

Pacifica Business Neighbor: Prints Old & Rare **This portal to human history is known all over the world**

By JEAN BARTLETT | THE WEEK OF 7-2-18-7-8-18



(Jean Bartlett photo)

Prints Old & Rare team, clockwise from bottom left: Bill Hall, Maxine Hines, Dave Alonzo, Anthony Taganap, Melinda Lindner and Kathleen Manning.

At Prints Old & Rare in Pacifica's Crespi Business District, antique maps, prints, charts, engravings, books and ephemera stretch beyond where the eye can see and packages move to customers all over the world with the precision of an elf-run workshop. This package, "Ireland;" this package, "South Africa;" this package, "India;" this package, "The United States Senate." San Francisco and San Franciscans are big customers.

Very locally, you'll find framed prints from this one-of-a-kind shop in numerous businesses and homes, including: the Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay (that would be an old map of Half Moon Bay); the home of tall ship and heroic era historian and novelist Pacifican David Hirzel (that would be an 1876 print of a Sunday service on the 70ft wooden tall-ship "Alert"); and at Pacifica's City Hall (that would be an old map of Pacifica). In business nearly 50 years, husband and wife Bill Hall and Kathleen Manning are dedicated purveyors and guardians of modern history, and they have remained faithful to their absolute golden rule.

"One of the most important things we decided from the start is that we would never sell reprints or copies," Manning said. "We would only sell originals."

The couple's commitment to the authenticity of their products – which includes 19th century magazine illustrations by artists such as Frederic Remington, Winslow Homer and James Audubon – has made for a fascinating list of customers, a few mentioned here: the White House, the Supreme Court, the archivists of the legislative bodies in all the states, and archivists at colleges and universities throughout the country and the world.

"Working at Prints Old & Rare is like a box of chocolates, you never know what or who you're going to find," said Maxine Hines. Hines, like the owners of Prints Old & Rare and all of their staff, is a Pacifican.

"It's like a museum," she continued. "The store is filled with thousands of historical items: antique maps, prints, books, pictures, newspapers, etc., as well as a few surprises such as an electric chair and a coffin. The latter two are particular favorites of mine. It's amazing to see and touch, gently, ever so gently, items that date back 100 to 500 years. There's one item that is so huge it takes up a large portion of the shop's shipping area. It's a working model of the Ocean Shore Railroad and it is vital to the history of Pacifica. Kathleen and Bill saved it from the wrecking ball when it was formerly in the lobby of one of Pacifica's hotels."

Hines noted that the shop additionally offers her something very special – a personal recollection that is very dear. "We called my grandmother a bonbon shopper. That was our word for her always finding 'sweets' at garage sales. And I loved going to her house because she had all these interesting things. This place brings me back to my grandmother."

Melinda Lindner, the office manager, has worked at the shop since 2000.

"One of my favorite memories is turning on the television one afternoon and watching the U.S. House of Representatives Curator, one of our clients, give a tour of the House's hallways," Lindner said. "And their walls are lined with many of our prints."

"When I first came here, I was a bit overwhelmed because there is so much material," Lindner continued. "But Kathleen and Bill are great educators and I learned the value of these historic prints and maps. I additionally found out, I really love the old maps. Funny, because of the Internet there aren't that many maps now because everyone uses MapQuest. But the old maps that you can find here, present such history. I'm always looking for something. I bought a chart of the Farallon Islands from the 1800s and I love it. My husband has also purchased several bird's-eye views of old San Francisco that are framed and on our walls."

Dave Alonzo has worked in the shop for 11 years.

"I've learned so much from working here," the company's archivist said. "My first day on the job, Bill started teaching me about history and geography and it was completely fascinating. I know now that copper engravings are 1500s and 1600s, and that they are always older than the steel engravings, many of which come from the 19th century. There is something new to learn, new to find every day I come in. And I discovered, from Kathleen's and Bill's old prints, that I have a love of old Roman architecture, drawings and sculpture that I didn't know I had."

As evidence of this, Alonzo pulls out a favorite, a 1770 engraving of the Greek geographer Pytheas. This is followed by another favorite, an 1806 sepia tone aquatint of the Temple at Paestum.

Anthony Taganap photographs the prints for online information and has discovered a real love for old San Francisco history through maps. These maps include: a 1906 map of pre-earthquake San Francisco, and an 1855 hand-colored lithographed U.S. Coast Survey of the Golden Gate of San Francisco Bay.

"It's so interesting to compare what was then to what is now," Taganap said.



"On The Coast of California, showing Point San Pedro, near San Francisco." First published view of Pacifica, California. Hand colored wood engraving from Picturesque America. 1873. Available through Prints Old & Rare.

Bill Hall noted that he also has a particular love of maps.

"I am interested in all maps, but I especially like American maps because we can show, through these maps, the changes that our individual states, and their cities and towns, make. We have maps where cities that we know now are not part of that map. We also have maps of areas where states exist now. We have a late 1700s map of just the original 13 colonies.

