

SUMMER 2006

AT THE PRESIDIO

A SEASONAL GUIDE TO THE PARK

HISTORIC BARRACKS REBORN

By Randolph Delehanty, Ph.D, Presidio Trust Historian



When the United States Army first occupied the Presidio of San Francisco after the Mexican-American War of 1846, the troops simply moved into the handful of Mexican adobe structures that survived from the old quadrangle. They added shingle roofs, new doors and windows, wood floors, and fireplaces. Cattle had eaten away the native grasses, and weeds overran the land. The Presidio was a sandy, wind-swept place almost devoid of trees. The Army was to spend almost 150 years fortifying, developing and landscaping the post. The first project was the construction of massive, red-brick Fort Point in the 1850s, designed to guard the entrance to the harbor.

In 1862, as the Civil War was raging, the Army made its first major improvements to the Main Post. Keeping the recycled adobes at the high end of the gentle slope facing the bay, Army engineers laid out the

first American parade ground: a long rectangle bounded by Moraga, Lincoln, Graham and Mesa streets. One-story wood barracks lined the long west side of the rectangle along Graham Street and officers' quarters lined the east side of the rectangle.

Infantry, cavalry and coastal artillery all served at the Presidio. Close order drill, manual of arms, bayonet exercise, skirmish practice and artillery gun drill took place on the parade ground. Frequent inspections and ceremonies on the parade ground expressed the Army's culture of recognition and reward.

The dozen or so clapboard barracks built along Graham Street were all originally one story with columned porches facing the parade ground. From the 1860s to the 1890s, most of the enlisted troops were from northern cities or Irish or German immigrants or their sons.

Troops pose on the porch of one of the Graham Street barracks in 1881, before the addition of a second floor.

Photo courtesy of Bancroft Library, University of California

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Some enlist because they really believe the life will suit them; others from disappointment in business or love affairs; others, again, to hide themselves from the consequences of some youthful scrape; but the large majority are driven to enlistment by absolute want.



Col. Richard L. Dodge, 1885

Conditions in the barracks were Spartan. A soldier's life was hard with monotonous duties and heavy labor maintaining the post, its roads and fortifications. Most Presidio troops manned the coastal fortifications, others were rotated out to fight in the Indian Wars on the frontier.

The troops' diet was heavy on beef, bread, mush, beans and coffee. In June, 1890 a pound of vegetables was added to the daily fare. Not until 1898 did the Army have permanent cooks. Tobacco, whiskey, card games, baseball and reading occupied the troops' free time.

Physical training and exercise for its own sake did not emerge until the late 1880s, and post gymnasiums were built about a decade later. Pay day was every two weeks and that was the day soldiers hurried up Lovers Lane and into town. Presidio troops enjoyed being on the edge of San Francisco with its theaters and saloons.

Buildings 86 and 87 were built in 1862 and first occupied by the cavalry. They may be the oldest surviving Army barracks west of the Rockies. The soldiers slept on individual iron beds in large open dormitories. In the 1870s the Army only issued mattresses and blankets, not pillows or sheets. There was little privacy in the barracks and it took many soldiers time to adjust to these conditions.

In 1886 the Presidio barracks were expanded as frontier posts were closed. A second story was added by jacking them up and constructing a new story underneath them. As newer, brick barracks were built, these buildings served many other uses including a wagon repair shop, a Quartermaster Commissary facility and later Army offices as well as barracks. Electricity was introduced in 1912 and the second story porches were glassed in to provide more office space.

