# Head to the Hills:
# A History
# of Recreation in the Puente Hills

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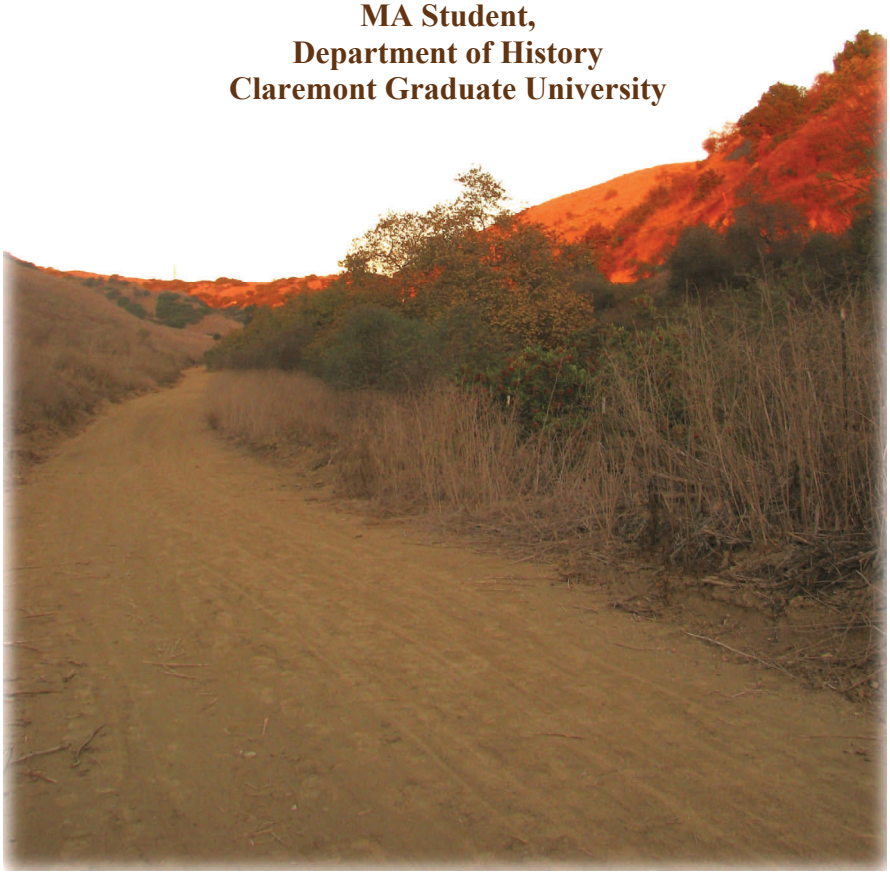

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Illustrations

*Introduction*

The thrill of adventure coupled with the exhilaration of the electrifying combination of fresh air and sunlight only begin to describe the abundant attractions of outdoor recreation. With mountains, oceans, and deserts all within easy distance and warm mild days that last all year, Southern California has long been a mecca for people seeking the perfect playground for their chosen activity. From slow-paced ramblers and Sunday drivers to the adrenaline driven mountain bikers and hunters, Southern California offers an activity to suit every personality. It would be safe to say there is not a geographical feature in the lower half of the state that has not been climbed over, walked on top of, driven upon, ridden across, or fished in.

For well over a hundred years, nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts flocked to California to partake in the wide variety of activities available to all who were willing. Life out of doors and the activities such a life allowed became a key part of California's identity very early on. To lure settlers westward, magazines, published as early as the 1880s and 1890s, extolled the virtues of the climate and the outdoor adventures waiting to be had.[1] California guidebooks from the first part of the 20th century contained passages applauding outdoor life:

> "We are all lovers of the life in the open. We are insurgents against sluggish existence, against wasting the bright sunshine of the world, against remaining prisoned up always between four walls and a roof. Boldly we make a declaration

[1] Joseph Backus, *Some Unusual California Magazines* (Los Angeles: The Book Club of California, 1975) 2.

