

# **NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY APRIL 2021 MEETING SUMMARY**

**DATE: APRIL 15, 2021**

**TIME: XX PM**

These notes summarize information that was planned to be presented at the April 15, 2021 Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of April 22, 2021. The meeting was canceled in advance due to concerns about the coronavirus and resulting state and local restrictions on gatherings.

All future meetings scheduled for the third **THURSDAYS of the month starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second-floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church **WILL NOT OCCUR in 2021** until the public health crisis due to COVID-19 has passed. Although we will not be able to resume our public meetings until then, we are still providing information to all who contact us with questions about North Park history and documenting those communications in monthly summaries.

## **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

We hope all our members and friends are staying safe and healthy.

## **2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The latest Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletters will be circulated for viewing at the next possible meeting. The April 2021 PastMatters column in Uptown News was Part 12 of a series about historic street names in San Diego (see the last page of this summary).

## **3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE**

The meeting summary from the canceled March 18, 2021 meeting has been posted on the website.

## **BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING**

### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The financials for this meeting are for March 20 to April 15, 2021 and were sent to Board Members on April 15, 2021. In this time period, one member renewed and gave an additional donation (thank you, Donna!), another member made a \$50 donation (thank you, Steve!), and Arcadia Publishing Company sent us a royalty of \$75.35, for total income of \$175.35. No expenses occurred in this time period.

## **ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING**

### **5. UPDATE ON PLAQUE FOR WATER TOWER**

Coordination with City Public Utilities Department staff regarding the feasibility of placing the plaque in a boulder or some kind of low wall next to the two-story building at the Water Tower site is pending return to some kind of normalcy.

### **6. PLANNING FOR PAULY'S ADDITION WALKING TOUR**

The team has developed the route, photo notebook and draft guide notes for the southern part of Pauly's Addition. The current tour starts at Upas and Texas, heads west on Upas, north on Mississippi to Landis, east on Landis to Texas, and south on Texas back to the park. This route is approximately one mile and includes six designated houses and a wide range of ages and architectural styles. All walking tours are pending return to some kind of normalcy.

Paul noted that 3535 Texas Street, which is one of the designated houses on our tour, has recently been sold.



## 7. BUNGALOW COURT IDENTIFICATION PROJECT

The City of San Diego has received a grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation to prepare a historic context statement addressing bungalow courts and garden apartments city-wide. The North Park Historical Society provided an updated inventory of local bungalow courts in the North Park area to City staff. The City's report should be available for public review this summer.

## 8. COMMUNITY COORDINATION

In April 2021, we responded to requests for information as summarized below.

1. Kari, who is the granddaughter of Master Builder Pear Pearson, said: "I was showing some of my Pear Pearson information to some classmates of mine and questions popped up about Master Builder designation, and also Historical Designation of homes by the City of San Diego. Master Builder (or the categories of Architect, Carpenter, Landscape Architects)-- What criteria is there for these people to receive their Master titles? Is it possible to tell me in a nutshell? Historical Designation-- What criteria is needed (in a nutshell?) to achieve the designation status? I have seen reports, but am not sure if there is some sort of general checklist?"

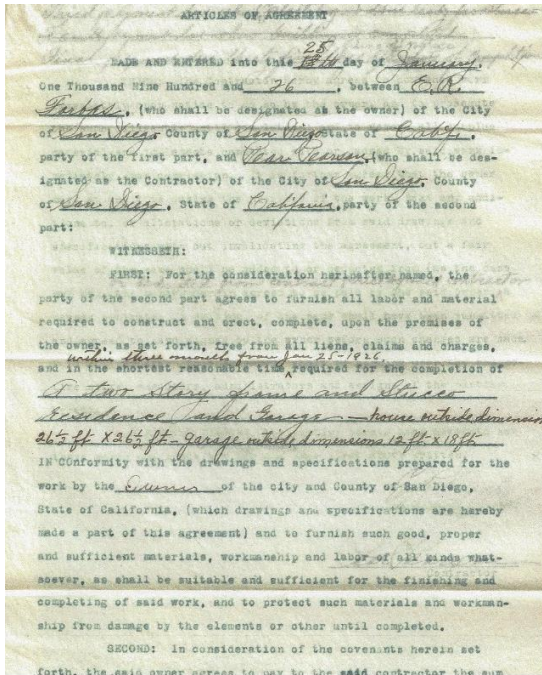
NPHS replied: The best thing would be to look at the City's webpages at [Historical Resources | Development Services | City of San Diego Official Website](#). Designation is not a simple process, and for some houses, different criteria may apply. Usually, a house achieves individual designation through Criterion C: "Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship."

