

PANORAMA



JULY–SEPTEMBER 2022 VOL. 34, NO. 3

The Russian River: San Francisco's Summer Paradise

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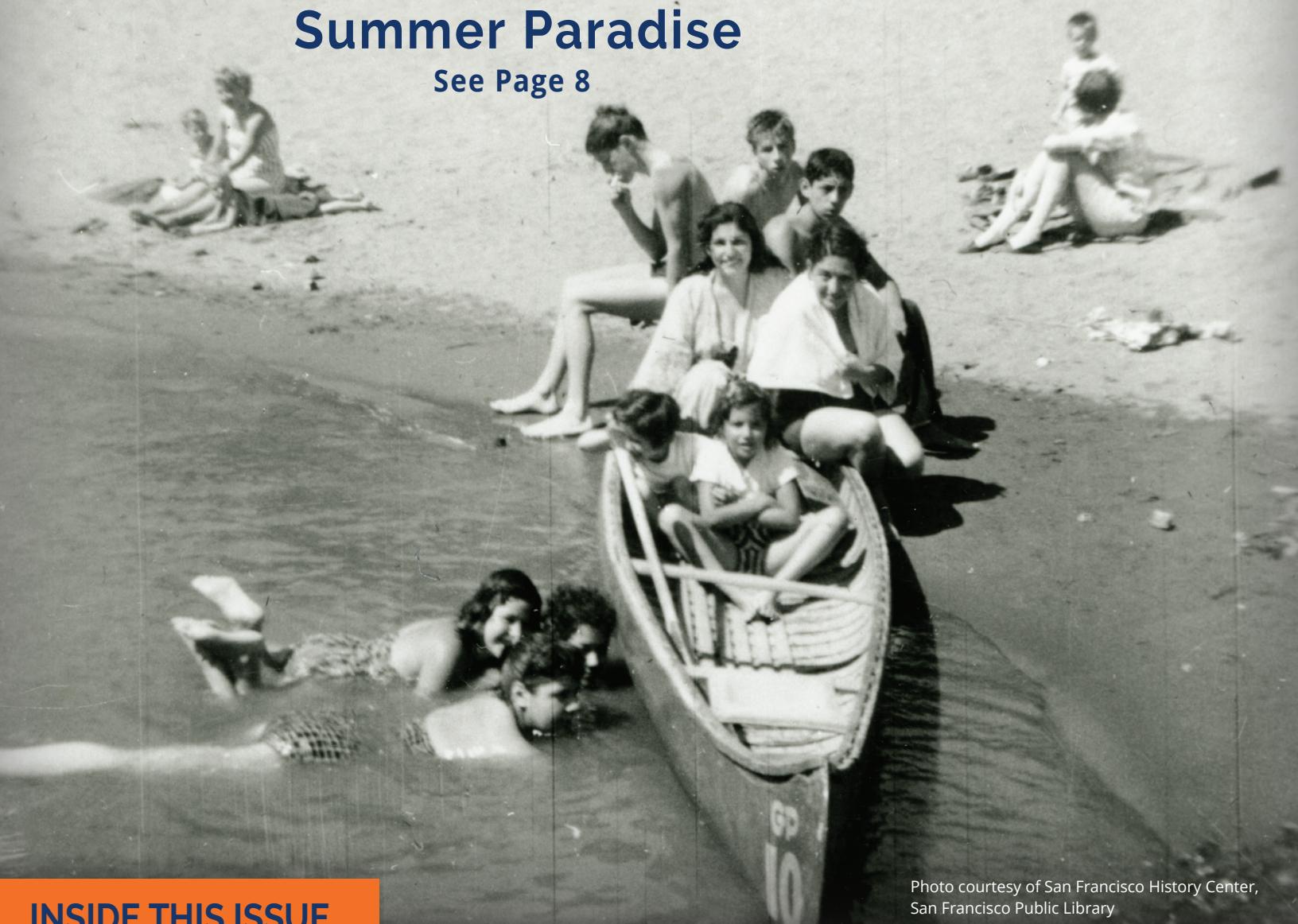


Photo courtesy of San Francisco History Center,
San Francisco Public Library

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THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGE: Stories of Resilience

What challenges has our city faced over time? How has San Francisco rebuilt stronger, better, and more beautiful?

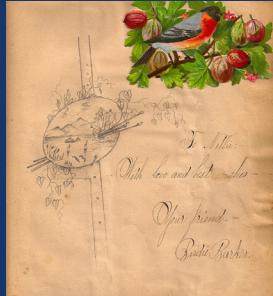
Since its earliest days San Francisco has been ravaged by disasters—fire, earthquakes, and disease. The 2022 Fracchia Prize invites you to learn more about these challenges and how our city has overcome them through resilience, courage, and creativity.

You may submit a written entry or a multimedia presentation. It requires a minimum of 10 pages.

First Place: \$2,500
Second Place: \$1,500
Third Place: \$1,000

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Message from the President



Thomas R. Owens, President
Chairman, Board of Directors

First, I'd like to express my gratitude to all of you who have supported our *Spring Forward* fundraising campaign. The Kevin O'Brien Musical Variety Show at Bimbo's 365 Club was a smashing success. More than 200 people showed up to dance, drink, and dine the night away in San Francisco's most iconic nightclub. (See page 15 for photos of the event.) Many of you responded to the spring appeal letter with generous donations. And the second annual Phoenix Rising online auction, held in June, was also a success.

