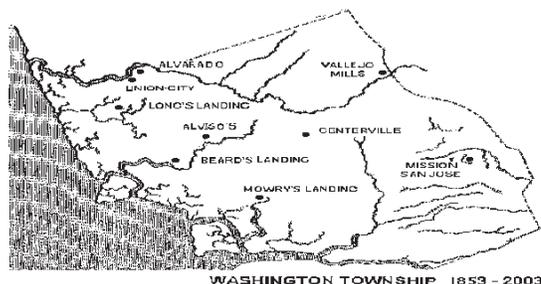


Washington Township Historical Society



MAY - JUNE 2021

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MEETING DATE: MONDAY, MAY 24, 2021, 7:00 PM
LIVE ON ZOOM, <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>

Washington Township Historical Society Editor: Al Minard

Our Guest speaker for the May 24, 2021 meeting on Zoom, will be Dr. **JOYCE BLUEFORD** or one of her staff members at the Fremont Math Science Nucleus Museum. Dr. Blueford and her staff have done a tremendous amount of work at the California Nursery and have consistently moved this project forward. There is major work going on at this site and there is a lot more to do especially with regarding the preservation of the historic trees on this site, and the tons of paper to process and archive.

Dear Washington Township Historical Society members and friends,

Our Zoom meeting on May 24, 2021 will start promptly at 7:00 PM. Our speaker will be someone from the California Nursery. We are including some information about this rather new historical park here in Fremont. Dr. Joyce Blueford has been actively involved with this project and has done a fantastic job of gathering documents and artifacts that Bruce Roeding had saved in a large trailer.

We are still dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic and we hope that you have taken the opportunity to get vaccinated. There is no cost to anyone getting the vaccine and it is available to anyone over 16 years of age.

We are waiting for actual meetings where we can see and talk to everyone in the same room

to work on the merger with the Washington Township Museum of Local History.

When the economy picks up again we hope to have a large celebration for the third historical plaque that we purchased two years ago. We are planning on putting this plaque on the Bronco Billy Pizza Palace in Union City. The owner wants to do some landscaping before we install the plaque, but it will happen.

Some of you have access to a computer or smart phone so you can attend our Zoom meeting. We have noticed that we are getting some people from out of the area attending these meetings and we are honored. We are saddened for those of you who are unable to attend our meetings. For those attending we have had good responses which makes the historical society look good. Thanks to our speakers and presenters.

History of the California Nursery

The 20-acre property is the last remnant of the original 463 acre California Nursery Company, a once grand nursery operation that brought national attention to the East Bay and was significantly associated with the evolution of the nursery industry on a statewide level.

The story of the California Nursery site involves great personalities such as Jose de Jesus Vallejo, John Rock, George Roeding, and Luther Burbank and associations with historical events such as the 1893 Columbia Exposition, development of Golden Gate Park, the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and the Golden Gate International Expositions of 1939 and 1940.

In 1884 a German immigrant named John Rock purchased 463 acres on a site that is today known as the town of Niles in Fremont. He moved his start-up nursery from San Jose and named it “The California Nursery Company.” Rock set about to create the best known Nursery Company in the State of California and became the premier supplier of fruit and nut trees. He marketed and hybridized 100’s of plant varieties with the assistance of the famous botanist Luther Burbank of Santa Rosa. In addition to fruit trees, the California Nursery became known for ornamental shrubs and 100’s of varieties of roses. Rock is thought to be responsible for introducing more new plants into the State than any other nurseryman.

In 1917 another legend took over ownership of the California Nursery Company, named George Roeding. Combined with the Roeding operations in Fresno, the California Nursery Company dominated the fruit and nut tree national market at a pivotal time when private agriculture was emerging as large corporate businesses. By the 1940’s George Roeding Jr. had evolved the company into an enormous retail operation with nurseries and growing grounds from the State of Washington to South America. All of this was headquartered out of Niles California.

