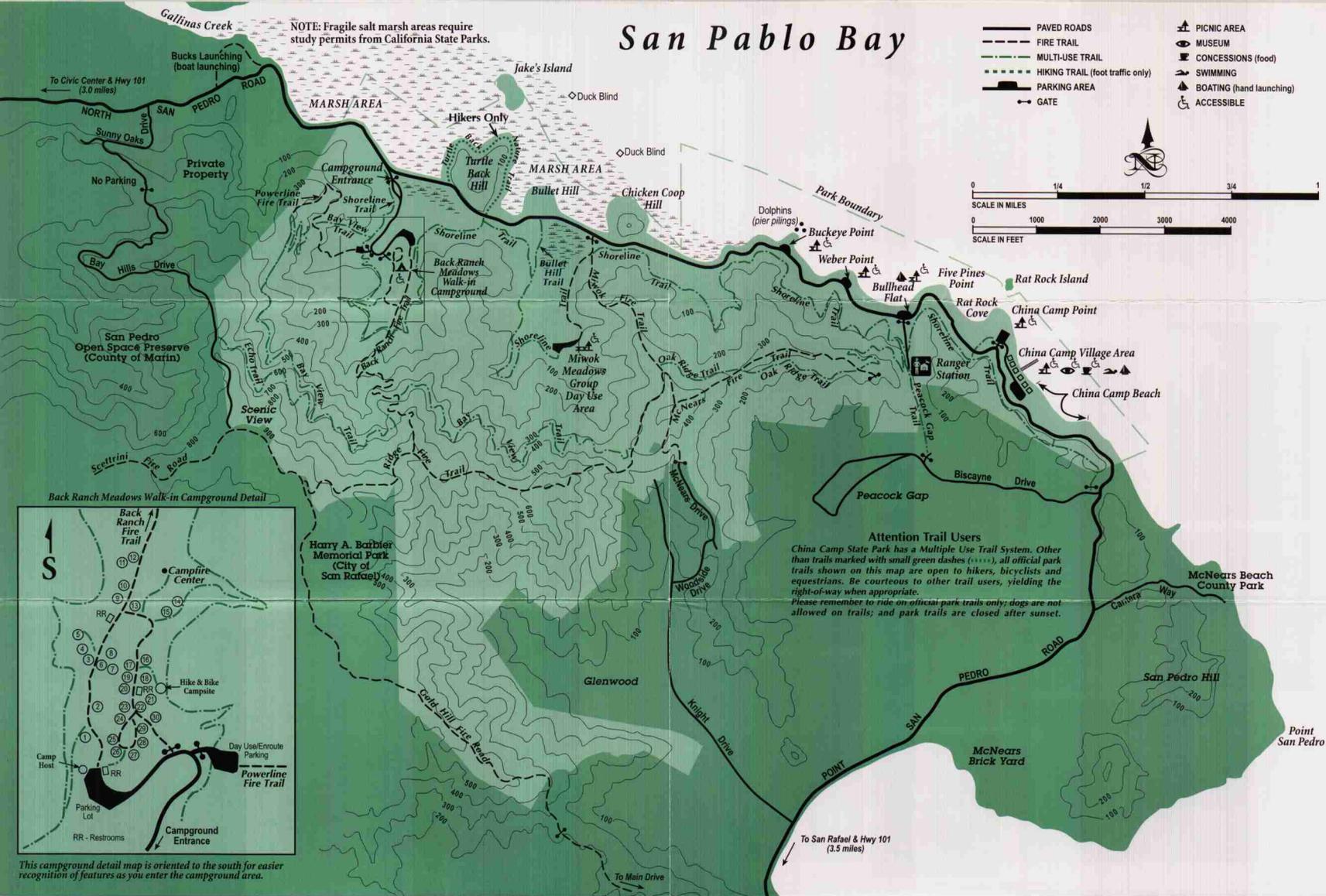
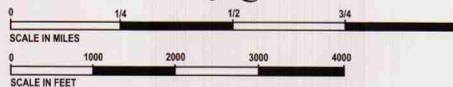
Frank Quan, a descendant of one of the early settlers and the village's only resident, still operates a fishing business here. Most of his catch is sold as bait, but if you stop in at the snack bar during the summer, you might ask him whether he has brought in any fresh bay shrimp. Some people say it is the best tasting shrimp in the world.

**"The Chinese Shrimp Fishery in California,"* by Robert Nash, Ph.D. Thesis, UCLA 1973.

San Pablo Bay

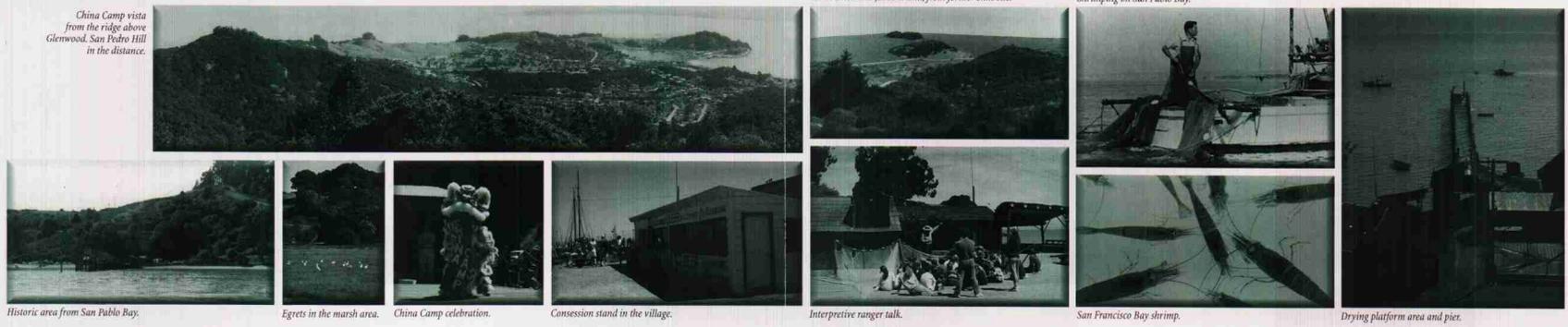
NOTE: Fragile salt marsh areas require study permits from California State Parks.

- PAVED ROADS
- FIRE TRAIL
- MULTI-USE TRAIL
- HIKING TRAIL (foot traffic only)
- PARKING AREA
- GATE
- PICNIC AREA
- MUSEUM
- CONCESSIONS (food)
- SWIMMING
- BOATING (hand launching)
- ACCESSIBLE



Attention Trail Users
China Camp State Park has a Multiple Use Trail System. Other than trails marked with small green dashes (---), all official park trails shown on this map are open to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. Be courteous to other trail users, yielding the right-of-way when appropriate. Please remember to ride on official park trails only; dogs are not allowed on trails; and park trails are closed after sunset.

This campground detail map is oriented to the south for easier recognition of features as you enter the campground area.



Turtle Back and Jake's Island, from former Nike site.

Stripping on San Pablo Bay.