These funds are already being put to good use. We've installed a retractable theater screen and a new sound system in the main gallery, allowing for professional presentations and movie nights. We're hiring a volunteer coordinator to manage our ever-growing number of volunteer tour guides. Thanks to a generous donation of artifacts from Union Bank, we're expanding our museum exhibits to include original paintings of San Francisco's maritime past, a collection of panoramic photographs, and other unique treasures from the city's past. To protect it all, we're implementing a major security upgrade for the museum at 608, including new security cameras, motion detectors, keyless entries, and shatterproof glass in the

downstairs vault display. These upgrades will increase our ability to securely host a variety of exhibits.

I'm also pleased to announce a partnership with the Victorian Alliance. Victorian Alliance has made a generous donation to SFHS for an all-new education initiative that supports the missions of both organizations. This summer SFHS will offer our first art workshop for middle school students: "Art and Architecture of the Victorian." We've recruited a professional art teacher to plan the curriculum, lead the workshop, and lay the foundation for future workshops.

Students will learn about the origins of our Victorian houses, how to recognize different kinds of Victorians, and how Victorians have been adapted over time to meet the changing needs of their inhabitants. Students will also learn a bit about color theory and use the color wheel to help them design and implement a color scheme for their own Victorian, using Kit Haskell's inventive coloring book *Authentic San Francisco Victorian Homes*.

And there's more. Check out the upcoming walking tours, monthly programs, and special events listed in this issue of *Panorama* and mark your calendars. We hope you'll make SFHS a part of your summer.

With Gratitude,

Thomas R. Owens

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEWEST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBER



Richard L. Corriea

Richard Corriea is a fourth-generation San Franciscan and a former San Francisco Police Department Commander. He attended San Francisco State University, and earned his Juris Doctorate and Master's in

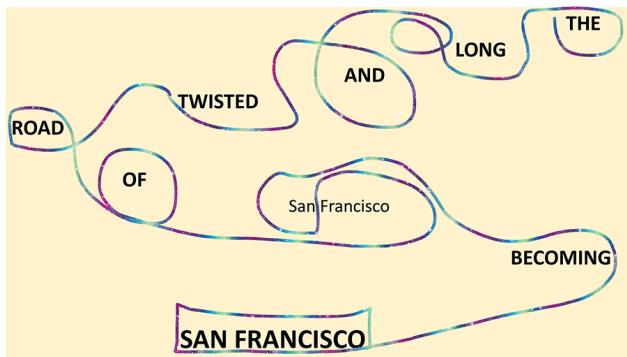
Business Administration at Golden Gate University. He is an adjunct professor at University of San Francisco's School of Management and a USF Fromm Institute Lecturer. He also serves as Director of the University's Institute of Criminal Justice Leadership.

Corriea's family has a long history of public service in San Francisco. His great grandfather was an SFPD sergeant before the 1906 earthquake and fire, and relatives including his great-uncles, father, sister and cousins have served the city in public safety capacities since that time.

During a thirty-five career in public safety Corriea has held a wide variety of positions, including, commanding the SFPD's Metro Division, where his span of responsibility included five district stations and over 600 personnel. Prior to his appointment to commander he headed up the Police Academy, commanded a District Police Station, and managed security operations at the SF International Airport and the Municipal Railway. He's recognized as a police practices expert with broad experience in investigations, patrol, crowd management and police administration.

Monthly Meetings – In-Person and on Zoom

NOTE: There is no meeting in August 2022.



The Long and Twisted Road of How San Francisco Became San Francisco

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 6:30 PM

San Francisco Historical Society Museum
608 Commercial Street

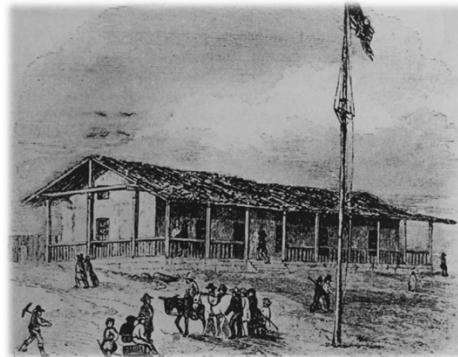
Angus Macfarlane

The settlement and development of the San Francisco Bay Area has a long and complicated history, featuring numerous conflicting claims between Native Americans, Spanish, and Mexican settlers, American and European immigrants, as well as the governments of the United States, Russia, and Great Britain. With wit and wisdom, Angus Macfarlane will simplify the complex story that resulted in a transition from the tiny Pueblo of Yerba Buena, through the Van Ness Ordinance of 1856 to bring legal order and taxing structure to the previous chaos.

The only thing that Angus Macfarlane enjoys more than studying San Francisco's arcane, abstruse, and forgotten history is sharing these treasures with the world. This is one of his deep dives, and his revelations will impress you. Angus has spoken at SFHS meetings in the past and written articles published in *The Argonaut*. He is researching the history of the Haight-Ashbury prior to the 1967 Summer of Love.



SFHS monthly programs are held in the SFHS Museum at 608 Commercial Street and are live streamed on our YouTube channel. To access our YouTube channel, go to sfhistory.org/events. In-person participants must pre-register at sfhistory.org/events and are free to members.



