

Walkin' in the Footsteps of Joaquin Miller The California Writers Club's Role in Joaquin Miller Park

Background Information

Timeline	
1886	<p>"Poet of the Sierras" Joaquin Miller built his home, the "Abbey" and other structures on the land he called "The Hights" (his spelling) in the deforested Oakland Hills</p> <p>He began planting over 70,000 trees.</p>
1904	Joaquin Miller began building monuments
1906-1909 & Beyond	<p>After the 1906 SF earthquake, Jack London and his literary friends who formed the CWC met for outdoor salons--a "blanket and a basket of chow" --on the lands then-owned by Joaquin Miller.</p> <p>These legendary writers formed the CWC in 1909, making what is now Joaquin Miller Park the birthplace of the CWC.</p> <p>Outdoor artistic and literary events continued through the late 1980's.</p>
1913	<p>Joaquin Miller died.</p> <p>The CWC led the campaign to convince the City of Oakland to buy the lands and turn it into a public park.</p> <p>The CWC incorporated as nonprofit.</p> <p>The CWC adopted the words "Sail On" from Joaquin Miller's poem, <i>Columbus</i>, as its motto</p> <p>The CWC commissioned the woodcut of its logo.</p>
1914	The CWC published its first <i>West Winds</i> Anthology with contributions and editing by founding CWC members.
1917	The City of Oakland bought Joaquin Miller's land
1925	The CWC published its second <i>West Winds</i> , a book of verse.
1930	<p>The CWC began planting trees in honor of California writers who had made significant literary contributions. The CWC planted its first tree in honor of Joaquin Miller and the last one about 1985.</p> <p>The CWC idea of a Writers Memorial Grove grew, likely in response to Joaquin Miller's dream of an artistic retreat in the Oakland Hills.</p> <p>Over time, about 55 years, the CWC planted at least 60 trees in honor of poets George Sterling, and Ina Coolbrith and other legends such as Mark Twain, Jack London, Robert Louis Stevenson and many others. The CWC planted a tree in honor of the CWC itself.</p> <p>Later, the CWC honored at least three members of the Woodminster Committee with benches in lieu of a tree.</p> <p>The idea of a memorial to California writers grew. CWC members formed and led the Woodminster Committee for the next 11 years.</p>

1934	The Woodminster Project began with hillside clearing by the Works Projects Administration (WPA) laborers.
1936	Nationally-known landscape architect Howard Gilkey called in to oversee the Woodminster Project The “mechanics” of the electrified fountain at the recently-closed Pan Pacific Exposition saved for addition to the Woodminster Project
1941	CWC member Harry Noyes Pratt, one of the originators of the idea of planting memorial trees, read his poem, <i>Woodminster</i> at the dedication of the entire Woodminster area. Woodminster, the “Cathedral in the Woods” dedicated to past and future’ California Writers. The CWC recognized on the dedication program for its contribution.
1962	Joaquin Miller’s Abbey and surrounding structures (since burned in a fire) and perhaps the entire Park designated a National Historic Landmark
1974	The City of Oakland designated the Abbey (and perhaps the entire Park) a City Landmark.
1997	Grand Reopening of the restored “watercourses”, the Cascades and Fountains at Woodminster by the City of Oakland
~ 2005	Multiple Park users (but not the CWC) formed the Joaquin Miller Working Group (JMWG) to identify and build support for Park improvements.
2008	CWC member Joyce Krieg began to look for the California Writers Memorial Grove and identifying plaque with the idea of the CWC Central Board planting a tree in the Park for the CWC’s upcoming Centennial. (See her tales in three issues of “ <i>The Bulletin</i> ” beginning in “August-September 2008) Joyce found that the Writers Grove was not marked and the sign (not a plaque) was in poor condition and placed in an out-of-way location above the stage door of the outdoor theater. Further investigation led the CWC to the JMWG, most of whom were unaware of the CWC or the CWC’s early contributions to the Park.
2009	The JMWG held a Stewardship Meeting in February 2009 (before CWC joined) and identified two projects for that year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Restoration of Joaquin Miller’s Abbey -Creation of the Monuments Loop Trail, which includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -monuments built by Joaquin Miler -sites envisioned by the CWC’s Woodminster Committee, and the -California Writers Memorial Grove created by the CWC <p>The City declined a tree (offered by the CWC in honor of its 100th year birthday) due to the drought, budget cuts, and lack of funds for a park ranger to carry water to a new tree for at least two years. Instead, the CWC Central Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -joined the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park -donated a one-of-a-kind poster designed by CWC member Joyce Krieg to the City’s Parks and Recreation Department for display in the Park’s Ranger Station, and -authorized an expenditure of funds for signage directing people to the CWC Writers Memorial Grove.

