

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

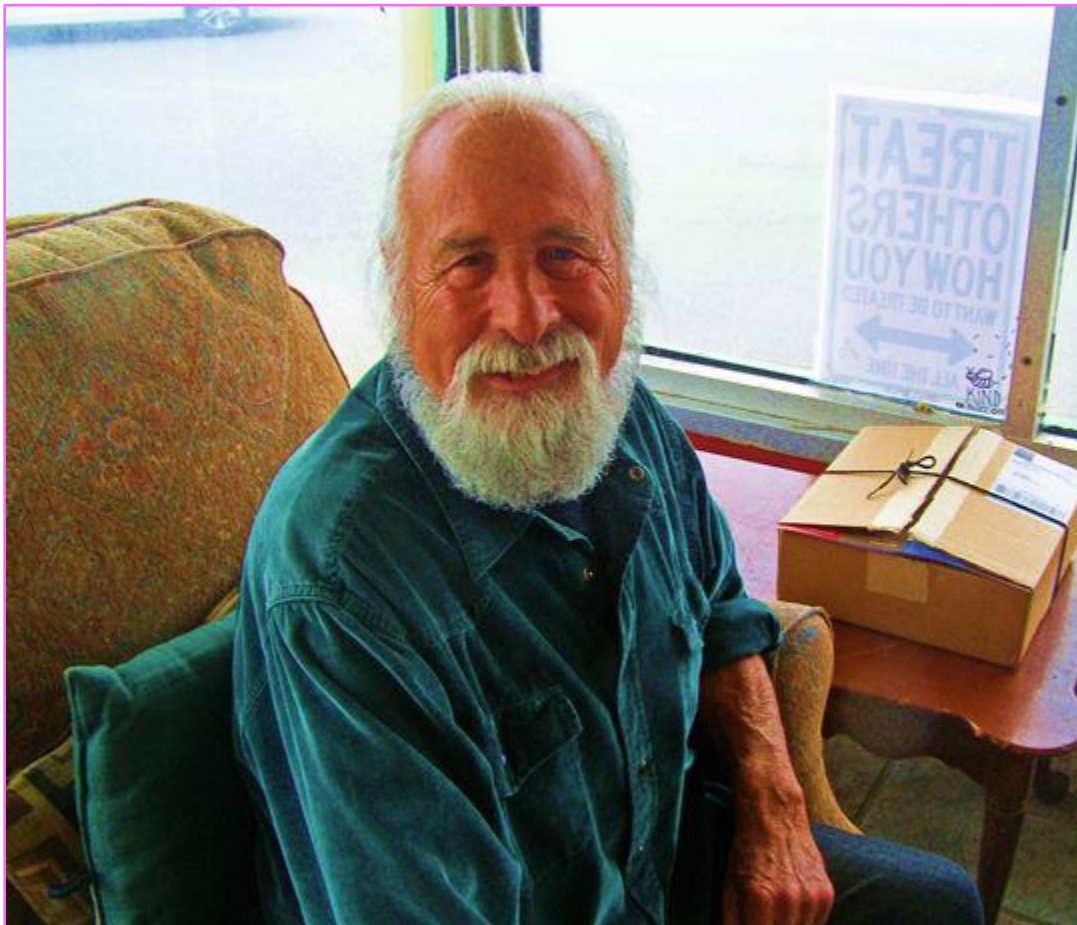
Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.



Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett
(A Pacifica Historical Society Project)

October 26, 2022



(Jean Bartlett photo)

Steve Brown at the Chit-Chat Cafe in Pacific Manor, Pacifica, California, October, 2022.

Wrapped in a very present state of filmmaking deadlines, Coastsider Steve Brown's life nevertheless meanders along a historic current of sensory perception, touching all the cultural shores of his generation: skateboarding, surfing, the "world's greatest" disc jockey Don Sherwood, Vietnam, Jerry Garcia, the Grateful Dead, Burning Man. He didn't plan on being a part of the times and their legends. He just was.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Steven Hancock Brown was born on October 26, 1944 at Children's Hospital in San Francisco, or officially, since 1991, California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) California Campus. His parents, William Robert Brown "Bill" and Esperanza Lupe (Puente) Brown, ("Linda" to Bill and "Espie" to her Puente family), brought their son home to Lobos Street in San Francisco's Oceanview neighborhood. The couple married in 1942, not long after Japan's December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor and the United States entrance into the Second World War. This home, on Lobos Street, was the home the couple lived in while Steve's father served in the U.S. Navy.



Steve's mom and dad, on their wedding day, San Francisco, 1942. Esperanza is flanked (going from her immediate "picture" left to "picture" right) by her father, Felipe Puente, her husband Bill, her mother Tomasa, and Bill's mom Florence.

"My father entered the War in 1942 and worked in Naval Intelligence on Treasure Island until the War ended in 1945," Steve began over coffee at Pacifica's Chit-Chat Cafe on Manor.

After the War ended, Steve moved with his parents to 161 Pinehurst Way in San Francisco's Mount Davidson Manor neighborhood, a compact neighborhood in the south-central part of San Francisco, nestled between six other neighborhoods. That's the place Steve's little sister Margie came home to after she was born in 1948. It's also the place Steve called home for 20 years. The Brown residence was just a few blocks from the El Rey Theater, which is now, as an official San Francisco Historic Landmark, being renovated and restored.

"Both my sister and I spent a lot of time at the movies at the El Rey Theater," Steve said, "and that same theater was also a huge part of my mom's childhood."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Born in 1922, Espie lived with her family at 262 Moncada Way, at most a 10-minute walk from the El Rey Theater. When the theater opened in November of 1931, Espie was right there to watch "The Smiling Lieutenant" starring Maurice Chevalier, and Espie and her siblings—Angelina, Carmen, Felipe, Amelia and Maria—spent many satisfied movie-days there. The movie theater also later served as an easy date location for Espie and the boy who lived right across the street – and his name was Bill Brown. Bill moved with his family to Moncada Way in 1938, when Espie was 16 and he was 17.

"The perfect time to fall in love," Steve smiled.

Moncada Way is located in San Francisco's historic Ingleside Terraces neighborhood, which is home to approximately 750 houses built at the former site of the Ingleside Racetrack. As the story goes, when Bill Brown arrived with his folks and siblings to their new home on Moncada Way, he was on the back of a flatbed truck playing the "Beer Barrel Polka" on piano.

"My mother's family, the Puentes, and my father's family, the Brown-Hancocks, were all good people and they had that in common," Steve stated, "but their background was very different and then, in my mother's family, there were five sisters and one brother, and in my father's family, there were five brothers and one sister."



Born in Mexico in December of 1882, Steve's maternal grandfather, Felipe Nicolás Puente, worked as Transportation General for revolutionary leader Pancho Villa during the Mexican Revolution. Felipe's future wife, Tomasa Aguirre, was the daughter of a cattle rancher. Her family's hacienda in Chihuahua, Mexico, was just across the road from Pancho Villa's home, "Quinta Luz," and it was neighbors that Felipe and Tomasa met. The couple married in Chihuahua in 1915 and the Jefe de Transportation would eventually become the longtime manager of the Mexican National Railway, San Francisco division, working in the Monadnock Building, a Beaux-Arts style, 10-story office building on Market Street.

←Felipe Puente, 4th from left, Chihuahua, Mexico, taken during the Mexican Revolution, circa 1914.