Yerba Buena Cove: A History of Smuggling

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 6:30 PM

San Francisco Historical Society Museum
608 Commercial Street

Carlina Ospina

During Spanish-California and Mexican-California, Yerba Buena Cove was a well-known secret for smugglers. Before the town of Yerba Buena was established, smugglers knew to anchor their ships in San Francisco Bay to trade/sell all kinds of merchandise, including clothing, fabric, jewelry, alcohol, food, musical instruments, furniture—anything Californios wanted or needed from around the world. Carlina will tell us why so many ships came to Yerba Buena Cove when Monterey was the official port of entry. Discover who was involved in smuggling, how this smuggling started, and curious stories about the smuggling trade.

Carlina is a Bay Area native, a San Francisco history enthusiast, and an overall California Gold Rush fan. While bartending at a Financial District hotel during the dot-com boom, she saw similarities between the Gold Rush boom of 1849 and the tech boom of 1999, prompting her to research San Francisco's early history. Her monthly podcast, "Monkey Block San Francisco's Golden History," focuses on early San Francisco history. Visit monkeyblocksf.buzzsprout.com.

Non-member fee is \$10, which can be applied to a new membership within 30 days. Doors open about 5:45 PM, and the program begins at 6:30. These programs are scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month (except August and December). Programs are subject to change, so please check the website for updates. Note: There is no meeting in August.

San Francisco Historical Society Walking Tours

Barbary Coast Trail Tours

Our three revamped Barbary Coast Trail walking tours begin at the SFHS Museum, 608 Commercial Street. These walks explore "ground zero" of early San Francisco. Each tour is scheduled one time per month, July through September. ("Wall Street of the West," "Gold Rush and Sunken Ships," and "Barbary Coast and Jackson Square" are scheduled for July and August only.)

Barbary Coast Trail tours are free for members and \$20 for non-members. Walkers 13 and under are free. You must register in advance. To register, call 415.537.1105, ext. 6 or register online at sfhistory.org/events. Tour length is approximately 90 minutes. The maximum number of attendees is 15. In case of rain, tour will be rescheduled.

Secrets and Stories of San Francisco's "Wall Street of the West"

Travel back in time to discover the stories and significance of the companies and people whose names adorn Financial District buildings. In addition to Silver Kings, the Big Four, and renowned bankers, this tour will introduce you to many others who "mined the miners" to create wealth beyond any normal imaginations.

Tour Dates, Times, and Guides:

(Both tours led by Thom Jackson)

- Friday, July 8 at 11 AM
- Friday, August 5 at 11 AM

Gold Rush & Sunken Ships

Experience how San Francisco went from a trading village to a metropolis. You'll learn about the hidden remains of sunken ships and artifacts from the Gold Rush.

Tour Dates, Times, and Guides:

(Both tours led by Thom Jackson)

- Saturday, July 9 at 11 AM
- Saturday, August 13 at 11 AM

Barbary Coast & Jackson Square: Pleasure Seekers and Merry Makers

Explore the beginnings of the "anything goes" city through its culture, food, and vice. Is it so different today? Discover how the City by the Bay reflects its glorious past and continues as a trend-setting urban playground.

Tour Dates, Times, and Guides:

(Both tours led by Carolyn Moniz)

- Saturday, July 9 at 11 AM
- Saturday, August 13 at 11 AM

Gold Rush Walks for Kids

Our trained guides offer free walking tours for elementary school children focused on the Gold Rush. This walk directly addresses grade 4 social studies standards, but students in grades 3–6 are welcome to attend. Please call 415.537.1105, Ext. 6, for more details.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WALKING TOURS!

Like our Barbary Coast Trail tours, the following walks are free for members and \$20 for non-members. Walkers 13 and under are free. You must register in advance.

Fisherman's Wharf: A Fishing Heritage and Tourist Mecca

Join us for an exploration of Fisherman's Wharf, the most popular free attraction in San Francisco, to discover how commercial fishing coexists with the modern tourist Mecca. Learn how Native Americans, Chinese, Italians, whaling sea captains, and sport fishermen all have harvested seafood from the waters of San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Starting at the Musée Mécanique at Pier 45, we will walk to the Maritime Museum at Aquatic Park, a flat, under-two-hour stroll. Along the way, you'll hear stories about World War II ships, a San Francisco theatrical production called The Cable Car Nymphomaniac, and the crisis that "broke the mold" for Irish coffee glasses.

Tour Dates, Times, and Guides:

- Saturday, July 16 at 11 AM, led by Maggie Bening
- Saturday, July 30 at 11 AM, led by Corrie Conklin
- Saturday, August 27 at 11 AM, led by Maggie Bening
- Saturday, September 17 at 11 AM, led by Corrie Conklin
- Saturday, September 24 at 11 AM, led by Maggie Bening



1906 Earthquake and Fire: Chinatown's Devastation and Renewal

Before dawn on April 18, 1906, the San Andreas Fault ruptured, sending shock waves racing across San Francisco. The city was abruptly wakened to witness a firestorm that would last three days and destroy almost everything within sight. Vibrant and densely populated Chinatown was swiftly engulfed by a raging fire on Day One, its inhabitants dispersed like embers in the wind. With Chinatown destroyed, city politicians and power brokers decided that this was an opportune time to relocate the Chinese community. Powered by an irrepressible resilience, the Chinese community reimagined Chinatown and built it back better.