That case has to be made in the report.

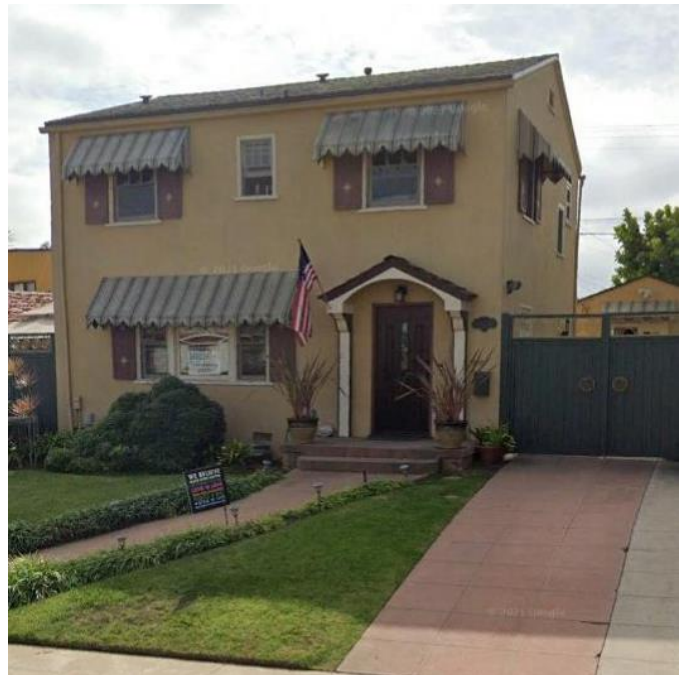
For a builder to be added to the City's Master list, that case has to be made, and it has to be requested by being included in the designation application for a house constructed by that builder. The City doesn't accept applications for Master alone.

2. Kari also found pages of contracts for houses built by Pear Pearson in her family's old files, and wanted to see if NPHS could identify the addresses of the houses from the names on the contracts. Using the 1926 and 1927 city directories, NPHS was able to match addresses with the owner names, as follows:

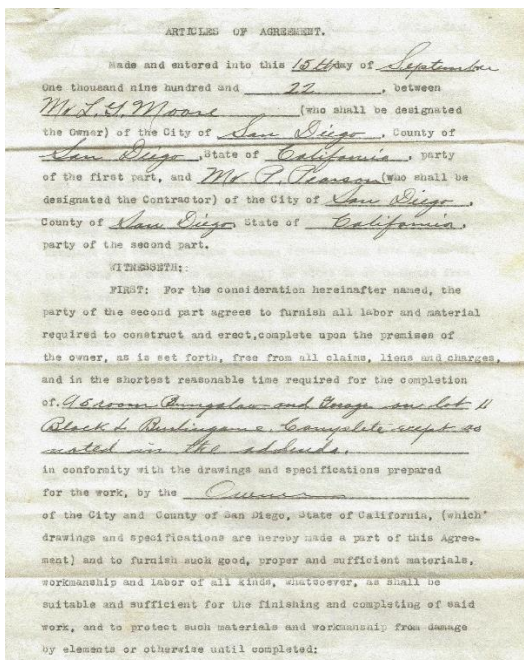
- Anna Walwick: (Widow of Robert C), 3344 Granada
- Charles L. Lawrie (Isabelle) asst dept supt SD Cons Gas & Electric, 3866 Belmont Ave.
- Daniel H. Perkins (Jean), no occupation listed, 3184 Maple
- Jno E. Crawford, slsmn RT Dawson Co., 4924 Hawley (now 4920 Hawley)
- Roy A. Novak (Laura), sec-treas Machinery Pipe & Supply Co., 3221 28<sup>th</sup>
- Edw R. Forbes (Mamie), slsmn Percy H. Goodwin co., 3021 Freeman
- Leo G. Moore (Florence), VP Nat'l Iron Works, 3190 Maple