that Americans in their traditional pursuits of happiness are, and of right ought to be, a free and out-of-doors people."[2]

Such gushing assertions verbalized the broad appeal of California. Outdoor recreation of all kinds became so prevalent in Southern California that even in one relatively small geographical area Californians found room for many different activities. The Puente Hills, in the last one hundred and fifty years, have been host to rodeos, hunters, bird watchers, fishermen, ramblers, hikers, horseback riders, bicyclists, Sunday drivers, historic trail reenactments, and artists. Individually, each activity illustrates the versatility of one relatively small naturally preserved area. Collectively, such activities underscore the importance of preserving an area for people to "be out in nature" enjoying activities that are an integral part of California's identity and history.

By using magazine articles, books, maps, and a variety of memoirs and individual recollections, this paper pieces together the various recreational activities that Californians have enjoyed in the Puente Hills for the last 200 years. Many of the activities played a key role in the history California's developing identity. None of them are possible without open land preserved in its natural state. While I have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, it is quite possible I have made omissions due to a lack of source material. I found a few diaries and eyewitness accounts to some early types of recreation, especially the rodeos and hunting. Records of personal experiences increased as I approached the present day. I found many contemporary personal accounts of mountain biking and hiking on the Internet. Guidebooks from all different decades proved useful with their suggestions about good places to hike or drive. There were a

[2] Aubrey Drury, *California: An Intimate Guide* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935) 543.

few newspaper clippings available although they were almost always written about the controversy surrounding the saving of the land with only brief sentences about the different types of recreation people enjoyed there. Sometimes I used postcards, maps, or artistic works to help recreate the story of specific activities. Altogether, I had to research the topic with care because there is not much written about the recreation in the area. Many people who enjoyed the Hills did not take the time to record their adventures. However, those that did have provided a fascinating view into the recreational history of the Puente Hills.

*Rodeos*

One of the earliest written records of outdoor recreation in the Puente Hills begins with the ranchos. Several large ranchos graced the base of the Puente Hills. Pio Pico (who was the last Mexican governor of California) laid claim to nine thousand acres of land in 1852. He built an elaborate home in which he frequently entertained guests with dining and dancing on the patio facing the hills.[3]

William Workman and John Rowland also owned large ranchos in the area. They received land grants from the Mexican Provincial government in 1842 for large parcels including pieces of the west side of the Puente Hills. They built homes, tended orchards and crops, and raised cattle. The cattle business resulted in the first recorded recreation in the Hills: the rodeos.

It was customary all over the western United States for cattle ranchers to allow their stock to roam in the hills foraging for food during the fall and winter months.

[3] William Wilcox Robinson, *When Ranchos Became Cities* (Pasadena: San Pasquel Press, 1939), 67.

Beginning as early as February, they sent the cowboys out to round up the cattle, sort, and brand them. This event typically lasted two or three days and was known as a rodeo. Often, people would come from the neighboring areas to watch the cowboys ride and rope the cattle. Although the main objective was work, informal competitions between cowboys occasionally occurred. It was not until the 1880's that the term "rodeo" began to take on its present day meaning when towns, capitalizing on the entertainment factor of the cattle round-ups, began hosting official competitions of bull riding and calf roping with paying spectators and a cash prize for the winner. [4]

In 1851, in an attempt to manage the burgeoning cattle business of California, the state legislature passed a statue entitled *Laws Concerning Rodeos, and Defining the Duties of Judges of the Plains*.[5] Among other things, this statute required that each rancho hold a rodeo annually for the purpose of rounding up its cattle. Although the statute made it law, eyewitness accounts from previous years indicated that the rancho owners had been holding rodeos annually since they had entered the cattle business. The owners made a tradition of inviting every family in the La Puente Valley to join them in the Hills to watch the riders work and enjoy a barbeque.