Tour Dates, Times, and Guides:

(All tours led by Jack Grippi)

- Saturday, July 16 at 11 AM
- Saturday, August 6 at 11 AM
- Saturday, September 3 at 11 AM



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Seeing the Elephant

Below is a partial listing of exhibitions and events offered in San Francisco by other history organizations.

Additional events may appear under Events on our website: sfhistory.org.

SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The San Francisco History Association's monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month at 7 PM (except December). To register for the online program, email info@sanfranciscohistory.org. In-person meetings are held at Sherith Israel, at the corner of California and Webster Streets.

History of Jazz in the Fillmore

Tuesday, August 30, 7 PM

Cory Combs

Projecting San Francisco History in Public Space

Tuesday, September 27, 7 PM

Ben Wood (benwoodstudio.com)



CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For more information about either of these programs, visit californiahistoricalsociety.org

Elaine Black Yoneda

July 26, 5:30 PM: Webinar Program

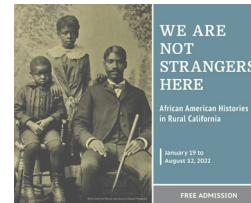
Rachel Schreiber discusses her new book, *Elaine Black Yoneda: Jewish Immigration, Labor Activism, and Japanese American Exclusion and Incarceration* (Temple University Press, 2021). Elaine Yoneda, daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants to the United States, spent eight months in a WWII concentration camp—not in Europe, but in California. She insisted on accompanying her Japanese American husband, Karl Yoneda, and their son Tommy when they were required to go to Manzanar. Don't miss this intriguing story.

CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PIONEERS

Exhibit through August 12

101 Montgomery Street, Suite 150, The Presidio

Visit californiapioneers.org for dates and times.



We Are Not Strangers Here: African American Histories in Rural California

This touring exhibition features rarely seen artifacts from archives across California highlighting the untold stories of African American pioneers, challenges widely held misconceptions, and builds understanding of the diverse experiences of early Californians.

SFHS CONTRIBUTIONS: JANUARY 1-MAY 31, 2022

We gratefully acknowledge all contributions received between January 1, 2022, and May 31, 2022. Gifts totaling \$150 or greater are presented here. We apologize for any errors or omissions and thank you in advance for bringing them to our attention.

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT	Kevin Pursglove Donald Reid \$5,000 - \$9,999 John Briscoe Douglas Donnellan Christina Giguere John Horton Jack M. Lapidos James Marchetti Sonja Moelleken Thomas R. Owens Fred Ruhland Thomas W. La Tour Cornelis T. Van Aalst \$2,000 - \$4,999 Barry Baker Joseph Barkett David Berelson Thomas Culligan Diane Gibson Thomas Gille	Henry Loubet Bruce M. Lubarsky Edith Piness Kenneth Sproul Michael Walker \$1,000 - \$1,999 Gregory Brooks Willie Brown Mark Buell Alfred Chiantelli Trey Curtola Troy Daniels Peter & Deanna Gumina Tom Hunt Richard S. E. Johns Steven Kay Paul Mustone James E. O'Donnell James R. Osborn Nancy Osborne David Parry Tina Riehl	Joanna Robertson Susan Saltgaver Mark Scheuer Pamela A. Tudor Brendan Walsh \$500 - \$999 Mary K. Austin Gregory P. Bilte William Blair Richard L. Corriea Marc Corsi Michael Dechert Peter Dwares John Feeley David Fleishacker Liz Fracchia Thomas Gilleran James W. Haas Kenneth Hagan Mark Hoose Alida Morzenti Amy Quirk Edward Reidy	Joshua Robison Michael & Susan Rocco Cynthia Schroeder Everett Snowden Greg Suhr Paul Toneli Andrew Venturi \$250 - \$499 Norman Bouton Greg & Alma Brown Rachel and Mark Clinnick-Barbagelata Karen Corday Richard DeLeon Edwin C. Fichtner Noah Griffin Douglas Hanlin & Kelvin Lynch Mary Ishisaki Barton Lane James Lazarus Donald MacLean	Janet Tara Morcom Christopher Paz Susan Stone Andrew Williams III \$150 - \$249 Milt Axt Robert Bardell Gregory Brown C. Alger Ciabattoni Kathleen & Kevin Cole Nick Ferris James Gleeson Leora Goren Alder Hockett Dora Huey Amy Palmer Karen Pollak David Retz William Rutland Peter Straus Carol Walker
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ANNOUNCING A SPECIAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN

San Francisco Historical Society and The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco



Anita Denz, representing The Victorian Alliance, presented a giant-size check to SFHS Director of Publications and Education Lana Costantini at the Bimbo's Musical Variety Show.

We are pleased to announce that this summer SFHS will be offering an all-new summer arts workshop for middle school students. "Living Colors: The Art and Architecture of San Francisco's Victorians" is a two-week workshop designed to teach young people about the history of San Francisco's most treasured architectural style—the Victorian. Over the course of the workshop, students will learn about the history of Victorians, the various styles of Victorian houses, and the terms we use to identify their features. Students will select a particular style of Victorian home, design a color scheme, and create their own painted lady.