The Army's long-range goal was to replace old wood buildings with modern brick, and later concrete, structures. Over time, almost all of the Graham Street barracks were demolished, leaving only Buildings 86 and 87 near Lincoln Boulevard by the time the Army departed in 1994. The Presidio Trust has recently completed a \$3.5 million rehabilitation of the historic barracks for a multi-tenant office complex. The buildings were seismically upgraded, lead paint was remediated, new plumbing, electrical, telecom and fire suppression and alarm systems were installed, a new elevator, restrooms and mechanical cores were added, and the buildings were made fully accessible. Their historic fabric was retained including the old sash windows, which were painted brown. The principal change was the

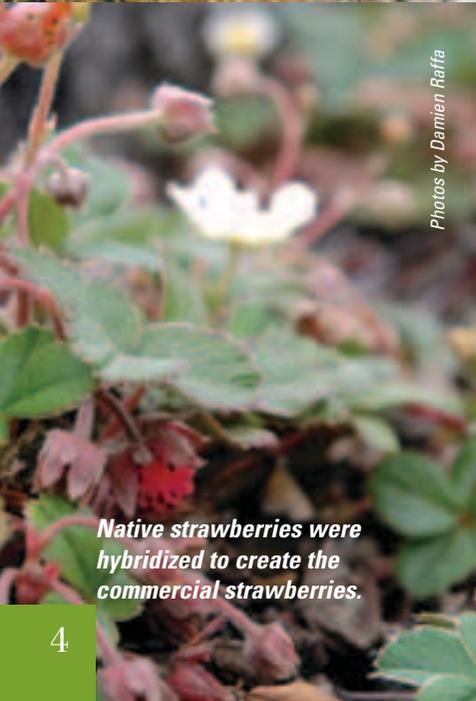
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The alligator lizard can be traced back over 300 million years.



Summer is high season for seed collection.



Native strawberries were hybridized to create the commercial strawberries.

Photos by Damien Raffia

presidio watch: reports from the field

An Ode to Our Summer Fog

“The advance of the summer fog over San Francisco Bay is surely one of Earth’s most impressive natural phenomena. To what other spectacle of nature can it be compared? Not to the geysers of Yellowstone or the falls of Yosemite; its scale is far larger and its forms more varied. To the observant it is more than a spectacle...It is an experience of the spirit.”

The above quotation is taken from Harold Gilliam’s *The Natural World of San Francisco*, completed in 1968. For many years, Mr. Gilliam wrote a naturalist column for the San Francisco Chronicle. Today, as a Presidio neighbor, the park remains one of his favorite places.

Living in the Presidio

Dune strawberry *Fragaria chiloensis*

If you were to walk along the Presidio’s shoreline at Crissy Field 150 years ago you would have seen a much more expansive beach than the one today. At high tide, this beach became an island, referred to by early San Franciscans as Strawberry Island because of the dune strawberries that grew plentifully there.

A member of the rose family, this plant produces tiny edible strawberries in late spring and summer. Its three-leaflets are glossy and dark green (sometimes confused for poison oak), and the five-petaled white flowers attract a variety of pollinators. Long red licorice whip-like runners help anchor the plant in the shifting sand and provide its primary means of reproduction. Dune strawberry grows along the Pacific coast all the way to Alaska, and along coastlines in South America and Hawaii. It’s a resilient native that survives mowing due to its ground-hugging posture.

San Francisco alligator lizard *Elgaria coerulea coerulea*

Alligator lizards are much smaller than their title suggests; head-to-tail they are no longer than your hand. The sub-family of alligator lizards was named due to their looks and behavior. But alligator lizards are not only small, they are insectivores. They have very small teeth well adapted for chewing insects.

They are prey to hawks and other predatory birds. Keep your eyes open on your next walk in a natural area of the park!