One of the attendees, Alice Karsten, recalled her experience with the rodeo in 1914:

[4] Wayne Wooden and Gavin Ehringer, *Wranglers, Roughstock, and Paydirt: Rodeos in America* (Lawrenc: University of Kansas Press, 1996), 10.
[5] Robert Glass Cleland, *Cattle on a Thousand Hills* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1941), 75.

"At noon a beef was broiled over live coals and all sat down at long tables under oak trees, where food was served in abundance. The rodeo was a thrilling sight for me, as I had never seen one before I came to live in Southern California…."[6] It was an event that drew people from all over Southern California. Karsten even recalled seeing the owner of Santa Catalina Island, Captain Phineas Banning, in attendance one year. However, after 1914, faced with the rapidly expanding population of the valley, the ranch owners decided to limit the invitation to just a few other ranch families.[7] Several years after that, through various financial mishaps and drought-related problems, the era of the ranchos came to close bringing an end to the days of the rodeo as anything other than a purely recreational activity.[8]

*Rambling*

Before the rise of the automobile, most hillside recreation involved walking. Walking constituted the primary mode of transportation for people involved in fishing, hunting, painting, and bird watching. It was also a chance for people to escape briefly from the rapidly growing cities that surrounded the area. It was this desire to escape the bustle of city life that drew many people to the Hills.

Recreational walking is an ancient activity. Theophrastus (370BC-285BC), a pupil of Aristotle, spent time rambling in the hills of Greece. His observations while rambling eventually lead him to write one of the first attempts at a comprehensive plant

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[6] Josette Laura Temple, *The Gentle Artist of the San Gabriel Valley: California History Preserved Through the Life and Paintings of Walter P. Temple Jr.* (Hong Kong: Stephens Press, LLC., 2004), 59.
[7] Temple, *The Gentle Artist*, 59.
[8] Once the cattle round-up rodeos began to disappear, some towns began holding competition rodeos in which cowboys used their skills to compete for a cash prize. I found no record of such competitions in the areas surrounding the Puente Hills.

catalogue of plants. Hundreds of years later, during the Renaissance, people of wealth surrounded their estates with "power gardens" which included grandiose displays of elaborate fountains and Greek and Roman sculptures. These "power gardens" displayed the economic prowess of the owners, but also included wide paths and fantastic vistas to encourage recreational rambling.[9]

In the early 19th century, Jane Austen's novels illustrated rambling as a time to think and in some cases, as an empowering activity for women. Most of her heroines spent time rambling alone over the hills of England. In Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, the heroine, Elizabeth Bennett, often headed out to ramble in the parks and hillsides using the time to be alone with her thoughts. Even the proud Mr. Darcy took note of "her love of solitary walks" in an affectionate way as if he considered her independence a positive character trait.[10]

American women also found recreation in rambling. Diaries and letters from the early 1800s tell of women spending peaceful afternoons walking alone in nature. In 1832, Catherine Marie Sedgwick wrote in a letter to Robert Sedgwick, "I devoted almost the whole of it [the day] rambling over the hills and by the river-side."[11] Four years later, Catherine Seely recorded in her diary: "No pleasure has been so often coveted through my confinement, as the indulgence of rambling among the rocky hills and valleys near the home of my childhood, where I have enjoyed such sweet solitude…"[12] That many

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[9] Andrew Cunningham, *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. N. Jardine, J.A. Secord, and E.C. Spary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 42.

[10] Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Champaign: Project Gutenberg, 2000), 98, http://www.netlibrary.com.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu/Reader/. Originally published in 1813.

[11] Ann Willson, *Familiar Letters of Ann Willson* (Philadelphia: Wiiliam D. Parrish & Co., 1850), 270.

[12] Catharine Seely, *Memoir of Catharine Seely, Late of Darien, Connecticut* (New York: Collins, Brother & Co., 1843),140.

women took the time to record their experiences and love of rambling suggests that the freedom to wander along in nature played an important role in their lives.

