

FRIENDS OF SANTA TERESA PARK



The Hidden Springs Trail leading to Coyote Peak

New Trail in Santa Teresa Park

By Ron Horii

In mid-November, 2021, the first new trail in Santa Teresa County Park in a long time finally opened. It took almost 6 months to build it, but many years to plan it. It doesn't have a name yet. Many names have been proposed, but the trail naming committee has not been able to meet because of the pandemic. They hope to be able to meet next year. The trail starts below Santa Teresa Spring, where there was a dead-end trail since it was open to the public. The trail entrance below the spring is still there. The trail

Meetings: 7:00 pm, 1st Thursday of each month.

Upper Clubhouse/Banquet Facility, Santa Teresa Golf Club
260 Bernal Road, San Jose, CA (Zoom meetings during shutdown)

Website: <http://www.stpfriends.org>

Email: fostp@stpfriends.org (email us to request Zoom meeting link)

Officers:

- Mike Boulland, President
- Kitty Monahan, Vice President
- Ronald Horii, Secretary, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor
- Greg Koopman: Treasurer



Start of the new trail below Santa Teresa Spring



Map of the new trail

Our Mission

The Friends of Santa Teresa Park (FOSTP) is a volunteer and neighborhood association, founded in 1992 and based in San Jose. Our mission is to help protect, enhance, maintain, and restore Santa Teresa Park and the surrounding neighborhood through education, volunteer involvement, coordination, and communications with the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department Staff, the City of San Jose, and the greater community. We are a diverse group with a wide range of interests. We report on problems and concerns in the park and adjoining neighborhood and recommend changes and improvements. We help out with trail maintenance and park events. If you are interested in helping out at the park or just want to know what's going on, you are welcome to join us. See our website for more information: www.stpfriends.org. You are welcome to visit our Facebook page (STPFriends).

follows Manila Drive to Manila Way, where there's a new trail entrance. It's a short distance from that entrance to the start of San Jose's Albertson Parkway. Near the end of Manila Drive, the trail turns left and enters the Bear Tree Lot. This was previously a restricted area. There was a monument and parking lot on Curie Drive, where you could see the Bear Tree, but not come close to it. The parking lot is still there, but the monument has been moved along the trail closer to the Bear Tree. You can now go up to the huge valley oak tree, which is supported with steel braces. It was one of the trees that was used for bull-and-bear fights during the Spanish and Mexican Rancho era in the 1800's, before California became part of the US, when the practice was outlawed. Bear were chained to trees and made to fight bulls as entertainment. Spectators bet on which animal would survive. The monument talks about the Bear Tree and the Bernal Adobe, which was in this lot.

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See <http://www.stpfriends.org/#newsletters> for this and past newsletters.



Bear Tree and monument by the new trail

The trail turns right on Curie Drive, where it intersects a short spur trail that starts at the end of the sidewalk on Curie, a block east of Manila Way. This is a critical entrance and the main impetus for getting the trail built. For decades, Curie Drive narrowed down here and was a dangerous bottleneck for bicycles trying to share the busy road with cars. Students going to Bernal School were warned not to bike down this route. For many years, FOSTP has been expressing concerns about the dangerous road and advocated actions to fix it. In those days, there was little that could be done to widen the road, because the 3 adjacent properties were privately-owned. Over the years, Santa Clara County bought those properties to add to Santa Teresa County Park. The last piece was the middle property, which contains the historic Jacoba Bernal House. It was put up for sale in the mid-2000s. Condo developments were proposed for it. FOSTP urged that the land be bought and added to the park. It was finally purchased with the assistance of then-San Jose City Councilmember Forrest Williams, who used urban grant money from the Santa Clara County Open

Space Authority to help the county buy it. That was the final piece of the puzzle.

After the open field of the Bear Tree Lot, the trail runs past the Jacoba Bernal House, which is protected behind a chain link fence. It was never planned to be open to the public. It was supposed to be converted into a park employee residence, like the nearby Pedro Bernal House. During the replacement of the roof, workers discovered that there



The new trail goes past the historic Jacoba Bernal House

was severe water and termite damage to the walls, and they would not support a new tile roof. It was determined that the house would be too expensive to repair, so it was covered with a lightweight temporary roof and remains in a mothballed state. FOSTP has held cleanup days there.

For a short distance, the trail runs over the old driveway for the house, then turns to run close to Curie Drive. There was an old wooden fence along the road. Parts of the fence had been repaired at different times over the years, so it was an uneven hodgepodge of styles. The wooden fence sections were removed, but the brick columns supporting them were left behind. A new fence was built separating the trail from



The new trail entrance at the end of the sidewalk on Curie Drive



The new trail runs next to an old garage



The new trail ends at the corner of Curie Dr. & San Ignacio Ave.

the street. The old garage is at the end of the driveway. The trail goes around it.

