

2020 FRACCIA PRIZE

Last year, the San Francisco Historical Society launched a new program for San Francisco high-school students: the Fracchia Prize, named for SFHS founder and President Emeritus Charles Fracchia. This year the second annual Fracchia Prize celebrated the 150th anniversary of Golden Gate Park by asking students to write a walking tour for a section of the park that includes a history of the park and the history of the stops along the tour. The first-place winner received \$2,500; the essay will be published in the upcoming Winter 2021 issue of The Argonaut. The second-prize winner received \$1,500; her essay starts below. The third-prize winner received \$1,000, and that essay will be published in Panorama's first quarter 2021 issue. For information about this year's sponsors and winners, see page 5. The 2021 contest will be announced soon.

Horticultural History:

Learning About San Francisco's Past Through the Garden Gems of the City's Favorite Park

by Indigo Mudbhary

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GOLDEN GATE PARK

One cannot learn about the history of San Francisco without learning about Golden Gate Park, as these over one thousand acres of lush parkland have played a critical role in the city's history since its beginning.

However, Golden Gate Park wasn't always the sprawling urban forest that we know today. Before the park was created, these acres contained only windswept sand dunes. In fact, the architect of Central Park in New York City, Frederick Law Olmsted, turned down the offer to design the park because he thought the massive sand dunes would make building impossible.

Well, Olmsted was wrong and today Golden Gate Park is not only beloved by San Franciscans but is one of the most visited city parks in the entire country. Its planning began in the 1860s when citizens began to express the desire for a spacious public park. In response, field engineer William Hammond Hall began a survey of the site in 1870, becoming park commissioner later in 1871.

Hall enlisted his friend John McLaren to assist, and McLaren immediately set to work blanketing the dunes with abundant plantings. By 1875, the area possessed close to sixty thousand trees and by 1886, the park was finished. It was an instant success, as streetcars delivered over forty-seven thousand people to the park on just one afternoon.

Today, Golden Gate Park is home to the de Young Museum, California Academy of Sciences, ten different lakes, bison, and much more. Even over a century after its creation, it remains a cherished city landmark, inhabiting a special place in the heart of every San Franciscan.

TOUR STOPS

1. Colonial Historic Trees
 - a) Pioneer Woman Statue
 2. Rose Garden
 3. Heroes Redwood Grove
 4. George and Judy Marcus Garden of Enchantment
 5. Music Concourse
 6. Shakespeare Garden
- Lunch stop: Japanese Tea Garden
7. San Francisco Botanical Garden
 8. National AIDS Memorial Grove

1. Colonial Historic Trees

What may seem like an ordinary meadow is actually a historical treasure hidden in plain sight. The thirteen trees in this grassy clearing were planted in October of 1896 by the Daughters of the American Revolution to commemorate the original thirteen colonies, using soil from famous revolutionary battlefields and a silver trowel allegedly used by Martha Washington herself. Each tree is different, native to its respective



A photo of myself next to the colonial trees' plaque.

colony. The center tree, a Hemlock representing Pennsylvania, even included soil from the Paris grave of the Marquis de Lafayette, a famous French aristocrat who fought valiantly in the Revolutionary War.

Though this landmark can be easy to miss, as it only is identified by a small plaque, it is worth visiting as it gives insight into how past San Franciscans preserved their history.

1.a) Pioneer Woman Statue

Next to the colonial trees, you will find the statue of a pioneer woman which, of the park's approximately nineteen statues, is the only statue of a woman. Built in 1914 by sculptor Charles Grafly, it was featured in two international exhibitions until it was ultimately placed here in 1940. If you look closely, you can see oxen skulls, pinecones, and cacti decorating the base of the statue, items symbolic of the pioneers' journey.

What also makes this statue special is that it's not obscured by bushes or

plants. John McLaren, park superintendent for fifty-six years, absolutely despised statues, so when constructing Golden Gate Park, he purposefully planted trees and bushes around statues in an attempt to conceal them in shrubbery. But the Pioneer Woman Statue remains in plain sight.

2. Rose Garden

One of the park’s most well-known gardens is the Rose Garden, an oasis of enchanting flowers and fragrant smells. It was originally created in 1961 by the American Rose Society, who wanted to assess how roses would grow in a cool climate like San Francisco’s. They soon discovered that roses thrive here, with some rose bushes even blooming twice a year as opposed to typical once-a-year blooming.