As cities and towns expanded and roads became more ubiquitous, some people recognized the danger of losing the ever-shrinking wild space in which to wander. The necessity of natural spaces became one of the themes of the Transcendental Movement. In 1862, Henry David Thoreau wrote an essay entitled "Walking," in which he contemplated the importance of having wild places to walk. He writes, "When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall?"[13] True rambling allowed a kindred connection with nature, a connection that could not be forged in the walled confines of a garden or estate. Thoreau believed this connection to play key role in humanity.

Over one hundred years later in her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking,* Rebecca Solnit revisited Thoreau's thoughts on walking and came to the conclusion that walking and thinking are profoundly connected. She writes, "On foot everything stays connected, for while walking one occupies the spaces between those interiors in the same way one occupies those interiors. One lives in the whole world rather than in interiors built up against it."[14] Solnit's belief that walking is essential to thinking and Thoreau's emphasis of the critical connection with nature suggest that rambling in unimproved nature filled an ever-widening void in humanity.

In California, the dramatic nature of much of the landscape underscored this critical connection with nature. One of California's first nature writers, Mary Austin

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[13] Henry David Thoreau, *Walking* (Boulder: Netlibrary, 1999), 2, http://www.netlibrary.com.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu/Reader/. Originally published in 1862.
[14] Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust:A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 9.

understood this connection well. In her autobiography *Earth Horizon* she writes of the visceral experience of being out in nature:

"There was something else there besides what you find in the books; a lurking, evasive Something, wistful, cruel, ardent; something that rustled and ran…and when you turned from it, leaped suddenly and fastened on your vitals. This is no mere figure of speech, but the true movement of experience. Then, and ever afterward, in the wide, dry washes and along the edge of the chaparral, Mary was beset with the need of being along with this insistent experiential pang for which the wise Greeks had the clearest name concepts…fauns, satyrs, the ultimate Pan. Beauty-in-the-wild, yearning to be made human."[15]

Not all people felt as poetically about nature as Austin did. Tensions developed between ramblers and various other groups. In England, the rights of ramblers prevailed over the right of property owners. Fences could surround private property, but the landowners must provide stiles to assist ramblers over the fences. In America however, private property owners built fences around their property to keep livestock in and people out. Ramblers began to run out of unbroken stretches of land long enough for a decent walk.

Automobile drivers provided another point of tension with ramblers. Roads were cut into hillsides and up mountains to improve accessibility by car. In 1913, the head of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather, opened Yosemite National Park to automobile traffic. In seven years the number of visitors exploded from 356,000 to 1.3

[15] Mary Austin, *Earth Horizon: Autobiography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1932), 19.

million.[16] No longer the same serene and quiet place for rambling and communing with nature, machinery came in to establish and widen roads. Now accessible to nearly everyone who owned a car, people filled the once pristine area.

The struggle between accessibility and preserving nature played out on a much smaller scale in the Puente Hills. Before much of the Puente Hills came to be protected as part of the Habitat Authority, ramblers were both a blessing and a curse to the natural state of the area.[17] As early as 1939, the National Audubon Society purchased one hundred acres and created a nature preserve was developed along the banks of the San Gabriel River.[18] Known first as the San Gabriel River Sanctuary and then as the Audubon Center of Southern California, guidebooks heralded the area as "dedicated to promote the understanding of man's relationship with the natural world."[19] Signs encouraged the people to walk the trails and observe all that surrounded them. One of the guidebooks cautioned that, "Picnicking, pets and recreational games are not allowed in the sanctuary. But the fascination of following the bright flash of a cardinal, or an insect fall, or a spider's egg sac…can be quietly satisfying." The author also noted that school and youth groups frequented the area as part of their nature study education.[20] In 1970, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation acquired control of the area

[16] Ted Steinberg, *Down the Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 241.
[17] The Puente Hills Native Habitat Preservation Authority (referred to as "Habitat Authority") is the government park agency that manages the Puente Hills.
[18] The National Audubon Society began at the very end of the 19th century as an organization dedicated to the preservation of wildlife, particularly birds. In 1904 enthusiasts formed a chapter in Los Angeles. I could not find any specific information as to when the independent Whittier chapter was established.
[19] Russ Leadabrand, *Exploring California Byways Vol.2: In and Around Los Angeles Trips for a Day or a Weekend* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1968), 20.
[20] Leadabrand, *Exploring California Byways*, 23.