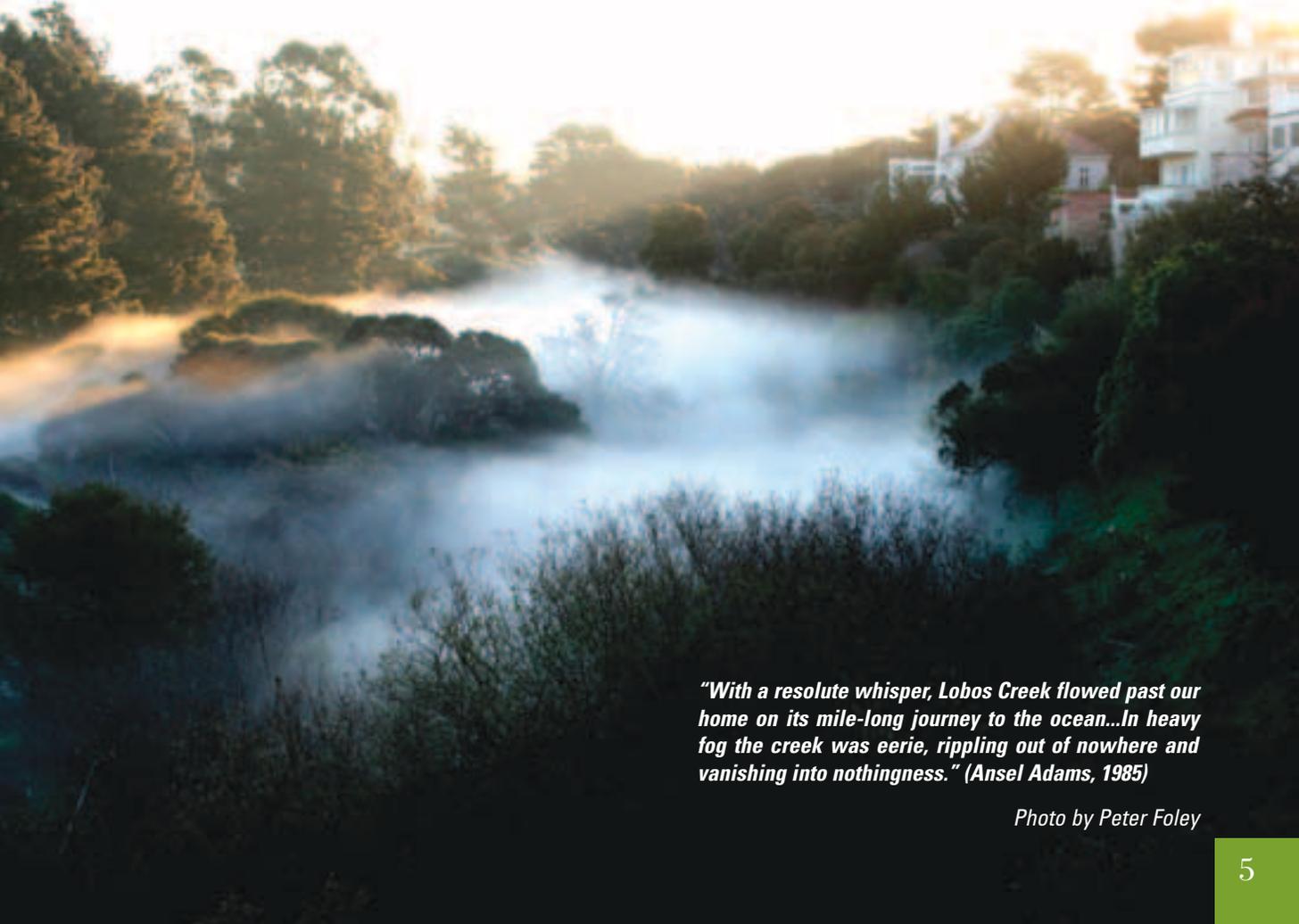
*Silvery lupine and
California poppy*



{ NATURE IN THE CITY }



Great Blue Heron



"With a resolute whisper, Lobos Creek flowed past our home on its mile-long journey to the ocean...In heavy fog the creek was eerie, rippling out of nowhere and vanishing into nothingness." (Ansel Adams, 1985)

Photo by Peter Foley

SUMMER 2006

PARK CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

Lend a Hand to Presidio Plants and Wildlife

Every Wednesday & Saturday
Join other volunteers to help improve Presidio habitats and grow native plants.

415/ 561 4449



Presidio RX Running Group

Mondays & Wednesdays
6:30 pm

Runners meet Mondays under the Palace of Fine Art's Dome, and Wednesdays at the Lombard gate.

www.Woohoo.org/presidiorex

Tours of Arion Press

See the historic typefoundry, Bookbinding and printing facilities of Arion Press. Reservations are required.

