

Sausalito History Source [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sausalito,\\_California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sausalito,_California)

### Indigenous culture

Sausalito was once the site of a [Coast Miwok](#) settlement known as Liwanelowa. The branch of the Coast Miwok living in this area were known as the Huimen (or as *Nación de Uimen* to the Spanish).<sup>[8][9]</sup> Early explorers of the area described them as friendly and hospitable. According to [Juan de Ayala](#), "To all these advantages must be added the best of all, which is that the heathen Indians of the port are so faithful in their friendship and so docile in their disposition that I was greatly pleased to receive them on board." Such placidity was likely a contributing factor to their complete displacement, which took place within the span of a few generations. As historian Jack Tracy has observed, "Their dwellings on the site of Sausalito were explored and mapped in 1907, nearly a century and a half later, by an archaeological survey. By that time, nothing was left of the culture of those who had first enjoyed the natural treasures of the bay. The life of the Coastal Miwoks had been reduced to archaeological remnants, as though thousands of years had passed since their existence."

### European arrival and invasion



### 1781 Cañizares Map of San Francisco Bay

The first European known to visit the present-day location of Sausalito was Don José de Cañizares, on August 5, 1775. Cañizares was head of an advance party dispatched by longboat from the ship *San Carlos*, searching for a suitable anchorage for the larger vessel. The crew of the *San Carlos* came ashore soon after, reporting friendly natives and teeming populations of deer, elk, bear, sea lions, seals and

otters. More significantly for maritime purposes, they reported an abundance of large, mature timber in the hills, a valuable commodity for shipwrights in need of raw materials for masts, braces and planking.

Despite these and later positive reports, the Spanish colonial government of Upper California did little to establish a presence in the area. When a military garrison (now the [Presidio of San Francisco](#)) and a Franciscan mission ([Mission Dolores](#)) were founded the following year, they were situated on the opposite, southern shore of the bay, where no portage was necessary for overland traffic to and from [Monterey](#), the regional capitol. As a result, the far shore of the [Golden Gate](#) strait would remain largely wilderness for another half-century.



William Richardson (1795–1856), an English-born Mexican citizen, first claimed and developed the site of Sausalito as a private [rancho](#).

The development of the area began at the instigation of [William A. Richardson](#), who arrived in Upper California in 1822, shortly after Mexico had won its independence from Spain. An English mariner who had picked up a fluency in Spanish during his travels, he quickly became an influential presence in the now-Mexican territory. By 1825, Richardson had assumed [Mexican](#) citizenship, converted to Catholicism and married the daughter of Don Ignacio Martínez, commandant of the Presidio and holder of a large land grant. His ambitions now expanding to land holdings of his own, Richardson submitted a petition to Governor Echienda for a [rancho](#) in the [headlands](#) across the water from the Presidio, to be called "[Rancho Saucelito](#)".<sup>[10]</sup> *Sausalito* is believed to refer to a small cluster of willows, a moist-soil tree, indicating the presence of a freshwater spring.<sup>[11]</sup>

Even before filing his claim, Richardson had used the spring as a watering station on the shores of what is now called [Richardson Bay](#) (an arm of the larger [San Francisco Bay](#)), selling fresh water to visiting vessels. However, his ownership of the land was legally tenuous: other claims had been submitted for the same region, and at any rate Mexican law reserved headlands for military uses, not private

ownership. Richardson temporarily abandoned his claim and settled instead outside the Presidio, building the first permanent civilian home and laying out the street plan for the [pueblo](#) of Yerba Buena (present-day San Francisco). After years of lobbying and legal wrangling, Richardson was given clear title to all 19,751 acres (79.93 km<sup>2</sup>) of Rancho del Sausalito on February 11, 1838.

### **Fishing village and sybaritic enclave**

In the post-Gold Rush era, Sausalito's unusual location became a key factor in its formation as a community. It was San Francisco's nearest neighbor, less than two miles (3 km) away at the nearest point and easily seen from city streets, yet transportation factors rendered it effectively isolated. A boat could sail there in under half an hour, but wagons and carriages required an arduous skirting of the entire bay, a journey that could well exceed a hundred miles. As a result, the region was largely dominated by two disparate classes of people, both with ready access to boats: commercial fishermen and wealthy yachting enthusiasts.

### **Transit hub**

The first post office opened in 1870 as "Saucelito" and changed its name to the present spelling in 1887.<sup>[4]</sup>



The *Eureka*, then the largest double-ended ferryboat in the world, carried passenger and automobile traffic on the Sausalito-San Francisco run from 1922 to 1941.

