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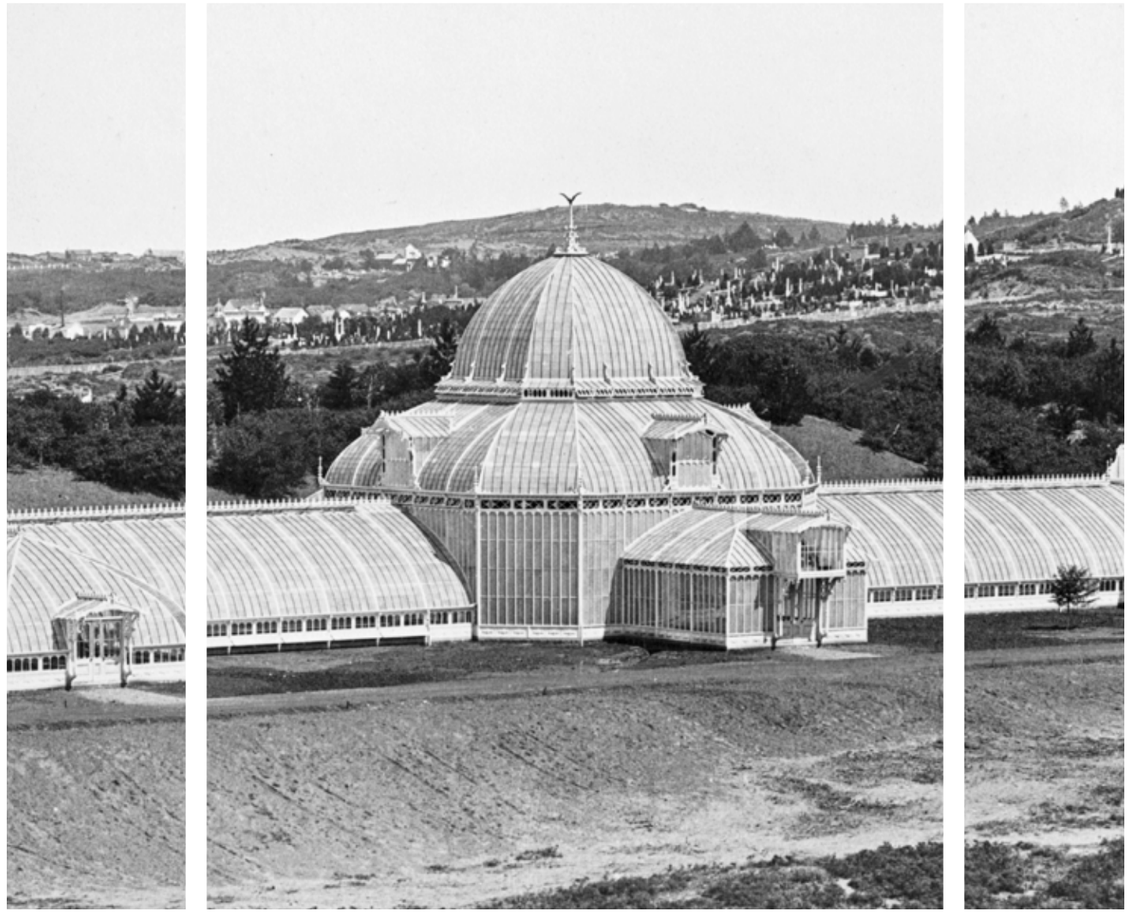
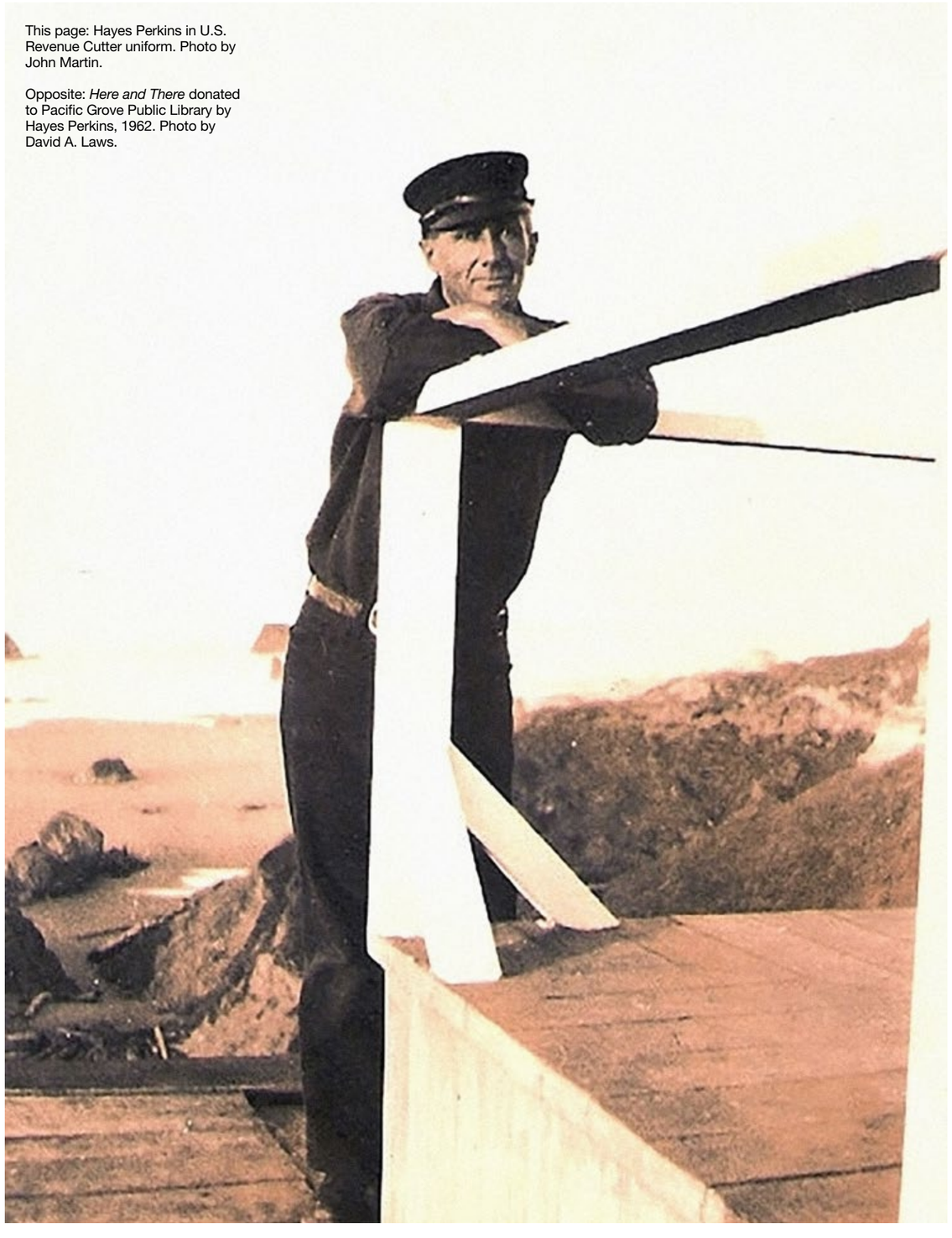


Opposite: A panel of lawn led views from the Chandler dining room to a fountain and ornamental grille set into the north wall, 1958. Photo by Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.
Above: The Conservatory of Flowers, a prefabricated wood structure in Golden Gate Park, soon after its completion and prior to landscaping of the valley, circa 1879. Courtesy Western Neighborhoods Project.

Hayes Perkins: The "Magic Carpet" Man

By David A. Laws

Previous and current spreads: Archived as Colorama No. 303 (*Teenagers on Bikes*), March 11, 1968, although it was taken in 1961. Photo by Peter Gales. From 1950 to 1990 the Eastman Kodak Company promoted its photographic products with 60-by-18-foot backlight transparency images called Coloramas in Grand Central Terminal, New York. Works by Ansel Adams and other photographers were seen by millions of commuters. Photo courtesy the George Eastman Museum.



This page: Hayes Perkins in U.S. Revenue Cutter uniform. Photo by John Martin.

Opposite: *Here and There* donated to Pacific Grove Public Library by Hayes Perkins, 1962. Photo by David A. Laws.

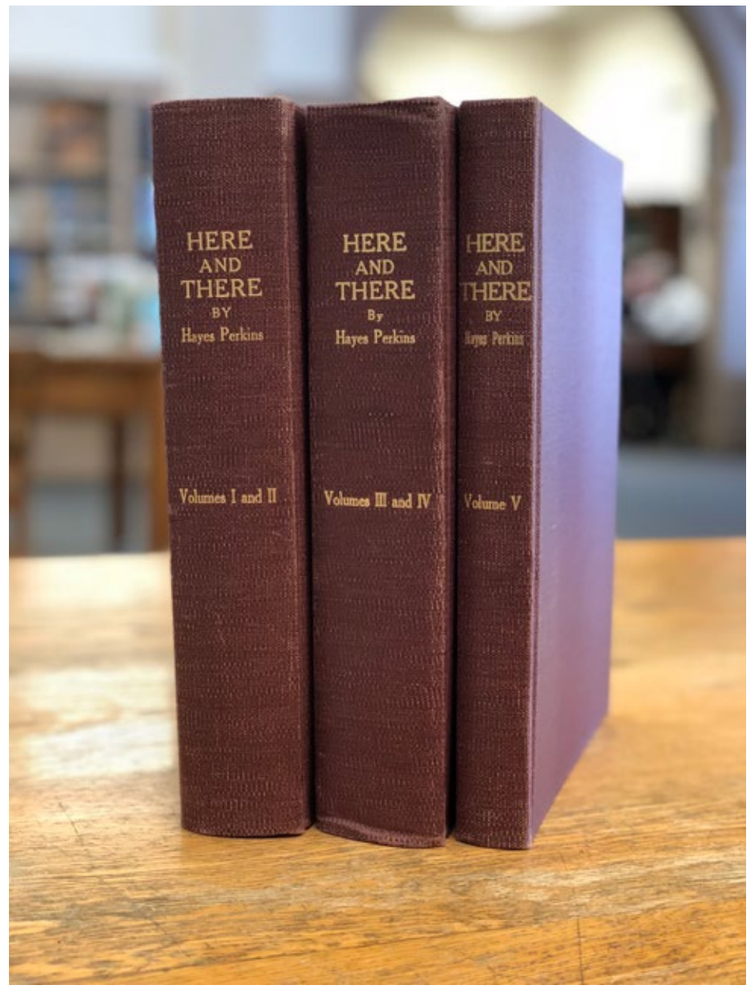
"For 14 years I toiled to make true a dream I have entertained since I was a small boy. I wished to have a beautiful garden beside the sea and … have made it come true."