Contract with Edw. R. Forbes



3021 Freeman Street in Loma Portal (Google Earth)



Contract with Leo G. Moore



3190 Maple Street in Burlingame (Google Earth)



The April 2021 PastMatters column discussed the likely person behind the current name of Bancroft Street and a possibility for the street's original name (Washington Avenue). See the last page of these notes for that article.

#### **9. UPCOMING COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

NPHS participation in future events will have to wait until a return to some kind of normalcy.

#### **10. FUTURE MEETINGS**

All future meetings scheduled for the third **THURSDAYS of the month starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second-floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church **WILL NOT OCCUR in 2021** until the public health crisis due to COVID-19 has passed. Although we will not be able to resume our public meetings until then, we are still providing information to all who contact us with questions about North Park history.

Prepared by

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Katherine Hon".

Katherine Hon  
Secretary, North Park Historical Society

# San Francisco writers

San Diego street names: Part 12 of the series

## PastMatters

KATHERINE HON

Bancroft Street between University Avenue and Upas Street was originally named Washington Avenue. Did Park Villas tract founder Joseph Nash — a new immigrant from England via Australia — name this street to recognize America's first president, George Washington? Or did he follow his typical pattern of naming streets after people he knew or wanted to acknowledge in the early 1870s?

No Washington appears in San Diego's Great Register of Voters through the 1870s or in the 1870 Federal Census for San Diego. With some historical conjecture, however, a Washington in San Francisco satisfies both hypotheses. Benjamin Franklin Washington (1820-1872) was a prominent resident of San Francisco when Nash arrived in 1867 and was the great-grandson of Samuel Washington, one of President George Washington's brothers.

B.F. Washington was born in what is now Jefferson County, West Virginia, and grew up at "Cedar Lawn," a house built for his father around 1825 near Charles Town, West Virginia. The town was founded in 1738 by Charles Washington, youngest brother of both George and Samuel Washington. The Cedar Lawn property had originally been part of the Harewood estate of Samuel Washington and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

B.F. Washington studied law and practiced locally until 1849. In a story that will sound familiar, he led a group across the plains when California gold fever broke out but did not pursue mining for very long. He moved to Sacramento, obtained a position in the post office, and was elected Recorder when the city organized in 1850.

In 1852, Washington became co-editor of the Democratic

State Journal. He moved to San Francisco the next year and partnered with others producing the Times and Transcript from 1853 to 1855. By appointment of President Buchanan, Washington served as Collector of the Port of San Francisco from 1857 to 1861. He retired to his sheep ranch in Tehama County during the Civil War.

In 1865, Washington returned to the city and became editor of the San Francisco Examiner, where he remained until his death in 1872. During this time, he also served on the Board of the State Tide Land Commissioners by appointment of Governor Haight in 1868.

Washington's death was reported in newspapers across the country from the Los Angeles Daily Star to the New York Daily Herald and all points in between, including the Feather River Bulletin, Idaho World, Daily Memphis Avalanche, Buffalo Evening Post, and Shepherdstown (West Virginia) Register.

His extensive obituary in the Charles Town Spirit of Jefferson's issue dated March 12, 1872 noted, "As a paragraph-writer it is conceded that he had few equals in the United States... He was at the same time by nature a poet."

The San Diego Daily Union's January 27, 1872 issue presented a

lengthy notice of Washington's death, describing him as "one of the leading Democratic politicians of the State" and stating that he "had long been connected with the Press, and was one of the ablest political writers on the coast."

