Outside Lands

San Francisco History from Western Neighborhoods Project

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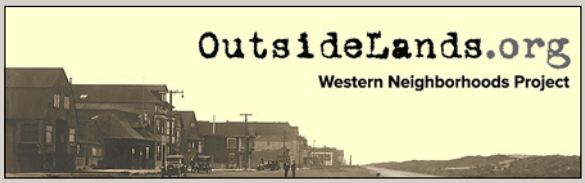

Outside Lands

History from Western Neighborhoods Project
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Cover: 1894 Midwinter Fair at night (wnp15.088; courtesy of a private collector)

Right: Celebrating at the first WNP Holiday Mingle, December 1, 2018.

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The California Midwinter International Exposition of 1894 was not as artistically cohesive or as grand as the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) of 1915; it didn't have the futuristic attractions of the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) of 1939, which took place on man-made Treasure Island with a seaplane airport. But the "Midwinter Fair" may have been the most significant to San Franciscans.

It was a pitch to the world that the city was a powerful and sophisticated metropolis when San Francisco still had a sense of inferiority, and out of the fair came a landscape and locales that have been part of every city kid's upbringing since. While the Music Concourse, the de Young Museum, and the Japanese Tea Garden are all visited by many thousands of tourists each year, they are equally claimed by locals. A city dweller rarely finds herself at Alcatraz, Fishermans Wharf, or even riding a cable car, but Golden Gate Park is our backyard.

The centennial of the PPIE in 2015 was a big event on the scale of local history to-dos, with corporate sponsorships, fancy parties, book releases, and light shows. But all has been quiet in the city about the 125th anniversary of the Midwinter Fair. Yes, 125 isn't as satisfactorily round as 100, but there are further complicating issues that explain a lack of interest.

Not only was the Midwinter Fair less impressive than the PPIE—it was largely made up of recycled attractions and recycled enthusiasm from Chicago's much larger Columbian Exposition of 1893—but it was also riddled with themes and attitudes decidedly uncomfortable and offensive today.

The International "villages" featured performers who either played up to, or were recast into, stereotypes of colonialism and racist theory of the time. The Dahomeys from Africa had an exhibit of huts, the "Eskimeaux" had igloos made of plaster. When authentic representatives of a culture couldn't be employed, African-American and Caucasian men substituted wearing savage costumes and heavy make-up. Meanwhile, the '49 Mining Camp exhibit created a golden mythology of manifest destiny and Wild West charm (complete with misspelled signs) that smoothed over the complicated politics, environmental degradation, and corporate avarice of the Gold Rush, and at the same time imported ridiculous Cowboy and Indian tropes to California.

Even acclaimed and revered remainders of the fair are stained with later shames. The Hagiwara family, creators and caretakers of the Japanese Tea Garden were removed and interred in camps by the U.S. government during World War II.

These complex subjects don't translate well for light shows or corporate-sponsored cocktail parties, but they make for extremely interesting history. We will delve into it all in 2019.

This year is also the eightieth anniversary of the GGIE, and our friends over at the Treasure Island Museum have their own interesting programs planned: treasureislandmuseum.org.

Comings and Goings

Our good friend **Jamie O'Keefe** has left our Board of Directors to attack some of her other many worthy pursuits, including collection consulting for the Guardians of the City, an organization dedicated to the history of the city's first responders. We will miss Jamie's practicality and amazing logistical acumen for event planning. She promises to stay close, however, and we will hold her to that. In November, we welcomed to our Board longtime WNP member and supporter **Ed Anderson.** A San Francisco native, architecture buff, and Silicon Valley attorney, Ed was the driving force behind the St. Francis Wood centennial book created by Richard Brandi and photographer Mark Citret. We are excited to have Ed's experience and professionalism on the Board. If you have a nomination, or perhaps a personal interest in serving on the WNP Board of Directors, drop our President **Chelsea Sellin** an email at chelsea@outsidelands.org.

The big news in the local history world at the end of 2018 was the



announcement that our friend from the California Historical Society, executive director **Anthea Hartig,** had been appointed the director of the Smithsonian Museum of American History.

We are sad to lose such a dynamic leader here in the city, but wish her every success in Washington, D.C. Go get em, Anthea!

One Year in The Home for History

February will mark our first year in our new space at 1617 Balboa Street. We hosted eighteen events in eleven months, with more than 700 guests attending. This is the sort of face-to-face history sharing that inspired our leap to a larger and more public home. More of the same will be coming this year (see the Historical Happenings calendar on pages 20–21). We have big front windows, in which we'd like to build robust exhibits for passersby when we're not open. Kids walking to Argonne School and commuters waiting for the 31-Balboa bus should learn a little bit about the neighborhoods, right? We also have a nice strip of blank wall above the windows, which could make for a nice sign or mural—perhaps a 2020 project.

20th Anniversary Gala

Reserve your seat now! On **Sunday, May 19, 2019,** we will celebrate the Western Neighborhoods Project's 20th Anniversary with food, drink, mingling between folks from the neighborhood ("Where d'ya go to school?"), and other gala-like stuff at The Clubhouse at Presidio Golf Course. See page 15 for more information!

Where in West S.F.?

Our mystery photograph last issue was a view east from Lincoln Park over MUNI's Sutro Division yard in the Outer Richmond.

Danny Hollander: "In the distance, you can see Temple Emanu-El and Roosevelt Junior High School. The streetcars are parked in what was the western terminus of the 1-California, 2-Clement, and C-Geary-California [streetcar] lines. Judging by the cars parked on the street—and the fact that the C-line was truncated in 1949—it looks like the photograph was taken in the mid- to late 1940s from near the site of what is now a CVS pharmacy."

Matt McIntosh: "There are apartment complexes blocking that view now. Time frame is a guess based on the cars, but it's between '45 and '50. If I have to guess only one year, I'd say 1949." [Correct!]

Ken Lewetzow: "My Dad became a motorman in 1936, and drove the #1 car on a split-shift, about 4-1/2 hours in the AM, and the same in the PM, driving the same people to-and-from work (which was brutal!). "I recall his pay was about $37.50 per week. (Overtime pay didn't start until 1938). At the end of his shift, he pulled the streetcar into this yard, while the conductor hauled the farebox and the day's receipts into the accounting and timekeeper's office. After a couple of years, Dad transferred to the #40 line to San Mateo which had a single 8-9 hour shift."



View east from Lincoln Park over streetcars. 32nd Avenue and California Street at left, June 1949 (wnp14.1340).

Well done, guessers, especially on the dating. The photograph is from June 1949. Other correct guessers were Julie Crossman, Michael Dadaos, Charlie Figone, Roger Goldberg, and Richard Rothman.

Next up! Here's a row of fine homes somewhere on the west side of San Francisco. No overhead telephone wires, nice lamppost, white picket fence…

Email your guesses of where and when, along with any memories, to woody@outsidelands.org, or use the Western Neighborhoods Project contact information on the inside cover. Good luck!



One-Legged Swimmer at Sutro's Baths: San Francisco's Lincoln Johnson

by John Martini

WNP member John Martini is a retired National Park Service ranger helping us process our OpenSFHistory collection of historical San Francisco images. To see thousands more historical images, visit opensfhistory.org.