—Letter to Miss Swallop, October 28, 1959

Gardener and self-styled adventurer Hayes Perkins (1874–1964) transformed a poison oak-covered ocean bluff in Pacific Grove, California into a dazzling springtime carpet of fluorescent-purple blooms. Photographs in *Life* and *National Geographic*, as well as a giant display in Grand Central Terminal, New York, enticed tourists from across the globe. One of the most loved and distinctive horticultural features of the Pacific Coast in the early 1960s, today Perkins's garden is but a sad reflection of its former glory. And its creator is all but forgotten.

Perkins worked his way around the world, including nearly eight years in Africa and nine on publisher William Randolph Hearst's California properties, before moving to Pacific Grove in 1938. He kept detailed diaries of his life and adventures from 1878 to 1936. A friend arranged for them to be typed in 1961. Five carbon paper copies of over 2,000 pages each were hard-cover bound under the title *Here and There*.[1] One is held by the Royal Geographical Society, London; Perkins gave his copy to the Pacific Grove Library.[2]

Living in a tiny cabin overlooking Pacific Grove's Lovers Point, in 1943 Perkins began to clear, plant, and hand-water the coastal bluff with a mix of shrubs and Mediterranean-climate succulents that he knew from South Africa. Over 14 years he single-handedly created a nearly one-mile-long pathway lined by Monterey Bay



on one side and a floral "Magic Carpet" of *Drosanthemum floribundum*[3] on the other.

Named Perkins Park in 1950, the garden played an important role in the town's appeal as a resort destination but decades of municipal financial woes and neglect have led to serious deterioration of Perkins's legacy.

A "BIRD OF PASSAGE"

Born on a homestead in the Coquille Valley near the Oregon coastal lumber port of Bandon on February 10, 1878, as a boy Henry Hayes Perkins was fascinated by tales of explorers and their adventures in Africa. In 1890 the family moved to an evangelical community in Hico, Texas. According to his diary, he left home at age 15 to escape abuse by his father William Perkins, "a Methodist of the strictest sort," who beat the boy frequently for refusing to convert to the gospel.[4]

Perkins hopped freight trains and worked in fields, mills, mines, plantations, and ranches across the country before setting off to explore the globe. While his diary is filled with extraordinary tales of personal privation and appalling conditions endured by migrant laborers of the era, Perkins's taste for adventure and desire to see the world remained strong throughout his life. A 1940 lecture in San Francisco billed him as a "bird of passage."

Perkins embarked on his first ocean voyage and experience of foreign travel from Portland, Oregon in October 1898. As a crew member on the schooner *Austrasia*, he survived a dangerous passage around Cape Horn to arrive in England in March 1899. He returned to the U.S. to participate in the Colorado mining boom. Later that year he joined the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, a forerunner of the Coast Guard, in order to see "other lands down the horizon line that need exploring" but deserted with other crew members to escape abusive onboard discipline after three months.

Over the next 25 years, Perkins alternated work in the Western U.S. and Canada with multiple ocean voyages, seeking opportunities abroad that culminated in eight circumnavigations of the globe. He wrote one of his rare descriptions of horticultural matters while serving as a groundskeeper for the *Heart of Africa Mission* in the Belgian Congo. Within a month of arriving in 1941 he had planted 1,100 bananas and plantains, 1,000 pineapples, and more than 200 fruit trees: "Mangoes, avocado pears, limes, lemons, oranges, and custard apples. Daily the estate grows more attractive. One can accomplish so much in a short time in a land like this, where all produce grows an inch, or two inches overnight." Although Perkins loved Africa and his success in the garden, he was angered by graft and abusive discipline and left before completing his term.

The later years show an increasing interest in exotic plants. He remarked on the ferns, fruits, and lush lawns of the Samoan Islands, Flame trees on Mozambique, and Baobabs in the Congo. He was particularly entranced by the exotic flora, "oleander, hibiscus, bougainvillea, eucalyptus, bamboo, banyan, gold mohur, and ironwood," of Colombo. An index lists more than 30 varieties of trees across dozens of entries.

THE HEARST YEARS (1928–1936)

In May 1928, Perkins found employment on the construction of publisher William Randolph Hearst's "castle" near San Simeon, California. His diary entries at this time become more autobiographical in nature. They offer unique insights from the perspective of an hourly laborer into the people, politics, and setting of the extraordinary world being created on "La Cuesta Encantada" (The Enchanted Hill).

Although he abhorred Hearst's infatuation with fascist dictators, particularly Mussolini, Perkins describes him as a fair, even a benevolent, employer. "He has an infectious grin that instantly puts all at ease. He will bestow this on his humblest employee as quickly as the greatest of men." However, Perkins spares no kind words for the legions of sycophants and corrupt managers who ruled the roost in Hearst's absence. He includes descriptions of the debauchery of visiting Hollywood figures and their ravishing of young women invited to party on the hill. As a non-drinker, he was especially troubled by late-night beach landings to replenish the castle liquor cellars during Prohibition. The Coast Guard ignored his whistle-blowing for fear of reprisal by Hearst.

Perkins makes no direct comments on landscaping work, but does mention guests in "ecstasies of joy and wonder at the marvelous beauty of the gardens" and the expenditure of $10,000 to move a single tree. Because of his strong work ethic and aversion to alcohol, he was trusted to tend the animals in Hearst's zoo. In late 1930, his boss severely injured a valuable white oryx and fired Perkins to deflect blame from himself. Learning of this injustice, three months later Hearst ordered Perkins rehired as camp janitor. In this role he was responsible for maintenance of worker housing on the hill. On his days off he enjoyed roaming the hillsides in search of wild honey. "Surely in all the world there is no more favored spot than this," he wrote.

By mid-1931, even Hearst's vast wealth could not sustain the project. Crew members were being laid off and work hours extended. Perkins "stole" water from a new reservoir to raise flower gardens around the camp to make it more attractive for the remaining employees. By early 1933, even the "harsh but square" head gardener, Louis Reising, had been let go. Perkins followed in March. He wrote: "When I took over the place it was a shipwreck. Grounds overgrown with jungle, gullies washed down the hill. Now the grounds are planted to ornamental flowers, [wisteria and passion fruit] vines, and shrubs." He had lived and worked on the estate for 25 months without ever leaving the hill.

In 1902, the publisher's mother, Phoebe Hearst, had contracted with Bay Area architect Bernard Maybeck, assisted by Julia Morgan, to build a massive stone, Gothic-style Rhine River castle on a compound in the rugged forest east of Dunsmuir in Northern California. Named Wyntoon, the castle served as a family summer retreat until it burned in 1929. Hearst asked Morgan to design an even larger replacement. Unable to finance the project while still committed to San Simeon, he scaled Morgan's design back to a medieval-style "Bavarian Village" of multiple half-timbered buildings. Today the estate is owned by the Hearst Corporation and is closed to the public.[5]

Hired by his former San Simeon boss, George Loorz, to work on rebuilding the Wyntoon property, Perkins spent the summers of 1933 through 1936 living in McCloud and commuting daily to the site. His assignments ranged from moving rocks to building and painting the structures. For a short time, he maintained the lawns and gardens and frequently encountered Julia Morgan, Hearst, and his guests, including Marion Davies, Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, and Herbert Hoover. On one occasion he, unsuccessfully, asked Hearst to fund another trip to Africa.

Construction on the Hearst estate ceased each fall before snowfall and the workers were laid off. For the winters of 1934 and 1936, Perkins travelled to Pennsylvania at the invitation of Frank W. Preston whom he met on the steamship *Vedic* en route from Cape Town to Sydney in 1925. At the time he noted that "it was a treat to find a man who could converse on some other topic besides sex." Preston arranged for Perkins to speak on his travels to Pittsburg society and supported his induction as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of London in 1937.

In July 1936, Perkins wrote that Preston had asked him to help build a game park around a research laboratory he was establishing near Butler Township, Pennsylvania. He mailed bulbs and seeds of gladiolus and foxgloves from Hearst's garden for planting prior to his arrival. The final entry in the nearly 60-year saga of *Here and There* is dated October 10, 1936 as he was waiting to travel east.

BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA (1936–1937)

A technical consultant to the glass industry, in 1936 Preston purchased a 100-acre abandoned farm where he opened Preston Laboratories to research manufacturing techniques for Corning Glass. He asked Perkins to landscape the property in the style of a park from his native England.