Not long after his daughter Espie and his son-in-law Bill married in 1942, Felipe Puente spoke in a Commonwealth Club speech, broadcast over KYA Radio 1260 in San Francisco. (The Commonwealth Club of California is the country's oldest and largest public affairs forum and is carried to more than 230 public and commercial radio stations across the nation.) In that speech, Felipe spoke of the importance of "Mexican-American cooperation in

the War efforts," citing cargo lanes in both Mexico and the U.S. that were critical to the U.S. He quoted Manuel Ávila Camacho, President of Mexico from 1940 to 1946. "Mexican soldiers are willing to shed their blood anywhere in the world where they may be needed."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

"I knew my grandfather Felipe Puente," Steve noted. "I still have the box, as well as the Lionel Train Set that came inside of it, that he gave me in 1949. 'To Stevie Brown,' he wrote on it. He was very popular in San Francisco and beyond. They called him 'el Puente de San Francisco' (the San Francisco Bridge). He was in fact so well known, that when the U.S. Vice President came to town after the War (that would be Alben W. Barkley under President Harry S. Truman), my grandfather gave him a tour of a metal plant in San Mateo County."

"Señor Felipe N. Puente, who died in San Francisco on January 12, was by far the most important personal tie between northern Californians and the Republic of Mexico for nearly a quarter of a century," wrote members of the San Francisco Commonwealth Club in the Journal of the Commonwealth Club of California, Vol. 27, January 29, 1951. (According to his tombstone at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma, CA, Felipe died on Saturday, January 13, 1951.)

"He had addressed the Club's Friday Luncheon as well as a number of meetings of our Latin America Section of which he was a member for seven years," the Commonwealth Club Journal went on to report. *"He was noted as a human personification of the Good Neighbor Policy; a man of far vision, intense enthusiasms, loyalties, and unselfish services.*

"Although a railroad man by profession, his expert and sagacious advice was freely given at the service of American travelers by sea, highway, or air, and a letter from 'el Puente de San Francisco' (The San Francisco Bridge) as he was affectionately known clear down to the border of Guatemala, opened all doors in Mexico.

"Adios, Amigo!"

"My grandfather was very sweet, a nice man, the kind of person you would want for a grandfather," Steve said. "He and I set up the Lionel train he gave me. His wife, my grandmother, was nothing like Grandpa."

Steve laughed.

"Well first off, let me say she was very nice to me and she taught me how to cook a lot of Mexican food in her kitchen and I still make those recipes for myself. Do I speak Spanish? Very little, unfortunately. My mother and all her siblings spoke Spanish, as of course did their parents. They would speak a lot of Spanish at Puente family gatherings, as well as English. My dad did not speak Spanish and my mom spoke English with my sister and me. But in regards to my mother's mother, she was what is known as a 'bruja.'"

A bruja is someone who practices charms and folk magic.

"My grandmother had a little bit of 'witch' in her. With some of the photos of my grandparents' life in Mexico, if there was someone she didn't like, she would cut them out of the picture. She used to put in little dolls with names on them. That did concern me a bit!

"Now my father's mother, Florence (Davis) Hancock was a Christian Science practitioner. She healed people. The beauty of it was I had two grandmothers, one who was healing and one who was putting pins in people's pictures. Ha! Ha! With my dad's mom, if someone was sick, she would go to them and she would get them to believe that with faith, and their attitude towards God, they would feel so strong with power that they could literally heal themselves. She actually had results with these people to the point where people were so grateful they would buy her a house."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.



Steve's paternal grandparents were Florence Louisa (Davis) Hancock and Richard Charles Hancock. Richard was actually Steve's father's stepdad, but he was so loved that Steve was given "Hancock" as his middle name.

Florence was born in Shipshewana, Indiana. Her first husband was Floyd Monroe Brown and the Browns had three children together, Vivian, Bill and Dick. Bill, Steve's father, was born in Seattle in 1921. Florence and her second husband, Richard Hancock, had three children together: Richard Charles, Victor and Jack. Army Air Force pilot Richard Charles Hancock died in the Second World War in the sky over Europe. During the War, Florence was honored for having three Army Air Force pilot sons – the most of any U.S. family at one time during WWII.

But before the War, apparently the Brown-Hancock boys were notorious, in a silly-fun way, for showing off to the Puente sisters. However, it was only the one Puente daughter, Esperanza, and the one Brown-Hancock son, Bill, who truly fell for each other.

←Steve's dad and mom, Bill and Espie, with Bill's mom Florence, San Francisco, circa 1952.

Before Bill and Espie married and perhaps before they even dated, 17-year-old Espie worked in the Mexican Arts and Crafts Pavilion in the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition held on Treasure Island, the artificial island in the San Francisco Bay built in 1936 and 1937 for the World Fair.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.



Espie Puente, Steve's mom, 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition.

"After my dad left the Navy, he went to work at California Standard Oil Company," Steve said. "He started off in the lower tiers, and worked his way up because he was so good with numbers. He became Assistant to the Treasurer and then later he had more power. I was really born at the right time to the right people who were very supportive of the life I chose for myself. That is a blessing. How lucky can a guy be?"

"My mom was a real housemaker and that's exactly what she wanted to be, she was never going to look for a job outside of our home. She made all the meals. She made everything clean. She was more of a disciplinarian than my father, but she was a disciplinarian to a kind degree.

"My dad loved to take us to places on the weekend. We'd go see historic places, and interesting places to go hiking and to beaches. When I started getting into surfing, he would film me surfing. He did a lot of filming. We would go out to Camp Mather in the Sierras, rent a cabin and stay for a week and he would

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

film there. That's probably what helped me slide so easily into filmmaking – and my dad had camera skills. Though not only did I observe this, but everyone in the family and all our neighbors were forced to watch his films as well!" Steve's dad also liked to entertain everyone, especially his wife and children, by playing popular songs on the piano, sometimes singing along. "We really had fun as a family."



Growing up after the War, Steve said his neighborhood was loaded with baby boomers and he had the time of his life.

"We all had coasters and bikes and we played baseball in the street. We played football. I was in the Cub Scouts, the Boy Scouts and then an Eagle Scout. My mother was a Den Mother when I was in the Cub Scouts. We'd all meet downstairs in our social room and these were some of the guys that I later surfed with."

Like his mom, Steve went to Commodore Sloat Elementary School. That was followed by Aptos Junior High School. At the latter, he played on the soccer and track teams and for his efforts he got his Aptos Block "A."

←Steve, Aptos Junior High School, San Francisco, 1958.

He had a childhood, and teen-hood, of going to San Francisco's famous but now long-vanished amusement landmarks. Playland at the Beach, San Francisco's grand seaside amusement park, was a popular hangout for Steve with both his family and friends. He swam at the great Sutro Baths – an ocean-pool aquarium built in 1894 and developed by self-made millionaire Adolph Sutro who made his fortune in silver in Virginia City, Nevada, at the Comstock Lode. The saltwater swimming pool complex burned down in 1966 and Playland closed in 1972 due to safety concerns and overall decline.

"Swimming at Sutro Baths was magic," Steve recalled. "When you went down those stairs and went into the first pool it was normal temperature, the next pool was hot water and the last was cold water and they were all salt water. (There were seven swimming pools.) There were regular diving boards and a high dive. They had a diving pool. You wanted to hesitate but you couldn't hesitate on that high dive. That was a jump. I never dived! But don't land the wrong way!"

High school was Abraham Lincoln High School in the Sunset District, not too far from where Steve lived, just slightly more than two miles away. He didn't know it then but that distance, between his house and his high school, would get a lot longer when he was 15/16, even though neither address changed.

All of high school was a crazy, busy time for Steve and he had no complaints. He focused on particular interests in school – history and business. He enjoyed all the challenges of being an Explorer Scout. He won awards in gymnastics (push-ups and climbing rope), swimming and long-distance running. He and his fellow long-distance runners would run out to the beach along the Great Highway, from Lincoln and back to Lincoln. In the summer of 1959 and 1960, he worked as a lifeguard for San Francisco Park and Recreation Pools, which included Balboa and Fleishhacker pools.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Fleishhacker Pool, another San Francisco amusement landmark now gone, was 150 feet wide by 1,000 feet long and held 6.5 million gallons of seawater. The largest swimming pool in the U.S., the outdoor swimming pool could "comfortably" accommodate 10,000 visitors at a time. Located next to the San Francisco Zoo, it had a two-tiered diving board which looked down on a section of the pool that was 14 feet deep. Naturally, of course, "Stevie Brown" made his way off that high dive. "That's 'Stevie,' with a 'v,'" he laughed.