"Of course it is fun to see big cities expand so quickly. South Florida, for example, was a virtual wasteland, just a swamp, until around 1920. We have so many customers in South Florida and throughout Florida. These are libraries, universities, collectors and businesses. Florida is a state where people really love their history. Miami, for instance, has an annual map show that people come to from all over the world.

"When people are looking for something very unique in a map – maybe a map like California when there was no Ventura County, there was just Santa Barbara County which then came down to Los Angeles County – we have it. People like seeing that, that's a change. Talking about California, the maps made in the late 1600s show California as an island. You see, when explorers discovered San Francisco, they travelled along the San Francisco Bay as far as they could and then they went along Baja California as far as they could. When their ships couldn't get through, they assumed it was the ship's draught. For several years, European map makers connected the water making California an island.

"I've done this for so many years, but it is such an exciting business. Sometimes things show up that Kathleen and I have never seen before."

Hall pulled out a map made before there was a West Virginia.

"West Virginia split off at the time of the Civil War," he explained. "We have original maps showing this. This makes it interesting."

He produced a canal and railroad map of Pennsylvania, dated 1840. There were no roads or freeways. People traveled by rail or by canal, or of course, horse and buggy.

But it's not just stories of maps and prints and charts and engravings that intrigue the owners and staff of Prints Old & Rare. There are also so many fascinating tales of customers.

"I don't even know where to begin with the interesting people who have come into our shop," Hall said. "We had one dealer from Australia come in. He called from the (San Francisco) airport and said, 'Can I be picked up? I'm a dealer in Australia and I buy from you occasionally.' So we said, 'sure,' and had someone on our staff pick him up. Late in the afternoon, I said, 'Well, you haven't eaten anything, would you like to go to a restaurant? Continue this tomorrow?' And he said, 'I have to stay with it. I have to get back to the airport. I've got to get back to Australia tonight.' He came here just to see our maps. I asked him, 'Have you ever seen San Francisco? People come from all over the world to see it.' And he said, 'Yes, when your man picked me up from the airport I saw a little of San Francisco on my way here.'"

"We had a visit from the Philippines Ambassador in Washington D.C.," Hall continued. "He used to go back to the Philippines about twice a year and he collected prints and maps on the Philippines. He would phone us about two days ahead of his trip. 'I'll be coming through and I've arranged to change planes in San Francisco,' he'd tell us. So he would give us his time between flights, about three hours, and we would take prints and maps on the Philippines to him at the airport. He would look through them, buy some and rush onto his plane. That was just so interesting and great fun.

"Because we sell to all these foreign dealers, I feel like we have the largest collection of prints and maps in the country and probably in the world.

"Because we sell to all these foreign dealers, I feel like we have the largest collection of prints and maps in the country and probably in the world."

Both Hall and Manning stressed that right now they are in the market to buy interesting maps of the old Ocean Shore Railroad. (Contact them. Tell them what you have and they will give you a price.) Manning has long been involved with the Pacifica Historical Society, www.pacificahistory.org, and can be given a lot of the credit for saving the last remaining car of the Ocean Shore Railroad, Car 1409. The massive restoration of Car 1409 has been taken under the fundraising wing of the unstoppable, all-volunteer Pacifica Historical Society. Expect success. (These are the

same folks whose herculean efforts to date have included saving and restoring the historic Little Brown Church, now the Pacifica Coastside Museum.)

"This is a wonderful experience, having this business," Manning said. "Many Pacificans don't know about it, though we do have walk-in customers. People are often looking for graduation and wedding presents, or antique views of where they have visited or perhaps where their ancestors originated. Look on our website and you can really get an idea of what we have. If someone has an obscure request of an old map, print, etc., call us first and we'll look into it."

"Our business is totally interesting to us," she continued. "I especially like social history such as political and ethnic cartoons. One day I would like to do a book based on the old adage, 'The more things change, the more they remain the same.' It's the old history teacher in me, I think!" (Right out of college, Manning began her working career teaching American history, European history, economics and government to grades 7 through 12.)

The once and ever history teacher said that among the popular items sold in the Bay Area – which includes old local city and town maps – are dog and cat prints.

"Something very interesting we learned is that dog people want their breed. But cat people, just want cats."

Prints Old & Rare, Manning's Books & Prints, 580 Crespi Drive #L, Pacifica, CA. Phone: 650-355-6325 or 1-800-879-6277. FAX: 650-355-1851. Website: www.printsoldandrare.com. Open Tuesday-Friday: 9am-5pm. Saturday-Monday: by appointment.



A Bartlett's Biographies Headliner

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.

Videos on Prints Old & Rare: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBP_sT63Ops and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv_2iTe_6E.
For an in-depth story on Kathleen Manning, visit: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_5c05cb4e2a1146bdb62e9e0c2274f20d.pdf.