Perkins lived over the laboratory for nearly two years. He removed rocks and debris and replenished topsoil that had been depleted over 200 years of farming. He planted a lawn, cleaned out a pond for ducks, built a bridge and a peacock shed, erected miles of fencing, and graded a landscape to accommodate "some 1600 trees, chiefly pine," all without any mechanical aid. Preston, who described Perkins as "the curator and custodian" of the grounds, reported in 1959 that the trees were now 30 - 40 feet high and that "the most successful evergreens, Siberian spruce, reached 20 - 30 feet." An orchard with trees cultivated in lines, stars, and other geometric patterns continues to yield today. Mrs. Preston said of Perkins that "He was an exceptionally good workman at any task he undertook."

Active conservationists in their retirement, the Prestons left their estate to the community. Today the site is maintained by volunteers as an arboretum with a prairie, gardens, and ponds open to the public. The laboratory was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.[6]

PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA (1938–1964)

Although he enjoyed the work at Butler, Perkins found the winters too cold. Once a week he would go to the machine shop to shellac the soles of his feet. In 1938 he returned to the West Coast because of the mild coastal climate he remembered from his San Simeon years. He chose Pacific Grove, near Monterey, which, because of its legacy as a Methodist summer retreat community, was still dry and "wasn't cluttered-up with bars." He rented an 8 by 16-foot, two-room shack on Mermaid

Top: Hayes Perkins at Preston Laboratories, circa 1937. Photo by John Martin.

Bottom: Perkins Park from *National Geographic* magazine article "California's Wonderful One," November 1959. Photo by B. Anthony Stewart.

Avenue overlooking the bay. He again found work with Frank Loorz who operated a construction business in the area.

In contrast to most of his peers who spent their pay on drink and the "ladies of the evening" while working for Hearst, Perkins had invested his paycheck in annuities. When they matured in 1943, at age 69 Perkins quit working for others and planned a retirement of reading in the library, lecturing about his travels, and light gardening for neighbors. Jerry Hurlburt recalls "During the war he came across the street and did some gardening for us when he thought my mother was letting the yard get out of hand. That irritated her and I'm not sure but what they may have had some words."

Children suffered painful skin rashes from playing in poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) growing on the unkempt bluff across Ocean View Boulevard from his home. As he was immune to the irritant effect of urushiol oil from the leaves, Perkins began clearing the area and planted *Drosanthemum floribundum*, a non-invasive succulent that forms a dazzling carpet of lilac-purple blooms in spring. He knew it as the genus *Mesembryanthemum* from his visits to Cape Town, South Africa, where it was favored for erosion control on steep slopes with poor soils, as well as being drought and salt tolerant - exactly the conditions that prevail along the Monterey Bay coastline.

John Bonnici, owner of Borg's Motel, allowed Perkins to fill up to 75 buckets of water two days a week from his faucet and hand carry them across the street to irrigate new plantings. He began to add other plants tolerant of the windy, coastal climate. "Most of the plants in that park are African. I wanted to have something to remind me of the Dark Continent, for somehow I have always loved it over any other land." A 1961 listing includes *Aloe arborescens*, a species from southern Africa with tough, green, succulent leaf whorls and scarlet blooms that tower over 6-feet high in late fall, as well as *achillea, arctotis*, calla lilies. cannas, century plants, dracaena palms, and *veronica.*

Perkins became a familiar figure to local residents. An article in the *Pacific Grove Tribune* noted that "Any day of the week, if you drive down by the ocean you will see a tall, spare, deeply-suntanned athletic-looking man with no hat and a bald pate working away ... building paths, planting flowers, spading and cultivating." Walter Wardle recalls "his bushy eyebrows and navy watch cap and pea coat walking along the trail in the morning fog, when I was 5 or 6 in the early '40s. I spent many a day pestering him as he worked along the shore. As I would talk, every now and then he would look up from his gardening and wiggle his big bushy eyebrows like approving of what I said then go back to his day's chores."

Top: Pacific Grove Honors Perkins. Hayes Perkins, third from left, with the mayor and other civic officers, September 22, 1950.
Credit: Heritage Society of Pacific Grove.

Bottom: Hayes Perkins in Perkins Park, April 30, 1961. A Kodacolor print signed *H. Perkins*, courtesy the Special Collections and Archives, Robert F. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Opposite page, clockwise from top-right:

Hayes Perkins plaque dedicated in 1950. Photo by David A. Laws.

Drosanthemum floribundum blooms. Photo by David A. Laws.

Illustration from "California Spectacle" article in *Life* magazine, October 19, 1962. Photo by Ralph Crane.

By 1947 the garden extended 1,500 feet to the west. The city had given formal permission for the use of public land and neighbors who had originally resisted the change now supported the project. In June, the Service Club, forerunner of the Rotary Club of Pacific Grove, organized a Flower Day to collect funds to further Perkins's efforts.[7] He used the check for $185.15 to augment his personal contributions towards additional plants and supplies.

Increased publicity generated more activity along the waterfront paths. Not all users were respectful. In 1949 Perkins announced that "discouraged by careless or deliberate vandalism … he could no longer continue work … and plans to leave town."[8] Fortunately, he did not follow-up on this threat and in 1950 the city named the waterfront area Perkins Park. The mayor and other dignitaries posed with Perkins for a photograph in front of a bronze plaque mounted on a large boulder in his honor. He commented, "I appreciated it all, but I didn't want it. I don't believe in personal advertising."[9]

LAST FOREIGN TRIPS

In August 1952 Perkins embarked on one last trip to Africa. On the journey across the U.S. he stopped at Butler and was surprised by the rapid growth of his forest. From Algiers, he set out on a primitive bus loaded with water-filled goatskins and eight passengers to satisfy an ambition to "ramble around the Sahara." After 2,500 miles of bone-shaking travel and encounters with Tuareg "pirates of the desert," his health deteriorated and he flew home in December.[10]

On his return, Perkins made a proposal to extend the park by another 1,200 feet. He requested that the city add water pipes and that he be given a helper. In 1953 the council authorized a budget of $2,700 per year for manpower, water, and equipment. He accepted payment of $14.75 per month "to give me a modicum of authority to hold back vandals, dog owners who trained their pets in the park, and bicyclists." By 1954 the *Monterey Herald* reported that, assisted by city employee Manuel Rego, the garden had been extended five-eighths of a mile and another 1,100 feet cleared for future planting.

In 1955, Perkins sailed on a Norwegian passenger-carrying cargo vessel for a four-month voyage around South America. His growing dissatisfaction with the level of city support for Perkins Park is evident in a letter he wrote from Chile to Monterey County supervisor A. B. Jacobsen. "These Latin people are a hundred years ahead of us in creating lovely flower gardens, and all, the few rich and the

many poor, unite in making the best of what they have. One sees no 'No Trespass' signs, they are not needed, but it would be bad indeed for anyone who touched a flower … I have seen no place with the beauty of the Monterey Peninsula but if you people would get together in the matter of parks, as do these South Americans, its fame would be worldwide."[11]

After Perkins's death, Preston arranged for the notes of these two final trips to be typed and copied. The final entry reads: "Thus ends my 130th sea voyage. I have no plans for further travel, there are no new lands to explore, and I don't care to go over old ground."[12]

In 1957 Perkins moved to Forest Hill Manor, a senior retirement home one mile inland. Daily he walked down the hill to continue working on the garden but, despite his concerns about the quality of the city maintenance, its fame had spread. Photographs showing the springtime carpet of bloom appeared in *National Geographic* (November 1959), *Life* (October 1962), United Airlines *Mainliner* magazine (1962) and numerous other publications. Union Pacific Railway featured the scene on menus for the Domeliner breakfast service. The garden's fame inspired international imitators. In 1963 the *Monterey Herald* photographed Perkins supervising the shipping of succulent cuttings to the coastal city of Bahía de Caráquez, Ecuador.

"Many cars per hour, to say nothing of the huge transcontinental buses" loaded with tourists stopped to photograph the scene. Postcard views mailed across the world attracted even more attention. The Chamber of Commerce ordered aerial photographs to feature on tourist guides.[13] In 1961 Kodak sent photographer Peter Gales to shoot the image for an 18 by 60-foot mural in Grand Central Terminal that featured changing views of scenic America. Perkins declined to pose for the picture in protest against showcasing his hated hordes of cyclists in the picture.

FINAL YEARS

A storm in February 1960 did considerable damage to the park. The city allocated $9,000 for repairs that included building concrete seawalls but for the rest of his life Perkins engaged in constant battles with city hall to improve maintenance, repair damage by dogs and cyclists, and prosecute plant thieves. "I'll bet I get in the can some of these days, the way I keep hounding the authorities."

A petition to local businesses to raise private funding in 1962 generated a $5,000 donation to install a sprinkler system. To Frank Preston he mailed a copy of a 1963 election flyer for Don Grafton who was running for the council: one of Grafton's platform points promised attention to Perkins Park. In his typical thrifty manner, Perkins typed a letter on the rear of the flyer.

He was particularly incensed when the superintendent of parks, a man Perkins claimed knew little about landscape gardening and was only appointed through political connections, did not replace Manuel Rego after he retired and attempted to take credit for ongoing public acclaim for the garden. "If they will only keep it up, they can name it for the devil himself," he said.

Perkins passed away on April 30, 1964. A few years earlier he had written, "For 14 years I toiled to make true a dream I have entertained since I was a small boy. I wished to have a beautiful garden beside the sea and … have made it come true." Vern Yeadon, curator of the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, said in an obituary in the *Monterey Herald*, "He alone was responsible for the beautiful shoreline garden. No one else can claim credit for it."