The workshop, which will be taught by veteran art teacher Angela Baker, will take place at the SFHS Museum at 608 Commercial Street. Students will have also one field trip day to explore the painted ladies of Alamo Square and visit the Westerfeld House, a splendid restored Victorian owned by Jim Seigel. This workshop has been generously funded by The Victorian Alliance. If you know a middle school student (any student entering grade 6, 7, or 8) who might enjoy the workshop, please call Lana Costantini at 415.305.2838, or email her at lana@sfhistory.org.

Announcing the Fourth Annual Fracchia Prize for Original Research about San Francisco History

THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGE:
Stories of Resilience

- What monumental challenges has our city faced over time?
- How has San Francisco rebuilt itself stronger, better, and more beautiful?

Since its earliest days San Francisco has been ravaged by disasters—fires, earthquakes, pandemics, social unrest, and human tragedy. The 2022 Fracchia Prize invites you to learn more about these challenges and how our city has overcome them through resilience, courage, and creativity.

You may submit a written essay or a multimedia presentation in response to the prompt.

First Place: \$2,500
Second Place: \$1,500
Third Place: \$1,000

This event is sponsored by the San Francisco Historical Society in partnership with San Francisco City Guides. The program is moderated by Mayor London Breed. All San Francisco City Guides participants are invited to attend. Ask your history or English teacher for more information, or visit sfhistory.org/fracchia-prize for details. A brief Q&A possible Q&A is included.

SAN FRANCISCO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SAN FRANCISCO CITY GUIDES

WORKSHOP DATES

Week of July 10

- Tuesday, July 12: Workshop at 608 Commercial, 10 AM–1 PM
- Thursday, July 14: Workshop at 608 Commercial, 10 AM–1 PM
- Saturday, July 16: Field Trip, 1–4 PM
 - The Painted Ladies of Alamo Square
 - Visit to the Westerfeld House (1198 Fulton Street) with owner and special host James Seigel

Week of July 17

- Tuesday, July 19: Workshop at 608 Commercial, 10 AM–1 PM
- Thursday, July 21: Workshop at 608 Commercial, 10 AM–1 PM

SAVE THE DATE

Valuation Day with Appraisers from CLARS Auction House

Bring your treasures to 608 Commerce Street and find out what they're worth!

September 21, 10 AM–2 PM



Announcing the 2022 Fracchia Prize Contest!

We are planning to launch the fourth annual Fracchia Prize competition for San Francisco High School students in September. This year's topic is San Francisco's resilience in the face of challenge and disaster.

We would like to thank SF City Guides and Ray Lent for their ongoing support of the Fracchia Prize.



Photo courtesy of San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

The Russian River: San Francisco's Summer Paradise

by Lana Costantini

What's 110 miles long, the color of old jade, and an ancient spawning ground for native steelhead trout? Where could you find dance halls, roller rinks, big bands, and water carnivals—all under the shade of mighty redwoods—in the 1920s? Of course, the answer is "The Russian River," or simply "The River" to those who know and love it.

"The River" refers specifically to the meandering, shaded lower portion of California's Russian River, the part that flows past sandy beaches and rustic resort towns from Mirabel to Jenner-by-the-Sea, where the river meets the great Pacific. Less than a two-hour drive from San Francisco, this iconic hideaway has been the city's summer paradise for more than 100 years. "The River" is more than just a nostalgic haven for swimming, canoeing, camping, fishing, and playful shenanigans. It is a region with deep ties to San Francisco's history, industry, economy, and culture.

Early Residents

The first people to occupy what we know today as the Russian River were the Pomo People. They called the river *Shabaikai* ("long snake"). The Pomo were stewards of the fertile valleys and forests for tens of thousands of years. They inhabited temporary camps near the river during summer but preferred higher, sunnier grounds for most of the year. (Compare this wisdom with that of eager summer vacationers who arrived in the 1930s and built permanent cabins and resorts directly in the floodplain.)

The Russians were the first whites to explore the Russian River (1812–1841). They called it *Slavianka* (“pretty little girl”). The Russians are known for their establishment of Fort Ross north of Jenner (and for their hunting of the California sea otter to near extinction). But they also operated three inland farms, one near the present-day town of Graton.

These farms grew wheat for Russia’s far-flung Alaskan colonies, as well as fruits and vegetables to sustain the local Russian settlements. To their credit, Russian naturalists explored the Russian River Valley extensively, meticulously collecting flora and fauna, accurately sketching the native peoples, and collecting exquisite Pomo baskets and other native artifacts that would likely have otherwise been lost to time. The greatest collection of Pomo basketry in the world is in St. Petersburg.

But the Russians proved hapless as settlers, their colony lasting just over 20 years. They finally gave up and sold their land to John Sutter (who by some accounts never paid them for it). The Russians packed up and left in 1841. By that time, other European settlers had arrived. The Mexicans, alarmed by the Russians’ presence in Sonoma County, had strategically extended their settlements north of San Francisco, hoping to prevent the Russians from further inland expansion.

The northernmost Mexican land grant was El Molino Rancho, near today’s town of Forestville. El Molino (“The Mill”) was located near the confluence of the Russian River and Mark West Creek. In the early 1800s, sea Captain John Bautista Cooper married General Mariano Vallejo’s sister, Encarnacion, and in 1833 the couple acquired the land. (A sign visible from Highway 116 just south of Forestville marks the location of El Molino Rancho.) In 1836 Captain Cooper built a commercial sawmill at El Molino—the first sawmill in the state powered by steam and a harbinger to the thriving timber industry that was to dominate the region in the years after the San Francisco Gold Rush.

