



KEVIN JOHNSON/SENTINEL PHOTOS

Norman Poitevin, a Santa Cruz historian, leads a group of people up 19th Avenue on Tuesday during his summer history walk series that runs along East Cliff Drive.

A stroll back through time

Live Oak

Live Oak residents tour historic Del Mar district

By **KIMBERLY WHITE**

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LIVE OAK — The streets and features of the unincorporated town may have been named for men, but all of the lots in the Santa Maria Del Mar district of Live Oak were originally only sold to women, with the head of the local Democratic Party signing off on the deeds.

That's because the neighborhood was established in the early 1890s by members of the Catholic Ladies Aid Society, on land donated by Live Oak pioneers Patrick Moran, James Corcoran and Henry Johans, according to local historian and Live Oak Neighbors member Norman Poitevin.

In 1891, construction began on

the Santa Maria Del Mar Hotel, one of several resorts in the area built for religious organizations that flocked there for beach-side retreats. That building has since been renamed the Villa Maria Del Mar Retreat Center. It's been operated by the Sisters of the Holy Names since 1963.

"This is not a retirement home for nuns like everyone thinks — this is a place where they have conferences" and other activities, Poitevin said Tuesday evening during the third Summer Walk series of the season.

Poitevin, dressed in an era-appropriate coat and hat, led several dozen residents on a tour Tuesday



Norman Poitevin, a Live Oak historian, explains the history of a building on 19th Avenue on Tuesday as he conducts a summer walk series along East Cliff Drive.

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