"I had to be tested to be a lifeguard," Steve noted. "They took me out to China Beach and said, 'Okay, you learned the moves, now you've got to pass the test.' Then they give me this Samoan guy who weighed 300 pounds to rescue right out in the middle of the ocean. I was a little kid, 14. I did save him. He might have helped a little. But I passed!" Like all lifeguards at Fleishhacker, with multiple lifeguards serving at all times, Steve patrolled the pool in a rowboat. "We found a human thumb in Fleishhacker Pool!"

With declining attendance due to maintenance issues beginning in the late 1960s, Fleishhacker Pool closed forever in 1971 following its conversion to fresh water – which was immediately followed by a winter storm that damaged a drainage pipe.

So what changed that made Steve's commute to high school so much longer? That story begins with Steve's parents. They listened to Don Sherwood on 560/KSFO, San Francisco. The station was billed as "The World's Greatest Radio Station" and radio personality Don Sherwood was billed as "The World's Greatest Disc Jockey." Sherwood was in the station's leadoff spot, 6 to 9 a.m., Monday through Friday.

"Donnie-babe," as his moniker went, spent his radio time ad-libbing, gulping coffee, puffing on cigarettes, offering opinions including unifying California, Oregon and Washington into a new nation, advising listeners about products, sometimes targeting products, tossing out impromptu imitations, and hosting guests – famous and/or on the verge of being famous – while dropping a number of tunes over the airwaves by 1950 chart makers such as Pat Boone and Ricky Nelson.

"If my parents hadn't liked him, I wouldn't have known about him. I mean that's the beauty of it. My parents had the right stuff on to get me to go in the right direction. A friend of mine—his father owned all these movie houses in the City and he was in Scouts with me—he said, 'It's Easter break (this is April of 1960), let's go down to KSFO and check out Don Sherwood doing his show.' So we went down to the Fairmont Hotel—KSFO was in the Fairmont, right across from the Tonga Room—and they let us go in and stand where they were playing the records and Don was in his booth. I watched Don having to go downstairs and get his coffee, and run upstairs and get his mail and open it up, plus he had to pull records from the music library. After I saw all that, at the end of his day I said, 'Hey, you need any help with any of that stuff?' And he said, 'You want to work for me?' Don Sherwood hired me directly and I was paid well. He was paid well. He was at that point in time the best paid disc jockey in San Francisco and eventually became the best paid disc jockey in the nation." Steve was 15.

"Now, I've got to say, my dad was an amazing dad – a dad who would let his son leave at 4:30 in the morning to work with a guy that was a little bit two famous in some ways. I had to walk two blocks from our house, get on the K Car (K Ingleside Streetcar Line) and go all the way downtown and get off at Powell. Cable cars don't run at 5 in the morning, so I had to walk all the way from Powell and Market to the Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill. I did that every morning. When I got up there, I got all the records for his show out of his locker. I made the coffee and made it ready for him, and made sure all his mail was opened and on the desk for him. Sometimes he wasn't quite there yet at 6 a.m. when he was supposed to be there and on the air." (Don Sherwood was famously frequently late. Rumor has it that he wanted the station to be aware of how valuable he was to them. The other rumor was he just partied too much.)

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

"When Don was late, I'd bring in the guy from the news department to sit in for a bit and I'm on the phone calling Don at his apartment saying, 'You know, it's time!'"

Not long after Don got there, Steve left for school.

"I was 15. I didn't have my driver's license yet. So when I left, I had to get on the Streetcar again and catch a bus and get over to Lincoln High School and be there on time. Of course I loved it!"

Six months later, the station noticed Steve had a knack for selecting the music programming and put him on their payroll.



This promotional mailer, circa 1962, features Steve, seated bottom left, and Don Sherwood, standing center. There's a recipe for cheese fondue on the back.

"When I was at KSFO with Don, I met all the people performing at San Francisco's famous Hungry i Nightclub. Don was the biggest DJ in the area and the place to promote your show. Woody Allen, Phyllis Diller, Jonathan Winters – they would all show up at the station at 6 a.m. It was totally fascinating to me to see how the adult world of entertainment acted off stage, and how really funny they were as human beings."

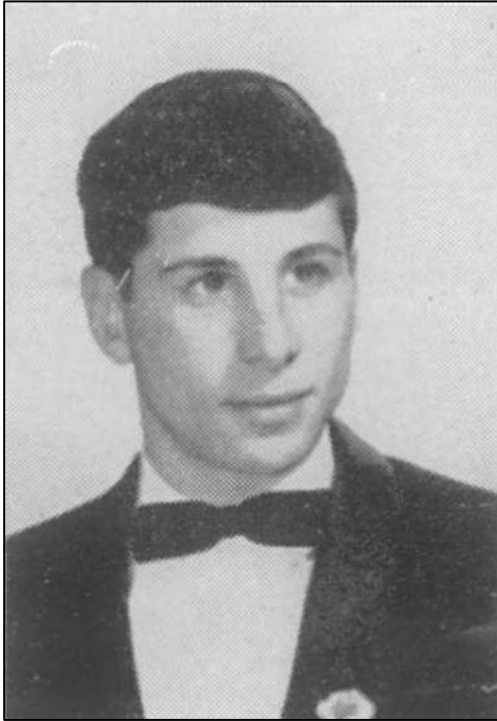
Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Steve also recalled a strange fellow sitting outside the station wearing a priest's outfit. He turned out to be Lenny Bruce.

"Of all the people I met through Don Sherwood, I'd say Jonathan Winters was my biggest influence. He and Don were really good friends, so I got to know him pretty well. He was one of the people that twisted my mind in a good way at an early age. I went into KSFO at 15 and when I came out 5 years later, I was 40!"



By the summer of 1962, the year that he graduated from Lincoln High School, Steve was working full-time at KSFO, programming the music weekly for eighteen shows, driving the news mobile wagon on remotes and assisting the promotion department on various station promotional projects.

"I was doing six hours of programming a day. This was easy listening music: Dean Martin, The Limelighters, The Ray Conniff Singers. On KSFO we played the first Dylan release which was immediately panned because 'his voice was so funny.' But Bob Dylan got the last laugh there.

"They had me drive the news wagon when they would go out on events, like when the Beatles came to town, because I was the kid that was the rock 'n' roller. I learned how to do recordings." Steve also learned to interview, which included interviewing the Beatles (and he still has that recording) when they played the Cow Palace in August of 1964.

In 1962, Steve enrolled in San Francisco's City College. His major was broadcasting and he studied and participated in both television and radio production.

When he was not in school or working for KSFO, Steve surfed when he could. He had learned to surf at Kelly's Cove – that strip of Ocean Beach tucked under the Cliff House. It was right after he turned 16. His dad gave him the old family 1950 Chevy, and in that Chevy, Steve could put his board up and find the waves – often at Ocean Beach or down the coast in today's Pacifica where he surfed Linda Mar. (On November 22, 1957, the nine separate coastal communities of Edgemar, Pacific Manor, Westview, Sharp Park, Fairway Park, Vallemar, Rockaway Beach, Linda Mar and Pedro Point became the City of Pacifica.)

"Kelly's Cove is kind of dangerous when the fog comes in," Steve said. "If the waves stop and you are out there by the rocks, you can't see which way to go to get back to shore. You have to yell to ask people where the shore is."

"I got my first surfboard from Jack O'Neill when he was right off the Great Highway," Steve said. "This is before he had his famous eyepatch."