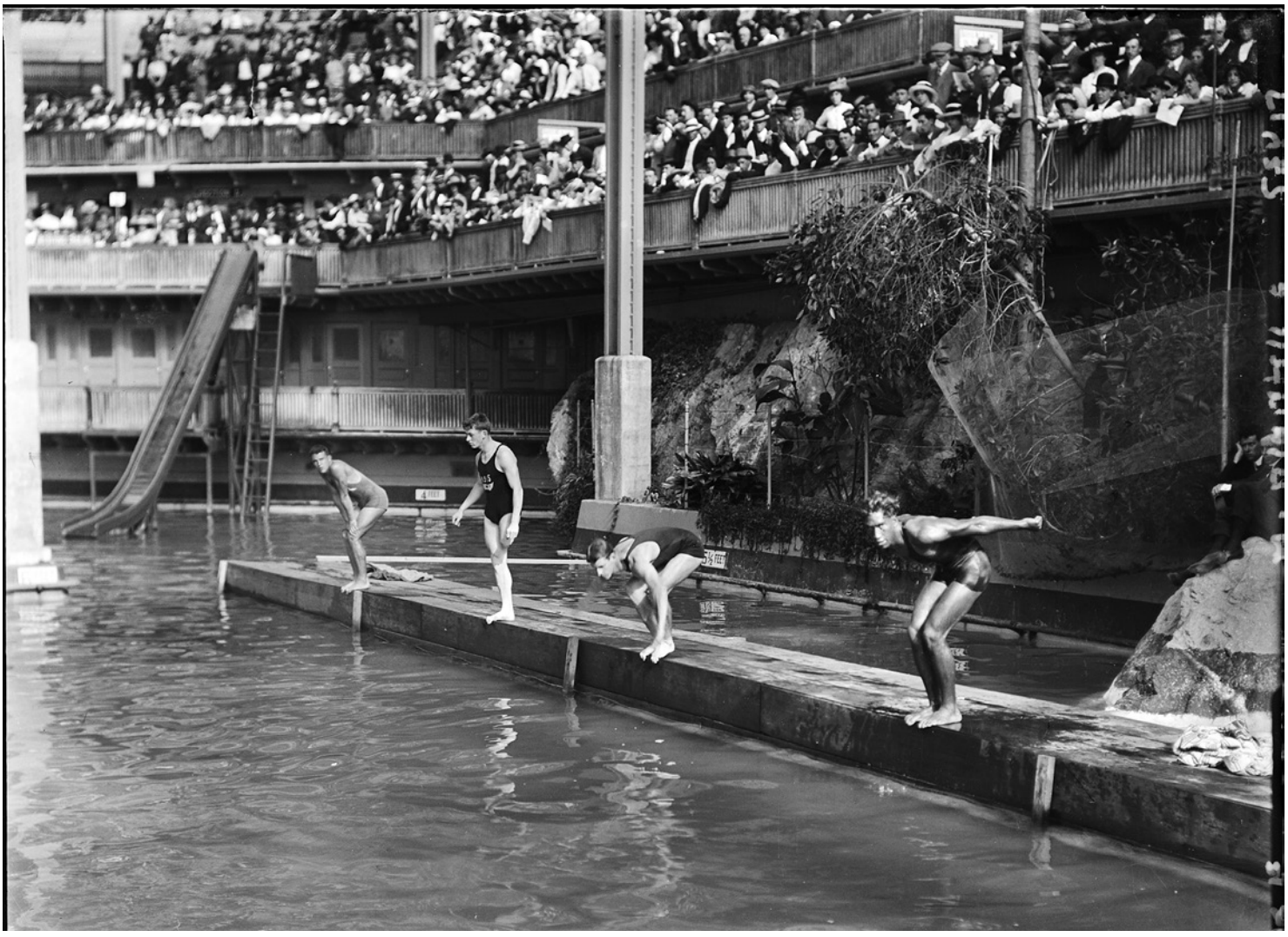
One of the more interesting photos in our OpenSF-History collection shows four swimmers lined up "on the blocks" at Sutro Baths, preparing for a race during the Pacific Coast Swimming Championships held at the Baths on July 4-5, 1913. What first caught my attention was the presence of famed Hawaiian swimmer Duke Kahanamoku at far right, at the time one of the greatest swimmers in the world.

I barely paid attention to the swimmer second from the left, though, who was flexing his leg while awaiting the starting gun. Only after several viewings did I realize he wasn't flexing his left leg; he only had one leg; the other was missing above the knee.

The first question that sprang to mind was why was a one-legged swimmer matched against one of the world's fastest swimmers? A benefit event perhaps?

As it turns out, the one-legged swimmer wasn't handicapped in any usual sense of the word, and his being matched against the Duke was no exhibition. This race was for real.

The swimmer I had erroneously thought of as being at a disadvantage was, in fact, Lincoln (Linc) Johnson of San Francisco, already one of the top athletes on the West Coast. Only 18 at the time, he would go on to become one of the best known American athletes of the early twentieth century, partly because of his having only one leg, but



Pacific Coast Swimming Championships, held at Sutro Baths July 4-5, 1913. Swimmers lined up at start of race. Duke Kahanamoku at right. Lincoln Johnson second from left. ([G45 SSU-017] GGNRA/Behrman GOGA 35346. WNP Collection, wnp71.1065)

mostly due to the amazing series of records he set.

Johnson first appears in San Francisco newspapers in 1911, when he was a sixteen-year-old student at Cogswell High School in the city, and swimming both for his school and the YMCA team. He was already taking first and second place honors in contests against other high school swimmers and much older athletes, clocking amazing times in the 220- and 440-yard contests as well as half-mile distance races.

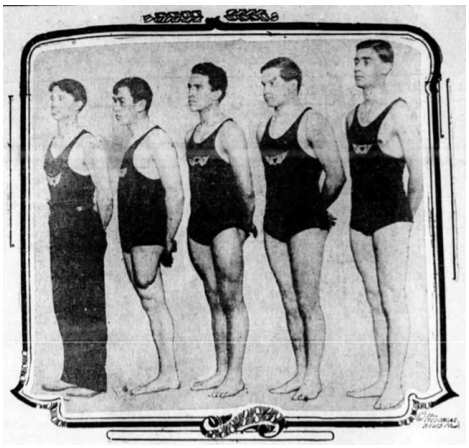
In the news stories, however, descriptions such as "One-legged Sensation," "One Legged Marvel," and "One Legged Water Dog" nearly always tempered the reports of Linc's swimming prowess.

Within a few years, local newspapers began dropping references to his single leg and instead started focusing on his record-breaking times as he blew away competitors.

Amazingly, Johnson wasn't the only single-legged champion swimmer of the Bay Area. His friendly rival was Frank Resleure from Berkeley, who swam for the Olympic Club. The two were repeatedly matched against each other, not because of their one-leggedness but because both men were superb, record-setting swimmers. Occasionally, deplorable headlines appeared when they competed such as "Freak Swimmers Head Y.M.C.A. Bill" and (possibly the lowest) "Two Remarkable Mutilated Swimmers."

I reviewed dozens of newspaper articles about Linc Johnson and, surprisingly, none of them featured any of the human-interest stories so common in today's sports journalism. There's no mention of where Johnson grew up, who his family was, or how he ended up with a single leg. All we know is he was born in 1895 in San Francisco and was attending Cogswell High School (sometimes called Cogswell College) when he began his phenomenal sports career.