He left his entire estate of $6,507.01 to purchase books for the library. Proposals to establish a Hayes Perkins Day in his honor and to place a plaque in the library were never consummated. Few residents know of him today.

Opposite page: Volunteers working on Perkins Park in March 1982. Courtesy Monterey Herald Photo Archive, California State University, Monterey Bay.

Right: Union Pacific Railroad "City of Los Angeles" Domeliner 1967 Pacific Grove breakfast menu card, September 1967. Photo by David A. Laws.

CODA

A commitment by Mayor A. B. Wells that "The city will maintain the coastal area in his memory"[14] proved difficult to honor due to economic challenges in later years.[15] Volunteer weed-pulls organized by neighbors attempted to replace maintenance abandoned by the city but could not prevent long term decline of the garden due to drought and neglect.[16]

Patches of iridescent color continue to brighten the bluff in spring but do not compare to visions portrayed on postcards, posters and national publications from the 1960s. In a letter to the *Monterey Herald*, the late John F. Limper of Pacific Grove recalled Perkins's prescient comment, "When I am dead, the city will let all my work go to hell."

Pacific Grove Public Works Director Daniel Gho manages the city's efforts "to return the park to the desired aesthetics." For the first time in many years, his 2017/18 budget allowed hiring a part-time landscape employee dedicated to Perkins Park. Accomplishments to date have included reducing the weeds, trimming the bushes and cypress trees, installing decomposed granite on the trails, and repairing the irrigation system. Thousands of *Drosanthemum floribundum* seedlings were purchased and planted in the fall to allow them to become established during the (hoped-for) rainy season. Residents are cautiously optimistic that this portends a new lease on life for Hayes Perkins's long-suffering Magic Carpet.

Endnotes

1 A listing of the major destinations described in *Here and There* is posted on the website "Hayes Here and There" by John Martin of Longmont, Colorado (Martin's grandfather was Perkins's cousin) [https://hayeshereandthere.com/hayes-perkins-biography-and-writings/]

2. The additional three original printings of *Here and There* are held by the Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland, OR, the Special Collections & Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA, and by the family.

3. Perkins knew *Drosanthemum floribundum* under the name *Mesembryanthemum*. It is commonly known as showy dewflower or rosea iceplant. *Drosanthemum floribundum* is a recommended ground cover for the Central Coast by Cal-IPC (California Invasive Plant Council). It is not related to the familiar highway iceplant or Hottentot fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*), a widely distributed invasive species throughout California, that was introduced in the early 1900s for stabilizing soil along railroad tracks. [https://www.cal-ipc.org/solutions/prevention/landscaping/dpp/?region=centcoast]

4. All subsequent quotations without attribution in this article are taken from Perkins's diaries and correspondence. At his peak of activity, Perkins claimed to have over 100 correspondents worldwide. His benefactor Frank W. Preston, who arranged for the typing and binding of the diaries, kept a copy of their exchanges for the years 1959 through 1964. Together with her husband's copy of *Here and There*, Jane Preston donated this correspondence (comprising over 200 pages) to the Special Collections & Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA in 1993.

5. Gary VanDeWalker "Wyntoon, McCloud's Brigadoon," The McCloud Blog (accessed August 23, 2018) [http://www.themccloudblog.com/everything/wyntoon-mcclouds-brigadoon/]

6. Kevin Lukas, "Preston Park," Butler County Historical Society (accessed August 24, 2018) [http://butlerhistorical.org/items/show/7]

7. "Town Honors Perkins" *Pacific Grove Tribune*, June 6, 1947 p. 1

8. "Plans to leave," *Pacific Grove Tribune*, March 11, 1949 p. 1

9. "Perkins Park & the Man who Created it," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, August 30, 1954 Section II, p. 1

10. "Hayes Perkins returns from Africa," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, December 17, 1954

11. "Traveler has Praise for S. American Parks," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, September x, 1955

12. A copy of the 46-page travel diary covering "Across the Sahara" (1952) and "Around South America" (1955) is held in the reference section of the Pacific Grove Library. (PGLH/92/PERKINS)

13. In later years it was also used in video promotions. See "Pacific Grove Magic Carpet" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5To5jXLA0xg

14. "Hayes Perkins, PG's Honored Gardener Dies," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, April 30, 1964 p. 4

15. "Weeds, Litter and Age Tarnish Pacific Grove's Floral Carpet," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, February 23, 1982 p. 19

16. "Volunteers Tackle Weeding, Pruning Along P.G.'s Famed 'Magic Carpet,'" *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, March 30, 1982 p. 13

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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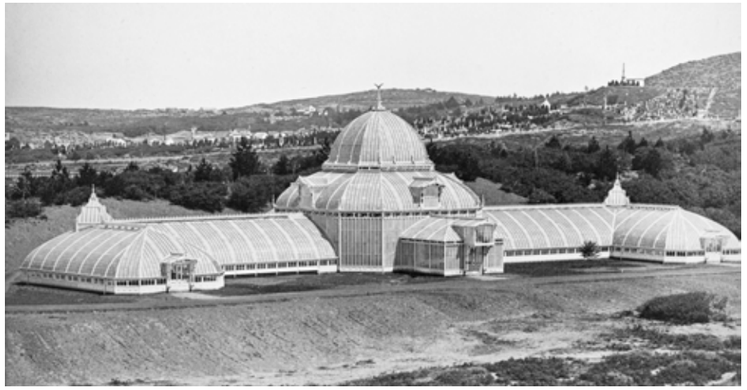
FLORAL PLAQUES

in Golden Gate Park's Conservatory Valley

By CHRISTOPHER POLLOCK

The Conservatory of Flowers with the floor of Conservatory Valley in the foreground. On the slope is the west floral plaque, at left, and in the distance, at right, is the floral clock, both surrounded by a clipped boxwood hedge. Approaching the valley, it is viewed from the elevated J.F.K. Drive, so the viewer looks down into the valley from a distance. Photo by the author, 2018.



The decorative form of gardening known as "carpet bedding" has been carried out in one form or another in Golden Gate Park's Conservatory Valley from at least 1892, and the tradition has continued to the present day with few interuptions. Numerous events and fashions have changed the world during that period, and the bedding designs over the intervening 127-years have reflected the time. The "floral plaques" using carpet bedding have celebrated milestones of local and international fraternal organizations, civic groups, conventions, historical celebrations, special events, and holiday celebrations. Now thought of as a horticultural relic, the practice remains today on a small scale in a variety of municipal parks around the globe.

Carpet bedding is the gardening technique of creating areas of plantings laid out in decorative patterns by the use of two or more contrasting color plant materials. The plants are closely spaced and selected for their dwarf habit and consistent color traits. The top of a finished carpet bed is essentially flat; albeit time-consuming and therefore expensive, the end result suggests an Oriental carpet, and hence the name.

The term "carpet bedding" was coined in 1868 in the English publication *Gardeners' Chronicle*, which described a new kind of planting scheme invented by head gardener John Fleming of the Cliveden Estate at Taplow, Buckinghamshire, England. An English gardening guide of 1876 noted that "mathematical precision is the very essence of this mode of garden decoration."[1] In the same text a methodology was discussed to keep the height of the various plant species at the same level. If a plant grew taller than others, its planting bed would be lowered; the reverse was carried out for lower growing species – an intense detail when carried out. Author Charles Dickens was the editor of *Household Words*, an English publication aimed at the middle class that said: "Of all the styles of decorative gardening, that known as carpet-bedding, tapestry-bedding, or mosaic work, is perhaps the most striking, and, as carried out in the various parks in and near London, is undeniably beautiful."[2]

Often considered the epitome of gardening, carpet bedding was popular in Europe and America from the 1870s and was all but forgotten by the 1920s. In San Francisco examples could be seen on the extravagant landscapes of notable local citizens such as Mayor Adolph Sutro's and *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper publisher Michael de Young's California Street residences in Pacific Heights. Golden Gate Park's second music stand, where the tennis courts are located today, also had elaborate bedding patterns.

The process involves many precise steps. The design is first worked out on a small-scale grid, where elements such as a circle need to be foreshortened due to perspective as the flower plaque bed sits on a slope. The form of a vertical ellipse is used so that it will appear as a circle to those on the drive across the valley. The plants are primarily selected for their foliage as blossoms generally tend to be short lived. The plant material is also chosen for its low-growing qualities and ability to maintain its small footprint. Hardy alpine species and succulents are popular for this use. An article in 1968 notes that the practice of painting some plants in the valley's beds with a thinned latex paint was used at the time – a practice not used today. The pattern is then scaled up on the site using a larger grid. Stakes and string demarcate boundaries between the plant materials. (Colored sand or chalk may also be used.) Scaffolding is placed to span the entire bed and the plants. Clipping of foliage is required at least once a week for non-succulents in order to keep the pattern uniform in height and prevent leaves from crossing outside its color zone – like paint by the numbers.

Although this article is focused primarily on the floral plaques of Conservatory Valley, a historical overview will give some context as to how the valley arrived at its current layout. Plans to construct a conservatory in the park appeared in William Hammond Hall's original 1872 master plan for Golden Gate Park's design.[3] (The fold-out map included

Opposite page, top to bottom:

The Conservatory of Flowers, a prefabricated wood structure, soon after its completion and prior to landscaping of the valley, circa 1879. Photo courtesy Western Neighborhoods Project.

This 1903 Pacific Novely Company postcard of Conservatory Valley celebrates the encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, a social, historical and benevolent fraternal society. Collection of the author.