Surf pioneer Jack O'Neill opened his first surf shop, the one that Steve went to, in 1959. His extremely successful business, which he later moved to Santa Cruz, went on to include all things surf-related: surf gear, clothing and wetsuits. He has long been credited with inventing the first neoprene wetsuit, and his

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

name remains synonymous with the wetsuit and its origins. However, evidence shows that the first wetsuit was invented by nuclear physicist Hugh Bradner, when Bradner worked at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at UC Berkeley. A lover of the ocean who enjoyed diving and sailing, Bradner decided to devote his free time to improving diving equipment for Navy frogmen. The result, in 1951, was a "foam wetsuit using a unicellular material known as neoprene." Still, Jack O'Neill definitely did his own experimenting with a number of materials which resulted in the wetsuits he made and sold.

"Jack O'Neill was a really personable guy and even back then, a surfing luminary," Steve recalled. "He told me something about getting the idea for his wetsuit material from looking at the materials on a DC-3 passenger plane."

As to that "famous eyepatch" – O'Neill, who died in 2017 at the age of 94, lost his eye in a surfing accident in the 1970s, though it did not keep him out of the water. In his later years, he worked tirelessly on marine and environmental causes. To this day, O'Neill's surf brand reaches all corners of the world.

When Steve wasn't riding the waves in his free time, he was gliding down the streets of San Francisco on a short narrow board mounted over two small wheels on either end.

In August of 1965, Steve and his skateboarding expertise made the pages of *Skateboarder Magazine*, Box 1028, Dana Point, California 92629. The magazine, now recognized and celebrated by Skateboarding Heritage Foundation, was launched by John Severson Productions. It only lasted four issues and Steve made the third.



Chris Borden took this 1965 photograph that ran in the third issue of *Skateboarder Magazine*. It shows Steve Brown, highlighting his street-style on the urban slope that snakes between The Great Highway and the Great Pacific.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

There is a baseball story. That's a game Steve played in the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts but did not play at Lincoln High School. He didn't have time. But he did play it with the KSFO team. They had a yearly baseball event with various native sons, business owners and/or residents of North Beach. Somewhere among Steve's vintage collection is his father's 8mm film footage of the day the KSFO team faced one particular North Beach luminary, Joe DiMaggio. When asked how the game went, Steve just laughed. "That's a baseball secret!"

Following his graduation from City College in 1965, Steve left KSFO. "Don was planning to move to Hawaii. I went to work doing sales and promotion for wholesale record distributor, C. & C. Stone." As such, he called on retail record stores and radio stations from San Francisco to Monterey.

"I did keep in touch with Don Sherwood after I left KSFO. I knew his son Greg as well. I remember one time Greg and I 'mat-surfed' at Rockaway in Pacifica, while his dad was on one of those blow-up rafts. You never knew what Don might do. This guy, Ed Brawley, used to give reports about ocean and bay conditions for scuba diving on Don's show – and this was just Don's way of being hands-on."

Meanwhile since August 2, 1964, like all young men of military age, Steve kept his eyes on the news. On that date, three North Vietnamese patrol torpedo boats engaged in a firefight with the USS Maddox (DD-731) while the destroyer was in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Maddox called for air support from the carrier USS Ticonderoga (CV-14). The Ticonderoga pilots strafed the three boats, catching one on fire. Both sides separated.

The attack on the USS Maddox blazed across U.S. headlines and the "Gulf of Tonkin incident" led the United States to engage more directly in the Vietnam War.

"I did not get a draft notice. I was at City College and in 1964 and 1965 they were saying, 'If you are in college, you are not going to be drafted.' Then it seems like moments later they were saying, 'Well, if you are a certain age, even if you are in college, you may still be drafted. But if you are married, you are not going to be drafted.'"

Steve and his girlfriend made haste to Reno, Nevada, and got married in 1965.

While Steve promoted vinyl from London, Decca and Elektra Records for C. & C. Stone, he also started up a rock band in San Francisco called, The Friendly Stranger.

The Friendly Stranger played at places such as San Francisco's California Hall with bands like The Great Society (original Grace Slick band) and Big Brother and the Holding Company, before Janis. Steve started out as The Friendly Stranger's bass player, but decided his skills were better suited to promoting and managing the band. He did meet a teenager back then, a nice local kid who was a guitarist. "He would stop in to help out and just a few years later, he skyrocketed to fame." That "kid" was Carlos Santana.

When Steve was with The Friendly Stranger, he got to know members of a mostly-covers band, The Warlocks. The Warlocks formed in Palo Alto in December of 1964 and played their first gig at Magoo's Pizza Parlor in Menlo Park on May 5, 1965. They played there every Wednesday night that May, packing the venue with local high school students. But the band also had some original tunes and in November of 1965, they did a demo session for Autumn Records.

"My path would cross with the The Warlocks and when they took a break and went out to their car in the back parking lot for a smoke, if you know what I mean, I would join them."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Around the time of their Autumn Records session, The Warlocks discovered there was another band in the U.S. using the "Warlock" name, so they changed their name to the Grateful Dead that November.



Steve's band, Friendly Stranger, play an outdoor gig at San Francisco's City College, 1966.

Not long after Steve married, "the military started singing a new tune."

"They were saying, 'Even if you are married, we want you.' By then, the war was building up. So in 1966, I joined the U.S. Navy Reserve. I tried to stay ahead of being drafted."

In 1967, he was called to active duty. Because Steve's dad had served on Treasure Island during the Second World War, he still had a number of Navy contacts.

"My dad arranged it. I met with this Navy guy on Treasure Island and told him about my experiences in radio and the music business." In February of 1967, Steve arrived at his assignment in San Diego – the Public Information Office of Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.



"My duties included: making master tapes of various types of music – classical, country, easy listening and rock – and sending out catalogs of music available for ship entertainment systems; making dubs, which is transferring or copying previously recorded audio material from one medium to another; filling requests for tapes; and doing service radio for the Public Information Officer."

In June of 1967 through November 1967, Steve was sent to Vietnam as a photo-journalist and to do audio recording with the Admiral's Flag Staff and Navy Combat Camera Crew. He also recorded interviews for "Hometown Radio News Service."

"As part of the film crew, I did the audio on selected missions and interviewed the guys in charge. If I wasn't doing that, I was talking to personnel and getting their stories about their life in Vietnam. Then I would send these interviews back to the station in their hometown. Was I ever put in harm's way? Oh, yeah."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.



Steve was on the USS Forrestal Aircraft Carrier on July 29, 1967. The supercarrier was stationed off the coast of North Vietnam, conducting combat operations. Due to an electrical anomaly, a Zuni rocket (a 5-inch Folding-Fin Aircraft Rocket) aboard one of the ship's F-4 Phantoms, accidentally fired and struck an external fuel tank of an A-4 Skyhawk. This triggered a jet fuel fire and a series of explosions that killed 134 sailors and airmen, and left another 161 seriously injured. Among the survivors, along with Steve and his film crew, was future U.S. Senator John McCain. Of the 73 aircraft on board, 23 were destroyed.

"We happened to be there filming when all that happened." Steve closed his eyes briefly as he recalled the tragedy.

In October of 1967, Steve was back in San Diego with the Public Information Office of Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

In January of 1968, the midshipman decided in his free-time, he would do radio and so he walked into what was then, easy-listening station KPRI-FM, 106.5 San Diego, and talked the general manager into giving him the midnight to three spot.

"I've never needed much sleep," Steve laughed. "I hope that's a good thing!"

Steve played what he liked to hear.

"When I could fly home on the weekends, I'd catch acts at the Fillmore and the Avalon Ballroom. I'd go to the Fillmore for the first three bands in the first set, and then drive quickly over to the Avalon and catch their second set of three bands – essentially, max it out. Using the equipment I brought from the Navy (ahem!), I recorded some of the concerts of Cream and the Grateful Dead. Then I'd play a song I recorded by the Grateful Dead and a song by Cream on KPRI. My radio name was DJ O.B. Jetty. I lived at Ocean Beach by the jetty in San Diego, and hey, I had to be somewhat incognito. I was in the Navy and wasn't exactly sure they would be pleased if they knew what I was up to in my spare time."

