



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.



CITY OF SAN DIEGO

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

PRESIDIO PARK RANGER REPORT

QUARTERLY:

JUNE 2009

EL CAPITAN AND EL JUPITER

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

[\(look for answers Inside\)](#)

Where is that?

The Chapel

In 1783, two cannons were cast in the Philippines, specifically Manila, for the purpose of being mounted on a seafaring war ship, which they were. Eventually arriving in San Diego, the two cannons were removed; placed strategically at Ft. Guijarros (Ballast Point), where they guarded the entrance to San Diego harbor until 1838, whereupon one of them was moved to what is now Old Town.

There are several varying accounts regarding the destiny of the cannon which had not been moved. One story suggests it remained at Ballast Pt. for a period of time, eventually making its last stand on a roof top of a downtown building in the 1920's. Apparently during the night prior to a large festival, several young men "plugged" the cannon, lit it and exploded the cannon, scattering shards of metal all over downtown streets. Another indicates that it was dumped into the deepest part of San Diego Bay, being discarded as useless. However, both cannons were given names. The one not moved to Old Town was termed "El Capitan". The other, which in 1838 now sat in the Old Town Plaza, was called "El Jupiter".

This cannon was used both as a public whipping post and a horse hitch. At some point it was positioned perpendicularly rather than horizontally. This may have occurred in 1880, when during the wedding celebration of Town Constable Jim Russell and bride Ida Bosserman overzealous revelers packed the cannon with too much powder causing it to crack when it was lit, thus rendering it inoperable.

Although the cannon was stationed in the Plaza in 1838 as well as 1880, it did not spend all those years in the Plaza. In 1847, Commodore Robert Stockton placed "El Jupiter" on the Fort he had constructed, high atop the hill overlooking Old Town and San Diego Bay. Previous to this post, "El Jupiter" sat for several years in the Plaza of Old Town under the Mexican Flag. Very shortly (a matter of months) after the cannon was placed in what would become Presidio Park, the Treaty with Mexico was signed and ratified. (continued)

EL CAPITAN AND EL JUPITER—CON'T

Protection of the harbor from Mexican forces no longer being necessary, "El Jupiter" was once again brought down and placed in the Old Town Plaza, this time under the American Flag.

During the early 1950's, the cannon was returned to Ft. Stockton and placed near the current location of the "base", where it gave testament of all the history to which it played a role.

In the early 1980's, due to repeated and destructive vandalism, "El Jupiter" (just the cannon, not the base) was removed from Ft. Stockton, and placed inside the nearby Serra Museum, where it is still today, cared for by the San Diego Historical Society.

FEATURED PLANT: ALOE ARBORESCENS



Photo courtesy of Meredith French

The Krantz Aloe can be found flourishing in Presidio Park. At the very top of the park where the American Flag flies, you can find an old stand of Aloe, which surrounds the former Ft. Stockton like a corral.

There are hundreds of types of aloe in the world but this species is a native of South Africa. It is unique because of its ability to thrive both at sea level and on mountain tops.

In South Africa over the centuries, stands of these aloes, which reach heights of 9 feet have been used to control livestock, grown into large circular stands effectively creating a corral. So while in Presidio Park, take time to visit our Ft. Stockton corral.

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...as we close in on three 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

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:(answers)

Where is that?

The Chapel

Within the walls erected by George Marston you can find the outline of an old church. Look closely and you can almost make out the pews, baptismal and the front door. Imagine the flurry of activity in the plaza during the heydays of the 1820's.

HELPFUL HINTS

PLEASE BE ADVISED

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