I highly recommend an amble around the Rose Garden to take in not only the rich reds, purples, and yellows that inhabit this garden but also its sweet smells. I recently went to the Rose Garden during a wet February afternoon, not within blooming season; even then, I was amazed by the unique beauty of each flower, and it’s no wonder that this place attracts many visitors, humans and pollinators alike.

3. Heroes Redwood Grove

Right next to the Rose Garden, if you head down a small dirt path, you will find yourself walking into a grove of redwood trees. In the cool shade, you will discover sunlight is almost completely obscured by the green branches of these gentle giants.

Originally created to honor those killed in World War One, the grove’s first redwood sapling was planted in 1919, in front of some twelve thousand spectators on Memorial Day. Today, approximately a century later, this single sapling has grown into an entire grove, whose pathways provide an excellent spot for quiet reflection beneath the branches.

4. George and Judy Marcus Garden of Enchantment

You don’t need to buy a ticket in order to see some of the de Young’s best statues, as the de Young has placed some outside the museum in a charming sculpture garden for public enjoyment. Additionally, the observation tower, which is inside the adjacent de Young Museum, is also free and provides a lovely aerial view of the park.

5. Music Concourse

What do a Roman gladiator, Beethoven, and a man making apple cider have in common? Their statues all line the perimeter of the Music Concourse, originally built in 1893 for the California Midwinter Exposition of 1894. The exposition was first proposed by M. H. de Young who, after seeing the success of the Chicago World’s Fair, thought it would be a superb way to stimulate the city’s ailing economy. Much to superintendent John McLaren’s chagrin, the park was selected as the fair’s epicenter, and what is now the Music Concourse was excavated to house attractions.

It now serves as an open-air plaza often used for performances, as the Spreckels Temple of Music provides a perfect outdoor stage for musicians and performers. If you are there on a Sunday afternoon, you might catch a performance by the Golden Gate Park Band, who perform there every Sunday between April and October.

Otherwise, the plaza is a great place to take a walk! Additionally, one of the trees in the Music Concourse has a small door at its base, rumored to be a fairy house. As a child I loved running



Left, posing with my personal favorite statue in the sculpture garden. Right, I chose the Cervantes statue because I felt it was a good example of the eclectic mix that lines the perimeter of the Music Concourse. Sadly, this statue was damaged during demonstrations this summer and had to be removed by the City of San Francisco.

between the trees and trying to locate the tiny fairy door, and I highly recommend a “scavenger hunt” among the trees to find this whimsical treasure.

6. Shakespeare Garden

This next location provides a unique way of traveling back to the Renaissance through horticulture. Established in 1928, the Shakespeare Garden is filled with approximately two hundred flowers, all of which can be found within Shakespeare’s work.

It’s truly magical, as people can put themselves into the shoes of a young playwright seeking inspiration, seeing the mandrake later found in the lines of *Othello*, the lilies that now inhabit the pages of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, and many others. In addition, the bust of Shakespeare in the garden’s monument is rumored to be one of only two busts of Shakespeare in existence.

Whether you’re a literary nerd (like myself) or not, it’s a lovely location all visitors can enjoy.

Lunch stop: Japanese Tea Garden

The Japanese Tea Garden is not only a beloved San Francisco landmark but also a great lunch spot, where you can enjoy popular Japanese fare at the garden’s tea house. I highly recommend a post-lunch walk through the meticulously maintained garden as well, enjoying its peaceful koi fishponds and stone structures.

For admission prices and more information, follow this link: https://sfrecpark.org/DocumentCenter/View/13561/JTeaG_Admission-FeeSign3_09172019

7. San Francisco Botanical Garden

Containing over 7,500 varieties of flora from all over the globe, the San Francisco Botanical Garden is easily one of the most visited locations in all of Golden Gate Park. The idea for the garden was first proposed by John McLaren during the 1890s, but actual construction did not begin until 1926, when local socialite Helene Strybing successfully gathered the funds to begin construction. By 1937, planting had officially begun, and it was open to the public just three years later.

The largest garden of its kind on the West Coast, it houses many fascinating collections, including the Garden of Fragrance, which is composed of sweet-smelling flora, including rosemary and lemongrass, originally designed to provide visitors with limited eyesight a way to experience the garden's delights.

