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THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



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“ We enrich lives through quality parks and programs ”

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SERRA

MUSEUM

The Serra Museum has been managed by the San Diego

Historical Society since opening its doors in 1929.

For general information about the Serra Museum and programs, please call **(619) 297-3258**.

To plan a function at the Serra Museum or loggia, please call the Site Rental Coordinator at **619-232-6203** extension **109**. Website: www.sandiegohistory.org



EVENTS

Interested in having a special event or an outdoor wedding in Presidio Park? Please call the Permit Center at (619) 235-1169.

You can also visit the following website to view availability and options:

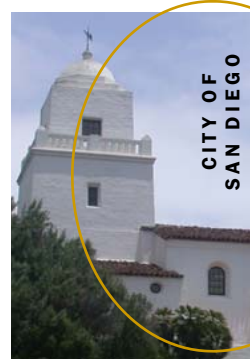
www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/general-info/bestsites.shtml

Questions or inquiries about special group tours? Please contact **Park Rangers** at (619) 235-5935.

PRESIDIO PARK
RANGER REPORT

QUARTERLY: JANUARY 2009

AND THE RIVER WILL FLOOD



CITY OF SAN DIEGO

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

(look for answers inside)

Where is that?

Cherokee Rose

San Diego's river has likely been a source of life and of death for thousands of years. Its furor and unbridled strength go mostly unnoticed for most of the year, as it appears so tame and placid during our dry season. But the sleepy trickle comes to life every winter when she loudly tells us all that she's had enough of our attempt to control her.

The San Diego River starts its trek miles to the east of Presidio Park, high in our local mountains, twisting and turning through the foothills. Dissecting Mission Valley, it eventually empties into the Pacific Ocean between the communities of Mission Beach and Ocean Beach, thanks to the re-enforced flood channel developed over the years.

Historically, the local Kumeyaay Indians depended greatly on the life-giving waters of the river. The families in this region were semi-nomadic, often arriving in the area to escape the colder regions to the East as the moderate winter weather of San Diego was an appeal even centuries ago. Prior to flood control channels, the delta stretched across a large expanse of land. From certain vantage points within Presidio Park one can see the southern boundary of the delta - San Diego Bay. From there the delta covered the entire area

West to the foot of Pt. Loma and North to False Bay (Mission Bay). This is not to say water covered these areas at all times. In fact, most of the year, one could walk across the marshlands. However, during periods of heavy rain it was possible to see water stretching across this entire flat land.

In fact, some people still remember rowing a boat from moorings near Presidio Park across the flooded tidal flats to Point Loma in order to visit friends and family on the other side.

This is to say that the normal course of the San Diego River when heavy rains occur, all things being equal, would naturally empty into San Diego Bay, and did so for thousands of years. In fact, City leaders in the Mid-1800's worried that the silting of San Diego Bay would soon make the waters unnavigatable and thus spoil the naturally large, protected harbor.

The first attempt to control the San Diego River was attempted by Army engineer Lt. George Derby. Hired by the City to construct a flood control channel in 1853, he completed the task in just under three months. All went well during the cyclical dry period, then failure. The abnormally wet winter rains of 1862 returned, causing the dike to over-



AND THE RIVER WILL FLOOD—CONTINUED

built properties. Then a typical dry spell ensued, lasting roughly until 1884. However, in 1875, congress had allocated \$80,000 to rebuild the dike which held through the flood of 1884 as well as the massive flooding that occurred in 1916 (some say created by the Rain Maker himself—Mr. Charles Hatfield—another story altogether). Since that time there have been several major floods that have resulted in major damage to property and some loss of life. But gradually over the years, trial and error, long dry periods and improved technology have left us

with a mostly stable and controlled river. This stabilization has made it possible to develop Mission Valley as you see it today. If you were to stand on the East side of the Serra Museum, looking up-river to the mountains, most of what you see is no more than 50 years old. Previous to that time, you would have seen dairy farms, pastures and a sleepy little river meandering through the valley—until those inevitable wet seasons arrive and send torrents tearing through the valley flooding it yet again.

FEATURED PLANT: BOUGAINVILLEA

Such a common plant. You’ve seen it everywhere. But do you know anything about it? Anything at all? Would you think there was a connection between the first woman to sail around the world, bougainvillea and a hidden identity?

labor intensive, gathering of plants.

Sometime early in the voyage the young man was “unmasked” as a woman; the companion of Botanist Commercon; thus becoming the first woman to circumvent the globe.

The race to “discover “ the world by the British, Spanish and French during the days of piracy and swashbuckling that spawned the famous lore of that era, found a French boat on a two year voyage to circumvent the world. In 1766, the boat, *Le Boudeuse*, with its 200 men set sail and would eventually complete the trip successfully. But of note here is botanist Philibert Commercon and his young male assistant, brought to help with the sometimes

Of the many discoveries, both geographically and botanically, not least among them was a mooring near San Paolo, Brazil where bougainvillea (named after the admiral of the ship—Louis Antoine Bougainville) was found and documented. It was brought back to France, flourished in Southern Europe and during the 1930’s disseminated throughout the world.

PRESIDIO PARK RANGER-LED TOURS

Join a Park Ranger every *second Sunday of the month* for a free tour of Presidio Park. The Ranger will discuss the history of Presidio Park and its relevance to the area, horticulture, archeology and more. All designed to give you a greater understanding and appreciation of this beautiful park. Please meet outside the entrance of the Serra Museum at 1pm.

OTHER INTERESTING ITEMS...

CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

Stein Education Centers:

This volunteer group provides litter abatement several times a week throughout the park and their help is greatly appreciated.

Presidio Plant ID. Project:

The project continues to move forward...having passed more than two on half years' worth of work. Much has been accomplished yet there is much to do. GPS/GIS has arrived! A special thanks to our "core" group!....stay tuned.....



The Scenery

Presidio Park must be one of the loveliest places in the City. Filled with beautiful vistas and colorful scenes.

Questions—Comments? Let us know your thoughts. (619) 235-5935

Where is that?

Cherokee Rose

Although a native of China...it was designated the State Flower of Georgia in 1914. The Legend of the Cherokee Rose tells us that the relocation of the 7 Cherokee Tribes to Oklahoma in the 1830's found these Roses flourishing on the Trail of Tears wherever a tear from a mothers' eye would drop.

located SW of the Serra across from the Bougainvillea

(see photo to left)

HELPFUL HINTS

PLEASE BE ADVISED

- Smoking is **ILLEGAL** in all of San Diego’s parks and beaches.
- Please keep your park clean.
- Do not stake anything into the ground. No metal detectors.
- Please do not feed the wildlife or chase them (i.e. Squirrels).
- Camping in the park is **not allowed**.
- **Please stay on designated trails.** People and pets are prohibited off trail. Staying on the trail preserves the park.
- Jump-for-Joys are not allowed.
- **Dogs must be leashed at all times.**