Col. Obadiah Livermore purchased a portion of William Richardson’s Spanish Land Grant, called Leaside Valley, just north of Sausalito in 1881. It is now known as Marin City. He called his home “Gilead,” but was damaged in the 1906 earthquake.

In 1907 the property was sold to Chandler Burgess, who built a new “Gilead”. Marinship worker housing was built around their home and many tree groves were preserved. His descendants owned the home and 4 acres until 2000. It became a school and then the permanent home of the Marin City Community Development Corporation (MCDC).
Early settlers planted Redwoods, Monterey Pines, Cypress, and even Eucalyptus to create shade and wind breaks.

This circa 1912 photograph of the Burgess Estate shows a well grown grove of trees (red arrow) in the area of the Manzanita School. The grove must have been planted long before the Burgess family bought the property and before trees were planted around their newly built home and out buildings.

This 1937 photograph of Highway 101 shows the “Historic Tree Grove” in what will become Marinship WWII worker housing built on marshland. The grove is still large and well grown.

This new highway connected northern Marin via the newly constructed “Redwood Bridge” (background) and a new 4-lane highway to the Golden Gate Bridge.

Marin City was created to fill the need for WWII Marinship worker housing. Marin City was built on slopes and filled marshlands by the Marinship Corp.

Housing was critically important, but Marinship Corporation did NOT cut down the grove.

Instead, a road was built to go through it, giving residents’ access to uphill housing. Four multifamily housing units were built in the bare area that is now Village Oduduwa and the proposed 825 Drake 74-unit apartment building.
This 1942-44 photograph taken from Hwy 101 shows worker housing on the hills and in the flats, but also shows the areas where services were provided for workers and families. The area closest to Richardson Bay and Hwy 101 is where the pond is located today.

Current streets like Drake and Donahue, Phillips, Buckelew, Park Circle, and Cole were essentially laid out at this time.

There was a road that followed the base of the far hillside allowing residents to either access to Hwy 101 and/or to the trains that would take workers to the Marinship. Evidence of this road remains.

This MarinNostalgia.org postcard shows the Historic Tree Grove with what is now Drake Avenue entering it.

This access street started at the edge of the flats and headed uphill through the grove, turned onto what is now Park Circle and then continued onto what is now the Donahue terminus to reach all worker housing in the hills.

This 1950’s cropped aerial photo shows Marin City as of May 9, 1950. Bayside MLK Academy had both a different name and shape. Marin City Community Service District buildings are more recognizable.

It is clear that Marinship Corp. made a decision to NOT cut down all the trees, but left many intact. 825 Drake and Village Oduduwa lots can clearly be seen. This grove might have historically housed farm workers or been the location of the original Manzanita School.
Applicant’s aerial photographs of the area where Rocky Graham Park was built indicate that a portion of the Historic Grove was cut down between 1993 and 1998. This view, taken July 9, 2020, toward Village Oduduwa and the 825 Drake Development on the Village Baptist property, shows that the original 53-inch diameter Coast Redwood has been thriving on the property despite having no irrigation system to maintain it or other trees to its right. The Village Baptist Church burned down in 1999, yet the trees have survived, dating back at least to the Burgess Family, if not to the 1880-90s tenancy of Col. Williams.
The Drake/Park Circle/Bucklelew Path is on the edge of the property. Trees on the lower portion of the property will be cut down, destroying the last remnants of the Historic Grove. Village Oduduwa residents’ view will be reduced to seeing the backside of the new apartment building.

The Developer’s photo-montage of the view is deceptive. The view from the Drake/Park Circle Pathway would look more like the larger cropped version above. Most residents of the Village will see only the apartment building, not a view of Rocky Graham Park.
This view is also deceptive. Parking spaces are designed for cars entering, not leaving as shown. Village Oduduwa residents won’t see this view or the canopy of trees and plantings. This view is from the west showing mature plantings that won’t exist for years. It misrepresents the building’s height differential, narrow sidewalks, and creates a higher retaining wall.

Enlargements of View 3, a photo-montage from an uphill vantage point, give a better picture of the altitude/height differential between Village Oduduwa and the proposed apartment at 825 Drake. Both 828 Drake and Village Oduduwa driveways descend from Park Circle. Village Oduduwa residents will not see trees and hills to the south, only this big, new building.
Tree No. 930, the 53" diameter *Sequoia sempervirens* (coast redwood), stands in the location of the first floor lobby. By not choosing to create an outdoor gathering space for residents around the tree and by requesting waivers to create the largest building possible, this development’s impermeable surface will increase storm water runoff into the already highly impacted storm water drainage system. See: Sierra Club Marin Group’s Exhibit 1, page 5: Marin City Drainage Study Flood Zone 3, 2017 Draft - *Combined MarinCityDMP_Report_000.pdf*

Removal of the Coast Redwood and other trees will adversely affect pedestrian use of the walkway by removing shade trees. The path is the only direct route for residents to Rocky Graham Park. In addition the drainage system from Village Oduduwa lies between the walkway and proposed parking exit.
This Community Path is heavily used and shaded by trees slated for removal.

First set of stairs from Drake to Park Circle

Second set of stairs from Drake to Park Circle

Third set of stairs from Drake to Park Circle

Fourth set of stairs from Drake to Park Circle

The staired pathway continues on up to Buckelew, allowing locals to walk up or downhill, to or from residences and school, rec. center, bus, shopping center, Rocky Graham Park, etc.

*Like the stairs in Mill Valley and Sausalito, the path and its shade are much appreciated.*