

JACK LONDON
STATE HISTORIC PARK

JACK LONDON PARK PARTNERS

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Left: Tilden Daken, *Valley of the Moon, Sonoma Mountain in the Distance*, ca. 1920, oil on canvas, 18 x 22 inches, from the Lien and Geoff Wolfe Collection. Right: Bonnie Portnoy, author and granddaughter of artist Tilden Daken.

**Author Bonnie Portnoy to celebrate grandfather Tilden Daken's 150th birthday
– the same year as his friend Jack London - with book signing at Jack London
State Historic Park on June 14, 2026**

100% of proceeds to benefit the park.

Author Bonnie Portnoy will appear for a special book signing event marking the 150th birthday of her grandfather, noted Western artist Tilden Daken (June 14, 1876– April 24, 1935).

The event will take place on Sunday, June 14 from noon to 3 p.m. in the historic House of Happy Walls Museum at Jack London State Historic Park and coincides with the park's yearlong celebration of the 150th anniversary of author Jack London.

In a gesture honoring both legacies, 100% of proceeds from book sales at the event will be donated to Jack London State Historic Park to support its preservation and educational mission.

Both born in 1876, Daken and London shared not only a birth year but a restless spirit of adventure that forged a lasting friendship. As young men, they rode the rails together from Reno to Oakland in 1901, embracing the rugged experiences that would later shape their creative work. Their lives remained intertwined in the years that followed. In Glen Ellen, both found inspiration in the landscape and in each other.

In the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Daken established deep roots in Glen Ellen and the region. It was there, in 1907, that Portnoy's mother was born, placing the Daken family firmly within the historical and cultural fabric of the valley that London also called home.

Known as "the Painter of the Valley of the Moon," Daken's paintings encapsulate many aspects of the state, from the area's natural beauty to a mythos of self-creation and spirited adventure that reflects views of life in the West popular during his lifetime.

Portnoy's book, "The Man Beneath the Paint," offers an intimate and richly detailed portrait of Tilden Daken as both artist and adventurer. Featuring more than 250 illustrations of his California paintings, the volume brings visual depth to Daken's artistic legacy while illuminating lesser-known stories of his friendship with London.

The book features a foreword by Matt Leffert, Executive Director of Jack London Park Partners, and a testimonial by Armando Quintero, Director of California State Parks, underscoring its cultural and historical significance.

Visitors to the event will have the opportunity to meet the author, purchase signed copies of the book, and engage with a compelling chapter of California's artistic and literary heritage. The legacy of her grandfather contained deep mysteries and Portnoy spent nearly two decades researching the man and his art. His story is based on accounts by hundreds of journalists across the country, letters Daken wrote to prominent men of the era she found in library collections, short stories he penned about his adventures, and of course family lore.

Event Details

What: Book Signing — *The Man Beneath the Paint: California Impressionist Tilden Daken*

Who: Bonnie Portnoy, author

When: Sunday, June 14, 2026, noon to 3:00 p.m.

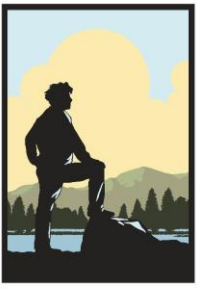
Where: House of Happy Walls, Jack London State Historic Park, Glen Ellen, CA

About the Author

Bonnie Portnoy, a former retail executive and Marin County native, is the author of "The Man Beneath the Paint," a biography of her grandfather, Tilden Daken. Many will recall the Tilden Daken art exhibition staged in the House of Happy Walls in 2024, "Tilden Daken: The Art of Adventure." Portnoy's work brings renewed attention to Daken's legacy as a pioneering Western artist and adventurer, while preserving the personal stories that connect his life to the broader history of California and the American West.

About Jack London State Historic Park

Jack London State Historic Park, in the heart of the Sonoma Valley, is operated and funded by Jack London Park Partners, one of the first non-profit organizations to be entrusted with management of a state park on behalf of the people of California. Funding to keep the park



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going strong is generated from visitors, members, and generous donors. Learn more about the park at <https://jacklondonpark.com/> and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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