Free for San Francisco residents, this attraction offers many options. Enjoy the garden's library, the largest horticultural library in northern California, or take part in a free guided tour, as experts guide you through a walk that's equally informative and colorful. Or, simply traverse its beautiful grounds.

For more information about ticket prices and tour times, follow this link: <https://www.sfbg.org/visit>

8. National AIDS Memorial Grove

This last stop touches on a more recent moment in San Francisco's history. The idea for this grove was first conceived in 1988 by a small group of San Francisco residents who felt they lacked a positive way to express their grief over the loss and suffering caused by the AIDS epidemic. They envisioned a serene, natural environment where services could take place, where one could reflect and remember among rhododendrons and redwoods.

They selected the de Laveaga Dell for the memorial, a meadow that had fallen into disrepair due to park budget cuts. Planting began in 1991 and it continues to be maintained by diligent volunteers who have put in a total of 200,000 hours of work since the grove's beginning.

In 1996, through legislation spearheaded by San Francisco's own Nancy Pelosi, the grove was designated as a national memorial. This designation made it the country's first nationally recognized AIDS memorial, providing the message loud and clear that in this country, those affected by this tragedy can openly grieve without stigma.

WHAT NEXT?

Now that you have visited all these stops, feel free to explore the rest of the park on your own. Continue on to the nearby Dahlia Garden or simply see where your own steps lead you! I sincerely hope today's journey has been enjoyable and provided you a glimpse into our city's history. Our ancestors created parks and monuments not solely for public enjoyment but also to pass their legacy on to their descendants. In visiting the park today, you have been a part of this exchange, as those who came before us provide us with the gift of their past.

Indigo Mudbhary has lived in San Francisco for sixteen years and is currently a junior at Lick-Wilmerding High School. Writing about Golden Gate Park was a great experience for Indigo, as it is one of her favorite places in the city, full of both current and childhood memories. The process of researching the historical significance of various sites contextualized a lot of her favorite places within the larger history of the city. When she's not writing, Indigo enjoys running, reading, and going on long rants about politics. You can find her any weekend scuba diving in Monterey or just exploring the city with friends.

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In 2018, the San Francisco Historical Society introduced a contest open to all San Francisco high school students: the Fracchia Prize, named for SFHS founder and President Emeritus Charles Fracchia. In 2019 the Fracchia Prize asked students to write an essay about Golden Gate Park and to create a walking tour of an area within the park. The first-place winner received \$2,500 and publication of the winning essay in an issue of *The Argonaut*. The second-prize winner received \$1,500 and publication of the essay in *Panorama*. The third-prize winner received \$1,000 and publication of the essay in *Panorama*. Below is the essay by the third-prize winner in 2020. The 2021 contest will be announced this fall.

It's a Ringer!

One Perfect Day in Golden Gate Park

by Luke Zepponi

THE HISTORY OF GOLDEN GATE PARK

In 1870, a field engineer named William Hammond Hall prepared a survey and topographic map that would be used as a blueprint for the park. He became commissioner of this project one year later. When the project started, three-quarters of the park was covered in ocean dunes, though soon after, the majority of the park was planted with assorted trees. Almost 60,000 trees were blooming five years later, and by 1879 155,000 trees were spread all across 1,000 acres of land. Among the planted trees in the north-east corner of the park was a native coast live oak woodland forest that early founders Henry Hammond Hall and John McLaren desired to preserve as wilderness. Use this link to learn more: <https://goldengatepark.com/history-geography.html>

STOPS ON THE TOUR:

1. Horseshoe Courts (start at the sign and stone stairs on East Conservatory Drive)
2. Horse and Horseshoe Pitcher Sculpture
3. Lick Hill & Phil Arnold Oak Woodlands Nature Trail

Lunch Stop: The Ghirardelli Card Shack area has lots of benches and picnic tables to enjoy your lunch. There's also a bench overlooking Coon Hollow and a grassy area called Bunny Meadow across from the Card Shack.

4. Phil Arnold Trail & Coon Hollow
5. Vista from Oak Woodlands Trail
6. Fuchsia Dell

1. Horseshoe Courts

Located in the Oak Woodlands, the Horseshoe Courts are a hidden gem and one of Golden Gate Park's largest unknown amenities, even to native San Franciscans. The Horseshoe Courts are situated in a natural arena of stone walls of red Franciscan formation and radiolarian chert left behind from the old Lick Hill quarry.

