

My stepfather's grandparents, Joseph McNeil and Ellen Redding, were both from a tiny town in Marin called Nicasio. Joseph was an artist. In the 1920s, he lived in San Francisco while Ellen was in San Rafael. During this time, he began courting her, and the two maintained a written correspondence until their marriage in 1928. Joseph created illustrations on the envelopes of the letters he sent her, the drawings ranging from creative formatting of her address to full illustrations and comics.

Their story has always struck a chord with me. So, last year, I made an animated film about the envelopes. For my Oxbow final project, I decided to return to the concept and make another film, telling more of their story with an emphasis on the town Nicasio. For this project, I combined live-action footage with animation and used audio clips and narration to tell Ellen and Joseph's story. I wanted to create the effect of a conversation with the past by combining live-action footage and animation, overlaying buildings and people that no longer exist on modern video. I also endeavored to bring the illustrated envelopes to life, adding movement and sound to the static images.

My focus for this project has been storytelling; I want the viewer to see what I do in the beauty of the past.

ELLEN

Phoebe S.