The Gold Rush Brings Changes

When California was seized by the United States in 1848, the Russian River and surrounding regions became part of the United States. After gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in 1848, San Francisco became an “instant city” and a new and pressing need emerged: lumber for building

homes and commercial buildings. The vast forests of virgin redwood trees in western Sonoma County had already been discovered by early settlers. Starting in 1860, the effort was on to harvest the mighty trees. And mighty they were. The biggest tree recorded was more than 300 feet tall and 12 feet wide and is estimated to have been more than 3,000 years old. There is no doubt that even mightier trees, whose sizes were never recorded, were felled by loggers to fulfill the need for lumber.

One of the earliest logging operations began in 1860, when S. H. Torrance built a sawmill on the shore of the Russian River at a heavily forested place known as Big Bottom, later called Stumptown (once the trees were gone). Today this town is known as Guerneville, named for Swiss immigrant and logger George E. Guerne. Early logging operations relied on teams of oxen to haul logs from the forested mountains down to the river, a brutally hard and dangerous job. The logs were floated downstream to mills in Monte Rio, Duncans Mills, and Cazadero, where they were milled into lumber.

Early loggers harvested massive virgin redwoods, first-growth forests thousands of years old. Redwood, especially old-growth redwood, is a superior building material, still much desired in modern construction. Most of San Francisco’s Victorian houses were built of redwood. The fact that so many Victorians still stand, sturdy as ever, is a testament to the fine quality of redwood.



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Country Historical Society

Rail Lines Bring More People

By the 1870s the first railroads were built to connect the mills and transport lumber to growing Bay Area cities. Though the railroads were built for transporting redwood, they had an unintended result: the birth of a fledgling tourist industry on the Russian River. In 1887 the first passenger trains carried adventurers, hunters, and fishermen to Guerneville. Word spread about the region's natural beauty and the opportunities for sport, rest, relaxation, and glorious summer weather—a welcome break from the gloominess of San Francisco's summer fog.

Rail lines were gradually extended, reaching Guerneville Park in 1902 and Monte Rio in 1909. With the extension of the railroads came the growth of communities. Stores, hotels, bars, campgrounds, and hunting lodges were built along the rail lines. Small towns grew larger. In the early 1920s, traveling from San Francisco to the Russian River was made even easier through a system of trains and ferries that connected the Bay Area to the Russian River. A day trip known as the "triangle route" carried the curious Marin County to the river and back within about 8 hours, making a trip to the river accessible and further igniting San Francisco's appetite for a warm summer getaway.

In the 1930s, railroads to the river were replaced by roads. The opening of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937 meant that people could drive their own cars to the Russian River. With easier access, an increasing number of San Francisco families built summer cabins on the river.

The river was mostly a working-class destination. Police officers, fire fighters, steel workers (like my grandfather), and others built modest cabins or simply camped out beside the river during the warm summer months. Often, moms and kids would camp for weeks during the summer, and dads would drive up for the weekends. My own father camped with my uncle and grandmother at Mirabel Beach for two or three months at a time, my grandfather joining them for weekends.

By the mid-1920s the river was booming. Resorts, cabins, campgrounds, and guest cottages popped up along the rail lines from Forestville to Duncan's Mills. Hotels, taverns, dance

halls, billiard parlors, and ice cream shops served the growing tourist population. Monte Rio boasted a seven-story hotel. Tourists crowded the beaches by day and dance halls at night. Popular dance halls included The Rio Nido Lodge, The Grove (an open-air pavilion in Guerneville), and the Mirabel Dance Hall. Nationally famous Big Bands regularly played there; bands like Glenn Miller, Woody Herman, and many others provided live music for revelers late into the night. The popularity of the river's dance halls continued into the 1950s.

San Francisco's intellectual and artistic elite also became aware of Russian River's charm. In 1878 members of San Francisco's all-male Bohemian Club held its first summer camping event at the Bohemian Grove, a beautiful wooded area along the river near Monte Rio. In 1900 the group purchased the grove and built a private 2,700-acre retreat that now has 122 camps, each with its own name and clubhouse. Initially made up of artists, journalists, and other creative types, present-day Bohemian Club members include some of the richest and most influential men in the world—politicians, corporate leaders, famous writers. The club still gathers at the Bohemian Grove every summer for secret activities, including an elaborate theatrical performance every member is expected to take part in.

The Grove has never been open to the public, but this fraternal organization regularly contributes to the community. Every summer the Bohemian Club hires local kids to work as chef's assistants and housekeeping staff. My nephew worked there in 2010, along with a bunch of his pals, the summer after he graduated from Analy high school in Sebastopol. (Their exact duties remain sworn to secrecy.)

The River is iconic and generational. Countless resorts and old family cabins have been continuously used by generations. My own family's cabin, in the hamlet of Hacienda, built in 1936, is one of these. We're now four generations into our love of the river. Of course, plenty of cabins, resorts, campgrounds, and hotels have vanished. Some burned down; others were destroyed by floods; still others simply deteriorated into the wooded hillsides where they were built, victims of damp weather and neglect.