Over the years the grounds of California Nursery were frequented by famous people that were customers or were otherwise associated with the California Nursery. They include President Woodrow Wilson, Phoebe and Randolph Hearst, Leland Stanford, John McLaren (the first Superintendent of Golden Gate Park), Architect Johannes Reimers, and photographers Andrew Hill and Gabriel Moulin.

Palm trees from the California Nursery became the “Avenue of Palms” at the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Plants and Oak trees from the Nursery were used in the 1939/40 International Exposition at Treasure Island. Innovations in plant shipping were developed in the packing shed on the site. Peach pits from California Nursery were used in gas masks in World War I. These and many other stories are waiting to be told.

The location of the Nursery site in the historic Niles District adds further distinction to the area, which is already rich in its cultural and commercial historical assets. The California Nursery site is poised to accentuate the existing Historic Niles District, as well as stand on its own as a significant historical asset and statewide destination.

Historical and Landmark Trees

The City of Fremont places great value in promoting and protecting its historical or landmark trees. In the early 1970s, a group called the City Beautiful Committee gathered information and documented various tree species and their locations which were published by the City of Fremont in 1973 in a booklet titled Landmark Trees City of Fremont. This booklet has recently been updated to “retire” trees which have not stood the test of time, and to include new landmark trees. This new publication is available online in its entirety here: : [Landmark Tree Publication “https://fremont.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18448/0_Landmark-Trees-Publication-2011?bidId=](https://fremont.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18448/0_Landmark-Trees-Publication-2011?bidId=)”

Tree Survey completed by HortScience

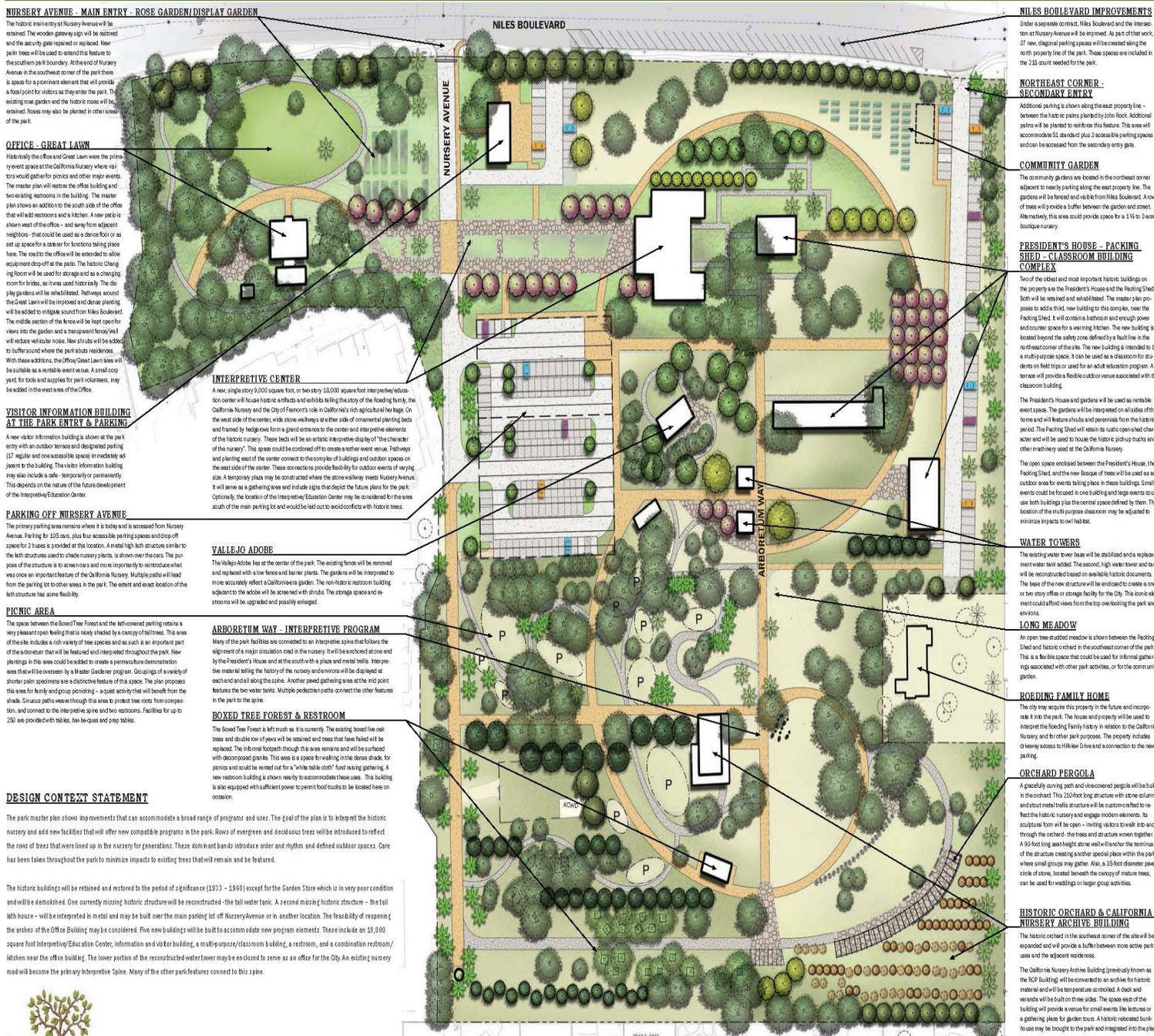
HortScience, Inc, a leading horticultural consultancy company from Pleasanton, completed a pro bono tree survey for the City, assessing all of the 756 trees at the CA Nursery. The survey matches up with the numbers on the trees on the Self-Guided Walking Tour and Landmark Tree Map noted above.

