

The History of Garber Park

Judge John Garber (1833 - 1908) was a renowned attorney and jurist. Born in Virginia in 1833, Garber moved to San Francisco in 1857 to live with his uncle, Joseph G. Baldwin, a noted author and member of the California Supreme Court. Garber himself would later serve on the Nevada Supreme Court, and then finishing his career in private practice.

In 1888 Judge Garber and his wife built their spacious mansion (see photo) which was located close to the present day site of the Claremont Hotel.

The heirs of the Garber estate offered the eastern segment of the Bellrose Tract—basically the mansion’s backyard—to the Berkeley City Council at the half-value of \$2,500 on the condition that the land be maintained as a park with the name John Garber Park.



The January 25, 1920 *San Francisco Chronicle* article links the sale and the conditions to a public conversation then-current on the topic of urban open space: “The spot is certain to become a popular resort and demonstrate its community value as the other parks and playgrounds of the City are doing every day. Every piece of ground thus added to the open spaces of Berkeley should be an occasion of public rejoicing on account of what it means both to those now living and to future generations who will find here in a city much more congested than at present, an opportunity for refreshment of body and mind.”

In early 1952 John Garber Park along with another remnant of the Bellrose Tract were deeded from the City of Berkeley to the City of Oakland.

Source: Oaklandwiki.org

Garber Park Stewards

We are a community group of devoted nature-loving volunteers that regularly work in the Park with the goal of restoring natural resources, educating the public, and increasing awareness about this unique preserve. Below are two photographs (before and after) of a sample project completed by Garber Park Stewards and Golden Hour Restoration Institute. This project site, Fern Glade, can be observed from the trail down towards the parking area. Please join GPS by finding events at www.garberparkstewards.org



Links

WWW.GARBERPARKSTEWARDS.ORG

WWW.CLAREMONTCANYON.ORG

WWW.GOLDENHOUR.ORG

WWW.OAKLANDNET.COM



Rules & Regulations

Garber Park is a public wildland park owned by the City of Oakland. People visiting Garber need to follow the current rules and regulations which are posted. We encourage people to enjoy nature in a non-consumptive manner so we can continue to enjoy these resources for ourselves while protecting the flora and fauna of this majestic park.



Welcome to John Garber Park

Interpretive map and historical information



We invite you on a ¾ mile self-guided loop hike outlined in this brochure.



Project collaborators

GARBER PARK
STEWARDS

GOLDEN HOUR
RESTORATION INSTITUTE




CLAREMONT CLUB & SPA
A FAIRMONT HOTEL




RESTORATION DESIGN GROUP
CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY






④ FERN GLADE - Why do you think this dense patch of ferns and trilliums exists among the invasive ivies? This is the work of Garber Park Stewards who have identified areas of fern diversity and restored them by removing invasives and using transplant techniques and seeding to re-establish native flora. The ferns have been liberated from the invasive ivy. You can see a before and after photo of this site on the reverse side.

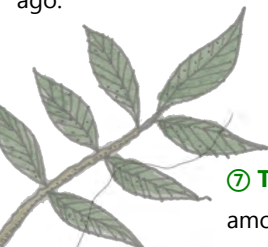


② FIREPLACE PLAZA - Although this historic fireplace has been well known for many decades, only in 2011 was the extensive stone patio uncovered during a restoration workday. Likely built in the 1920's, this was probably the site of many celebrations and camping outings before urbanization engulfed this area.

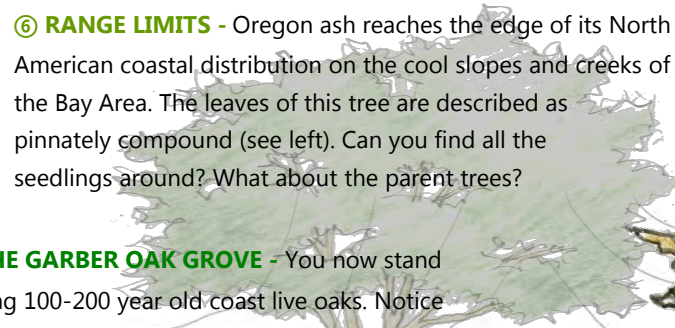
③ THE FOREST FLOOR - As you stand on the edge of the switchback, look towards the interior of the park. The oaks create dense shade allowing a rich understory of sword ferns to dot the forest floor. This represents a healthy forest where invasive plants are limited and native plants provide homes for many birds including the oak titmouse, a small grey bird with a pointed crest that mates for life, often living in crevices in oak trees. Listen for its high pitched *see see see* call.