The only reference I was able to find speculating on how Johnson and Resleure could complete so well against two-legged swimmers was a 1947 *San Francisco Chronicle* story that opined, "This was the age when swim experts deemphasized leg power and boys who had lost a leg were the top-flight swimmers of that day." Another *Chronicle* story put it succinctly, "Neither ever thought that they were great, particularly courageous, or wonders of the world. They just simply would not ask for quarter because of their disability."



Swimming Team of the San Francisco YMCA with Lincoln Johnson second from left. (*Los Angeles Times,* April 9, 1912.)

Lincoln was so good that in 1912 he became an Olympic hopeful for the upcoming Stockholm Olympic Games. His reputation was known across the country, and a special race was staged at Sutro Baths especially for Johnson, who would hopefully set a qualifying time that would get him into the Olympics. Any other swimmers who wished to compete against Johnson were similarly invited, presumably because the Olympic selection officials needed to see Lincoln's time in a true competition and not just as a solo exhibition of speed.

But the race's outcome wasn't what was anticipated. Lincoln was bested by a few seconds by his rival Frank Resleure, and never made it to the Olympics. Ironically, neither did Resleure. Frank was an Australian citizen, and thus couldn't represent the United States.

It's not written how Lincoln Johnson took his defeat, but his accomplishments kept on piling up: speed records set at swim meets across the country; competition in the 1913 Pacific Coast Championships at Sutro's; records set at the Southern California Swimming Association meet; a collegiate "fancy diving title;" and a 1914 trip to Hawaii to compete again against Duke Kahanamoku and other top island swimmers.

While in Hawaii, Lincoln took up surfing. Here's how the *Chronicle* of March 4, 1914, reported Johnson's feat:

"One of the features of the trip for local swimmers to Honolulu…was the mastering of the native Hawaiian surf-board by Lincoln Johnson, the local one-legged swimmer. It is said that Johnson accomplished the difficult feat of riding the board onto the beach while standing up. None of the other members of the team succeeded in the stunt…Johnson was as tickled with the surf-board as a youngster with a new toy, it is said, and found so much amusement in the management of it that he violated training rules by giving too much time to the board…"

As Johnson grew older he took on other challenges. In 1919, he was reported as captain of the Union Iron Works' crack water polo team. In 1925, '26 and '27, he participated in the *Chronicle's* first three Golden Gate swims, each time finishing in the top ten. He was also described by the papers as being a "successful attorney with a family, with golf and swimming as his hobbies." Sometime in the 1930s, Linc was fitted with a ball-bearing prosthetic leg, which allowed him to master yet another 'sport:' ballroom dancing.

Lincoln Johnson died of a heart attack on October 2, 1948, at his home near Healdsburg, California. He was only 53 years old, but it had been a remarkable life. Linc had been a short-distance and long-distance champion swimmer, an Olympic hopeful, a surfer, a champion diver and water polo captain, an attorney for the State of California, a ballroom dancer, and husband and father of two sons.

A life well lived.

The San Franciscans: Sydney Stein Rich

by Nicole Meldahl

Western Neighborhoods Project Board President Chelsea Sellin and I have been researching the history of the Conservatory of Flowers in preparation for its 140th anniversary this spring. (Commemorative events are being planned, so stay tuned.)

One of my favorite discoveries was learning of a trailblazing San Franciscan named Sydney Stein Rich, first female gardener in Golden Gate Park, who went on to take the reins of the Conservatory of Flowers by the late 1940s.

Sydney Stein was not born, she was made. The daughter of Russian immigrants Eva (Towaroski) and Jacob Friedman, her given name was Sadie Friedman. She was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 19, 1906, and came to California with her family sometime before 1915. Once on the west coast, however, her parents divorced and her mother remarried to a man named Abraham Stein, or possibly Wasserstein. When Sadie left the family home in 1922, she adapted her stepfather's last name on an application at the Emanu-El Residence Club in San Francisco. Club records alternately refer to her as Sadie or Sydney Stein, the name she would thereafter be known. Her brother, Peter, would also adopt Abraham's last name, although her sisters Esther and Yetter both kept Friedman until their marriages.



Sydney Stein with ice plant, Golden Gate Park, June 1934. Courtesy of San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (AAA-7693).

The Emanu-El Residence Club at 300 Page Street was part of a neighborhood center and settlement house run by the Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood for Personal Service that provided affordable and safe housing for poor and immigrant Jewish women in San Francisco. The Sisterhood focused on single women and/or those without family following World War I, and commissioned a residence hall designed by Julia Morgan and Dorothy Wormser. Now the San Francisco Zen Center, the building was brand new when Sydney first called it home in 1922. She would stay there on four separate occasions through 1929, each stay being several months, and, in 1925, she paid her room-and-board by working as a stock girl and saleswoman in the city.

But Sydney Stein wanted to work outdoors. She had once worked as a temporary gardener on a large estate, and the experience stayed with her. With the support of Matilda Esberg, a prominent local philanthropist and founder of the Emanu-El Sisterhood, Stein attended the California School of Gardening for Women established in Hayward—the first women's gardening school in California and one of the earliest horticultural colleges for women in the United States. On July 25, 1927, the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced Stein as the first graduate from the school "without ceremony other than eight hours' hard work in the garden."[1] Sydney Stein would never forget the support of Mrs. Esberg and the Emanu-El Sisterhood, and would join the Residence Club's board as a successful horticulturist in October 1940, serving the organization, in one form or another, until 1955.

In a well-researched article that informed this piece, Dr. Judith M. Taylor surmised that Stein was influenced by the growing women's liberation movement and the concept of Zionism. This is an interesting hypothesis into why Stein went into professional gardening, a man's domain in the 1920s. Surely she rode the swell of these historical tides, but I think it a disservice to posthumously politicize Stein's ambition. Sydney Stein was the first woman to be hired as a gardener by the City of San Francisco, and would become "Chief Nurseryman" and eventually Chief Gardener



A group of visitors in front of the Conservatory of Flowers during Sydney Stein Rich's era, c. 1945. (WNP Collection, courtesy of a private collector; wnp25.2751).

of the Conservatory of Flowers. She was persistent and hardworking, but she never criticized the gendered parameters of her time (at least on public record). A feminist in hindsight, for sure, but perhaps merely an accomplished San Franciscan in her time.

According to Stein, she asked Superintendent of Parks John McLaren for a job after graduation. "Didn't get it right away, but I kept going back… Finally he asked me if I could spade. I said yes, so they put me to work spading, and I spaded for a year [in 1929]. I've been here five years now, and I'm still crazy about it."[2] An August 15, 1934 profile of Stein in the *San Francisco Chronicle* outlined her thoughts on what it was like for a woman working in landscape gardening. "It's hard work, but women have the artistic talent, the creative ability, the choice of color necessary to make a good landscape artist."[3] She was the only woman on a crew of 100 gardeners in Golden Gate Park, and also recognized as a leader in her field. By 1934, she was in charge of the floral designs that announced events and welcomed visitors in front of the Conservatory of Flowers.

In addition to being the first woman gardener, she was the first woman to join the Laborers' Union (later named the William Hammond Hall Society). She wasn't shy about her femininity; who she was came through clearly during interviews, and she seems to have mothered other laborers, helping them to prepare for gardener examinations. One reporter commented: "That a woman can do a man's job without losing her personality is perfectly illustrated by this very small, attractive and feminine looking girl who can, and does, talk about manicures and dancing in the same breath as weeds and snails."[4] Asked if the men resented her, she said "I work hard and never do anything they dislike. I'd just love to wear shorts when I'm working, but they wouldn't like that. They treat me just like a sister…and they're just grand to work with."[5]

The 1940s would see the apex of Sydney Stein's career in Golden Gate Park. She was promoted to Head Nurseryman in 1940, and shrewdly purchased a three-year supply of cyclamen seeds from Switzerland, realizing the escalation of World War II would soon shut off supply.