DJ O.B. Jetty told listeners to write the manager if they wanted more of what he offered and at first the station thought it was just his friends calling. Then they decided nobody could have that many friends and moved Steve to an earlier spot, playing this "new sound" starting at 9 p.m.

The first weekend of March, 1968, the Navy man was once again back in San Francisco, attending and tape recording the Saturday night Cream concert at the music venue, Winterland. On Sunday, March 3, he was on Haight Street. He had gotten an inkling, as did a few thousand others, that a music event might

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

happen on the street in the afternoon – though nothing was written in stone. He came prepared with a camera and his reel-to-reel recorder with its own battery pack and microphone. As the day played out, Steve snapped a photo of Jerry Garcia walking along Haight Street, guitar in hand. Then at 3 p.m., on the back of two flatbread trucks, the Grateful Dead played a free concert which is still the stuff of legend. Steve captured a lot of the audio, and those tunes include: "Viola Lee Blues," "Turn On Your Love Light" and "Cryptical Envelopment." Those results, captured by Steve, are an easy online listen.



(Steve Brown photo)

Jerry Garcia on Haight Street, San Francisco, March 3, 1968.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

By the spring of 1968, KPRI was a 24-hour rock station and Steve became program director, sold air time and did an eight to midnight show daily.



DJ O.B. Jetty, playing the hits on KPRI-FM San Diego, early 1969, just after his hon. discharge from the Navy. (No more military prohibition on goatees!)

Navy life remained busy but quiet and the midshipman had it in mind that he was going to cover, at least a portion of, the 11th annual Monterey Jazz Festival in September of 1968 (September 20, 21 and 22) for the radio station. But he never made it. The Navy got wind that it was "their" man behind the O.B. Jetty moniker. By August of 1968, Steve was back in Vietnam as a photojournalist and no stranger to close calls.

"The film crew was often lifted by helicopter from the stern of a ship. I remember one time, when we were actually in the helicopter, we thought we were being shot at, only to discover the sliding closing door had come loose and was being sucked up into the helicopter's propellers – chopping it up. The helicopter started falling towards the stern. It was going to crash and it did crash. Boy did we jump out quick!"

Steve surfed in Da Nang.

"That was nice. They had a booth and for 50 cents you could take a board out. The water is warm there so the wax you put on your board would melt off in no time. The waves were medium, a little like Pacifica in the south end, except add green snakes in the water." Also, apparently, sharks and six-foot sharp-tooth barracudas, a ray-finned fish, could be among the Da Nang additions.

Another memory from Da Nang, Steve would be happy to forget.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

"I had phoned my parents from Da Nang, and right when I was talking to them, an attack came in. My parents could hear it before the phone cut out. I went back to where the bodies were coming in and I saw bodies turned to meat, bodies burned. I didn't want to go to war. I didn't want to sign up. I thought sending music out to people when I was in San Diego was very peaceful."

Steven Hancock Brown was honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy after he returned from Vietnam in December of 1968.



Steve and his mom, San Diego Navy Dock, December, 1968.

Out of the Navy, Steve returned to KPRI as program director and DJ until the station sold to new owners in April of 1969. Back to the Bay Area, he took a job as DJ and public service director at KSJO-FM, San Jose.

"We were living in San Francisco and it was too far to commute for too little money just to be in show business!"

He left in October of 1969 to work as the album buyer for a record wholesaler in San Francisco – Nor-Cal Super Stop. With Steve's help, that became the largest wholesale record operation in Northern California.

"Then," Steve noted, "the greatest event of my life happened, the birth of my daughter. Melissa was born on November 15, 1969, and just after I watched my wife bring her into the world, I went into the waiting room down the hall and I looked up at the TV. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young were coming out on stage at the Polo Field in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. They opened with, "Teach Your Children."

He stayed with Nor-Cal Super Stop until Super Stop manager John Iott decided to start his own chain of retail record stores. Steve was with John to open the first Record Factory in San Jose, and Steve also set up John's wholesale operation, "Mighty Fine Distributing" to service the Record Factory chain and other

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

retailers. He additionally started J & B Advertising to do in-house radio, television and newspaper ads. Steven opened four more Record Factory stores in Northern California, and worked through a lot of the construction on the chain's sixth store, a 4,000-square foot space, carrying \$100,000 in inventory and located at Serra Shopping Center in Colma, before he amicably left for another music road.

"When I was with the Record Factory, I was the head buyer for Mighty Fine Distributing. That made me very popular with all the record companies who wanted to be sure I wanted lots of their artists! I would be sent to Los Angeles when a new record was coming out. I would go to the studio or someplace where the music could be presented really well. The record companies would invite all these people from newspapers and radio stations, as well as the record buyers, like me, to come to these special events and have a listen. I remember one time this guy came out. I didn't really know who he was but there was a piano there and there was a bass player, and he started playing from his album."

This "guy" would be Elton John and he began his session with "Your Song," from his self-titled second album, "Elton John," which was released in April of 1970.

"I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, this is a great song,' and Bill Graham (San Francisco-based, world-famous impresario and rock concert promoter), is sitting over there and getting his checkbook out. That was a night!"

In June of 1972, Steve bought a "nice old house in Pacifica." At the end of 1972, a couple of Steve's friends who worked for Warner Bros. Records in North Beach, got word that the Grateful Dead wanted to leave the record label once their contract expired.

"One of the Dead's financial guys created a whole new business package for the band and he called it, 'The So What Papers.' When I heard that, I submitted the 'Why Me Papers,' essentially my creative résumé to the band!"

Steve was invited to interview with Jerry Garcia. They already knew each other as friendly acquaintances, but as they young men sat together at a big table in a conference room, they talked about everything except the record business – including growing up in San Francisco and going to Playland, Sutro Baths and Fleishhacker Pool – and they clicked. "We were like long-lost brothers."

In 1973, the Grateful Dead established two record labels, Grateful Dead Records for group recordings and Round Records for solo projects. In April of that year, Steve was hired by the Grateful Dead to be the album production coordinator, set up an independent wholesale distribution network, and create promotional and advertising programs.

"There were only four of us that worked for Grateful Dead Records and I had a lot of hats to wear. But it was definitely worth it and I had a fantastic time."

Steve Brown talked about some of his experiences, for instance working with the Dead on "From The Mars Hotel."

"That was the second record on their label, and it was recorded in the studio rather than live, and they were doing things that nobody had done before. For instance, they hooked together two 3M 16-track recorders with two "sync" tracks. That gave them an amazing 30 tracks to record their music on."

An accidental move on Steve's part made a change in the record's artwork. Alton Kelley and Stanley Mouse created the Mars Hotel cover art from photos of the dive hotel of the same name, located at 192

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

4th Street, corner of 4th and Howard in San Francisco, where the Moscone Center stands today. Fun fact - the Mars Hotel was once a temporary residence for novelist/poet Jack Kerouac.

"Alton and Stanley took those photos and did their wonderful artist rendering, which included adding something very cool and very 'Martian-like' to it.

"My accidental move was when I went to see the album's artwork, I picked up the separate, already backwards-written cutout graphic of 'Ugly Rumors' (to be placed below the album title) and held it upside down. 'Perfect!' Alton and Stanley shouted. And that's how the graphic 'Ugly Rumors' remains today."

The words are in a stylized Aztec text, which because of the Steve Brown unplanned brilliant maneuver, can only be read holding the record upside down in front of a mirror. On a related note, in "The Grateful Dead Movie," released in 1977, it includes film footage of the demolition of the Mars Hotel.

Steve worked as the production and post-production assistant for "The Grateful Dead Movie." (His movie credit reads, formally, production design.) The film was directed by Jerry Garcia. Leon Gast was location director and it was produced by Bill Graham (concert producer), Ron Rakow (executive producer) and Eddie Washington (producer). Steve's production work included: scripting, editing and sound tracking.

