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ROSS, THE COUNTRIFIED CITY

As an ideal residential community, the town of Ross would be hard to equal, particularly outside the boundaries of Marin County. Joining the city limits of San Rafael on the southwest, situated between Kentfield and San Anselmo, at the base and extending up the slope of Tamalpais, Ross is one of the most beautiful home situations imaginable. The city of San Rafael, Ross and other towns of the valley are so closely built as to be in reality one city—making a population of more than 10,000 people.

The town was incorporated in 1908 and is conducted on good business lines, her trustees being business men well fitted to handle the reins of government. The census reports for 1910 gives the population at 556, but the town continues to grow and now has more than 600 people whose homes scattered throughout the shaded canyons, surmounting the crests of gently sloping hills, and tucked away in the primeval forests that are still and for years to come will be one of the prides of Marin.

Many of San Francisco's most prominent business men have in the past chosen this garden spot for a few months' rest and outing in the summer and from this have grown to love Ross, and its surroundings, resulting in the erection of mansions and the development of gardens that are a continual source of wonder and admiration. These same citizens, many of them, now make Ross their permanent home.

Their dwellings with the rounding grounds of rarest flowers and shrubbery, rose gardens that know no superior anywhere, set down in the midst of natural beauties. Rough underbrush, gigantic pines and redwoods, are among the features that bring Ross into the prominence it now holds as a purely residence town. Old oaks, knotted and gnarled, patriarchs among their kind, gracefully draped with moss and mistletoe, spread their gigantic arms over some of the most beautiful lawns of which California may boast, while at their very roots are nestled the rarest specimens of semi-tropical plants and flowers. Among these gardens and along the shaded roadways, tree squirrels hold their frolics, unafraid and undisturbed by hunter or trap, and they too lend their charm to the beauties of Ross.

While it is so thoroughly "countrified" and natural, still the conveniences of a developed civilization are at hand. Pure mountain water, electric lights, gas, a perfect sewer system, and telephones which put the house holder in direct communication with accommodating and energetic trades people in San Anselmo or San Rafael, bring the Ross residents into a close touch with civilization as a nature loving person could wish.

Enormous sums have been expended upon the public roads and highways within the corporate limits of Ross, and these roads have been brought to a condition of perfection, by the exercise of the best engineering skill available. There is the long straight stretch known as Shady Lane, where the trees meeting overhead from a leafy arch for half a mile or more, where song birds of every description build their homes, and voice their joyousness in a charming medley. Then there are bits of road winding their tortuous way over hills and down dales where one may feel that he is far separated from any human habitation until a sharp bend brings him out before a gently sloping lawn, bordered with dainty flowers, the whole surrounding some beautiful home.

The fathers of the town of Ross have also seen to it that their residents shall have fire protection equal to that which would be afforded them by the best department of any large city. The equipment consists of an automobile chemical engine, which is also equipped as a hose wagon. This engine is under the direct supervision and care of Jos. A. Green, a fireman, trained in the hardest schools of fire fighting in the United States—the departments of some of our large cities. A Gamewell Fire Alarm system has

been installed, although it is not quite ready for operation; about twenty alarm boxes will be placed throughout the town, thus an alarm can be turned in and while the bell is still sounding the big auto, will be on its way. The Engine House is an attractive building centrally located, adorned with stucco work, and the assembly hall upstairs furnishes the Town Trustees with a cozy meeting hall. In the rear of the building on the ground floor, are comfortable and very pleasant accommodations where the Engineer and his wife reside, thus he is always on duty.

The Ross School is located in close proximity to the Engine House. This building will soon be brought to completion and when finished will represent an architectural triumph, in style of design and adornment, it will be in keeping with the Engine House. The ground surrounding the two buildings, is in reality a natural park, being studded with oaks and other trees, a beautiful creek bounding it on one side, and dense underbrush on the other. As soon as the work is completed on the school building, this ground will be cultivated and planted with choice flowers, and will present one of the prettiest spots in or near Ross. Opposite this natural park is the beautiful edifice now being erected, St. John's Church, with the rectory adjoining. These structures are both ornamental and substantial, and are placed to derive all benefit from their natural beautiful surroundings.

Several concrete bridges have been erected across the creek with a view to durability as well as artistic beauty. In the construction of these spans, no expense has been spared to bring them to a high standard of perfection, and they will stand for ages to come as a monumental token of the activity and progressive ideals of the community that erected them.

Ross is also the home of the Lagunitas Country Club, an organization of San Francisco businessmen, who have not only an ideal location, but as beautiful a country club home as perhaps is in existence.

Among the most beautiful homes and extensive grounds of Ross are the residences of H. M. A. Miller, E. G. Schmiedell, John Martin, Sam Leake, H. E. Bothin and many others. In winter as in summer, Ross is ideal. When the trees are bare, and winter has taken possession of the valley, there is a crispness in the atmosphere, a charm in the very air that invigorates and pleases. In the spring, the budding and leafing of the trees brings a transformation most interesting to watch, and the wild flowers by the road side and on the hills, run riot in a fragrant carpet of beauty. When the warmth of summer has come, the trees again shade the roads, modifying the heat of the sun, so that one is always comfortable. As the sun loses its strength in the fall, the autumn shades appear on the leaves, every rustle of the breeze brings down showers of them, and the roads and fields are carpeted with these tokens of the advancing year. Thus, it goes—there is always something to attract the eye. Something to please the mind. To those that know Ross, to those that love Ross, this something is the peculiar charm which this beauty spot in the garden of Marin alone possesses. Ross makes no pretensions as a place of business, having only a grocery, livery stables and blacksmith shop.