She became manager of the Conservatory of Flowers by 1942, and took on a more formal public role. In May 1945, she gave a Kodachrome lecture showing flowers for a group of San Francisco's socially elite League of Women Voters at the home of Mrs. Marcus Koshland at 3800 Washington Street. In October 1947, she was honored by the California Spring Blossom and Wild Flower Association alongside Alice

Eastwood and Eric Walther at a picnic luncheon and tour of the Shakespearean Garden and Arboretum.

Stein resigned from her position as Chief Gardener at the Conservatory of Flowers in May 1949. In her retirement, she became a flower arrangement consultant for the storied Podesta Baldocchi florist firm. She also appeared on television, doling out gardening tips for the home on Channel 4 in 1950. She had married a widower named Neville J. Rich Sr. in 1946, when she was 40 years old, and the couple lived at 3027 Webster Street.

Sydney Stein, the petite horticultural powerhouse, died on September 8, 1956, of malignant hypertension. The *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a simple death announcement. In lieu of flowers, her family directed contributions be made to the Strybing Arboretum Society of Golden Gate Park or Emanu-El Residence Club. Professionally fulfilled, presumably happily married, Sydney Stein was not a rich woman; probate was filed by Neville one month later for less than $2,500.

Over two decades after Sydney's death, her sister, Esther Oppenheimer, worked with Conservatory of Flowers staff to create a permanent memorial. There were brainstorming sessions fueled by Chinese food takeout, and eventually a bench was suggested.

After funds were raised by the Conservatory Auxiliary, a turquoise glazed-ceramic bench was crafted, and the Conservatory hosted a ceremony in honor of its dedication on September 12, 1983. Esther also created the Sydney Stein Rich Fund which one month later donated two benches valued at $2,300, as well as a stove and a refrigerator to the Conservatory of Flowers.

Sydney Stein Rich's memorial bench was installed on a raised platform overlooking Conservatory Valley. Neglected over the years, it was "rediscovered" during the renovation and repair of the Conservatory after a devastating 1995 windstorm. Today the bench can be found inside the Conservatory, in the west wing just off the main dome.



Sydney Stein Rich with D. Lyle Ghirardelli, who is presenting seeds from Costa Rica to the Conservatory of Flowers on December 14, 1948. Courtesy of San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (AAA-7535).

Notes

1) "San Francisco Girl Wins Garden School Certificate," *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 25, 1927.
2) "She Delves the Good Earth, for Happiness," *San Francisco Chronicle,* August 15, 1934.
3-5) *Ibid*

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"Prized Cyclamen," *San Francisco Chronicle,* December 27, 1942; "San Francisco Center Function," *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 2, 1945; "On the Clubs' Agenda," *San Francisco Chronicle,* October 5, 1947; "Several Ladies Help Tend Golden Gate Park Gardens," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 8, 1948; Minutes of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission Minutes, 1949; "See More on Channel 4" ad, *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 7, 1950; "Green Thumb Sisterhood," San Francisco Chronicle, July 15, 1951; Eva Stein Obituary, *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 13, 1952; "Rich," *San Francisco Chronicle,* September 10, 1955; "Probates Filed," *San Francisco Chronicle,* October 5, 1956; "It All Started With Orchids," *San Francisco Chronicle,* December 23, 1978; Resolution No. 13448, Minutes of San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, October 23, 1983; "New Blooms in the Glass Palace," *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 15, 1984.

The Fits and Starts of Constructing the Lower Great Highway

by Christopher Pollock

Some people ask, "What is the distinction between the Upper and Lower Great Highways in San Francisco?" Today these names have a different meaning than they once did. The Upper Great Highway is the four-lane elevated roadway within the sand dunes. The Lower Great Highway is the city street that is off-grid, physically lower, parallel to, and east of the Great Highway.

From a historical perspective, the term Upper Great Highway included only the roadway starting at what was called H Street, now Lincoln Way, which proceeded north along the face of Golden Gate Park and up to the Cliff House. The Lower Great Highway ran south between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard, spanning the Sunset District's western edge along the Pacific Ocean. It is the latter that this article is about.



Looking northeast in 1910 over the Lower Great Highway to the Sunset District. (wnp37.03002, A. S. Baldwin Estate of Adolph Sutro assessment.)

Site History

The official Order 800 map of 1868 identified San Francisco's west shoreline as the Great Highway. Running from Sutro Heights southward to Sloat Boulevard, it was part of the area known as the city's Outside Lands and it was reserved for public use. At the time, the Park Commission only oversaw Golden Gate Park, Mountain Lake, and Buena Vista Park. The commissioners were appointed by the governor, not the city administration.

The Park Commission published a biennial report in 1872-73, discussing their hopes for what would be created in the Outside Lands. In it they stated that "the 'Great Highway' is not destined to be merely an auxiliary to the Park (Golden Gate Park); it can be made a drive of rare attraction and beauty." But the same paragraph also stated that "this auxiliary should be immediately placed under the control of the Park Commissioners."[1] This implied that the Great Highway was not yet under their domain. But "The Great Highway" (was) committed to their charge by (an) Act of March 11th, 1874."[2]

Ocean Beach became of interest to the commission when it was realized that the shifting sands of the park were dependent on what happened at the beach. Consequently, early on the commission approved funding to stabilize the sands with the intention of future landscaping. And as time went along it was clear that the beach, vulnerable to intense winter Pacific storms, required taming to assure its future.

Initial Construction

The beginnings of a navigable roadway along Ocean Beach was in 1879, when the Board of Supervisors allotted funding for a road to be constructed between the Cliff House and Golden Gate Park; what was known as the Upper Great Highway. But there were always plans by the Park Commission to extend the esplanade south along the beach, which would become the Lower Great Highway. By 1890, the roadway south of the park was reported to have been graded to a width of 180 feet fronting Golden Gate Park.[3] This was followed in 1892, when it was to have been graded 100 feet wide for (another) two miles.[4]

South Terminus

A photo taken in 1910 (above) recorded a simple two-lane straightaway roadway along the beach. Although located in the middle of nowhere, public transportation via United Railroads #12 streetcar service terminated at the intersection of Sloat Boulevard and the Great Highway. With transportation available to the beach, a seemingly insignificant seed was planted at the terminus when citizen J. C. Estredo suggested a playground in 1910, as water service was available there.[5] It is unclear when the playground was actually built, but, in 1913, a toilet building, designed by the architectural firm of Reid Brothers, was constructed near the intersection of the Great Highway, between Sloat Boulevard and Wawona Street.[6] The cost was $1,298. (The building still exists as the only remaining remnant of the early Great Highway.)

The same report enumerated $250 for slides, which assumes a playground.[7] The tunnel, to separate the tykes from the highway traffic above, was probably built at this time. (Photographs show an artistically rounded tunnel section profile, which was different from the other tunnels that were constructed along the highway to the north later in 1929, which have a faceted section profile.)