415/ 561 2542

JUNE

30

PASADOS del PRESIDIO Kids' Passport Through Time

June 30, 11 am to 4 pm
KIDS! Get your passport and enjoy an afternoon of family fun, activities, music and lots more commemorating San Francisco's 230th anniversary. Evening festivities feature !Fandango! concert at the Moraga Room, Officers' Club, 7 to 9 pm.

www.presidio.gov

415/ 561 5500



15

Explore the Presidio From a Bird's Eye View

July 15, 9 am to noon
Explore the Presidio with other bird watchers. Meet at the Crissy Field Center.

415/ 561 4449

17

Presidio Open Space Update

Monday, July 17

6:30 pm

The public is welcome to attend and discuss open space projects. Presidio Officers' Club.

415/ 561 5418

29

Summer Tree Walk

Saturday, July 29

10 am to noon

Join Presidio Forester Peter Ehrlich to explore the Presidio Forest. Meet at the Presidio Officers' Club, 50 Moraga Avenue.

www.presidio.gov

415/ 561 5500



JULY

8

Presidio Quail Habitat Restoration Program

Saturday, July 8

9 am to noon

Casual weeding and other field activities will support the Golden Gate Audubon Society's city-wide "Save the Quail" campaign.

415/ 561 4449

PULL OUT AND POST! ►

AUGUST

5&6

12th Annual Aloha Festival

August 5 & 6
10 am to 5 pm
Co-Sponsored by the Pacific Islanders' Cultural Association. Features food, music, dance, crafts, and more.

www.pica-org.org/alohafest



12

Presidio Quail Habitat Restoration Program

Saturday, August 12
9 am to noon
Casual weeding and other field activities will support the Golden Gate Audubon Society's city-wide "Save the Quail" campaign.

415/ 561 4449



24&25

Pacific Union Presents Concerts at the Presidio

August 24 and 25
8 pm
Golden Gate Club
415/ 447 6274

25

PLANTS + INSECTS ART + SCIENCE

August 25 - November 19
Wednesday - Sunday
11 am to 5 pm
A new exhibition of photographs of flowers and insects at The Presidio Officers' Club Exhibition Hall. Reception from 5 to 8 pm.

www.presidio.gov
415/ 561 5500



Photo of Edward S. Ross in action: Photographing mating damselflies in Napa Creek.

26

Plants and Insects of the Presidio

Saturday, August 26
9:30 to 11 am
Have fun with this hands-on family program led by Presidio naturalist Damien Raffa. RSVP for reservations and meeting locations.
415/ 561 4449

30

Photography without the Camera

Wednesday, August 30
7 to 8 pm
Join us for an intimate evening with photographer Robert Buelteman as he explains his "cameraless" technique. 50 Moraga Avenue.
415/ 561 5500

SEPTEMBER

30

A Presidio Classic is Approaching Film in the Fog

September 30, 5 pm
Join friends and neighbors for food, music, and a classic fun film. Details in the next *At the Presidio*.
415/ 561 5500

PLANTS + INSECTS ART + SCIENCE

A New Exhibition Comes to the Presidio Officers' Club

Art and Science: Two Ways of Seeing Nature

Curated by the Presidio Trust Public Programs staff the exhibit presents two contrasting ways photographers look at nature. Robert Buelteman's large color photographs – made without a camera or lens – present plants in a way never seen before and embody his highly personal way of seeing nature. Edward S. Ross' scientific, patiently photographed close-ups alter the viewer's sense of scale and reveal intimate details of the insect world around us.

see page 9...