Above: This 1886 photograph shows the nearby newly placed Garfield Monument with carpet bedding surrounding its base. The conservatory is just out of view to the left. It again welcomes the National Grand Army of the Republic to San Francisco with a portrayal of the organization's badge. Courtesy Western Neighborhoods Project.

in that report showed the area where the greenhouse would eventually be sited as "The Valley.") What became Conservatory Valley was roughly graded in 1872 under the direction of Assistant Park Engineer William Bond Prichard. It was located on the south side of the North Ridge, an area that was, and remains, forested with native live oaks. The grading included a terrace for the proposed conservatory and a flat, lower area to the south. Main Drive (now John F. Kennedy Drive) was aligned parallel to the Conservatory's terrace providing a raised vantage point from which to observe the valley, whose axis runs east to west, in between the roadway and the greenhouse across the valley.

Construction of the Conservatory of Flowers was completed in 1878 after the park received the gift of a large greenhouse originally belonging to the James Lick Estate of San Jose, California. Final site grading occurred the following year and included a carriage drive to the Conservatory and the leveling of the hillocks in front of the Conservatory to prepare the ground for a lawn.[4] The work, according to the San Francisco Municipal Report of 1880-1881, stated that this area south of the Conservatory was completed with a force of some 25 men, three two-horse wagons and an outlay of $4,000. The end result was described to be decorated with "bright flowers and variegated foliage."[5]

The park's first music stand was erected at the western end of Conservatory Valley in 1882. It was a small wood structure adorned with gingerbread decoration. Acting as a visual foundation was carpet bedding. Addition of this building altered the visual character of the valley, which was changed from planting beds to gravel paving so that carriages could drive into the area and allowed attendees to remain in their carriages during a concert – a concept similar to that of drive-in movies during the mid-twentieth century. A new, much larger, music stand was dedicated on July 4, 1888 (on the site of today's tennis courts nearby to the south), the former stand was removed and the valley was re-landscaped with flower beds.

A description of the valley's planting appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1886 to mark the encampment in San Francisco of the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization of Civil War veterans. The entire city was decked out with elaborate decorations, including the lawns of Conservatory Valley. Wealthy individuals, including *Chronicle* newspaper publisher Michael de Young and railroad titan Charles Crocker, also had special event-specific carpet bedding designs on their California Street mansion lawns to celebrate the occasion. The display in Conservatory Valley consisted of a series of distinctive emblems portraying the various auxiliary organizations of the patriotic order. A band of bedding surrounded the bandstand, continued across the sloped lawn in front of the Conservatory to the east and terminated in designs surrounding the base of the President James Garfield monument, which had been unveiled the year before. The newspaper article went into great detail citing the names of many of the bedding plants used as well as their color: *aspergula* (green), *lobelia* (blue), *amoena altemanthera* (red), *compacta* (yellow), and *amoena allemanthera* (red).[6]

San Francisco enjoys a Mediterranean climate so the floral displays in Conservatory Valley can be planted year-round. An 1885 newspaper article mentions that "a San Francisco open-air concert on the 13th of December, enjoyed by thousands seated on the benches in Conservatory Valley, or walking along the flower-lined paths, would be an admirable subject for illustration for the midwinter number of some New York publication."[7] This was followed by an 1887 article that mentions that "Conservatory Valley is a glory of color all the year round and is the wonder of all Eastern visitors."[8] This was published in January, highlighting the area's salubrious climate even in the middle of winter.

It is not known exactly when bedding designs were first laid out in Conservatory Valley but it was soon after John McLaren was appointed park superintendent. McLaren was hand-picked by the park's designer and first superintendent William Hammond Hall in 1890.[9] (McLaren actually started in the park as assistant superintendent in 1887 and had previously worked on various grand estates on the Peninsula south of San Francisco.)

In 1891, a giant sundial was created on the west side of the valley under the direction of John McLaren. It was sixty feet in diameter and the angled gnomon topped out at twenty-four feet high. Bedding plants were configured to spell out numerals denoting the time.[10]

San Francisco was to become the stage for a series of large events that were reflected in the park's carpet bedding between 1909 and culminating with the grandest city event of all in 1915. These occasions were held to herald San Francisco's return to glory as the "Paris of the Pacific" after the cataclysmic Great Earthquake and Fire of April 1906 left much of the city in smoldering ruins.

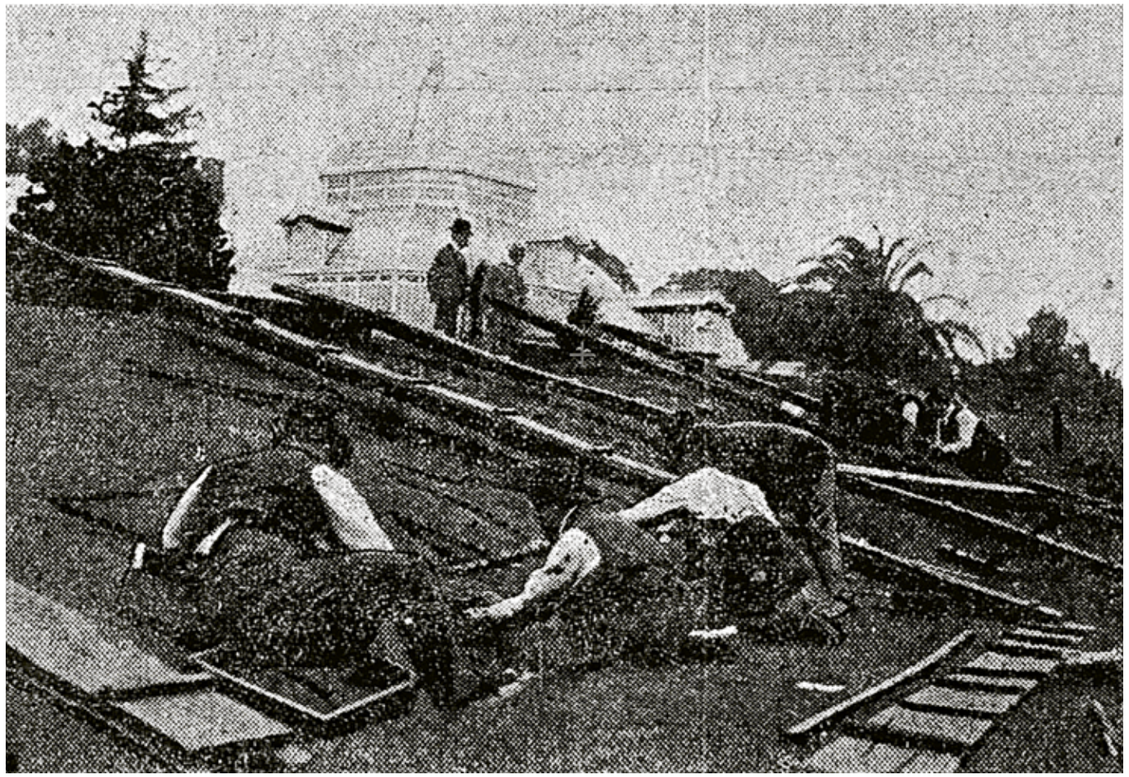
The first of these events celebrated the arrival of Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet in San Francisco Bay during June and July of 1908, and was observed in carpet bedding with an illustration of a vessel shown from its starboard side surrounded by the greeting "Welcome to the Fleet." During a time of Manifest Destiny, this fleet demonstrating American sea power was sent to 20 ports across the globe over a period of fourteen months.

The following year the Portola Festival was featured in a spectacular bedding design incorporating three panels in a 25 by 300 foot-long bed. It portrayed Don Gaspar de Portolá on horseback in the larger center panel flanked by a Franciscan friar and a musketeer with both gazing toward San Francisco Bay. A Spanish galleon was shown in the panel to the right and on the opposite side of the main panel was an illustration of the Carmel Mission.[11]

Hosting the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 (PPIE) was to be the city's greatest achievement. Although critical as an economic boost to a city that lay in ashes just

Opposite page: "Manifest Destiny" was pictured in this 1908 carpet bedding scheme with the coming of Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet to San Francisco Bay. Richard Behrendt postcard, collection of the author.

Above: Hollywood movie studio Paramount Pictures held its annual convention for many years in San Francisco starting just after their incorporation in 1912. Real photo postcard, Dennis O'Rorke collection.



Opposite page: Gardeners in the process of planting a floral plaque in 1901 to celebrate the visit of President William McKinley to the park. The planting, which included *alternanthera* and *echeveria*, portrayed the façade of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Image courtesy *San Francisco Call*, April 22, 1901.

This page: The giant sundial in Conservatory Valley as shown in this hand-tinted stereoview photo dated 1892. Photo by Underwood and Underwood, collection of the author.

nine years prior, the official reason for the fair was to celebrate two events: the completion of the Panama Canal and Vasco Núñez de Balboa's discovery of the Pacific Ocean 400 years earlier. The 635-acre exposition site spanning today's Marina District, including the flanking military posts, was host to the PPIE spectacle. (An early proposal was to spread the exposition throughout the city including Golden Gate Park, an idea which was later scuttled.) A floral display spanned Conservatory Valley's edge proclaiming the phrase "Panama Pacific Exposition 1915."

The following year an equally impressive scene was created in the large bed, designed by Thomas Munroe, celebrating the fraternal organization Native Sons of the Golden West's annual convention. The elaborate scene incorporated the Bear Flag, the Seal of California, the American Flag, a Pioneer, a Native American, and two dogs.[12]

Sometime after 1915, the year of the PPIE, the valley's planting beds and form were redesigned to appear much as it is experienced today. The new design removed the diagonally-angled sloping path west of the conservatory steps and allowed a symmetrical, angled lawn in front of the conservatory as viewed from Main Drive. On the floor of the valley are a variety of bed shapes including rectangles, circles, and C-shaped beds that are symmetrically laid out.