After the garage, there was an old wooden fence that has been replaced with a chain link fence. There's a wide open field across from Bernal Intermediate School. This was the Bonetti Ranch, previously owned by the Bonetti Family, who bought the ranch and house from Pedro Bernal. They lived in the house across from the entrance to Bernal School. It is currently used as a park employee residence.

The trail ends on San Ignacio Avenue, at the Curie Drive intersection. It should provide a safer way for students to get to Bernal School, as well as Stratford School farther north on San Ignacio. It's been a long road to get here.

In 2009, the County Parks Department started a master planning process for the Santa Teresa Park Historic Site. The plan was created by Park Planner Antoinette Romeo. She held community meetings to discuss the plan. FOSTP was heavily involved with those discussions. Finally, the plan was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on December 15, 2009. It featured internal trails, including one along Curie Drive. The plan also had a parking lot on San Ignacio Avenue, a new visitor center, landscaping, and inter-



Entrance to the new trail on San Ignacio Ave.



Santa Teresa County Park Historic Area Site Plan
County of Santa Clara, California

Historic Site Plan map

pretive signs. If fully implemented, the plan would cost several million dollars.

Even with the plan approved, the road could not be widened. The city owns the road. The county can't add to the road or just give the strip of land along the property to the city to widen the road. It's against state law. They would have to do a complicated land swap or sale. They are doing that at Martial Cottle Park to widen Branham Lane, but it's been taking years to work it out. It's much easier to do internal trails that are entirely on county property.

In presentations before the County Parks Commission and in meetings with park staff, FOSTP has advocated for giving priority to building the trails. It's been in and out of the park capital budget many times over the years. Finally, a plan to build a new trail was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on 1/26/21. Bids were opened in March. Construction began in June. The contractor was Terramark. The cost was \$342.2K. Tom McLauchlan was the project manager. Major construction was done by November, and the trail was opened up in mid-November, delayed from its original projected September opening. There will be a formal dedication ceremony on December 11 at 11 am at Santa Teresa Spring. The Friends of Santa Teresa Park will have an information table with activities, treats, and mementos.



Construction sign, showing project cost, contractor, manager, and dates

Early History of Rancho Santa Teresa

by Joan Murphy

Follow wide, easy, accessible walking trails through the Bernal Ranch and historic areas of Santa Teresa County Park and Neighborhood. These trails are ideal for families with toddlers, elderly folks, and teachers with classes of small children. You can begin the trails at the historic Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch House.

Jose Joaquin Bernal had been born in Sinaloa, Mexico to a Spanish Catalan family, and his mother was about 14 years old at the time of his birth. When he was about 13 or 14 years old, he accompanied his parents and Juan Bautista de Anza on a thousand mile journey, walking from Mexico to Alta California in 1775-76. He subsequently enlisted in the Spanish military as a “Leather Jacket Soldier.”

Years later, after his retirement from the military, he was awarded close to 10,000 acres in a Land Grant by the Spanish Governor. This was the land on which he established his ranch, which he called Rancho Santa Teresa. By the time of his death, he had 76 dependents.

The Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch House was built in the middle of the 19th Century for Rufina Bernal (a granddaughter of Joaquin Bernal), Rufina’s husband, Carlos Maria Gulnac, and their daughter Susan Gulnac, (who married an Irishman, Patrick Joice). In addition to the ranch house, the buildings included barns and a chicken coop. There was also a garden, an orchard, and a vineyard. The buildings were wooden rather than adobe. 19th Century American settlers who moved to California brought with them a preference for wooden buildings rather than Spanish adobes, and wooden buildings prevailed as the century advanced. Unfortunately, this was a significant cause of the depletion of California’s old growth oak and redwood forests.

Chores for the 19th Century housewife and her children included cleaning and emptying chamber pots, hauling water, caring for and slaughtering chickens, gathering their eggs; milking dairy cows, making butter, cheese, and ice cream; feeding and caring for farm animals, such as goats, pigs, dogs, and cats; making soap and tallow, laundry, ironing; spinning, weaving, knitting, and sewing clothes and bedding; tending the fire in the wood burning stove, which

was used to heat the house and cook and preserve food; planting and caring for the kitchen garden; and keeping fresh foods cold in an ice box with large blocks of ice.

Child-rearing was a large part of Hispanic ranch women’s work. Women tended to marry young—often 13 or 14 years of age. Families could have 5, 10, 15, or more children. One Hispanic lady, the wife of Rancher Secundino Robles, bore her husband 29 children. Robles Park in Palo Alto is named in Secundino’s memory. He was known not only for his large family, but also for his inordinate generosity and hospitality.