Established in 1922, major improvements were made to the courts in the 1930s as part of the Depression-era WPA (Works Project Administration). The 16 courts were surrounded by cobblestone walls, a restroom facility (out of order), and a clubhouse that was lost to fire in the early 1970s.

The clubhouse used to be on the flat area to the left of the Horseshoe Pitcher sculpture. From the 1930s until 1989 there was an active organization called the Golden Gate Horseshoe Club. The club held local and regional tournaments at the courts. Several



(Top) A horseshoe court. The horse in the back was sculpted by artist Jesse "Vet" Anderson in 1937 and restored in 2009. Photo taken in 1955. (Bottom) Also created by Vet Anderson in 1937, the horseshoe pitcher sculpture collapsed in 2009 and was lost. Both photos from Golden Gate Park website.

members of the California and National Horseshoe Pitching Hall of Fame played on these courts. In 2008, after nearly two decades of neglect and without an organization, the San Francisco Horseshoe Pitching Club was founded and began restorations. Mayor Gavin Newsom rededicated the courts in 2009 and held a national tournament attended by World Champion horseshoe pitcher Brian Simmons of Vermont.

Trail Hint: Walk up the stairs towards the courts; then make your way to the middle of the courts.

2. Horse and Horseshoe Pitcher Sculpture

An artist named Jesse “Vet” Anderson (1875–1966), who was also a member of the Golden Gate Horseshoe Club, built the Horse Sculpture and the Horseshoe Pitcher sculpture in 1937. Vet was a cartoonist, comic strip artist, animation illustrator, and sculptor, as well as a political cartoonist at the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Detroit Free Press*. He lived in San Francisco, working on the two bas-relief sculptures for the WPA Horseshoe Courts. He acquired the nickname “Vet” when he was 23 years old because he was a veteran of the Spanish American War. Sadly, in 2009 the horse sculpture collapsed, fell off of the cliffside, and was lost.

Trail Hint: Walk to the end of the courts and look up at the cliff to get a closer look at the back of the horse’s leg, still visible. Then make your way toward the sculpture of the Horseshoe Pitcher.

3. Lick Hill and Phil Arnold Oak Woodlands Nature Trail

The trail leads up to the top where the view of the courts is part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Here, at the top of Lick Hill, you get a nice overlook view of the horseshoe courts and the oak woodlands surrounding them. On most weekends, you may hear bongo drums coming from musicians gathering at Sharon Meadow.

Trail Hint: Make your way back to where you entered the courts and take a left onto the trail. Walk until you see a set of steps on your left; climb those steps. Once you are at the top, go left around the circular area in the middle until you see a small clearing with sand. This area offers a birds-eye view of the courts.

When you are finished looking at the view, continue along the trail. Once you walk down that trail for a few seconds, you will see St. Mary’s Medical Center across Stanyan Street and, just beyond, the spires and dome of St. Ignatius Church.

4. Phil Arnold Trail & Coon Hollow

Continuing along the trail, you can see to your right the top of the Golden Gate Bridge and the dome of Congregation Emanuel in the distance. This view is really amazing especially when the skies are clear and sunny. Along the left side of the trail, you will pass the working area where staff gardeners collect their mass of prunings. Across the street the trail enters (Mayor Henry Perrin) “Coon Hollow” oak woodlands.

Trail Hint: Make a left at the paved trail after you see the view of St. Mary’s Hospital. When you reach the bottom of the path, make a right

onto the dirt trail across from the Oak Woodlands sign. Do not cross the road. When you get to the end of the dirt trail, after passing the view of the Golden Gate Bridge, continue straight by crossing the street and head down into Coon Hollow on the dirt trail. Follow that trail until you arrive at the Ghirardelli Card Shack with the picnic seating area.

Lunch Stop: Ghirardelli Card Shack area has benches and picnic tables to enjoy your lunch. There’s also a bench overlooking Coon Hollow, and a grassy area called Bunny Meadow across from the Card Shack.

Trail Hint: Once you finish your lunch, face Bunny Meadow and make a left on the paved trail until you come to the Conservatory of Flowers. There, you will find a drinking fountain and restrooms if needed. Then walk across the front of the conservatory and follow the paved path that veers left. Do not go down the stairs. Follow that path with the succulent gardens on either side until you reach a path intersection. Turn left up the hill, until you see a dirt trailhead, which is the first one on your right. Leave the paved path and enter the world of the oak Pygmy Forest.