Paramount Pictures hosted their annual convention in San Francisco for many years between 1916 to about 1931. Paramount clearly liked San Francisco throughout the company's early days as more than one floral plaque was installed celebrating the event during those years.

A 1932 plaque was designed as a portrait of the beloved and respected Superintendent John McLaren. It appeared on his 85th birthday when he had held the position for forty-two years. It is assumed that this was created as a surprise as McLaren, based on other such personal tributes, probably would not have accepted the proposal had he been aware of it. Its form was an anomaly for the time as it was placed flat in the sloping lawn.

Over time the floral plaques in the valley have changed shape. In the 1930s the form was round with a fan-shape added at the top and bottom; additionally the bed tilted up more than the sloping lawn that it sat within. At the top was a crown-shaped addition with the word WELCOME which remained for a time – no matter what the message below. One was an incongruous greeting in 1934 that stated "WELCOME, Mail Early Merry Christmas." At some point between 1938 and 1945 the form of the plaques were changed from a circle to a rectangle. Since most photographs favor the plaque on the west end of the lawn, history is silent as to when the plaque on the east side was first created.

There do not seem to be many official written records of what plaques were installed in Conservatory Valley until 1937 when the subject of floral plaque requests started to appear in the Park Commission Board's meeting notes. It is assumed that up to that time John McLaren had full control of the valley's planting with no interference from others. What brought about this change is unclear but at that point McLaren was ninety-one years old and almost blind – Assistant Superintendent Julius Girod acted as his eyes. The commission's board asserted itself when they unanimously voted "that only emblems of a non-commercial character would be installed hereafter."[13] Two months later the board received a request from the San Francisco Convention and Tourist Bureau listing twelve conventions to be held during the later portion of the Great Depression year of 1938 and suggested that the commission provide a dozen floral welcome messages installed in front of the Conservatory. The board held the request in abeyance until it received another contact two months later from the Bureau, which then enlisted the San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce to back up the request. With this the board rejected the whole proposal citing a lack of funds and stating that they did not "deem it a function of the Board to create displays for the purpose of general publicity."[14] If this had been approved it would have hijacked the entire process. Nothing seems to have become of the proposal after this rebuke.

Commission meeting notes show that the heyday of requests by organizations for a plaque was in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Not all were carried out, sometimes due to the commission feeling that an organization was not worthy or due to time constraints to obtain plant materials. Many requests were for specific dates usually centering around a convention or historical date.

John McLaren died in 1943 during the beginning of the United States' involvement in World War II. During the various incarnations of carpet bedding on the slope, photographs show that there are a few times when nothing was planted – construction of plaques was limited due to a shortage of gardeners, a male-dominated force at that time. In 1944 there is but one recorded plaque, which was requested by the United Seamen's Service and was installed at their expense. The next year a single plaque, for the San Francisco Peace Conference, is listed in the Park Commission's meeting notes. The commission's president and park superintendent were delegated to make the final selection from a number of designs for that plaque.

An historic multi-nation conference opened in San Francisco's War Memorial complex on April 24, 1945 with forty-six countries in attendance. The conclave ended on June 26th with the formal signing of the United Nations Charter. "San Francisco Welcomes United Nations" was proclaimed in a plaque design when the organization convened. With Golden Gate Park as one of the most visited attractions by tourists, the plaque would have been seen by the many diplomats and other conference attendees. The

Above: On the left of the sloped embankment is an illustration of the Steinhart Aquarium's Swamp favorite, Claude, an albino alligator. This was the feature of a 2008 plaque upon the reopening of the rebuilt California Academy of Sciences. Photo by Cat, August 30, 2008/Flickr.com

year 1946 saw two war-related plaques: one for the Shrine Victory Convention and the other for the American Legion National Convention, both held in San Francisco.

Sydney Stein Rich started work in the park under McLaren in 1929 and resigned in 1950. Later in her career she was head "nurseryman" of the Conservatory and supervised plaque displays such as the American Legion emblem installed in the plaque in the fall of 1946.[15] Her exact length of involvement in the plaques is not known.

With the increasing popularity of the floral plaques, the Park Commission passed a resolution in their November 11, 1947 meeting which stated that "it was determined as a matter of policy that henceforth no such applications would be granted unless the applicant would assume the expense thereon, except in extraordinary cases." This was a move by the commission to limit their financial exposure in what had become a popular venue. Up to that time the plaques were usually constructed at the park's expense.

With the post-World War II growth of the responsibilities of the Recreation and Park Department, the commission decided to entrust the floral plaque selection to a single person. (The department and board's name was changed around this time.) In 1951, the commission, via Resolution 358, "full authority to approve or disapprove all requests for floral displays in front of the Conservatory and directs him to establish the proper charge."[16]

One of the few written technical records of the creation of a plaque in the park appeared in a 1959 *Popular Mechanics* magazine article titled "San Francisco Says "Welcome" with Billboard of Flowers." It documented the creation of a floral plaque in text and illustrations discussing the design process, the plants used and showing gardeners installing a plaque; Otto Miller was cited as the landscape foreman in the article.[17]

In addition to the previous sundial, another giant floral timepiece was installed in 1962 when the east plaque was turned into a 17–foot diameter clock through a donation of the electric clock mechanism by the Watchmakers of Switzerland and Retail Jewelers of San Francisco.[18] The numerals were spelled out in bedding plants. With the large cantilevered hands the clock suffered problems over time and was removed at some point. The notion of a floral clock is attributed to John McHattie who was the City Park Superintendent of Edinburgh, Scotland and former gardener to the Duke of Wellington. He supervised installation of a floral clock in West Princes Street Gardens in 1903, which remains today.

In the latter half of 1964, a six-month trial was carried out to limit the plaques to one a month. In the February 11, 1965 commission meeting, Park Superintendent Frank Foehr reported that the trial was successful as "the man hours which had previously been required to change the design had been used to great advantage in other sections of the park." The resulting Resolution 6127 also noted that preference should be given to national organizations. Another article, published in a 1968 issue of *California Horticultural Journal*, gave a description of the plaque and clock, also discussing the process of a plaque's creation. It was written by gardener John McKelvey who was the section supervisor of that portion of the park. Bedding materials cited in the article included *ajuga* (dark brown-black), *Echeveria elegans* (white) and *santolina* (silvery grey).[19]

Golden Gate Park's centennial was celebrated in 1970 with a plaque featuring a graphic representation of the historic "Portals of the Past" monument located at Lloyd Lake within the park. The celebration, which consisted of many different events, lasted from spring through summer.

Between 1982 and 2001, the plaque was under the direction of Thomas Mrakava, section supervisor. When the San Francisco 49ers won their first-ever Superbowl in 1982, the event was celebrated in a plaque depicting a 49er football helmet.[20] The year 2001 saw the centennial of lawn bowling in Golden Gate Park, a favorite pastime of John McLaren's. A plaque of red begonias, grey-green succulents, and green Irish moss marked the event. When reconstruction of the Conservatory of Flowers was completed in September 2003, the east plaque was returned to a variation of the clock form, a gift of the locally based Fisher (Gap Clothing) Families. The new floral clock has cast concrete numerals that are raised above the grade.

A more recent installation commemorated the September, 27, 2008 reopening of the newly rebuilt California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. The subject of the plaque's design was the popular Swamp exhibit in the Steinhart Aquarium occupied by Claude, an albino American alligator. The Academy donated $5,000 for the construction of a plaque to proclaim the historic occasion attended by thousands.[21]

Today all the beds in front of the Conservatory are designed and tended by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's horticultural staff in Section 1 under the direction of the Golden Gate Park Superintendent. E

POSTSCRIPT

Technology entered the world of carpet bedding in 1998 when the English concern of Kernock Park Plants introduced an ingenious modular method of gardening coined InstaPlant. The method uses computer aided design to lay out and count the number of plants required in a design. A very complicated design can be achieved with this system, which treats each plant as if it is a digital pixel. The design is laid out in squares and shallow trays of the same size are pre- planted with the desired specimens. The modular trays are then installed at the site in a matter of hours rather than the weeks of on-site work usually required to hand-plant a carpet bedding scheme.

June 15, 2018

About the Author:

Christopher Pollock has authored two publications about Golden Gate Park to date: San Francisco's Golden Gate Park: A Thousand and Seventeen Acres of Stories (Graphic Arts/Westwinds, 2001), which is a hybrid history and tour guide of the park's many features. (A new and enlarged version is in process and will be released by Norfolk Press in 2020 for the park's 150th anniversary.) This was followed by Golden Gate Park: San Francisco's Urban Oasis (Arcadia, 2003), a publication of historic postcard illustrations. Another publication, Reel San Francisco Stories: An Annotated Filmography of the Bay Area was published in 2013, concerning some 650 movies filmed in the Bay Area since the beginning of talkies.

He is a frequent speaker and tour guide to local and visiting groups. He has appeared on television and been heard on radio and in podcasts.

Chris started his career as a designer specializing in interior architecture. He changed gears to focus on historic preservation, specializing in historic research and in 2016 he was tapped by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department to be their historian-in-residence for all of the city and county's parks. With this, Chris will bring a layer of history to the department's many holdings. A native of Connecticut, Chris has resided in San Francisco since 1979.

Endnotes

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6. "Bright Bunting" San Francisco Chronicle, August 1, 1886, p. 3.