"I know there were several people involved with the film on Altamont (the 1970 documentary 'Gimme Shelter'), that were also crew on 'The Grateful Dead Movie.'"

At a glance that includes director and cinematographer Albert Maysles, who was one of several cinematographers on both films.

"I particularly remember this because one of my jobs was to map out how the band moved on the stage for the film people. They needed to know where the really good shots of the band or the individual members of the band were, as well as where the interesting fans were. I would go with them physically. I also told them when the crew members would go down the stairs and get on nitrous oxide tanks. Ha! Ha! I've still got my 'Cinema Crew' shirt from those days."

Another Steve assignment was to look at the dailies. That's the unedited footage that is collected at the end of each filming day for viewing by select members of the film crew.

"There was a lot of stuff we didn't use in the movie. Where did it all go? I wish I could get my hands on this one take I really liked. We were back stage rolling joints and putting them in Jerry's guitar case and what the film crew did was speed that footage up. I really wanted it, but they decided it was too silly."

Steve's in the movie a few times.

"There's a huge crowd of people in the movie. You'll never find me, though I can find me! I worked on that movie from 1974 through 1976. It wasn't released until 1977 because they were busy with other stuff."

On February 26, 1976, Jerry Garcia was one of the musicians on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine. The cover's headline read: (San Francisco Ten Years On) "What A Long Strange Trip It's Been." On the non-cover, nor anywhere inside, was a photo of Steve and Jerry.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.



(photo by Jim Marshall)

Steve Brown and Jerry Garcia, 1976, consider the sale of the Golden Gate Bridge.

The first time I interviewed Steve – that would be February of 2008 for the *Pacifica Tribune* – that photo and interview was a front-page *Tribune* story.

The year was 1976. Rolling Stone Magazine was shooting its tenth anniversary cover with the Golden Gate Bridge as the backdrop. In the foreground were the folks who had just gotten out of Steve Brown's van: Grace Slick, Jerry Garcia, Steve Miller, John Cipollina and Dan Hicks. At a break, photographer Jim Marshall shot a picture of Steve Brown selling the Golden Gate Bridge to his friend Jerry Garcia for \$15.00.

Steve traveled with the Grateful Dead all over Europe and the United States and into Canada.

"Not only did I have a good time touring with the Grateful Dead, but then there was Jerry Garcia's solo band for Round Records and I traveled with them and drove the car. When I was with the Garcia Band, we had Nicky Hopkins on piano."

This would be 1975 that Nicky played in Jerry's band. Besides the Jerry Garcia Band, Nicky Hopkins played with a number of legendary bands including: The Kinks, the Steve Miller Band, The Jeff Beck Group and Plastic Ono Band.

"Our drummer for Jerry's solo band was Ronnie Tutt. He worked as Elvis's drummer (from 1969 until Elvis's death in 1977). And here I am, sitting in the car, driving, and they are swapping stories of all these people and I am going, 'Where is the recorder? These stories are great!' We'd get into Tennessee and go see Elvis's home. We'd get somewhere else and head off to visit another famous person behind a story."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

And of course, Steve has plenty more of his own stories that famous lights travel through – not yet mentioned or maybe never to be mentioned in this interview-biography due to a time-crunch reality of reining things in. Undoubtedly several hundred names would fill a list, if Steve had one, of his inadvertent walks with giants.

"Not to worry," Steve laughed. "I've got at least two books of stories, though I better get started!"

Still...

Steve was friends with lyricist, singer-songwriter, poet and Jerry Garcia writing partner Robert Hunter, 1941-2019. Some of the "Dead" songs by the Garcia/Hunter duo include: "Touch of Grey," "Truckin'," "Friend of the Devil" and "Sugar Magnolia."

"Robert Hunter, what a great guy," Steve said recalling his friend. "I did sit in on a number of Jerry and Robert songwriting sessions. I had to be there for the times when they would redo some of the session writing right there in the studio at Bob Weir's and when they were working on an album that I was involved with."

Those albums that Steve was involved with would be: "Wake Of The Flood," 1973; "From The Mars Hotel," 1974; "Blues For Allah," 1975; and "Steal Your Face," 1976. For those who own the "Grateful Dead Records Collection" (Vinyl 5LP Box Set), 2017-remastered versions of these four 1970 records, Steve wrote the 2017 liner notes for each LP in the Collection's book, which also presents Steve's detailed notes, taken in the 1970s, on the evolution of the various songs and tracks presented.

"For instance when they did 'Mars Hotel,' they came in and made changes. I would see the changes, but not necessarily the original lyrics. I used to go over to Robert's house, over in San Rafael by the bay. I have a nice picture of him holding his lyrics up, covering his face of course! He was a magic guy in a lot of ways. I have a book of all his songs."

Steve put together the Robert Fried Memorial in June of 1975. Born in 1937, painter, printmaker, sculptor and most famously, 1967 through 1970 psychedelic poster artist – Robert Fried created 18 rock concert posters for promoters Chet Helms of the Family Dog, Bill Graham and others.

"The purpose was to raise money for Robert Fried's widow," Steve said.

The result of Steve's actions brought Bill Graham on board, among others. The memorial concert was held at Graham's Winterland, with Jerry Garcia and Friends, Kingfish, Keith and Donna, and The Mirrors as the event's performers. Steve, only 30 at the time, already had a lifetime of experiences to know how to pull an impromptu concert together.

Meanwhile, if Steve's former house could talk – he lived there until he bought a new place in 2010, just down the road from Pacifica in Moss Beach – what a collection of individual story portraits we would find.

There's the big cozy yellow chair that Jerry gave him, a chair that Steve still has. "Because," as Jerry once said, "It looks better in Steve's house." Of course, over the years until his death in 1995, Jerry sat in that chair more times than his friend can count.

"Jerry, just like my friend (guitarist) John Cipollina and the 'world's greatest' disc jockey Don Sherwood, all died from the effects of doing too much but particularly from smoking unfiltered cigarettes. In Jerry's

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

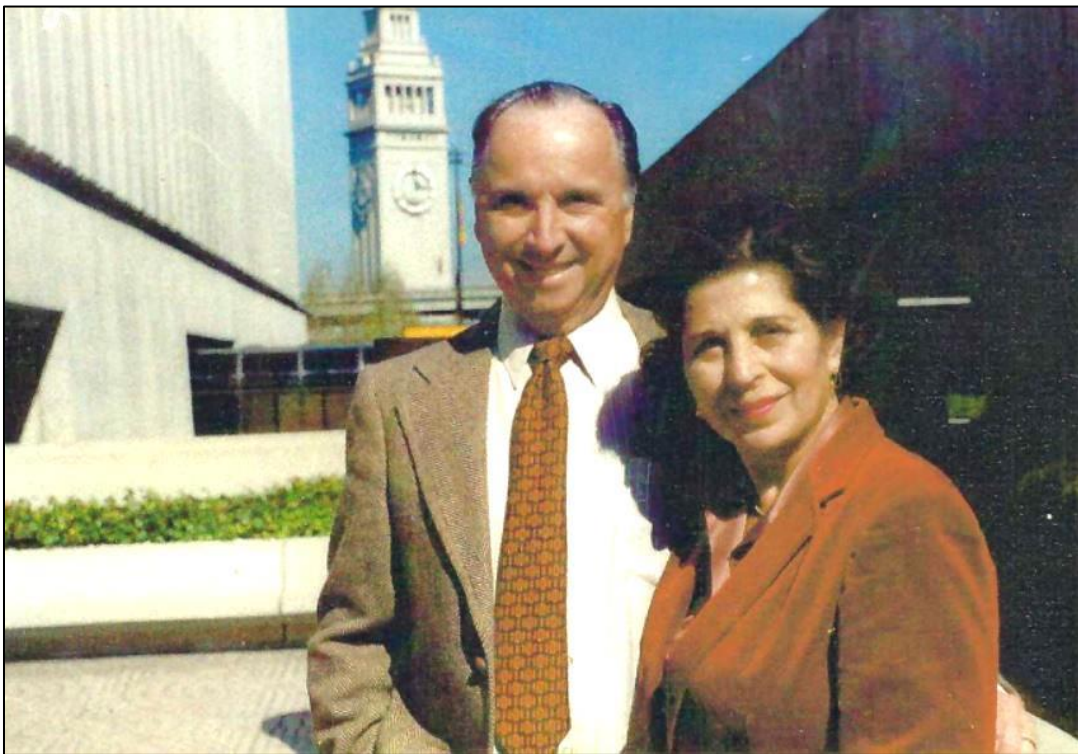
case, besides smoking, there was snorting and other drugs. He would say, 'But it feels so good.' He died with a smile on his face but I had to walk back talking to him about it."