With the opening of the Twin Peaks streetcar tunnel in February 1918, the Sunset District was opened to development by an easy and direct connection to downtown.[8]

The same site was again brought to the public's attention on April 1, 1919, when the *San Francisco Chronicle* suggested the idea of a much larger playground at Ocean Beach. The existing "embryonic" playground with only a "dozen pieces of apparatus" was considered too small for the patronage.[9] The next day the same newspaper printed an editorial directed to the Park Commission, Board of Supervisors, and Playground Commission about the subject. This was immediately followed by a Resolution by the Playground Commission urging the Board of Supervisors to appropriate $25,000 to start the process of a larger playground.[10] This started a conversation among many city boosters, a rolling stone that would eventually culminate in the Fleishhacker Playground and Pool and the zoo that followed.



Looking northwest from the intersection of Sloat Boulevard on March 5, 1923, showing the pre-Fleishhacker-era playground and tunnel leading to Ocean Beach. (wnp36.02989; Horace Chaffee photograph, Department of Public Works book 32, image 8562.)

Some amount of roadway construction took place in 1919, but more was to be done. Discussions later that year sought a $40 million bond to assist in this, and other municipal improvement projects.[11]

Parkway Realized

With voter approval, Proposition 1 passed a more than $9 million highway bond in the fall of 1927. Out of this amount, $1 million was budgeted by the supervisors for the highway's development. The proposed recreation strip would overall be 400-feet-wide and consist of a pair of roadways with a median, a continuous landscaped lawn, with a walkway and bridle path along the entire Sunset District's shoreline.[12] The cost of the project was estimated to cost $600,000.[13] It included elements along the Upper Great Highway, as well.

On the eve of the Great Depression, June 9, 1929, the massive project was dedicated, realized under the direction of City Engineer Michael O'Shaughnessy. It included a seawall on the upper portion (just below the Cliff House and south to Lincoln Way) and the entire highway running from the Cliff House south to Sloat Boulevard with its just completed Fleishhacker Pool and Playground. (The O'Shaughnessy Seawall was intended to be continued south.) With city and state dignitaries in attendance, a crowd of 50,000 onlookers gathered at the intersection of Lincoln Way and the Great Highway. There, Mayor James Rolph Jr. and City Engineer Michael O'Shaughnessy spoke to the crowd and the ribbon was cut by Lucy Young, the governor's 15-year-old daughter.[14]

Other aspects of the design included three additional highway underpass tunnels, which were placed at the ends of Fulton, Judah, and Taraval Streets; each intersection was a streetcar terminus. An underground toilet facility was located at Fulton Street and surface buildings were constructed at the Judah and Taraval locations. Technically there were two Great Highways; a third road (what is today called Lower Great Highway, east of the berm) was also built and used as a service road to the highway where trucks and slow moving traffic could travel.

The highway's east side, facing the service road, was a continuous lawn area punctuated by amoeba-shaped planting beds for shrubs.[15] All of the lawn and planting beds were watered by sprinklers.[16] The roadway was lined with electric light standards of exposed aggregate cast concrete, bronze, and glass. Traffic signals were provided for high use times along only the Lower Great Highway.[17]

Equine Drinking Fountain

One artistic and functional element was the Nunan Memorial Horse Fountain, a bronze pedestal form sculpted by Park Commission member M. Earl Cummings, which was dedicated on December 16, 1933, near the intersection of Sloat Boulevard and close to the playground. The ceremony was hosted by the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; attending were the Acting Mayor and President of the Board of Supervisors, J. Emmett Hayden;



View southwest over Great Highway, showing "amoeba" landscaping on eastern slope, circa 1930. (wnp27.6364; Moulin Studios photograph)

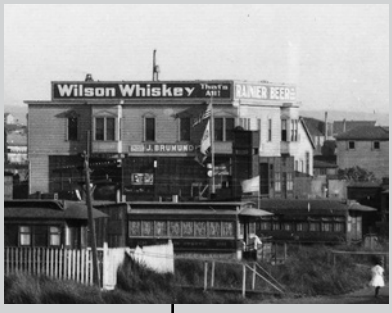
Herbert Fleishhacker, President of the Park Commission; many representatives and friends from the SPCA, as well as a group of Boy Scouts.[18]

49 Mile Drive

In 1938, toward the end of the Great Depression, the 49 Mile Drive scenic automobile route was created by the Downtown Association to promote the city as a tourist destination. This was on the eve of the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition held on Treasure Island, which would bring tens of thousands of tourists to the city. The entire length of the Great Highway was part of the route to show off the city's scenic shorefront set on the vast Pacific Ocean.

Intense storms in early 1940 reached inland and ripped away portions of the highway around the

The Lower Great Highway seems a benign place today. It is mostly a residential shoreline community with a few commercial ventures fronting the Pacific. However, starting in the 1860s, this was a place then outside the city limits, where mischief could and would go unnoticed. Below is a composite view along the width of the Lower Great Highway showing some of the various restaurant and saloon businesses that existed there from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century.



Fernando Cortez Ruggles



Glenn Koch





The Lodge
1302 La Playa

Villa Miramar
1362 49th (La Playa)

The Breakers, The Crest, Canary Cottage, and Mendel's
1536 La Playa

Bungalow Cafe, Somerset Cafe Lodge, William W. Hopkins' Restaurant & Saloon
1938 Great Highway

Lincoln | Irving | Judah | Kirkham | Lawton | Ortega | Pacheco

Taraval Street intersection.[19] The Park Commission's meeting notes recorded a dour outlook about the repair, stating soon after "if and when funds become available."[20] But, despite the comment the highway was reopened that November.[21] And a longer-term solution was a 665-foot-long seawall, which was built in 1941 at that location, with the intention of preventing flooding of the underpass. (The wall was buried by sand over time.[22])

In 1941, during the emergency of World War II, the U.S. Navy approached the Park Commission for permission to place a lookout station on the highway between Noriega and Ortega Streets.[23] (The permission was not revoked until 1963.)[24]

Drifting Sand Nuisance

The Park Department purchased a sweeping machine in 1942 after perpetually dealing with drifting sand on the roadway.[25] Consequently, the roadway was closed to traffic quite often. Over time what was eight lanes of traffic was reduced to four, due to the perpetual and chronic problem of drifting sand. (For example, in 1977, the roadway was closed for 70 days during the first nine months of the year.[26] The problem is still a challenge today.)

Initially, the Great Highway's terminus was at Sloat Boulevard, as there was an erstwhile outlet from Lake Merced to the Pacific Ocean blocking it from proceeding further south in the early days. Although some sort of road was shown on later maps, in 1964, the Great Highway was officially authorized to be extended south to connect with Skyline Boulevard.[27] With this came a series of renovations to the existing highway, mostly near the Sloat intersection. All the light standards along the highway were removed, the tunnel near Sloat was also removed, and upgrades were made to the south end toilet facilities.

Reconstruction

In 1976 a new main sewer project was slated to run much of the length of 42nd Avenue through the entire Sunset District. Residents objected to the impacts and the Department of Public Works volleyed with an alternate site of the Great Highway, which became the resolution.[28] This turn of events led to the opportunity to consider the long discussed renovation of the city's ocean beachfront property.