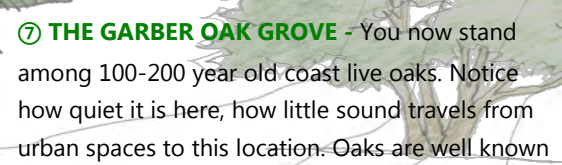
④ COLORFUL BUCKEYES - Can you count all the colorful species of moss and lichen that adorn the weathered California buckeye branches? Lichenized fungi, such as orange wall lichens, are extremely sensitive to air pollutants since they assimilate their nutrients solely from the air and rain. Lichens disappear where pollution is excessive. Take a deep breath, the air is fantastic here.



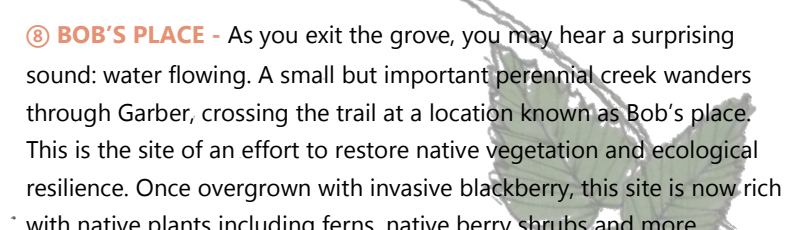
⑤ HORSETAIL MEADOW - What looks different about this area? Is it sunnier, wetter, or cooler than the previous section of trail? This area is dominated by horsetail, a plant that looks like a bottlebrush. This vascular plant reproduces by spores rather than seeds, a reproductive strategy also used by mushrooms. Horsetail is a "living fossil" as it is the only living genus of the entire class Equisetopsida. This plant dominated the understory of Paleozoic forests more than 100 million years ago.



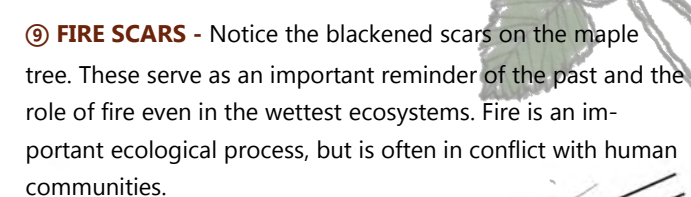
⑥ RANGE LIMITS - Oregon ash reaches the edge of its North American coastal distribution on the cool slopes and creeks of the Bay Area. The leaves of this tree are described as pinnately compound (see left). Can you find all the seedlings around? What about the parent trees?



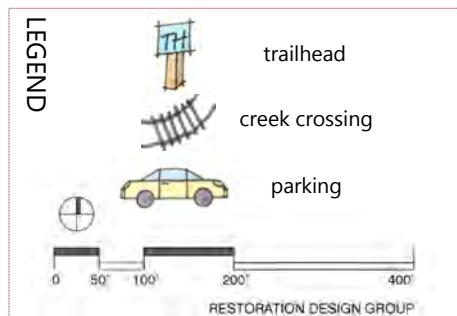
⑦ THE GARBER OAK GROVE - You now stand among 100-200 year old coast live oaks. Notice how quiet it is here, how little sound travels from urban spaces to this location. Oaks are well known to serve as sound barriers. Although, this grove may not currently harbor Sudden Oak Death (SOD) infection, the pathogen is rapidly infecting much of the Bay Area. SOD infects and kills many species and has forever changed Bay Area forests. Some forest stands have experienced greater than 80% tree mortality.



⑧ BOB'S PLACE - As you exit the grove, you may hear a surprising sound: water flowing. A small but important perennial creek wanders through Garber, crossing the trail at a location known as Bob's place. This is the site of an effort to restore native vegetation and ecological resilience. Once overgrown with invasive blackberry, this site is now rich with native plants including ferns, native berry shrubs and more.



⑨ FIRE SCARS - Notice the blackened scars on the maple tree. These serve as an important reminder of the past and the role of fire even in the wettest ecosystems. Fire is an important ecological process, but is often in conflict with human communities.



This brochure and project was generously funded by Claremont Club and Spa.