



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

The City of San Diego
Balboa Park Administration Building
2125 Park Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92101
Phone number: (619) 235-1100
www.sandiego.gov



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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 arrange private functions at the Serra Museum or loggia, please call the Site Rental Coordinator at 619-232-6203 extension 109. Website: www.sandiegohistory.org



Serra Museum
2727 Presidio Drive
CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS
Through September

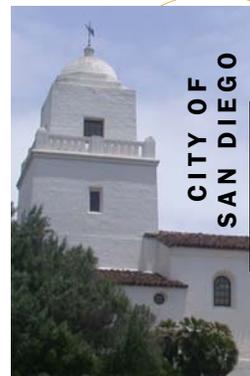
EVENTS

If you are 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 3, ISSUE 4

PRESIDIO PARK RANGER REPORT

QUARTERLY: JUNE 2008

THE RANCHOS
THE MEXICAN INFLUENCE (1821-1848)

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

(look for answers inside)

Where is that?

Symbols of Presidio's Modern influence



...Spain had neglected the far off lands of California. Civil unrest plagued Mexico City and its governments.

There was not a defining date or particular battle that denotes the end of Spanish rule and the establishment of Mexican rule of Presidio Hill. It was a period of waning powers and entrepreneurial Rancheros, a period of strained Indian relations and of distracted governments.

After Spain had established her Mission system, communities developed in and around these lands. Spain had granted vast quantities of land to the Church. However, everyday life slowly shifted away from the Church grounds and centered more around the new growing communities.

Here in Presidio Park this couldn't be more true. The bustling Presidio life seems to have come to a halt in the early part of the 1800's, replaced by the new city just formed at the base of this hill, today know as "Old Town".

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain, it also gained all the Mission land from Cabo San Lucas to the foggy San Francisco Bay and Mission Sonoma to the North; hundreds of

thousands of acres. The Secularization Act enacted by the Mexican government removed Mission Lands from their control and distributed them to the private sector's civic leaders, former Mexican military and other supporters of the Mexican resistance. These vast stretches of land were referred to as Ranchos (Ranch).

The privately held Ranchos were vital to the economies of their perspective regions. Some lands were fertile, used for farming, and yet others were well suited for cattle and grazing.

These lands passed from generation to generation, retaining the strong ties of each family to the Ranchos. Many of the families retained their ancestral connection with Spain, while others began to identify themselves more closely with the New World culture.

Near Presidio Park, Mission Valley with the San Diego River dissecting it, had remnants of these Ranchos as recently as the 1950's.

For the Presidio itself this was sadly an era of neglect. While life flourished in Old Town, at the base of the hill, and cattle grazed Mission Valley—the Presidio lay abandoned and looted...

...then the Americans arrived...

**FEATURED ANIMAL: ICTERUS CUCULLATUS
HOODED ORIOLE**

A migratory species that comes to Southern California to breed, may be seen in Presidio Park from March to September.

This beautiful bird winters along the coast of mainland Mexico and Southern Baja. As spring arrives in San Diego, the males and females can be seen courting: dancing and singing about one another. Soon thereafter the female begins building a nest for the eggs she will lay. Prior to the human population explosion of the last 100 years in our region, the Hooded Oriole was content utilizing Cottonwoods and other Riparian trees for its lofty nests. But as non-native

Palms have been prolifically planted, the Mexican Fan Palm has become a favorite.

If you seek a nest, you must look high up, to the bottom side of the palms' fronds. Their nests are cylindrical in shape and hang far out of the reach of predators. The Ranger has spotted these birds on occasion, but seemingly only juveniles and females; rarely a male. If you want to find this beautiful Oriole, you'll need to look now-they will be gone by fall, having returned to the Mexican Rivearea for the Winter.



**FEATURED PLANT:
CORK OAK -QUERCUS SUBER**

The Cork Oak is an ancient tree of sorts. It can live for 200 or even 300 years. It produces a large, broad canopy which can be as broad as the tree is tall. The Cork Oak grows slowly and develops a mangled trunk filled with crevasses and ridges. The bark is considered soft and pliable.

Native to the drier climates of Southern Europe and North-West Africa, this Oak has been farmed for generations. The bark of this tree can be harvested every 10-12 years, then treated and cured to produce what we call cork.

The country of Portugal produces 60% of the world's cork market, but cork is also harvested in Spain, Italy,

France, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. Cork forests cover tens of thousands of acres in these countries, in fact in Portugal it is illegal to cut a Cork Oak down, except for reasons of disease.

In Presidio Park, we have at least one. It guards two paths at their beginning (or ending), right at the split. This particular tree is South of the Serra Museum between the Eucalyptus Grove and Cosoy way.

Historically, the importation of this grand species dates back to John Nolen, Landscape Architect, and the important Kate O. Sessions.

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 one year's worth of work. Much has been accomplished yet there is much to do. A special thanks to our "core" group!....stay tuned.....



Photography: 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 American, Mexican and Spanish flags flying atop Presidio Hill.



HELPFUL HINTS

PLEASE BE ADVISED

- Smoking is **ILLEGAL** in all of San Diego's parks or 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 permitted.
- **Dogs must be leashed at all times.**