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Country Historical Society

Changing Yet Remaining the Same

Over time, the demographic of "The River" has changed many times. Cabins once inhabited by summer residents who lived for most of the year in San Francisco have become year-round homes for many. The 1960s brought hippies and pot farms, fueling a new mix of cultures.

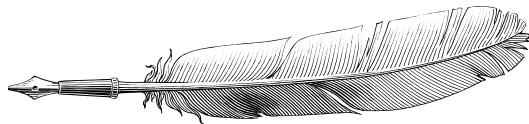
The bikers of the 1970s were joined but not replaced by the gay guys of the 1980s—and more recently, a number of LGBTQ+ businesses have made Guerneville and surrounding towns even more cool, more vibrant, more delicious. I know there are more divergent groups to come.

What is everlasting, though, is the simple magic of "The River": warm summer air and water the color of old jade; idyllic days away from San Francisco's summer fog; memories of the summer you fell in love or jumped triumphant from a summer bridge into the cool water below. It's all there still.

It's July in San Francisco, and we are shrouded in fog. Take 101 north to River Road and turn left. Drive until you've entered the cool shade of the redwoods and begin to catch glimpses of the river below. You'll see.



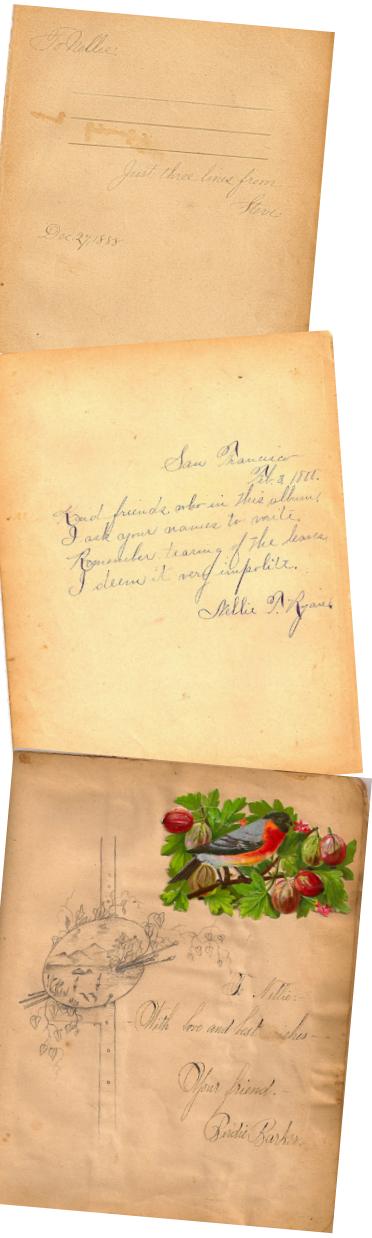
Fabrice Florin via Wikimedia Commons



A 19th Century San Francisco Autograph Book

by Lorri Ungaretti

Autograph books have been traced to 16th century Europe. Before then, people asked friends and family just to sign their Bibles, but once autograph books became popular, they took over and friends and school instructors were invited to do more than just sign the pages; people offered good wishes and prayers, made up simple poems, wrote humorous poems, and shared their thoughts. Some illustrated their entries with sketches or small paintings.

 Autograph books finally became part of American culture in the 19th century. School yearbooks later replaced autograph books, but since yearbooks did not appear until junior high (or middle) school, autograph books were still popular in my elementary school in the late 1950s and early 1960s. By then people were no longer creating art to accompany their messages; they just signed the books and maybe offered words of friendship and support. Poems by then were almost nonexistent in autograph book entries.

MaryEllen Orichowsky recently shared with SFHS photographs of the entries in her great grandmother's autograph book. Nellie Ryan attended school in San Francisco, and most people signed her book from 1886 to the mid-1890s. Some of the messages were friendly, some were serious, some were funny, some were religious. Some messages were ornately decorated; others were simple writings with no embellishments. Nellie's autograph book was leather bound, and she wrote a poem at the beginning, inviting friends and family members to share.

Many of the autographs with interesting messages are hard to read and have no illustrations attached.

Some people wrote about their faith:

In the Book of life "God's Album," / May your name be wrote with care, / And may his choicest blessings, / Go with you every-where. / (The wish of your True Friend, R. J. Campbell, San Francisco, Dec. 15th 96).

A more general message had a strange signature:

In the hour of sweet perfection, / In the hour of social glee, / If you ever think of any, / Just one moment think of me. / (From your friend, May Hensly, San Francisco, Aug. 4th 1889, 23rd Street Baseball).

Some autographs used gentle humor to entertain the reader:

Rest thy head upon the water, / And it shall return to thee, / After many days – mouldy. / (Your school mate Tina Swift. / San Francisco, Cal / Jan. 18, 1887).

Nellie:

Just three lines

from Steve

Dec. 27, 1888

The first page in the autograph books contained Nellie's message to people who signed her book.

San Francisco, Feb. 3, 1888.
Kind friends who in this album,
I ask your names to write
Remember tearing of the leaves,
I deem it very impolite.
Nellie T.[?] Ryan

Some of the more ornate signatures included illustrations and what looks like stickers.

