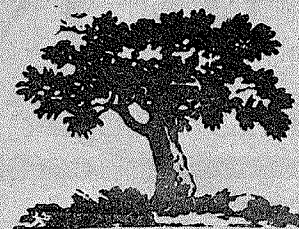


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Conservation coup

The 1,300-acre Phleger estate near Woodside will be preserved as open space if the Peninsula Open Space Trust can raise the funds. See Page 3.



GIUSEPPE SAITTA

SUNLIGHT filters through the branches in the forest that covers most of the Phleger estate.

POST agrees to buy Phleger estate

■ **1300 acres** of forest on the east side of Skyline will become public open space if POST can raise the money. It's the most financially ambitious land-conservation project in the U.S., says a POST official.

BY MARION SOFTKY

The forested hills rising to Skyline that you can see as you drive along Canada Road between Woodside and Edgewood Road will become part of the Bay Area's permanent greenbelt if the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) is able to consummate a bargain sale. POST this week agreed to purchase the 1,300-acre Phleger property from the heirs of the late Herman and Mary Elena Phleger.

While the total price is not being released at this time, the purchase is financially the most ambitious land-conservation project ever undertaken in the United States, said Audrey Rust, executive director of POST. The largest project until now was \$23 million, she said.

The property owned by the Phlegers since 1936 encompasses more than two square miles of hillside. It meets Canada Road at the familiar stone gates at the end of Edgewood Road and extends through meadows and redwood forest to Skyline Boulevard. It abuts the San Francisco Watershed on the north and east along Canada Road, and is bounded on the south by Huddart Park and Woodside.

"If you stand at Edgewood and 280, it's almost everything you can see," said Audrey Rust, executive director of the local land trust. "This property is the most important remaining piece of open space on the Peninsula," Mrs. Rust said. "It's a rare opportunity to save a spectacular redwood forest, create an uninterrupted greenbelt, and preserve one of the most extraordinary views left on the Peninsula."

The sale is the result of six months of negotiations with the Phleger family. The family has made a gift of \$5 million to POST to reduce the cost of the property.

To meet its first deadline, POST must raise \$14.5 million by the end of June.

POST is working in high gear to put together a public-private partnership to raise the money and prove it can meet the challenge. It will be approaching government agencies, private foundations, corporations and individuals for contributions.

"We need your help. It's an opportunity that will only come once," said Mrs. Rust.

When Mrs. Phleger died last week at "Mountain Meadow," her home for 54 years, a new chapter started for land which has been an integral part of San Mateo County history.

"The whole family loved the property, and is very interested in protecting it as open space," Ned Gates of Woodside told the Almanac. Mr. Gates is the late Mrs. Phleger's son-in-law.

First occupied by Indians, the Phleger property later provided redwood to build San Francisco. Willard Whipple operated two steam-powered sawmills along West Union Creek before the Civil War. His logs were dragged down Whipple Avenue to Redwood City. From there they were floated to San Francisco on barges powered by tides.

As the forests declined, so did the little community of West Union. During the last half of the last century, the entire watershed was gradually bought up by the Spring Valley Water Co., predecessor to today's San Francisco Water Department.

Mary Elena Phleger, who lived on the Phleger estate for 54 years, died Dec. 5. See Page 37.

William Bourn, president of the Spring Valley and his assistant, Samuel Eastman, built two of the Peninsula's most outstanding homes on the watershed.

Filoli, Mr. Bourn's home, was designed by Willis Polk and is a popular destination for visitors wanting to view its formal architecture and spectacular gardens.

Less well known is the home built for Mr. Eastman in 1927 by Gardner Dailey on his share of the watershed. It was Gardner Dailey's first house after he left Willis Polk, according to Mrs. Rust.

"It is reminiscent of Filoli on a smaller scale, and it has the world's most beautiful setting," she said.

The William Matson Roths (of the steamship line) and the Herman Phlegers bought the adjoining estates in the same year, said Mrs. William Goodan, Mrs. Roth's only surviving child, who lived there as a girl.

POST will be getting the 8,000-square-foot mansion along with the 1,300 acres of forest. Mrs. Rust expects that POST will eventually sell the home with some surrounding acres and restrictions to prevent development to make up some of the cost of purchasing the property.

Ultimately POST plans to sell the rest of the 1,300 acres to a public agency so that it can be opened to the public. "Our hope is to eventually have it included in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area," Mrs. Rust said.

It has magnificent forest and major op-

(Continued on next page)

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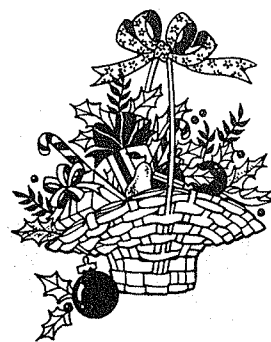
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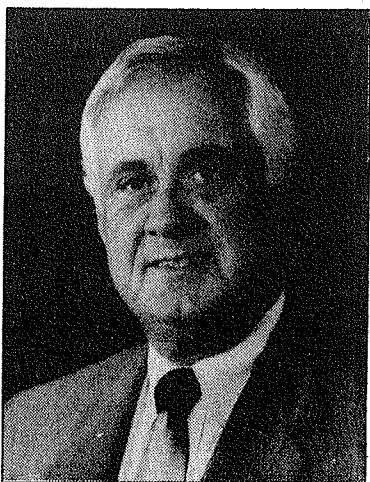
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