Another small story portrait, at Steve's old Pacifica home, unless the new owners took it out, is the flower box that famous psychologist and psychedelic drug advocate Timothy Leary helped Steve install.

"I remember I took Timothy up to Milagra Ridge to see the ruins of the former (Cold War) Nike missile base. He was a smart guy, very interested in things and in history. Certainly with me, he was just a regular guy, a nice person, who was willing to hike!"

And of course among the many visitors to Steve's Pacifica home were his parents.

"One of the beautiful things is that my parents were very proud of what I was doing, back then and always. When my dad was in the treasury department (finance division) of Standard Oil of California, at the Board meetings he was very proud to tell them how I worked for Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead. I mean these are older guys with short hair, just like my dad! My mom was just as proud. That really makes such a good difference in a person's life."



Steve's dad and mom, Bill and Espie Brown, downtown San Francisco with the iconic Ferry Building clock tower in the background, circa 1976.

In 1975, the Grateful Dead signed a distribution deal with United Artists. In 1976, the Grateful Dead Records label was disbanded and the band signed a contract with Arista Records.

"There were workload and budget cuts when they gave up their record label, and while I continued (even now) to do some work for the Grateful Dead, in November of 1976, I went back to wholesale album buying. This time for the Bay Area retail record chain, Satisfied Ear."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

For Satisfied Ear, Steve saw to the building and stocking of three new stores (Daly City, Larkspur and San Francisco), and managed their wholesale operations until the chain was bought by Rainbow Records in June of 1979 and his job duties changed. He left for a job as an associate producer.

"That was with the short-lived Seen Sal Inc. of San Francisco. We were doing fundraising events to help get marijuana legalized."

Steve was responsible for the talent, production, security, ticket sales, advertising and promotion of all produced concerts and fundraising events. This included San Francisco's 1979 Margo St. James Masquerade Ball at the Civic Auditorium.



Jerry Garcia, the "incredible-record-collector guy" and Steve Brown at a New Year's Eve event, 1992.

While still keeping his feet in the world of rock, in December of 1981, Steve volunteered at Pacifica's 1977-established nonprofit, Pacifica Community Television Inc., back then, Channel 8 on the dial. Today's Pacifica Community Television/Pacific Coast TV, offers global live streaming on cable channels 26 and 27. As a volunteer, Steve helped produce the weekly show, "Pacifica News."

"My dad came and helped set up the studio for Channel 8 when it was in Manor."

In April of 1982, Steve was hired as part-time staff at the channel to help produce programs and train volunteers. In January of 1983, he was promoted to production manager. Meanwhile in September of 1982, the San Mateo Community College District hired Steve to be an instructional aide. He ran the Multi-Media Lab for the Social Sciences Department at Skyline College, 18 hours a week. As such, he helped students produce slide, film and video presentations.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

"I had 15 hours of programming every week at the station, and then I had a classroom full of students up at Skyline College. Admittedly for a number of years, there was never any sleep. But working at Skyline was the perfect thing to do. These kids were becoming adults with creative ideas and I was in this beautiful spot to see that change from high school to college/adulthood. I would go with students, on my own time, to their projects. I had an average of 40 students a semester for 10 years. I worked with 900 projects. And all that time I was still working doing programming with our local access channel. It was crazy. I was like two people."

Steve also became one of the filmmakers for a number of Burning Man events – the closing day of those events. Founded by the Cacophony Society, Larry Harvey, John Law and Jerry James, the multi-day event which celebrates artists, art, culture, self-expression, inclusion, contemplation, community and renewal, had its start at San Francisco's Baker Beach in June of 1986. In 1991, it relocated to Black Rock City, a temporarily-created city in Northwestern Nevada. The opening day of the event begins with the symbolic burning of a large wooden effigy. The event, as laid out by its co-founder Larry Harvey in 2004, is guided by ten principles: radical inclusion, gifting, decommmodification, radical self-reliance, radical self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, leaving no trace, participation, and immediacy.



Steve Brown, circa, 1996.

"I take to the open road ~ healthy, free, the world before me." From Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road."

Steve, who remains a cameraman and video producer with Pacifica Community Television/Pacific Coast TV, is a film library of people, places, organizations and events. For many of the Steve Brown local film-library listings, only a few mentioned here, there are years of footage: the Pacifica Beach Coalition, the Pacifica Historical Society, the Pacifica Garden Club, The Bruce Latimer Show (the longest running musical variety show on television) and coastside City Council meetings.

"Please mention Robert Twigg," Steve underscored. "I've done so much of this film work with him."

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Editor, regional Emmy winner, storyteller and local resident Robert Twigg is the President of West Avalon Productions. Additionally a multi-award winning photographer, he directs and manages "every aspect of" video production from pre-production to post. His work includes news, commercials, live events, branded content, entertainment and lifestyle programming.

In late 2011, Steve realized that he was sitting on all these film archives – footage that he shot during his heavy rock years, because he didn't then have a computer. "This stuff was only viewable in my format if you came to my house."

Pacifican, and then Board President of the Pedro Point Community Association Danny Estrella, heard about Steve's archives and told him to "put them together and share it." On April 20, 2012, at a sold-out showing at the PPC Association, Steve presented just that with his film, on DVD, "Flashback Jam – 45 Years of Rock 'N' Roll Memories."

"These were stories from the 45 years prior, all pre smartphone," Steve laughed. "This was done with film, VHS, super VHS and digital."

Steve opened his film with one of his favorite Jerry Garcia quotes. "We would all like to be able to live an uncluttered life, a simple life, a good life."

"There was an interview at the Grateful Dead's house at 710 Ashbury Street in October of 1967," Steve recalled. "They had been busted the day before for pot, the whole house, the whole band and so the next day, they did a press conference and I gleaned that quote from the audio I heard on the news."

Steve's "Flashback Jam" includes footage with the Dead on their 1974 European tour. There is footage from "The Human Be-In" event at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park on January 14, 1967, and the KFRC "Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival, June 3 and 4, 1967, on Mount Tamalpais. (*"Don't believe the dates on the Internet," Steve noted. "I know. I was there!"*) The footage includes the Jefferson Airplane singing "Saturday Afternoon" and Jim Morrison, standing surprisingly still, vocally rolling out "Light My Fire" with The Doors. There are interviews with: Bill Graham; rock 'n' roll poster and album artist Alton Kelley; and entertainer Wavy Gravy, whom journalist Paul Krassner described as an "Oral combat historian...the illegitimate son of Harpo Marx and Mother Teresa." Steve ended "Flashback Jam" in 2012 times with the Surf Coasters band from Japan. The film immediately became part of The Grateful Dead Archive at UC Santa Cruz University Library Special Collections & Archives. (The Grateful Dead archive materials were given to the University by the band, and a great deal of Steve's film work and "being there" collectibles and notes are part of that collection.)

In 2013, Steve put together a second film from his home archives and he named his film, "Steve's Flashback Jam – Second Helping."