Planning started in the 1970s for the mega-project that involved a new north-to-south sewer line connecting

continued on page 18


Law Baer








Glenn Koch





Seabreeze Resort,
Roberts Family Resort,
and Donovan's Reef
2200 Great Highway

Andrew & Frank Dibble's
Road House
2400 Great Highway

Oceanside House
Tait's-at-the-Beach
2526 Great Highway

The Chickery
2600 Great Highway

Ulysses Ciatti Restaurant
2560 Great Highway

Mac's Hitchrack Tavern
2690 Great Highway

John F. Murray's
Road House
2788 Great Highway

Rivera | Taraval | Ulloa | Vicente | Wawona | Sloat

West Portal School Transition: From Charlotte Estes to Clara White

A True Crime Story Involving a Lie Detector and Inspector Hart of the Juvenile Bureau

by Grant Ute

MEMORIES

Nicole Meldahl's fascinating article, "Charlotte Estes' Missing Sundial" (*Outside Lands,* Jul-Sep 2018) suggests the Unified School District's challenge in filling Charlotte Estes' shoes at West Portal School in the fall of 1940. Her successor turned out to be Miss Clara H. White, who transferred from Laguna Honda School and continued the tradition of strong leadership at West Portal School. She was an remarkable educator and personality who deserves recognition.

I offer a portrait here as seen through my family's eyes in order to provide further perspective on the qualities of the dedicated women who administered San Francisco public schools in the first half of the twentieth century.

In the fall of 1940, my mother, Marjorie Ute, transferred from Miraloma School coincidentally when Clara White became West Portal's second principal.* As a student at West Portal from 1951-58, I also am grateful for my own education there and also knew Clara White for many years.

Miss White was born in 1890 and attended the Normal School like Charlotte Estes, graduating in 1912. Subsequently, while teaching in the 1930s, she commuted by ferryboat and electric train to summer and night classes at UC Berkeley to pursue a Master's degree in Education. Tall, thin, usually dressed in black, with craggy features and a shock of white hair, Clara White was quite a figure in her own right. Independent, direct yet quite kind, she served as principal of West Portal from 1940 until her retirement in 1955.

Nicole Meldahl's article mentioned that Miss Estes never married. There was a reason for that. Early in their careers these schoolteachers were not allowed to continue working if they married. Miss White lived all her life with her two sisters and brother in her family home on the 2700 block of Union Street.

A consummate educator Clara White trusted the school secretary to function as an "administrative assistant," letting her run the school business operations while she oversaw the education of the students, class assignments, supervision and training of the teachers. To say that she was an imposing woman who would not tolerate any nonsense would be an understatement. Besides their professional relationship and in spite of their age difference, my mother and Miss White remained close friends for the rest of their lives. I knew her well and in 1971, when she was in her 80s, did an ethnographic study of her social patterns as part of my Master's at the UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare. Even at her advanced age, she continued to promote my education.

In those days the principal was the resource teacher. To give an example, Miss White might come to my mother and say something like, "Miss Judy," (the children could not pronounce "Ute" and thought her name was "Judy," so she called her that as well), "What is the name of the boy in the third seat, second row from the windows in Sullivan's class? When my mother provided the name from memory she would declare, "He has no concept of phonics. Have him sent to me and I will work with him."

It was a different time. These women saw themselves as responsible not only for the "three Rs," but also for children's moral development as well. For example, on one occasion someone discovered that the boys' restroom had been graffitied. Miss White directed my mother to write up a work order for a Department of Public Works crew to come out and repaint the room. The work was done promptly and a "time and materials" bill was subsequently sent to the school for something like $27 (if I recall correctly).

Miss White identified the likely suspect and had my mother summon him to the office. Shortly after shepherding the boy into the principal's office, the intercom squawked, "Judy, I have a young man in here telling me the most unbelievable story. Would you please bring in the lie detector?" Not taken aback by this odd request, "Judy" dutifully wheeled in an adding machine with lots of spooled tape.

When she sat down in position like a court reporter, Miss White briefed her that this boy had made some rather inconsistent statements, asked her to turn on the "lie detector" and directed the boy to repeat his story. At the end of his recitation, Miss White turned to "Judy" and asked her to review "the tape"—particularly the point where the story did not hang together. My mother responded, "Yes, Miss White" and took the paper spool and unraveled several yards of it onto the floor, stopped suddenly and raised her eyebrows and looked at the suspect. Usually, under the weight of this "evidence," the student would then confess.

For those less forthcoming, though, there was a back up plan. For that part of the story we switch to my father, who worked at the Water Department. Many years later he told to me how one day he got a call at his desk and after answering with his customary, "Ute speaking," was surprised to hear a voice that was clearly my mother asking to be connected to "Inspector Hart of the Juvenile Bureau."

He listened curiously as my mom worked her way through a "call transfer" and some formalities with "Inspector Hart" before recounting the details of the offense and relaying some implausible alibi that Miss White would dictate to her in earshot of the prime suspect.

The case he remembered involved a mother who called the school to report that a $20 bill was missing from her

* Her career at West Portal extended until 1974 and she was the source of a lot of the school class photos Western Neighborhoods Project has up on OutsideLands.org



Retirement banquet for principal Clara White, seated at far left, 1955.

purse. The suspect had been spotted buying all his friends candy and ice cream down in "the Village" (as Miss White and "Judy" called the West Portal shopping district.) After listening to the phone call my father could hardly keep from laughing when he heard a boy's voice in the background suddenly blurt out, "All right…all right…I admit it...I did it!!" followed up by a complete confession that he took the twenty from his mother's purse to treat his classmates in order to make friends.

For Miss White this theater was not about assignment of guilt. These were real life lessons about responsibility and good citizenship. After Judy wheeled the "lie detector" away, Miss White talked with the graffiti-artist about how a public school was not his—just like it was not hers. It belonged to everyone, "The People." The repairs had cost the school $27 and the People had paid for his damage. She told him that the responsible thing to do was for him to repay the school department for the damage he caused.

And this is where it got interesting.

Since a child at that time (even in Forest Hill) may at best have had only a 25-cent weekly allowance, $27 may as well have been a thousand dollars. Miss White explained that she had special work he could do after school to earn the money to make the restitution. He agreed to do so at an agreed upon wage per service. (The pay came from her purse and the tasks were within his ability.) Over time, a special relationship was forged as he acquired work skills. More importantly, Truth won out—only assisted by great interviewing techniques, the latest "equipment" and (only if necessary) phantom police work. But what did a student take away from this?

Shortly after, a phone call came in to the office from the young graffiti artist's prominent attorney father. He demanded a meeting with Miss White. She immediately accommodated the request with one caveat—that the boy be present. The lawyer/father came and lectured her at length about how she had no right to require his son to work and how, besides, the School Department had plenty of tax money to make the repairs.

This went on until the boy (remember a sixth grader at best) interrupted and said, "No, dad. That's not right. This is the people's school and the people should not have to pay for the damage I caused." With that, the lawyering stopped and the moral education was completed.

These women (Charlotte Estes, Clara White, and a host of others) were all exceptional by the standards of any time. Their work stands as silent public testimony to their contributions not only to education but also to the creation of generations of "good citizens." That is also why some San Francisco schools are named after now-obscure women and why one may find a monument like the one at West Portal Playground to Charlotte Estes. We are all beneficiaries of their professional commitment and should remember that many sacrificed their own right to a family life to devote themselves to generations of children of this city.

Contemporary educators would not dare or have the time to make interventions such as these and today's media-savvy kids probably wouldn't fall for the lie detector ruse. While these women are all gone from the scene, any surviving students are by now great-grandparents. But I bet the graffiti artist still remembers Miss White and the lesson he learned.

