



*The Pines (above), built in 1888 was the residence of Major and Mrs. Orson C. Miller, and was situated appropriately on Miller Avenue.*

Meanwhile in Old Saucelito, or “Old Town” as it is now called, little had changed since Charles Botts’ initial venture. The Pacific Yacht Club made its debut in 1878. A few homes had been built. A few saloons had come and gone, and Botts, who died in 1884, had long since sold his interests to John Turney and others. The new owners incorporated in 1870 as the Old Saucelito Land & Drydock Company, and hoped to compete with the Sausalito Land & Ferry Company in New Town. Perhaps as the name implies, they still had plans to establish a drydock facility in the cove as an industrial base to attract business. But business was slow. By the 1880s, Old Town, isolated from the railroad, lay dormant once again.

Then in 1885 two guests registered at the El Monte Hotel set about changing that. Major Orson C. Miller and his wife had moved from San Francisco to Sausalito, like so many others, with a plan in mind.

Miller found title to the moribund lands of the Old Saucelito Land & Drydock Company in the hands of the Savings and Loan Society in San Francisco where it had been for the past three years. Miller approached Horace Davis, president of the Savings and Loan Society and by September 1887 the two had consummated a deal. Miller picked up all the unsold land in Old Town for \$25,000.

He immediately set to work, surveying new streets and extending old ones further up the hillsides. He set up an auction house at the corner of Richardson and West Street and published a new map of available lots under the new corporate name: The Sausalito Bay Land Company. Miller’s new map of 1888 shows Sausalito Boule-

vard for the first time, a sweeping semicircle with panoramic views extending from New Town to the Pacific Yacht Club lands. Sausalito Boulevard, with gentle grades suitable for horse-drawn wagons, was the key in reviving interest in Old Town. Central Avenue was also graded as a link between unsold Old Town lots and the lands of the Sausalito Land & Ferry Company. The new roads made Old Town more accessible by land. Previously, the only passage was the rock-strewn rough beach called Water Street, which was indeed water at high tide.

A few years before O. C. Miller arrived in Sausalito, there was a brief flurry of excitement in Old Town when manganese was discovered in the hills west of town. The ore found in the rock outcroppings was rich enough to justify small-scale mining. Tunnels were dug near the springs between present-day Prospect Avenue and Sausalito Boulevard. Henry H. Eames, an opportunistic inventor, built an ore reduction plant at the foot of Main Street to process the manganese ore. By 1880 the yield was about fifty tons of black oxide annually, hardly enough to make Sausalito a mining center. By 1893 the mines were abandoned and the Saucelito Smelting Works demolished to make way for Joseph Lowder’s Walhalla.

Long forgotten, the mine entrances were sealed with fill from highway construction in the 1950s. In October, 1982, the mines were inadvertently rediscovered during slide-damage repairs following the disastrous rains of January that year. The tunnel uncovered extended over 100 feet horizontally into the hill and was lined with decaying redwood timbers. It has since been sealed.