	Five representatives from four Northern California branches participated in a photo opportunity celebrating the CWC's 100th year anniversary and groundbreaking for the restoration of Joaquin Miller's Abbey. The first step cleared the path to the Abbey and removed the dirt covering the creek.
2010 & Beyond	<p>The JMVG began its transition to a stand-alone nonprofit and adopted a new name, the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park (FoJMP). Your CWC representative is a board member.</p> <p>The Friends planned its first "gathering", a short business meeting and three tours designed to reintroduce the public to Joaquin Miller Park and its rich literary and natural history and artistic and recreational legacy. (see attachment and separate flyer for details on the April 25 Walkin' in the Footsteps of Joaquin gathering)</p> <p>The California History Tour, one of three hikes on April 25, will focus on the CWC's enduring legacy, which is Woodminster, the "Cathedral in the Woods" dedicated to past and future writers by the City of Oakland in 1941. Woodminster includes the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -California Writers Memorial Grove plus -The Cascades, fountains, pools, and 7,500-seat outdoor amphitheatre, and -Fire Circle <p>The FoJMP are developing a long-term project list. Opportunities to protect the CWC legacy and support the CWC mission include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - restoration the Writers Memorial Grove - revival of poetry and other readings at the Park - identification and news stories of the people, believed to be CWC members and poets, whose names are embedded in The Cascades' stones <p>Interested FoJMP members and other groups have begun germinating the idea of restoring the artistic/cultural/literary/naturalist events on an annual or biannual basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -April-annual meeting -September-Joaquin Miller's birthday

F-JMP & Park Facts

- 1) From an initial 40 or 50 acres (archival documents vary), Joaquin Miller Park is now about 500 acres (estimates also vary), about the same size as Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.
- 2) Today, the stakeholders (and interim board members) include:
 - Alameda County Historical Society
 - Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay
 - California Writers Club
 - City of Oakland
 - Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Park Rangers,
 - City Naturalist
 - City Councilmember & Staff
 - East Bay Regional Park District
 - Friends of Sausal Creek (runs a native plant nursery in the Park)
 - Hikers
 - Joaquin Miller Community Center Advisory Committee
 - includes Hillside Gardeners and East Bay Native Plant Society
 - Metropolitan Horsemen's Association
 - Neighbors
 - O'Dog (dog owners group)
 - Producer Associates (Woodminster Theatre Summertime Productions)
 - Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI)
- 3) For more information, go to www.calwriters.org and www.oaklandnet.com/joaquinmillerpark

Walkin' in Joaquin's Footsteps April 25, 2010 Gathering

What:	<p>First Annual Membership Meeting of the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park (FoJMP), followed by Three self-guided tours:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Flora & Fauna 2) Joaquin Miller-The Man, His Abbey (home) and His Monuments 3) California History-showcasing the <u>CWC's enduring legacy Woodminster</u>, The "Cathedral in the Woods" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dedicated to California Writers in 1941, - includes the California Writers Memorial Grove, plus - the cascades, fountains, and pools, and Fire Circle where CWC founding members met for literary/artistic salons.
When:	<p>Sunday, April 25</p> <p>10:00 am Annual Meeting (CWC will have a display table) 11:30 am <u>Self-guided</u> hikes start (and continue) through 3:00 pm</p>
Where:	<p><u>Joaquin Miller Park</u> in Oakland CA</p> <p>Meeting, displays, and hikes start at <u>The Meadow</u> How to get there: Enter the Park on Sanborn Rd off of Joaquin Miller Road Above Highway 13 at Lincoln Ave./Joaquin Miller Road Exit (Mormon Temple)</p> <p>Handicap Accessible and Shuttle Service from the Meadow to the sites</p>
Cost:	<p>Tours and meeting are free and open to the public FoJMP membership is \$25</p>
Why Important:	<p>The CWC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Formed at this site, in 1909, where Jack London met with his literary friends 2) Led the campaign to make the grounds a park, then created the California Writers Memorial Grove and then the vision for Woodminster from 1913-1941 3) Continued the tradition of outdoor salons through the late 1980's 4) Joined the FoJMP in 2009 [Central Board payment], 5) Donated a one-of-a-kind Centennial poster to the Park in 2009, and 6) Honored by City Council representative for its 100-year anniversary and contributions at the kick-off restoring the pathway to Joaquin Miller's Abbey (home.)
CWC Marketing & Volunteer Opps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Help to research/prepare early CWC history message on CWC Woodminster Committee members/select poems and excerpts from early CWC Members 2) Need four- to- six people to staff the display table and serve as a docent the day of the event. Note: stand at fixed site, limited walking 3) Opportunity to display sell sheets and other marketing material, especially for authors who have written on topics of interest to F-JMP stakeholders (see FoJMP Facts) 4) Read poems and excerpts from the literary works of early CWC members and share current work Note: readings on the theme of arts and nature encouraged <p>To volunteer contact Linda Brown (CWC-Berkeley) at BrownCalifornia@aol.com or 510-530-1261 and, to read your poetry or other literary works, contact Nina Egert (CWC-Mt. Diablo) at ninaegert@sbcglobal.net.</p>