As a follow up for this story, though, I checked and Inspector Hart is still on call at his rotary candlestick phone, working a crossword puzzle in the Juvenile Bureau.

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The California Midwinter International Exposition lit up at night, as viewed from Strawberry Hill in Golden Gate Park. (wnp15.240; Courtesy of a private collector.)

Great Highway, *continued from page 11*
to the Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant to be located near the intersection of Sloat Boulevard. In September 1977 a report was issued titled "Redesign Plan for the Great Highway" which was authored by the landscape architectural firm Michael Painter and Associates that worked in tandem with various consultants and jurisdictions. The report laid out a plan for the redesigned highway to be a naturalistic meandering roadway along the beach with a giant sewer under it. Some of the several agencies involved included the state's California Coastal Commission and federal-based Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). (The beach portion west of the highway was transferred to the GGNRA in 1975.[29]) Despite all the study and discussion, the upshot was a straight roadway with no pedestrian under- or overpasses and no vista area or other parking either; effectively it was a repeat of the 1929 solution.

Most of the existing infrastructure, including any tunnels, was removed to make way for the project. The only remaining portion of the 1929 project were the classically designed toilet buildings at the Judah and Taraval Street intersections and the earlier toilet building near Wawona Street.

Seawall Project

A follow-up part of the project was first discussed in 1984 when the Board of Supervisors recommended $38 million for construction of a seawall along the beach.[30] A hitch came into the situation soon after when the California Coastal Commission would not allow a seawall to be constructed on the now federally owned beach part of the site.[31] But a plan was finally approved in 1986 for a $6 million project that would start on the north at Noriega Street and span south to Santiago Street; this was between large existing sand dunes. Part of the design included a pedestrian promenade, which had six nodes where stairways ascended to the beach. Construction of the seawall project began in 1988.[32]

An extension of the seawall followed, which was constructed between Santiago and Taraval Streets in 1992; the project also included adjacent sand dune restoration. This was part of the larger construction project of the adjacent Oceanside Sewage Treatment Plant, which replaced the Richmond-Sunset plant located in Golden Gate Park.[33] When the entire project was dedicated on June 18, 1993, its overall cost was cited as $13 million.[34]

Postscript

Due to the efforts of Park Superintendent, Frank Foehr, the bronze Nunan Memorial Horse Fountain was later relocated and installed by members of the park maintenance crew in 1968 to the Bercut Equitation Ring in Golden Gate Park.[35] It needed to be moved due to renovation of the highway. It was damaged in 1974 due to theft and thought to be lost—but it was found to be in a Recreation and Park storage building earlier this year. (See *Outside Lands,* Volume 13, Number 4, Oct.-Dec. 2017, page 16.) After an absence of 45 years, it will be installed in Golden Gate Park on McLaren Lodge's grounds in 2019 for the public to once again enjoy.

The author thanks Angus Macfarlane for editorial assistance.

Notes

1. *Second Biennial Report of the San Francisco Park Commissioners, 1872-73* (San Francisco: B. F. Sterett, 1874), pg. 10.

2. *Fourth Biennial Report of the San Francisco Park Commissioners, 1876-77,* (San Francisco: Spaulding & Barto, 1877), pg. 1.

3. *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 27, 1890, pg. 17.

4. *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 19, 1892, pg. 5.

5. *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 31, 1910, pg. 7.

6. San Francisco Park Commission, meeting minutes, January 9, 1913, p. 642.

7. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1911-12,* ended June 30, 1912. (San Francisco: Neal Publishing Company, 1913), pg. 469.

8. *San Francisco Chronicle,* February 4, 1918, pg. 7.

9. *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 1, 1919, pg. 13.

10. *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 3, 1919, pg. 13.

11. *San Francisco Chronicle,* December 14, 1919, pg. 95.

12. *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 12, 1927, pg. 3.

13. *The Municipal Employee,* Volume III, Number 6, June 1929, pg. 16.

14. *San Francisco Chronicle,* June 10, 1929, pg. 3.

15. *The Municipal Employee,* Volume III, Number 6, June 1929, pg. 30.

16. *San Francisco Municipal Record,* Vol. IV, No. 8, August 1930, pg. 243.

17. *The Municipal Employee,* Vol. III, No. 6, June 1929, pg. 30.

18. *Our Animals* (SFSPCA), Vol. 27, No. 10, "Horse Fountain Dedicated," San Francisco, January 1934.

19. *San Francisco Chronicle,* February 29, 1940, pg. 6.

20. San Francisco Park Commission, meeting minutes, March 14, 1940, pg. 60.

21. San Francisco Park Commission, meeting minutes, November 28, 1940, pg. 280.

22. "Ocean Beach Storm Damage Reduction Feasibility Study" Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, September 24, 1996, pg. 2.

23. San Francisco Park Commission, meeting minutes, April 24, 1941, pg. 150.

24. San Francisco Park Commission, meeting minutes, May 9, 1963, pg. 142.

25. San Francisco Park Commission, meeting minutes, July 23, 1942, pg. 247.

26. *San Francisco Chronicle,* September 5, 1977, pg. 5.

27. San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, meeting minutes, June 25, 1964, pg. 205.

28. *San Francisco Chronicle,* March 16, 1976, pg. 5.

29. San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, meeting minutes, June 12, 1975, pg. 140.

30. *San Francisco Chronicle,* August 22, 1984, pg. 11.

31. *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 26, 1984, pg. 3.

32. *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 9, 1988, pg. A2.

33. *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 24, 1992, pg. A25.

34. *San Francisco Chronicle,* June 13, 1993, pg. B1.

35. *Our Animals* (SFSPCA), "Nunan Fountain Flows Again," November-December 1968.

You're Invited!
Western Neighborhoods Project 20th Anniversary Gala

On Sunday, May 19, 2019, Western Neighborhoods Project will celebrate its twentieth anniversary with a gala benefit of history and friendship at The Clubhouse at the Presidio Golf Course from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

With a theme of "Back to the Neighborhood," the evening will focus on the inspiration for Western Neighborhood Project's creation in 1999—preserving and sharing the history of San Francisco's west side.

Meet neighbors, local history celebrities, former classmates, and new friends. Enjoy fine food and drink, find a treat at the silent auction, hear old-school stories, see rare historical pictures, and watch home movies from the Outside Lands. Whether you are a native or a recent arrival, you will get a warm welcome "back to the neighborhood" at our twentieth anniversary gala.

Early Bird price for seats is $150 by March 31, $200 after.

Sponsorships, table purchases, and advertising opportunites are also available for this landmark event.

Buy tickets and learn more at **OutsideLands.org/gala**





Some of the guests enjoying each other's company at the sold-out 2017 WNP Gala. Don't miss out on the fun at this year's 20th anniversary event. (Photo by Tammy Aramian/Artam Studio)

Historical Happenings

outsidelands.org/events.php

Opening the Midwinter Fair

January 24, 2019 (Thursday) 7:00 PM–8:00 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)
$20 General Public, $10 for WNP members

One hundred twenty-five years ago, on January 27, 1894, the California Midwinter International Exposition opened in Golden Gate Park. Over the next several months the fair was the site of parades, concerts, and nightly electric light shows, all amid Moorish palaces, German beer gardens, mock volcanoes, and Eskimo villages. The fair reflected the imperialist desires, mercantile ideals, societal anxieties, and racist philosophies of the time, and left legacies to the park and surrounding neighborhoods that survive today. Join us for a night of historical images and stories as we explore the origins and overview of the fair.

