

Marion Hollins: Portrait of a lady

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By Jim Fruitt

She once bred racehorses in Scotts Valley. Marion Hollins was athlete, visionary, millionaire and much more. She was a part of this land and her spirit may still whisper at you when the wind blows through her old stables.

The Rancho Augustine was known as some of the most beautiful land in the county in 1930 when she bought it for her horses. Now it is known as the site of the dilapidated Santa's Village amusement park and it may soon be known as the Polo Ranch housing development.

Although she is well remembered by those surrounding her Pasatiempo Estate, her name is lost to much of Scotts Valley.

Now that the City of Scotts Valley has demanded her stables, built by the famous architect William W. Wurster, be saved, many are asking, "Who was Marion Hollins?"

• Athlete: She was perhaps the greatest all around female athlete of the 1920's.

She won the Women's Amateur Golf Championship in 1921 over the finest players of the age. She won the first Pebble Beach women's championship in 1923, rarely failed to win it thereafter and was chosen the Captain of the first United States Curtis Cup Golf Team in 1932.

She was an expert rider, owning her own string of polo ponies and steeplechase race horses. She built her own polo field and steeplechase course at Pasatiempo. She organized a Santa Cruz Polo Club and it was said, "she was to polo what Babe Ruth was to baseball."

She was also a pioneer in women's tennis and even had clay imported from England and France for her courts.

• Visionary: She directed the construction of Cypress Point in Monterey, considered to be one of the greatest golf courses in the world. She used Dr. Alister Mackenzie, Scottish physician and famous golf course designer, to build Cypress and her own Pasatiempo course.

She was an early feminist and she

was sportswoman Louis Dedley and the other was polo player Eric Pedley. They promised: the first to earn a million dollars will give the others \$25,000 each.

During a party celebrating Hollins good fortune in oil, she announced her fulfillment of the pact.

Churchill Peters was her friend. An investment banker for over fifty years in San Francisco, Peters comes to his home in Santa Cruz every weekend.

"When you met her you could sense a certain air about her, always cheerful and quickwitted," Peters said. "She knew all the jet set, the upper sporting class, if you will. There were always the rich and famous around her. She was a great lady... really a lot of character."

Born in 1892 in East Islip, Long Island, New York, Hollins grew up a tomboy with four brothers on her family's 600 acre estate. Her father was Harry B. Hollins, one time partner of J. P. Morgan. Her first love was horses but she soon found a talent for golf. She played in her first Women's Amateur Championship when she was 18. She played in 14 Women's Amateurs from 1912 to 1940.

Hollins came to California for a vacation with her family in the 1920's. She found herself as athletic director of the Pebble Beach Golf Links after meeting it's builder and owner, Samuel F. B. Morse. It was here where she met Mackenzie and became a builder of golf courses.

Traveling across the bay in 1927, she took a ride up into the hills

above the bay, along the Rancho Carbonero. One look at its beauty and she knew it had potential as one of the greatest courses in the world.

She bought the property and in September of 1929, the Pasatiempo Country Club opened. Famous golf pro, Bobby Jones was there along with 300 guests.

Despite the depression she moved on undaunted. Spending enormous amounts of money to give the best of everything for Pasatiempo, meaning "past time."

Betty Hicks met Hollins in 1942 and in a article for Golf Journal she described what her life was like.

"Marion's scrapbook was crammed with the memorabilia of the club's social maelstrom," Hicks said. "Mary Pickford and Buddy Rogers are photo to photo and autograph to autograph with the Vanderbilts and Crockers. Photographs and signatures crowd the pages: Will Rogers, Irvin S. Cobb, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Brian Aherne, Joyce Wethered, Joan Fontaine, Jean Harlow, Jack Dempsey, the Rothchilds, the Zellerbachs, and Claudette Colbert. Pasatiempo was a plush, giant magnet, and Marion Hollins was its omnipresent monarch, a dervish spinning from polo field to fairway to homesites to clubhouse to tennis courts."

By 1938 Hollins had spent her millions keeping the estate in lavish style and it went up for sale.

Morse hired her once more and she moved back across the bay. She died of cancer in 1944 in Pacific Grove.

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Marion Hollins, right, presents a cup to the owner of the winning horse, Mrs. Arthur Haley, in the 1932 Carbonero Cup.

Over 300 guests came to Pasatiempo in 1929 to help Ms. Hollins celebrate the grand opening of her golf course, middle. Famous British golfer, Syril Toller is on her left and perhaps the greatest golfer of all time, Bobby Jones, is on her right.

The Santa Cruz Sentinel ran this photo when Hollins lost her estates and left for Monterey in 1940.

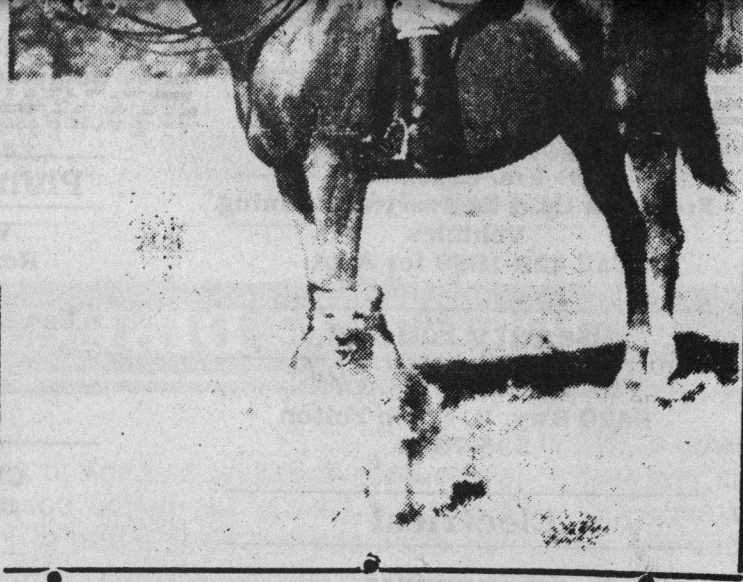


joined the Women's National Golf Club on Long Island, New York which was run entirely by women.

• **Millionaire:** The President of Maryland Oil Company, Colonel Franklyn P. Kenney, had a hunch there was oil in the San Joaquin Valley but couldn't find an investor until he found Miss Hollins. She and her friends and family put \$100,000 into drilling there and it turned out to be one of the world's richest oil fields. The sale of the project earned Hollins \$2.5 million.

Hollins was known for more than just her millions and athletic talents, she was famous for her style.

It was during a New Years eve party in the mid- 20's that Hollins made a pact with two friends. One



MISS MARION HOLLINS