A New Exhibit

Presidio Officers' Club
Exhibition Hall
50 Moraga Avenue
August 25 – November 19
Wednesday through Sunday
11 am – 5 pm

Opening Reception

Friday, August 25
5 pm – 8 pm

Wednesday Evening Talks

Presidio Officers' Club
7 pm – 8 pm

August 30th
Photography without the Camera
Robert Buelteman

September 13th
*The Lives of Insects: Around the
World in Ninety-One Years*
Edward S. Ross

September 27th
*The Presidio: An Island
of Biodiversity*
Terri Thomas

October 25th
*Insects: An Evolutionary
Success Story*
John Hafernik

November 8th
Monarch Magic
Mia Monroe

Saturday Plant + Insect Walks

Outdoor programs in the park
alternate Saturdays beginning
August 26. Great for adults and
children ages 7 and up.
9:30 am – 11 am

www.presidio.gov

415/ 561 5500

◀ {See *Calendar* for Listings }

*Larva of western Cecropia moth.
Photo by Edward S. Ross*



*Photo by Robert Buelteman,
Santa Barbara Museum of Art,
Gift of William and Sonja Davidow
From the upcoming Presidio Exhibition
PLANTS + INSECTS*



MAKE BIKING SAFER

for Your Family

{ KIDS IN THE PARK }



Whether you're on a solitary trail or along a busy street, biking can be a dangerous sport. "When a driver is focused on getting to his destination or just not paying attention, you could be the one who pays," said Erin Hughes, a bicycle safety and equipment expert at Sports Basement in the Presidio.

"Several easy steps can be taken to make bicycling safer for you and your kids or partners," says Hughes. "The California Vehicle Code specifies that all bicycles must have a light, attached either to the helmet or the front of the bike, and it must have a beam that reaches 50 feet," she says. "Helmets should be in good condition (less than three years old)."

According to Hughes, apparel helps drivers notice bike riders more easily. "We have a whole section of visibility products here, including elbow and knee pads," said Hughes. But it is still up to the biker to ride safely. Ride with the direction of traffic, and try to stay on low-traffic streets. It is probably best to ride with others after sundown.

Biking can be a healthful and fun family activity if all riders have the right equipment. Tires should be fully inflated. Protective clothing such as long pants or pads for knees and elbows, and a helmet are essential. Ride safely and enjoy a beautiful day. For more information, visit www.sfbike.org.

“

I feel safer with my bike safety gear on. I know if I fall, my head will be ok. Also, if I didn't wear it, my mom would kill me.

”

Audrey, age 11

Photo by Oren Michels

WHY DO YOU RIDE?

Biking in the Presidio

The Presidio Wins “Bicycle Safety” Award

For the second consecutive year, the Presidio was among fifteen U.S. cities to be designated a “Bicycle Friendly Community” by the League of American Cyclists. The program analyzes bicycle friendliness in applicant communities, evaluating education, enforcement, encouragement, engineering, and evaluation. The Presidio was recognized at the Bronze level, and hopes to improve its rating for 2007.

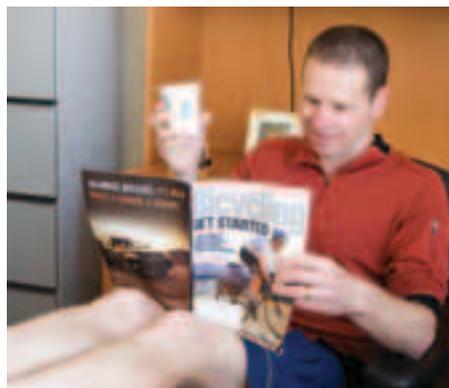
“The Presidio offers such a wide range of trails, suitable for riders of all levels, and all offering the advantage of beautiful and varied scenery,” said Mark Helmbrecht, manager of transportation at the Presidio. “Many are multi-use trails or roads with painted bike lanes. Some of the most popular include the Bay Area Ridge Trail and East Washington to Immigrant Point.”



Photos by Amy Wolff

A Quick Workout and Back to Work

Mack, a college student at USF, knows that a bike break during the middle of the day won’t last forever. So he takes advantage of the opportunity almost every day while he can. “This is my favorite place to ride in the city,” he says.



He Walks the Walk

John, a Trust employee, recently sold his old Volkswagen and commutes on his “beater” Italian road bike. This fall he plans to board MUNI with his bike and 3-year daughter Chesna to take her to preschool. He grinned: “I just have to remember to take both off the bus.”