We add events frequently and sometimes things fall together quickly, so not every listing finds its way into the Outside Lands magazine schedule. For the most accurate and complete events calendar, visit outsidelands.org/events.php.

More good ideas for staying up to date: follow our social media channels (listed on inside front cover) and be sure you are on our email news list by entering your address in the box at the bottom of the front page of outsidelands.org

1938 San Francisco Model and the City's Western Neighborhoods

Woody LaBounty will give a series of presentations on the massive, 3-D scale model of San Francisco created by the Works Progress Administration in the late 1930s. Described by someone recently as "a pre-Internet Google Street View," the mostly-wood 37' x 40' model depicts every structure standing in the city at the time. Parks, lakes, theatres, schools, and even the color schemes of individual houses are accurately represented. Today, the model provides a fascinating historical viewpoint of a San Francisco both familiar and alien at the same time. Woody will explain the purpose and creation of the model as well as point out highlights, changes, and the development of neighborhoods using sections of the model on display in different San Francisco Public Library branches. He will be joined at the February 20th event by Lorri Ungaretti, author of five books about the Richmond and Sunset Districts. Each event will feature different sections of the model and all are free to the public.



A section of the 1938 San Francisco Model showing Sutro Baths, Sutro Heights, and the Cliff House.

Merced Branch Library, 155 Winston Drive
January 30, 2019 (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m.

Richmond Branch Library, 351 9th Avenue
February 2, 2019 (Saturday), 2:00 p.m.

Ocean View Branch Library, 345 Randolph Street
February 13, 2019 (Wednesday), 6:00 p.m.

Anza Branch Library, 550 37th Avenue
February 19, 2019 (Tuesday), 7:00 p.m.

Parkside Branch Library, 1200 Taraval Street
February 20, 2019 (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m.

Park Branch Library, 1833 Page Street
March 23, 2019 (Saturday), 3:00 p.m.

Midwinter Fair Member History Walk

February 16, 2019 (Saturday) 11:00 AM–12:30 PM
Free to WNP Members

Join John Martini on a special history walk exclusively for WNP members and explore the history and legacy of the 1894 California Midwinter International Exposition in Golden Gate Park. One hundred twenty-five years ago the Music Concourse was the center of activity with an Electric Tower, the Firth Wheel (a knock-off of the first Ferris Wheel), industrial and art pavilions, statues, and fountains. John will talk about fair legacies in the origins of the Japanese Tea Garden and de Young Museum, and uncover surprising pieces of the fair still to be found in the Music Concourse. Free to WNP members, but limited to 30 people.

Reserve your spot by email (woody@outsidelands.org) or phone (415-661-1000), and we will respond with the starting location.

A New Look at Old City Cemetery

February 21, 2019 (Thursday) 7:00 PM–8:30 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)
$20 General Public, $10 for WNP members

Lincoln Park was once "City Cemetery," the final resting place for thousands of the city's poorer classes, including a Chinese burial ground and sprawling "potters field" for paupers. But the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed most records of the cemetery. Not even a complete map survived. Then, in the 1990s, over 750 burials were uncovered during rehabilitation of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. In this program, historians John Martini and Alex Ryder will describe their research into the cemetery, sharing clues they've uncovered in old newspapers and city records and showing seldom-seem photos and historic maps.

West Side Murals: WNP Member Event

February 23, 2019 (Saturday) 10:00 AM–11:00 AM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)
Free to WNP members

WNP Member Richard Rothman will give a presentation on west side murals, including the endangered Noah's Ark piece at the San Francisco Zoo's Mothers Building and the controversial section depicting a subjected Native American at George Washington High School. Richard will detail the histories and uncertain futures of these public art works.

San Francisco History Days

March 2, 2019 (Saturday) 11:00 AM–5:00 PM
March 3, 2019 (Sunday) 11:00 AM–4:00 PM
Old Mint, 5th and Mission Streets
Free and open to the public

On the weekend of March 2 and 3, 2019, the Old Mint will become a pop-up museum of San Francisco history. Join community historians, archivists, genealogists, archaeologists, researchers, educators, reenactors, and other history enthusiasts for a free Community Open House at this historic site. Previous history weekends at the Old Mint have attracted several thousand participants.

As always, Western Neighborhoods Project will be there and this year we will have an exhibit focused on the 125th Anniversary of the Midwinter Fair in Golden Gate Park. More information at sfhistorydays.org

Conservatory of Flowers

March 21, 2019 (Thursday) 7:00 PM–8:00 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)
$20 General Public, $10 for WNP members

Nicole Meldahl and Chelsea Sellin will commemorate the 140th anniversary of one of Golden Gate Park's most iconic landmarks with historical photos and stories. They will also share the research methods they employed in working with the Conservatory Society to uncover the great glass palace's history.

Play Ball! Baseball in the City

April 4, 2019 (Thursday) 7:00 PM–8:00 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)
$20 General Public, $10 for WNP members

On the eve of the San Francisco Giants' opener, we will highlight rare and historical baseball images from OpenSFHistory. See the minor league San Francisco Seals playing at 16th Street and Potrero, Candlestick Park under construction, and Willie Mays, Juan Marichal, and other Giant favorites in their prime. Bring your memories and prepare for a whirlwind illustrated tour of America's pastime as played in the city.

Western Neighborhoods Project 20 Years Gala

May 19, 2019 (Sunday) 6:00 PM–9:00 PM
(The Clubhouse at the Presidio Golf Course)

We will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Western Neighborhoods Project with a special gala of fine food, toasts, celebrity historians (yes, they exist), and a great deal of gaiety and appreciation. For more details, see page 19 and go to OutsideLands.org/gala

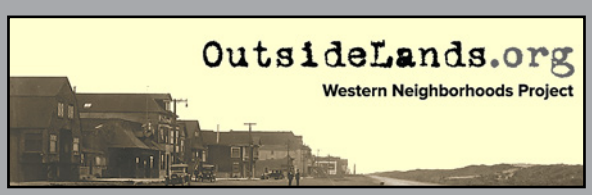
The Last Word



The searchlight on Bonet's Electric Tower at the 1894 Midwinter Fair in Golden Gate Park illuminated the fair grounds around today's Music Concourse, and also rotated to focus on surrounding west side landmarks. Targets included Lone Mountain, Prayerbook Cross (on the hill above today's Rainbow Falls), and, shown above, Sweeney's Observatory on Strawberry Hill, where the *San Francisco Examiner* said the light would surprise "pairs of lovers sitting in the alcoves."

Electric Tower, with the fair's Administration Building on the left, and the Horticulture Building at right. (wnp37.03194; Marilyn Blaisdell Collection.)

Photographer Isaiah West Taber insisted his night views of the tower and its searchlight were unretouched and "printed just as the camera took them," using his own secret method capturing "arc, incandescent, and reflected search light."



Not a WNP Member?

Outside Lands magazine is just one of the benefits of giving to Western Neighborhoods Project. Members receive special publications as well as exclusive invitations to history walks, talks, and other events. If you like what you've read, please join hundreds of other west side fans as a member. Visit our website at **outsidelands.org,** and click on the "Become a Member" link at the top of any page.