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china Camp State Park is located on the
southwest shore of San Pablo Bay. Three miles
from downtown San Rafael in Marin County. The park
is easily reached from Highway 101, 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. Magnif-
cent panoramic views of the north bay 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 moder-
ate climate at China Camp, while high ridges to the west protect the park from the 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—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

Point San Pedro was originally part of the Coast Miwok territory. These California Indians hunted small ani-
mals and deer, collected acorns, and gathered marsh
plants and shellfish. They made baskets and disk
beads from clamshells, and traded them for such
locally unobtainable resources as high-grade obsidian
from Lake County tribes. Their village site typically
consisted of ten or twelve households, with eight to
ten individuals living in each. The remains of numer-
ous sites have been found in the park.

Houses were built of grass and tule thatching over a
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Drake, after his initial contact with the Indians in 1579,
described them as being peaceful and of a loving
nature. In 1775 Father Vicente Santa Maria confirmed
Drake's observation and added that the Indians were
both friendly and physically healthy.

The establishment of the San Francisco Mission in
1776, and its sister mission San Rafael Arcangel in
1817, had a profound effect on the Coast Miwok of the
area. Many factors played a tragic role in the decline of
the population. Diseases and hardships introduced by
Europeans drastically reduced the Coast Miwok
population. Estimated at approximately 2,000 in
earlier times, there remained very few individuals by
1900.

The area within today's park became part of a large
land grant held by Timoteo Murphy of Rancho San
Pedro, Santa Margarita y las Callinas. Murphy held
the grant until his death in the early 1850s. The land
was divided and sold. The McNear family owned part
of the property that is now China Camp State Park until
the mid-1940s. They ran a dairy and leased major
portions of land for grazing. Some features of this era,
such as cisterns, may still be seen in secluded areas of
the park. The era is memorialized by the naming of
Back Ranch Meadows Campground.

THE CHINESE

A significant era began for China Camp in the mid-
1860s when the Chinese immigrants began shrimp
fishing. The Chinese, like many other immigrant
groups, came to California with the prospect of mining
gold. However, other economic opportunities kept them here. China Camp was one of 20 or 30 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 type of work they knew best.
San Pablo Bay provided abundant resources for their
trade, and harvesting shrimp became their specialty. A large percentage of the shrimp netted by
these villages was dried on the hillsides behind the
camps. It was shipped to China or to Chinese communities throughout the United States. After the
1880s, the passage of several restrictive laws drastically
reduced the productivity of the Chinese fishing
community. The most crippling law was passed in 1911
when Chinese bag nets, the only efficient nets then
known to 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 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 say it is the best tasting shrimp in the
world.

The Grace Quan (pictured below), a reproduction of
a Chinese junk, is named after Frank Quan’s mother.
The replica was built in 2003 by the San Francisco
Maritime National Historic Park and dedicated
volunteers, with support from staff at China Camp
State Park. During the summer months, the Grace
Quan can be viewed at China Camp, and in the
winter months at the San Francisco Maritime
National Historic Park.

Rat Rock Cove looking south (ca early 1900s)

THE GRACE QUAN
**San Pablo Bay**

**Map Details**
- **Map Scale**: 1 inch = 600 feet
- **Legend**
  - Accessible Feature
  - Mesh Area
  - Park Area
  - Private Property
  - Picnic Area
  - Shooting Range
  - Castles
  - Parking Area
  - Water Access

**Rules and Regulations**
- Dogs are allowed in developed areas only and are not allowed on trails. Dogs must always be on a leash (not to exceed 6 feet) and under control.
- You may have fires only in park barbecues in designated fire areas.
- Dogs are not allowed on trails, and park trails are closed to protect this unique natural and historic resource. For further information, please feel free to contact the staff at park headquarters across from the Bullhead Flat picnic area.
- Ride on official park trails only.
- State park rules are strictly enforced at China Camp in order to protect the unique natural and historic features of the Park.
- Dogs are not allowed on trails.
- Equestrians must yield to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. Be courteous to other trail users, yielding the trails shown on this map are open to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians.
- This campground detail map is oriented to the south for easier recognition of features as you enter the campground area.
- Please review the trail map and study permits before entering the park.
- BOATING (hand launching) ACCESSIBLE FEATURE
- MARSH AREA
- GROUP PICNIC AREA
- MUSEUM
- SAVE AREA
- **Notice**: Fragile salt marsh areas require study permits from California State Parks.

**At Attention Trail Users**

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