7. "A Winter Contrast" San Francisco Chronicle, December 14, 1885, p. 3.

8. "Golden Gate Park" San Francisco Chronicle, January 30, 1887, p. 3.

9. California Horticultural Journal "Conservatory Valley Floral Plaque and Floral Clock in Golden Gate Park" John McKelvey, January 1968, p. 24.

10. "A Big Sun-Dial" San Francisco Call, June 14, 1891, p. 6.

11. "Park Portola Floral Picture" The Richmond Banner, October 8, 1909.

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13. Park Department, Board of Commissioners, meeting minutes, September 23, 1937, p. 111.

14. Park Department, Board of Commissioners, meeting minutes, January 20, 1938, p. 19.

15. "Sydney Stein Rich: Forgotten Gardener in Golden Gate Park" The Argonaut, V. 13, N. 1, Fall 2002, p. 51.

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17. "San Francisco Says "Welcome" with Billboard of Flowers" Popular Mechanics, March, 1959, p. 128.

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Ruth Shellhorn's Garden FOR Dorothy & Norman Chandler

By KELLY COMRAS

On July 16, 1955, landscape architect Ruth Shellhorn pulled out of the parking lot of Disneyland at 7pm. Covered in dust from head to toe, she was heading home from a four-month-long, seven-days-a week project working with Walt Disney and his elite design team. Her breakneck, next-to-impossible task had been to finish a pedestrian plan and landscape design before the theme park opened to the public the next morning.[1]

Just four months earlier, Shellhorn's friend and colleague, the architect Welton Becket, had responded to Disney's call for help on the already-under-construction theme park, recommending Shellhorn as the only landscape architect who could make the disparate elements of the park "hang together."[2] Becket's recommendation was not a casual confirmation. He and Shellhorn had first worked together on the award-winning Bullock's Pasadena department store. Constructed in 1947, Bullock's Pasadena was one of the very first suburban department store developments that explicitly acknowledged the automobile, and which won the pair design awards from their peers and accolades from the public.[3]

In 1952, Shellhorn and Becket undertook a renovation of the much-beloved Bullock's Wilshire department store near downtown Los Angeles (Parkinson and Parkinson, 1929). Their design for Bullock's Wilshire included a bold, reimagined landscape design with a gracious pedestrian access to accommodate Becket's new, double-deck parking facility at the back of the store. Shellhorn's subtle use of lush, richly-textured plant material, which came to be known as the "Southern California look," so appealed to Bullock's Wilshire patrons that management acknowledged Shellhorn's contribution with a bronze plaque at the entrance to the stairwell atrium.[4]

Previous spread: Rose garden adjacent to *porte cochere*, 1958. Photo by Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Opposite page: Ruth Shellhorn, *Los Angeles Times* Woman of the Year award, 1955. Photographer unknown. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Above: Walt Disney and Shellhorn in front of the Western train station, July 2, 1955. Photo by Harry Kueser. Courtesy the author.

Top: Bullock's Pasadena facing Lake Avenue, 1967. Photographer unknown. Courtesy the author.

Above: Patio in back garden, 1958. Photo by Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Right: Bullock's Wilshire, stairwell atrium garden, 1952. Photo by Douglas M. Simmonds. Courtesy the author.

Opposite page: "General Landscape Plan, May 4, 1956." Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

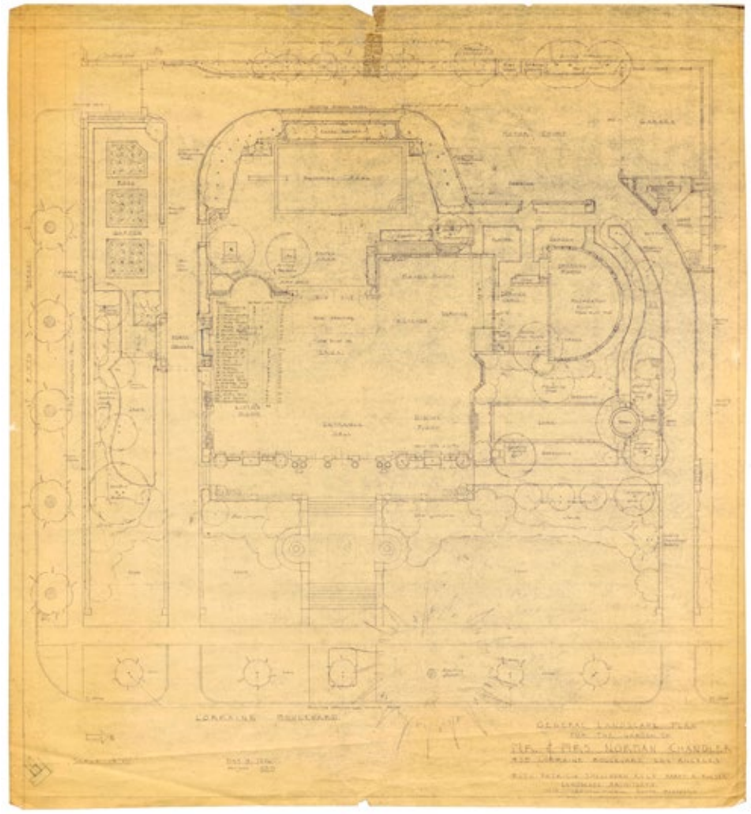
Dorothy Buffum Chandler, wife of The Los Angeles Times publisher Norman Chandler, spotted the plaque at Bullock's Wilshire in 1955 and made inquiries. Upon meeting, the two women immediately liked each other, and Chandler was intrigued with Shellhorn's exceptional education and dedication to her profession.[5] Upon learning of Shellhorn's work with Walt Disney and Welton Becket, Chandler nominated Shellhorn for one of the Los Angeles Times' coveted Woman of the Year awards. A powerhouse in her own right, Chandler was also serving as a regent for the University of California and was in the midst of raising millions of dollars to build a performing arts center in downtown Los Angeles.[6]

In early 1956, Chandler and her husband purchased a mansion at 455 South Lorraine Boulevard in Hancock Park, a fashionable neighborhood in central Los Angeles. When it was built in 1913, the mansion was originally intended to be part of a compound planned by the Janss family[7] to be situated between Lorraine Boulevard on the east and Windsor Boulevard on the west. Houses were to be constructed for two brothers, Harold Janss and Dr. Edwin Janss; their father, Dr. Peter Janss; and a son-in-law of Peter Janss, Harold H. Braly, one of the Janss Investment Company partners. Historian Steve Vaught explains:

"The property (6 lots) was purchased in 1911 for $67,000 with plans for the mansions to run about $35,000 each. They even later purchased a seventh lot solely for their garages and other ancillary structures so as not to mar their lawns with such things. In the center, between the four mansions was to be a truly exclusive "private park" where the Jansses could have dances. All four of the Janss mansions were to be designed by the same architect, the well-known Los Angeles architect J. Martyn Haencke, in compatible yet not identical "Renaissance" styles."

The first mansion was completed for Edwin in January of 1913. The second, completed for Peter also in 1913, was the Beaux-Arts mansion purchased by the Chandlers in 1956. (The remaining two estates were not constructed as planned and the properties were later sold.)[8] After Peter Janss sold 455 South Lorraine in 1917, the property went through several ownerships until it was purchased by the actor, Lewis Stone, who played Judge Hardy on MGM's *Andy Hardy* series in the 1930s. He died of a heart attack in front of the house in the fall of 1953 after chasing away teenage vandals who had thrown patio furniture into the swimming pool.[9] Stone's widow stayed on, allowing the house and garden to deteriorate.

Because the property was in deplorable condition when the Chandlers took possession in 1956, they began an extensive restoration and commissioned Shellhorn to create



a landscape design for the nearly one-acre estate, which was renamed Los Tiempos (The Times).[10] During their initial interview, Shellhorn took notes as Dorothy Chandler laid out the broad strokes of the garden she envisioned. Flexibility was a key requirement. In her role as a UC Regent and fundraiser for the music center, Chandler wanted to use the garden for entertaining large groups of people, but she and her husband also relaxed at home with a steady stream of close friends. These included UCLA Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy, and Broadway department store magnate Edward Carter,[11] and she anticipated more intimate gatherings in a garden setting that avoided monumental gestures. Chandler also wanted an extensive cutting garden of roses, and a workspace for potting and composting. The feeling of the garden spaces and how color would be used were important considerations. Chandler asked for a gracious flow of space and the use of soft colors, focusing on a range of pinks and blues. Views into the garden from the music room and the dining room were of special importance.

The Chandler's two-story mansion was located on a corner lot with Fifth Street to the south and was set amidst a garden that was asymmetrical in layout with a variety of defined activity areas. The front entrance, facing Lorraine Boulevard on the east, featured two tiers of broad steps that led up to a porch running along the full length of the front of the house. The left side of the porch stepped down to the driveway, and the right side of the porch stepped down to the north garden. Double front doors opened into an entrance hall. From inside the dining area where the view to the garden extended to the north side of the property, Shellhorn specified the formal gesture of a long panel of lawn, which terminated at a circular fountain backed by an ornamental grille. The transparency of the grille shielded the driveway behind it, but gave a sense of depth and roominess to the otherwise enclosed area.