This street name was changed in 1914 by Ordinance No.

5417, which stated, "Change Washington Avenue in East Lynhurst and Park Villas and Wisconsin Street in University Heights to Bancroft Street."

The name Bancroft likely recognizes Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918), another prominent San Franciscan. He came west in 1852 from Ohio, following his father, who left to pan for gold in 1850. But Hubert did not pursue mining. He set up a bookstore in San Francisco. The 1861 San Francisco directory described H.H. Bancroft & Co. as "importers and jobbers books and stationery." Bancroft left the book-selling business to his brother, Albert, in 1868 in order to focus his attention on writing, compiling and publishing histories of the West. By this time, Hubert had accumulated a vast library of historical material which continued to grow. In 1905, the University of California, Berkeley, purchased Bancroft's

60,000-volume collection of books, maps and other documents.

Bancroft had multiple connections to San Diego, although he lived and operated his businesses in San Francisco for much of his adult life. The 1873 City of San Diego Lot Book recorded H.H. Bancroft as the owner of 34 lots in Middletown, two whole blocks in Horton's Addition, and two whole blocks in Taggart's

Addition. In 1886, he had a four-story commercial building constructed at the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue and G Street. The Bancroft building survives in a reduced one-story state at 665 Fifth Avenue.

In 1885, he bought a ranch with an adobe cottage built in 1863 in Spring Valley from Rufus



Benjamin Franklin Washington, editor of the San Francisco Examiner from 1865 to 1872, grew up in the Cedar Lawn house built for his father around 1825 in what is now West Virginia. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places. (Photo by Acroterion, courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons)

King Porter. The Bancroft Ranch House is now operated as a historic house museum by the Spring Valley Historical Society. Their website at [svhistoricalsociety.org](http://svhistoricalsociety.org) features many fascinating historical photos and notes the following about preservation of the ranch and structures:

"The Spring Valley Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in getting the adobe designated California State Historic Landmark No. 626 in 1958, changing the name from the 'Porter adobe' to the 'Bancroft Ranch House.' On March, 24, 1963 — just short of 100 years after being built — the newly restored adobe was opened as a museum. The Spring Valley Historical Society was founded in April of that year and became the manager of the property, later purchasing the adobe and a portion of the land in 1967. The Society has been dedicated ever since to preserving the history of the Spring Valley area. The museum is located at 9050 Memory Lane (off Bancroft Dr.); admission is free."

The property is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

The 1901 San Diego City Directory listed Hubert H. Bancroft, his wife Matilda, son Griffing and daughter Lucy living at "Fir St cor 4th." That location is now a parking lot. Griffing, an attorney, remained in San Diego until his death in 1955, while his

father returned to San Francisco around 1905.

When Hubert H. Bancroft died on March 2, 1918, newspapers far and wide from the Hawaiian Gazette to the Boston Post carried the news. The San Diego Union's March 3, 1918 issue highlighted his local connections, stating, "Hubert Howe Bancroft formerly resided in San Diego. He owned much realty here...The Bancroft property in this city includes the block bound by Fifth and A, Sixth and B streets and property on Fir, Elm, Fourth and Third streets."

The San Francisco Examiner's March 3, 1918 issue detailed his accomplishments as a historian, quoting Professor Henry Morse Stephens, head of the University of California, Berkeley's history department, who said, "Bancroft was the greatest of a half dozen great American historians, and the only one who had an adequate understanding of the historical west. His greatest value was as a collector of writings concerning the Pacific Coast, for the Bancroft collection is the chief historical glory of the University, which owns it. His histories constitute a museum of information of Mexico, California, Nevada, Oregon and all the West, based on his study and knowledge of the country."

—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at [info@northparkhistory.org](mailto:info@northparkhistory.org) or 619-294-8990.



The famous historian Hubert Howe Bancroft is the likely namesake for Bancroft Street, which replaced the original name of Washington Avenue in 1914. (Photo by Bradley & Rulofson, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, in the public domain)