5. Oak Woodlands

The Oak Woodlands is home to some of the oldest coast live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) in San Francisco. It was added to the National Old Growth Forest Network in 2015. These old oak woodlands occur only in three locations: Golden Gate Park, the Presidio, and Buena Vista Park. Golden Gate’s grove is the largest of the three. Around 50 acres of these special trees were left as “wilderness” when the park first started in 1871.

One of the park’s newest trails, the Phil Arnold Trail, starts at JFK Drive at the intersection of Conservatory Drive East and is just under a mile long. It’s been over 20 years since the Friends of Oak Woodlands started as a grassroots environmental group. The oaks were subject to being cut down by humans, mostly during and after the Gold Rush and great earthquake, but they remain and are now protected, thanks to the Friends of Oak Woodlands. One of the main threats to these trees is SOD, “Sudden Oak Death,” which occurs in coastal and valley regions and introduces a pathogen that is killing millions of California oaks.

Trail Hint: The Pygmy Forest dirt trail ends at the road; make a sharp right turn onto the paved path leading down to the bottom of the Fuchsia Dell.

6. Fuchsia Dell

The peaceful Fuchsia Dell allows walkers to enjoy the colorful flowers and cool green space. The fuchsias are shades of red and purple and put off a light-colored appearance and are usually bushy as well. In 1940, The Fuchsia Dell of Golden Gate Park was established. A sundial on a pedestal was built in 1983. Engraved on the sundial is, “Amidst The Flowers I Tell The Hours.” The best time to visit the Fuchsia Dell is from May to November when the flowers are at their peak bloom.

This is where the tour ends, but feel free to keep roaming around the area!!

Luke Zepponi is an 11th grade student at Abraham Lincoln High School.

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Zepponi, Peter. Personal interview conducted by Luke Zepponi, July 11, 2020.

IN MEMORIAM

George Piness, a long-time supporter of the San Francisco Historical Society, died early in December at the age of 94. George is survived by his wife of 70 years, Edith Lamm Piness, a member of the SFHS Board; his two sons, Peter and Thomas; his daughter Jane; and four granddaughters. George was an MIT graduate, a dedicated engineer and, until recently, a fine sailor with a zest for life. “He was very good natured and a friend of SFHS for many years. He will be missed,” said Charles Fracchia, SFHS founder and President Emeritus.

Recent Issues of *Panorama*

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, last year’s second, third, and fourth quarter issues of *Panorama* were available only online. If you were unable to see these issues and would like to receive computer printout copies, please contact Lorri Ungaretti at (415) 537-1105, ext. 6 or lorri@sffhistory.org.

Antique Map Store Meets the Digital Age

by Lana Costantini

After gracing Grant Avenue for more than 17 years, Schein & Schein, purveyor of antique maps, prints, and rare books, closed its doors last October. Dubbed a “Magical Map Emporium” by *Curbed San Francisco*, a visit to Schein & Schein was a journey back into time and place, where visitors could browse through a rich collection of printed treasures ranging in price from \$5 to \$50,000.

Jim and Marti Schein opened their shop in the heart of North Beach in 2003, offering a wide range of printed materials dating from the 14th to the 20th Century. In addition to maps, the shop displayed rare atlases, lithographs, antique hotel and travel brochures, and engravings. Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and a handmade tin ceiling reminiscent of Victorian times gave the shop an old-world aura cherished by locals and visitors alike.



Though the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed countless small businesses, Jim and Marti closed their shop for other reasons—the Scheins are going digital. Their business will continue, but with an online-only presence. Jim and Marti plan to move to their home in Glen Ellen and run the new iteration of Schein & Schein from there.

“We’re really looking forward to the modernization of the business,” Jim said when I caught up with him at Schein & Schein on moving day. “In addition to giving Marti and me more time, it will give consumers easier access to a very large, unique collection. People who are looking for something specific will more easily locate it online rather than searching through the store as in the ‘old days.’” He added, “We’ve had a good run here. We hope the world is ready for an online Schein & Schein—because it’s coming!”

No doubt the world will embrace the Scheins’ new venture.

Still, seeing the elegant old shop on Grant Avenue go dark is bittersweet, and Jim and Marti’s presence in San Francisco will be deeply missed by those who were enchanted by the old-world treasures in their one-of-a-kind shop.