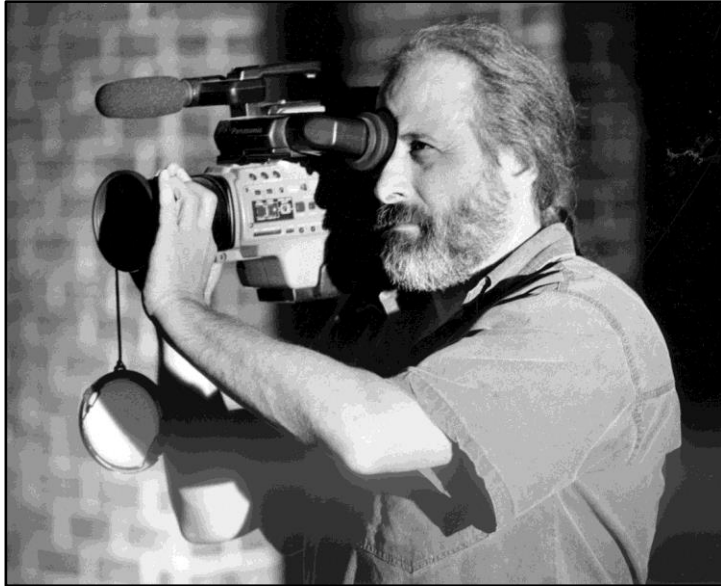
"With my first film, I only scraped the frosting. With 'Second Helping,' I dug deeper and pulled out 90 more minutes of good nuggets. I still have so much more."

"Second Helpings" opens with shots from San Francisco's famous clubs – Bop City, the hungry i, the Purple Onion, the Fillmore Auditorium. Steve sneaks in flashes of Joan Baez, Lenny Bruce, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, a young Jerry Garcia and then takes us along on his own road trips where he recorded events like the Dead playing Golden Gate Park in the 1990s, and Weir, Garcia and Kahn playing San Francisco's Gift Center in 1989. There's a radio interview with Jerry Garcia, and a 1992 San Francisco Civic Center concert with Little Feat and Bonnie Raitt. All of this is just in the first 16 minutes. This film is also now part of the UC Santa Cruz Special Collection.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.



In 2015, "Documenting The Dead: The Steve Brown Collection" got its own place at UC Santa Cruz University Library Special Collections & Archives.

"That took four visits to my home from the archivists and multiple boxes were borrowed that were loaded with notes taken, photographs and various ephemera I gathered along my way."

"Brown's archive comprises three boxes of papers, with a few photographs and pieces of ephemera," wrote Nicholas Meriwether, who curated the UC Santa Cruz Grateful Dead archive from 2010 to 2016. "It documents the range of roles Brown played, from Deadhead to employee to

alumnus, but always participant, from the young photographer and recording engineer who captured historic moments of the band in the 1960s to the indefatigable staffer of the 1970s who worked on Mars Hotel and The Grateful Dead Movie to the professional videographer who went on to produce seminal documentary films of the 1974 European tour, the 1995 Jerry Garcia Memorial, and more."

In 2016, Community Videographer Steve Brown, who has numerous WAVE awards (WAVE is the top West Coast award for public television broadcasting), was honored with a Commendation from the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County, State of California, for his receipt of the prestigious 2016 PCT HONORS award for Exemplary Service on the Coastsider in the areas of Public Service, Education and Community Volunteerism presented by Pacific Coast TV."

For a number of years now, Steve has been doing filming and soundtrack work for director, producer, writer, filmmaker and documentarian Tom Wyrsh. On the following Wyrsh films, Steve is cinematographer: "Haunted Sonoma County," 2016; "Haunted Wine Country," 2017; and "Up Late with Bob Wilkins," 2022. Steve was also a participant in the (2010) Wyrsh documentary "Remembering Playland at the Beach," the (2011) Wyrsh documentary "Sutro's: The Palace at Land's End," and the (2013) Wyrsh documentary "The Cliff House & Sutro Heights."

He is also, as of this interview, working on The Bruce Latimer Show 1,000th episode for Pacific Coast TV.

Steve has gotten some "nice checks" over the years from filmmakers interested in his vintage footage.

"When Martin Scorsese was one of the executive producers of "Long Strange Trip," (a Grateful Dead documentary released in 2017 and directed by Amir Bar-Lev), I was contacted."

For character research, Steve lent Jim Morrison archival footage to actor Val Kilmer who portrayed Morrison in the 1991 Oliver Stone film, "The Doors."

Steve – who has a landline, does not have a cell phone and still prefers to edit video using old analog equipment – laughed heartily.

Walking with Giants ~ The Unassuming Life of Coastsider Steve Brown

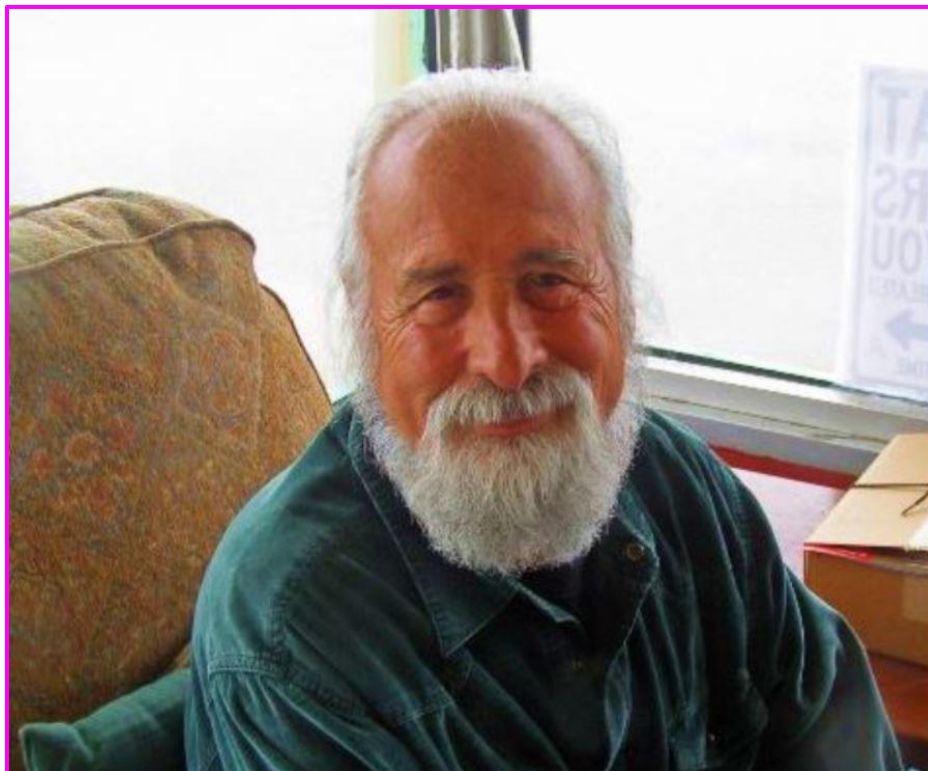
An interview-biography by Jean Bartlett (www.bartlettbiographies.com)

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

"I've got plenty more vintage film footage where that came from!"

As the clock heads towards end of interview, Steve pointed out that he is still so proud to be Melissa's dad who has also made him grandfather to Madeleine. "I love them both with all my heart." The longtime divorcee also cannot say enough about his wonderful girlfriend Linda.

"We've been together going on eight years," he beamed. "Finally I made the right match!"



(Jean Bartlett photo)

Steve Brown at the Chit-Chat Café, Pacifica, California, October, 2022.



Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Contra Costa County Times, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco. She is also a former Hallmark Card writer, a produced playwright and a published author.

(Copyright 2022. Pacifica Historical Society / Author: Jean Bartlett, City Biographer. Funded by the Sam Mazza Foundation. Available via the Pacifica Historical Society and online at www.bartlettbiographies.com.)