American women had few rights, could not vote, and often could not inherit or own property in their own right. Spanish women could own, manage, and dispose of property, and run a ranch or a business, like the water company of Jesusita Bernal. Spanish fathers occasionally left their estate to a favorite daughter, rather than one of their sons, such as in the case of the Piedmont Ranch and Adobe in Milpitas, California.

In 1492, Queen Isabella of Spain had personally led her army in battle when she defeated the Islamic Moors, who had ruled much of her country for over 700 years. Queen Isabella and her husband, Fernando, expelled the Moors back into North Africa, ending their Caliphate in Granada, and saving western Europe from further Islamic invasions from western North Africa. Isabella had 7 children. She brought her toddlers and other young children along with her army when she rode into battle against the army of the Caliphate. Although Spain was bankrupt after more than 700 years of war, that same year—1492, Isabella sold her family’s jewels to outfit Columbus in his voyage to America. Other European monarchs had refused to fund Columbus—and Mexico, and most of Central and South America are Hispanic to the present time.

Men on Spanish Land Grants handled the ranches and herds of cattle, mules, and the horses. They grew and harvested hay and silage for hundreds of cattle; fed, roped, branded, marketed, and slaughtered the animals; tanned the hides; and made saddles and other leather goods. They planted and cared for the ranches’ extensive vineyards and orchards. Valuable deposits of cinnabar and marl were found on Rancho Santa Teresa, which they mined. They hunted, fished, and protected their ranch animals from the grizzly bears, wolves, and cougars, which roamed the area in the 19th Century.

Spanish Californios held charreadas, bull and bear fights, and fandangos on their ranches. (A few women, as well as men, had begun practicing bull-fighting in Spain during the 17th and 18th Centuries.)

During and after the Mexican Revolution, Hispanic women began to participate too in charreadas—riding side saddle, with billowing, elaborately embroidered dresses, petticoats, boots, and sombreros, and exhibiting fantastic feats of horsemanship. In the 21st Century, bull fights are still



Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch House



Timeline in the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch's West Barn

being held in Atwater, California. Charreadas, desfiles, fandangos, and religious fiestas, like “El Dia de los Muertos”, are held throughout the State.

Spanish landholders employed Native American and Mestizo, as well as Spanish, vaqueros on their ranches. A few early Land Grants—like Rancho Los Coches, in San Jose, were actually awarded to Native Americans. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, after the Mexican-American War, Alta California was surrendered by Mexico to the United States. Native American lands were taken by American settlers, and immigrating American settlers mostly refused to employ Native Americans, except as slave laborers, or to intermarry with them.

After 1848, a bounty was put on the scalps of Native Americans by California. More money was paid for the scalps of Native American braves than for the scalps of Native women. Small amounts were paid, too, for the scalps of Native children.

The Spanish land holders rights under the Treaty were often not honored by American Courts. After the Treaty was signed, historic Spanish Land Grants were illegally squatted on by Americans. Herds of cattle, horses, and mules were stolen. Hispanic land holders were falsely accused of crimes they had not committed, were lynched, and had their properties illegally taken. A sizable portion of the original Spanish Land Grant of Jose Joaquin Bernal was lost at this time.

FOSTP Work Days at the Bernal Ranch

The Friends of Santa Teresa Park have been having almost monthly work days in the park at the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch on the first Friday of each month. The first was on Friday, April 2, 2021. It was a cleanup of weeds in front of the ranch house. Later work days included removing weeds from the garden boxes, trimming vegetation, cleaning up Santa Teresa Spring, cutting blackberry vines, and repairing erosion on the path to the spring. Here are pictures:



Dorene, Mike, & Youngmee at Santa Teresa Spring



Park Interpreter Rob with Mike, Woody, Marilyn, Joan, Ron, and Youngmee in front of the ranch house



Joan and Youngmee clearing weeds from the butterfly garden box

Santa Teresa Park News in Pictures



Unearthing time capsule by the Bear Tree Lot monument, 5/28/21



New memorial bench below Santa Teresa Spring



Trail work day on the Stile Ranch Trail, 11/6/21



Fire training, controlled burn, 7/1/21



Patrick Joice passed away on 8/18/21. He was the last of the Bernal Family descendants who owned Rancho Santa Teresa. He sold the ranch to IBM, who later sold it to Santa Clara County. The ranch he lived and worked on is now the Bernal-Gulnac-Joice Ranch. He came to many park events at the ranch. This is him at the Family Fandango on 8/1/09. The last time he came to a public event at the ranch was at La Fuente in 2018. He brought his family and memorabilia and talked to people about his life growing up on the ranch. Patrick's grandfather, also named Patrick Joice, married Susan Gulnac, who was the daughter of Carlos Gulnac and Rufina Bernal. Rufina's grandfather was Jose Joaquin Bernal, founder of Rancho Santa Teresa.

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