A plentiful amount of water for irrigation was cheap and readily available in 1956. Shellhorn's conception of the garden as "Mediterranean" thus relied less upon the unthirsty characteristics of the plant material that she retained and selected and more on a casual indoor-outdoor style of California living. She found existing plantings were either sparse

or overgrown and the garden tired looking; it appeared cut into tiny spaces with boxwood hedges around each of the planting areas. Shellhorn preserved a mature deodar cedar tree and five windmill palms on the front parkway and additional trees on the property, including eugenia, orchid, flowering crab, crepe myrtle, plum, Mediterranean fan palm, magnolia, jacaranda, and cherry, as well as shrubs of pittosporum, camellia, and oleander.[12]

An existing driveway made a complete, one-way "U" along the perimeter of the property, with an entrance from Lorraine that ran parallel to Fifth Street. Shellhorn used a crisply trimmed hedge of eugenia to delineate the property line along the first leg of the "U" driveway.". The driveway continued past a wide border that Shellhorn planted in lawn with well-shaped trees of arbutus and Chinese magnolia in the background, setting a tone of spaciousness. The driveway proceeded under a *porte cochere* where guests exited their chauffeured cars and entered the house through the music room. The view from the music room was through a half circle bay window that afforded an important first impression of the back garden on the west side of the property. Access to the back garden was through an enclosed glass-walled porch and a paved patio. Shellhorn had the existing pool completely renovated and paid particular attention to the surrounding stonework. After conducting an exhaustive search for a stone color that would work well with the green tones of the pool water, she found a subtle mint green Arizona conglomerate stone and ordered cast stone coping for the fountain, the frame around the grille and the grille wall, three sections of wall in the back garden, the planter behind the pool, and edging along the driveway.

Just past the *porte cochere*, Shellhorn replaced a badminton court with a densely-packed rose garden, painstakingly laid out so as to distribute colors of pink, apricot, yellow and white roses in a seemingly random pattern. The driveway continued to the back of the property, which was shielded from the garden by hedges of pittosporum and eugenia, made a right turn toward an existing motor court, garage, and incinerator in the northwest corner. Shellhorn added a workspace for potting and composting. The driveway then turned right from this corner to run along the north border of the property, approaching a circle of newly planted flowering cherry and crabapple trees surrounding a separate building called "The Pub," which Chandler used as her fundraising headquarters for the Los Angeles Music Center.[13] The driveway completed its "U" shaped form by exiting onto Lorraine Boulevard.

Shellhorn commissioned a "nocturnal illumination" plan from Rudolf Wendel to simulate the effect of moonlight bathing the lawn, trees, and plantings in a natural setting. It demonstrated an understanding of Shellhorn's textural compositions by highlighting important plantings with "a play of light and shadow"; shrubs behind the ornamental grille, for example, were "illuminated so that the grille work appears in shadow, filtering the light of the shrubs through it." Wendel's plan also suggested that the eugenia hedge beyond the swimming pool be bathed in moonlight so that the pool would not appear as a dark mass if the spray light were turned off.[14]

POST SCRIPT

Chandler and Shellhorn developed a long-lasting friendship during the building of this garden. Until meeting Dorothy Chandler, Shellhorn had primarily relied on the introductions and connections of the male businessmen and designers who admired and supported her work, such as Walt Disney and Welton Becket. Chandler became a powerful female champion for Shellhorn, introducing her to an elite group of wealthy, powerful women throughout the Los Angeles area who gave Shellhorn many commissions.[15] Chandler also intervened as a UC Regent to ensure Shellhorn's appointment as Consulting Landscape Architect for the University of California, Riverside campus in 1956, where she completed a campus-wide landscape master plan.[16]

Norman Chandler died in 1973. After Dorothy Chandler passed in 1997, Los Tiempos was sold. The estate was declared a city of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in 2006. Recent real estate photographs show that the south and west driveway, and the rose garden, have been removed to expand the garden; the *porte cochere* now functions as a small patio; and paved areas in the back garden have been replaced with lawn.[17] Many of Shellhorn's trees, as well as some garden areas, remain.

Opposite page, top to bottom:

A panel of lawn led views from the Chandler dining room to a fountain and ornamental grille set into the north wall, 1958. Photo by Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

The pool planter featured an array of colorful flowering shrubs in front of a eugenia hedge, 1958. Photo by Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Endnotes

1. Shellhorn diaries, box 356, Ruth Patricia Shellhorn Papers (Collection 1757), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA (RSP).

2. Pasadena Heritage Oral History Project, "Interview with Ruth Patricia Shellhorn," conducted by Molly Johnson (Pasadena: Pasadena Oral History Project, 2002), 62; Shellhorn's interview with author, November 17, 2004.

3. Bullock's Pasadena was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

4. Kelly Comras, Ruth Shellhorn, (Athens: University of Georgia Press and Amherst: Library of American Landscape History, 2016), 5.

5. Comras, Ruth Shellhorn, 3-66.

6. Marshall Berges, The Life and Times of Los Angeles, New York, Athenaeum, 1984, 66-73; and The Music Center Story: A Decade of Achievement, 1964-1974, a commemorative booklet edited by James W. Toland, 119.

7. The Janss family had enormous influence over the development of twentieth century real estate in Los Angeles, including UCLA, Westwood, and Thousand Oaks.

8. The compound idea with the second two mansions was never fully realized. Rumors about the original architect(s) have circulated widely, including one that attributes architect Haencke's work to Julia Morgan and/or William Dodd. But Steven Vaught's research refutes this notion and his analysis appears the most trustworthy at this point. See his blog post and comments in https://paradiseleased.wordpress.com/2012/04/25/my-two-cents-worth-on-an-11250000-mansion/. Also see author's correspondence with landscape historian Steven Keylon. Both Southwest Builder and Contractor, November 2, 1912 and Building and Industrial News, July 2, 1913 only list J. Martyn Haenke as architect. The confusion may be due to a later listing, found in Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer Vol. 11, p. 15, October 25, 1913, which lists architects J. M. Haenke and W.J. Dodd as the preparer of plans for a 2-story frame and plaster garage at the same address.

9. Steve Vaught, blog post and comments.

10. Architect J. Martyn Haenke designed the mansion. Historian Steven Vaught compellingly refutes the rumor that Julia Morgan and/or William Dodd participated in the design, https://paradiseleased.wordpress.com/2012/04/25/my-two-cents-worth-on-an-11250000-mansion/.

11. Margaret Leslie Davis, The Culture Broker: Franklin D. Murphy and the Transformation of Los Angeles, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 2007), 31-34, 105. Carter, also a UC Regent, commissioned Shellhorn for a landscape design in 1956 and for his Bel-Air garden in the 1960s, Shellhorn's project index, 1935-1988, box 361, RSP.

12. Shellhorn's interview with the author, November 29, 2004.

13. Toland, The Music Center Story, 119.

14. Shellhorn's client files, box 12, RSP.

15. Kelly Comras, "Ruth Patricia Shellhorn: Mid-century living in the Southern California Landscape," in Women, Modernity and Landscape Architecture, ed. Sonja Dümpelmann and John Beardsley (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 166-167, 178-181.

16. Shellhorn, "Landscaping," George Vernon Russell F.A.I.A. & Associates, Long Range Development Plan, University of California, Riverside, May 1964, 12-17.

17. http://la.curbed.com/archives/2012/04/mindbogglingly_pedigreed_chandler_house_hits_the_market.php.

“Living with Nature”

CGLHS 2018 Conference in Marin County

BY CHRISTY O’HARA, CGLHS PRESIDENT

Our annual conference entitled “Living with Nature: The Settlement and Protection of the Marin County Landscape” was held the weekend of November 3-4 in the beautiful and lush setting of the Marin Art & Garden Center. The event was well-attended with over 60 registrants from all over the state. Conference convener Antonia Adezio enlisted seven speakers including Carol Roland-Nawi, former State Historic Preservation Officer; Julianna Polanco, current State Historic Preservation Officer; Marlea Graham, landscape historian and founder of CGLHS; J.C. Miller, landscape architect and historian; Nona Dennis, retired environmental planner; Robert Berner, executive director of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust; and Fran Cappelletti, librarian of the Moya Library/Ross Historical Society. Lecture topics focused on the central leaders, who over the course of 50 years helped preserve natural and cultural resources in Marin—from forests to farmhand—with a landscape that stands in sharp contrast to the nearby dense urban landscape of San Francisco. As has been historically true in America, many of these preservation leaders were women. Since so many of our members enjoy talks on the designed landscape, lectures also included the regional work of landscape architects Robert Royston and Helen Dupuy Van Pelt. Tours are always a special feature of our conferences, so visits to three private gardens, each associated with a historic home, provided views of a range of design responses, from formal and modern, to personal expressions.

Another highlight of the conference was a special Saturday night dinner at the historic Lagunitas Country Club in Ross. Nestled in the redwoods, this site served loggers and hikers in the 19th century before the 1908 clubhouse was built. Designed by architect John White, partner of Bernard Maybeck, the rustic but elegant wood structure blends into the natural wooded landscape. Drinks under the tree canopies were followed by a dinner, with lively discussions at each table. I would like to thank board member and MAGC executive director Antonia Adezio as well as her staff for the outstanding conference. It not only brought our group together, but it was a fascinating education on the history of Marin.

Clockwise from opposite top left: Cocktails under the redwoods at the Lagunitas Club; two of the three gardens on the Sunday tour; a cozy dinner at the Lagunitas Club; landscape architect JC Miller lecturing on landscape architect Robert Royston. Photos by Steven Keylon.

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Address Correction and Forwarding Requested

Front Cover: Perkins Park from *National Geographic* magazine article "California's Wonderful One," November 1959. Photo by B. Anthony Stewart.

Back Cover: The pool planter in the Chandler garden featured an array of colorful flowering shrubs in front of a *Eugenia* hedge, 1958. Photo by Ruth Shellhorn. Courtesy Ruth Shellhorn papers (Collection 1757), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.