Seeing the City’s Natural Highlights

Lincoln is visiting San Francisco from Washington D.C. with his wife. While she works, he has rented a bike and is looking for the bridge. “In the past when I’ve been here, I felt like I missed the natural beauty of the city. This is a great way to see it all.”



Two for One, or One for Two?

Shawn and Tanya from Australia have pulled their tandem off the road to get their bearings. “It’s a beautiful way to see the park,” said Shawn. “And riding across the Golden Gate Bridge is something you don’t do every day.”

HISTORIC BARRACKS

...continued from page 3

{ HISTORY NOTES } 



construction of an elevator and entry structure between the two barracks, providing access to both buildings. This contemporary feature was designed to complement, but not imitate, the

historic architecture. Subtly lighted, it makes a fine addition to the Presidio at night, creating a seamless blend of the old and the new. The Trust's Robert Wallace, AIA, was the project architect.

“

This contemporary feature was designed to complement, but not imitate, the historic architecture of buildings 86 and 87.

”

The new elevator and entry structure has a “monitor” top, and links Buildings 86 and 87.

Photo by Robert Wallace, AIA

PROFILES: Innovators Ross and Buelteman

By Randolph Delehanty, Ph.D, Presidio Trust Historian

Plants + Insects Like You've Never Seen Them Before

“

This exhibit is like a walk along a nature trail. The encounters are random, unpredictable and startlingly beautiful.

”

Edward S. Ross, Ph.D

“

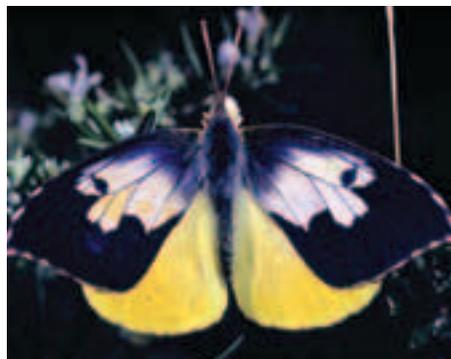
This work is a joyful celebration of the world. All these plants are right there, right outside, and we never notice them.

”

Robert Buelteman

The Close-up Photography of Edward S. Ross, Ph.D

Scientist Ed Ross was in second grade at Laguna Honda Grammar School when his teacher brought a caterpillar into class. As soon as the school bell rang, he dashed off to gather his own caterpillars. It was the beginning of a lifetime's fascination with insects. In 1939, after graduating from the University of California at Berkeley in entomology, he joined the staff of the California Academy of Sciences. His specialty is Embiidina, web spinners, and he has traveled around the world studying them. When he could not find candid photos of living insects, he taught himself close-up flash photography. He has published many scientific papers and his insect photographs have appeared in many books and magazines. He lives in a Japanese-style compound set in a hilly garden with a view of Mt. Tamalpais. At 91, he continues his work as an entomologist and nature photographer.



*Male Dogface Butterfly.
Photo by Edward S. Ross*

The Cameraless Photography of Robert Buelteman

Artist Robert Buelteman was born in 1954 and developed his love of nature growing up in Woodside, south of San Francisco. In 1973, a friend paid a debt by giving him an old Yoshika camera. He took it on a trip to the mountains in Utah and that experience triggered a lifetime's fascination with photography. He became a professional photographer specializing in black and white landscape work. After publishing three books, he decided to blaze a new trail. He abandoned his camera and lens and perfected his own technique evolved from Kirlian photography that captures the corona surrounding electrically charged plant specimens. The resulting chromogenic development prints are vivid and compelling and create a new way of seeing the brilliance and beauty of the natural world.



Photo by Robert Buelteman, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of William and Sonja Davidow



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AT THE PRESIDIO is published by the Presidio Trust. Your questions and comments are welcome. Please email to: jnichels@presidiotrust.gov

{Cover}

Amy Wolff

Pastoral Beauty of Mountain Lake, 2006

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{ DID YOU KNOW? }

An estimated 2,000 years old, Mountain Lake is the only natural lake in the entire GGNRA.