In the 1870s, the [North Pacific Coast Railroad](#) (NPC) extended its tracks southward to a new terminus in Sausalito, where a rail yard and [ferry](#) to San Francisco were established. The NPC was acquired by the [North Shore Railroad](#) in 1902, which in turn was absorbed in 1907 by the [Southern Pacific](#) affiliate, the [Northwestern Pacific](#).

By 1926, a major auto ferry across the [Golden Gate](#) was established, running to the [Hyde Street Pier](#) in San Francisco.<sup>[12]</sup> This ferry was an integral part of old [U.S. Highway 101](#), and a large influx of automobile traffic, often parked or idling in long queues, became a dominant characteristic of the town.

Northwestern Pacific commuter train service also expanded to serve the increased traffic volume, and Sausalito became known primarily as a transportation hub.

This era came to an end in May 1937, with the opening of the [Golden Gate Bridge](#). The bridge made large-scale ferry operations redundant, and since the new route of Highway 101 bypassed Sausalito entirely, in-town traffic was quickly reduced to a trickle. Car ferry service ended in March 1941 (passenger ferry service, however, continues to this day, linking downtown Sausalito with both the [Ferry Building](#) in San Francisco's [Embarcadero](#), and [Pier 39](#) in the Fisherman's Wharf district). Northwestern Pacific also closed its Sausalito terminal in March 1941, although some tracks remained in use as "spur tracks" for freight trains as late as 1971.<sup>[11]</sup>

### **Bootlegging and Rum Runners**

Sausalito was a center for [bootlegging](#) during the era of [Prohibition](#) in the United States. Because of its location facing the Golden Gate and isolated from San Francisco by the same waterway, it was also a favorite landing spot for [rum runners](#).<sup>[13]</sup> The 1942 film *China Girl* has some footage of [Sally Stanford](#)'s Valhalla restaurant on the waterfront. The scene shows the docks and illustrates rum running.

### **Industrialization during World War II**

When the United States entered [World War II](#), [Fort Barry](#) on [Point Bonita](#) was reoccupied. [Fort Baker](#) also hosted large numbers of troops. Barracks and other housing was constructed for soldiers. Few of these buildings remain.<sup>[14]</sup>

A major shipyard of the [Bechtel Corporation](#) called [Marinship](#) was sited along the [shoreline](#) of Sausalito. The thousands of laborers who worked here were largely housed in a nearby community constructed for them called [Marin City](#). The soil which supports this area is [dredgings](#) from [Richardson Bay](#) that were placed during [World War II](#) as part of the Marin [shipyards](#) for the United States Navy.<sup>[15]</sup> A total of 202 acres (0.8 km<sup>2</sup>) were condemned by the government. A portion of this total area was formed in the shape of a peninsula and this peninsula became known as [Schoonmaker Point](#). In honor of the city's contribution to the war effort, a Tacoma-class frigate was christened the [USS Sausalito \(PF-4\)](#) in 1943. The ship *Sausalito*, however, was not built in Sausalito but at one of the [Kaiser Shipyards](#) in [Richmond, California](#), also on the San Francisco Bay.

The Marinship Shipyards were the site of incidents that provided a key early milestone in the [Civil rights movement](#).<sup>[16]</sup> In 1944 in the case of James v. Marinship the [California Supreme Court](#) held that [African Americans](#) could not be excluded from jobs based on their race, even if the employer took no discriminatory actions. In the case of Joseph James, on whose behalf the suit was brought, the local Boilermakers Union excluded Blacks from membership and had a "closed shop" contract, forbidding the shipbuilder from employing anyone who was not a member of the union. African American workers could join an auxiliary of the union, which offered access to fewer jobs at lower pay. Future US [Supreme Court](#) justice [Thurgood Marshall](#) successfully argued the case, winning a ruling that the union be required to offer equal membership to African Americans. The Court extended the ruling to apply explicitly to all unions and all workers in California.

### **Postwar Sausalito**

Following World War II, a lively waterfront community grew out of the abandoned ship yards. By the late 1960s at least three [house boat](#) communities occupied the waterfront along and adjacent to Sausalito's shore. Beginning in the 1970s, an intense struggle erupted between house boat residents and developers. It was dubbed the "House Boat Wars".<sup>[17]</sup> Forced removals by county authorities and sabotage by some on the waterfront characterized this struggle. This long fight pitted the waterfront against the "Hill People" or the rich on the hill looking down on the water front. Today three house boat communities still exist — Galilee Harbor in Sausalito, Waldo Point Harbor and the Gates Cooperative, just outside the city limit.

In 1965, the City of Sausalito sued the [County of Marin](#) and a private developer for illegally zoning 2,000 acres (809 ha) of land to build a city named [Marincello](#) adjacent to Sausalito. The city won the lawsuit in 1970, and the land was transferred as [open space](#) to the [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#).