A few years ago, Dr. Joyce Blueford, of the local Math Science Nucleus, befriended the grandson (Bruce) of George Roeding Sr. Through that relationship, and with the assistance of the late Lila Bringham, she began a process of slowly uncovering what would later become an enormous collection of artifacts chronicling the history and operations of the once Grand California Nursery Company. With Dr. Blueford’s assistance, the City began to realize the important story that this site has to tell Fremont residents, the region, and world. Suddenly, what had been locally regarded as a lovely passive 20 acre site

with majestic trees and old nursery buildings, became a historical treasure trove the likes of which are seldom discovered in today's world.

The primary purpose of this Master Plan is to tell the story of the California Nursery Company to current and future generations through the sharing of the site's remaining historic buildings, majestic arboricultural resources, and display of the carefully preserved artifacts and documents. This Plan seeks to blend this overarching historical theme with the many uses

existing on the site today, including educational tours, community gardens, wedding and events, various volunteer efforts such as those that manage the rose garden, and possibly reinstating a small retail nursery presence on the site. The plan proposes a thoughtful measured increase in activity to the site, promoting awareness of the stunning community resources present on the site, and to generate modest income to support on-going maintenance and operations for future generations.



CALIFORNIA NURSERY HISTORICAL PARK MASTER PLAN

SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

DESIGN TEAM
 Planning Inc. - Landscape Architect
 Camp & Company - Historic Architect
 BDC Engineers - Civil Engineer
 Langley Group - Environmental Consultant
 Park Engineering - Structural Engineer
 HKS/Science - Architect
 Land Economics/Deals/Builds - Financial Advisor
 Investors & Associates - Cost Estimator
 West Science Network - Historic Consultant



MAY 24, 2021, MEETING

Will be on Zoom starting at 7:00 P.M.:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>

This meeting will start at 7:00 pm, you can log in about 15 minutes early to check your connection.

NEW MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR SINGLE ADDRESS

ONE-YEAR \$10 FIVE-YEAR \$40 TEN-YEAR \$70 PATRON: \$50.00 for one year

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-Mail Address _____

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