To Nellie
With love and best wishes
Your friend Birdie Barker

Dear Nellie
Let not our friendship be like the rose, to sever
But, like the evergreen, may it last forever
is the wish of your friend
Mary J. Murphy

Feb. 19th 1894
To Miss Ryan
Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Moody
These few lines which here I trace
Years may change not, nor eye efface,
They may be reading thought valued not
When she who wrote them "is forgot"
Your Friend,
Jessie J. Layden

March 24th, 1888
To Nellie,
Remember [illegible] bear in mind,
A faithful friend is hard to find.
But when you find one that is true,
Don't change the old one for a new.

Weber Book
San Francisco, June 13, 1887

Dear Nellie,
May the Blessings of health,
The enjoyment of wealth,
And a nice little portion of pleasure.
With a home full of love,
And the blessings above,
Bestowed on thee without measure.
And year after year,
May your blessing's increase,
And your passage through life,
Be a mission of peace.

Sincerely your friend,
Lizzie G. Murphy

More Humorous messages:

Dear Nellie:
You want something worthy of course,
In thee book, to remember a friend;
You have my best wishes, may you never wash dishes
And have any old stockings to mend
Sept. 5th 1887

(Note: This was the second poem that included
"may your never wash dishes" to rhyme with
"wishes" and "have any old stockings to mend"
to rhyme with "friend.")

To Nellie,—
When you grow old and ugly,
people often do—
Remember that you have a friend,
That is old and ugly too.
dearly Yours,
Flore R. West
Grass Valley, xxxx, Cal.
June 21st, SF

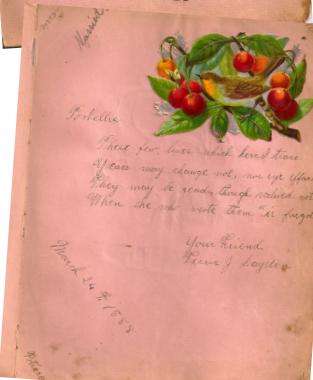
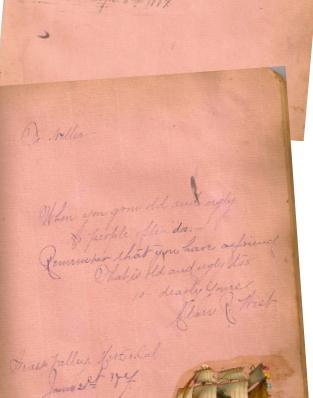
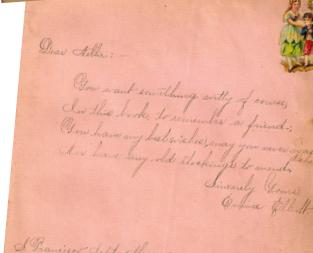
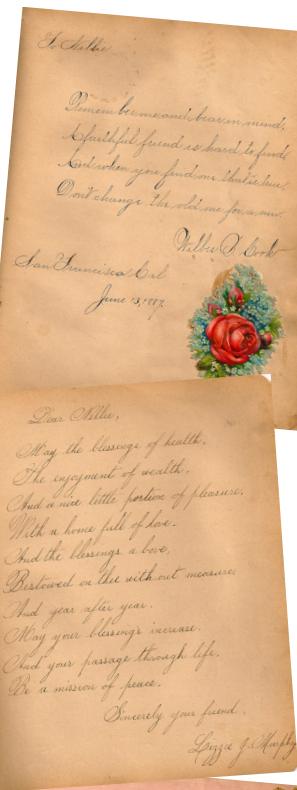
To Nellie
Remembrance is all I ask.
And if remembrance be a task
"Forget me"
Henry E. Sale
San Francisco
Jan 26th 1897

From Family Members

Dec. 6 1892
Nellie
Remember Your Mother
Mary Ryan
Mary Ryan was a native of the City of Cork,
Ireland and the great-great grandmother
of donor MaryEllen Orlowsky.

San Francisco
Nov 18, 1888
To Nellie,
The roses are red,
The violets are blue,
Sugar is sweet,
And so are you.

Your loving sister,
Maggie Ryan





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Bimbo's marquis lights the night



*Top: Kevin O'Brien performs hit after hit
Below right: Where else can you do this?*



KOB's Musical Variety Show: Mingle, Dance, and Dine!

On April 29, 2022, SFHS hosted an evening of unbeatable fun at the iconic Bimbo's 365 Club in North Beach. This fundraising event, which was generously sponsored by First Republic, offered something for everyone: a delicious dinner, a full open bar, Kevin O'Brien's medley of much loved tunes, accompanied by San Franciscan's top musicians, and yes—dancing the night away.

These photos provide just a glimpse of an evening filled with friends and fun. Thank you to everyone who attended the KOB Musical Variety Show as well as those who could not attend but made generous donations. The evening was such a success we're planning another evening of dining and dancing for February of 2023. Stay tuned!

Right: Some friends from First Republic;

Bottom Left: The city's coolest supper club vibe; Bottom Right: SFHS staff and volunteers





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A Peek at the Past

This photo, taken in 1925 from the Crystal Palace Market at 8th and Mission Streets, shows a great deal of activity in the growing Civic Center. City Hall, the Civic Auditorium at its left, and the State Building, which is just three years old, at the center right. The Pioneer Monument stands in its original position near the corner of Larkin and Grove Streets. (It was moved to the Main Library parking lot in 1993.) All of this activity is being watched by Market Street passersby.



Photo courtesy of Department of Public Works



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