from the National Audubon Society and absorbed it into the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area.[21]

However, not everyone who hiked in the area was there to enjoy nature in its primitive state. In a book about the history of Whittier, written in 1933, the two authors, Benjamin Arnold and Artilissa Clark, described the sad lack of recreational development in the Hills. They record their experience hiking up Mount Lookout "the summit of the Puente Range, East of Whittier."[22] However, rather than enjoying the natural surroundings, they lamented the fact that it was not more developed:

> "Simply a story of inability followed up by a lack of foresight: Oft did the first settlers say to each other---'Too bad we can't get water enough to pipe to Lookout.' Could there have been 100 acres of the summit dedicated to Whittier, water piped to it, trees, shrubs, and flowers planted and cared for, park accommodations provided, good roads laid from E. Penn street and the Skyline Drive…by 1915 it would have been the best, most famous, most cheerful and instructive recreation park in the state; and have long ago put Whittier in the middle of the map."[23]

Instead of enjoying what nature had to offer, they took it upon themselves to offer suggestions to improve the area and the accessibility. Their page-long description of improvements that should be made to Mount Lookout ends with the exultation that, if

[21] The Whittier Narrows Recreation Area refers to the area of land behind the Whittier dam (built in the 1950s by the Army Corp of Engineers).
[22] Benjamin Arnold and Artilissa Dorland Clark, *The History of Whittier* (Whittier: Western Printing Corp., 1933), 387.
[23] Arnold and Clark, *The History of Whittier*, 387.

their suggestions were followed, future generations would get to enjoy being "not only 'Next to Nature,' but on top of it."[24]

The desire to provide the public with an orderly packaged sense of nature was not unique to the Clark and Arnold. In the late 19th century and into the early part of the 20th century, many people began to recognize the importance in human development of a connection with nature. In order to provide that connection to everyone, nature had to "packaged" and accessible. City parks became an important feature of city planning. Frederick Law Olmsted played an important role in the development of city parks. In 1858, he created the design for New York's Central Park. He recognized the importance of constructing a "nature" area in the middle of a city to provide immediate escape for city-dwellers.[25]

This constructed sense of nature continued through the 20th century. In one sense, nature became a commodity. To provide a controlled nature experience to the city and suburban youth, those parents who could afford to do so sent their children to summer camps. Churches set up charities to provide one-day nature excursions for slum children in hopes of improving their sense of morality by controlled exposure to nature.[26] Educators began including the study of nature in city classrooms.[27] All over the country, people explored different ways to get back to nature in quick and convenient ways.

While many environmentalists expressed dismay at the hordes of people cluttering the once untouched wilderness, many environmental victories also marked the

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[24] Arnold and Clark, *The History of Whittier*, 388.
[25] Julius Fabos, Gordon Milde, and V. Michael Weinmayr, *Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.: Founder of Landscape Architecture in America* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 12.
[26] Peter Schmidt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 97.
[27] Schmidt, *Back to Nature*, *xix*.

first part of the 20th century. Large areas of land such as Yellowstone and Yosemite were set aside and protected from rampant development as national and state parks.[28] Nature preserves became more prevalent. People realized, as more and more development rose around them, that the protection of open space was important for many reasons, not the least of which was to provide a temporary escape from the cities.

As for the Puente Hills, the suggestions of Clark and Arnold went unheeded. Mount Lookout (present-day Workman Hill) remains covered in scrub brush and simple trails, relatively untouched. Many other similar trails crisscross the hills just as they have for the last hundred years providing ramblers with miles and miles of undeveloped wilderness in which to "re-connect" with nature.

*Juan Bautista de Anza Trail*

Some people came to hike the Hills for more than just spectacular views and exercise. Some came to participate in historical reenactments on the Juan Bautista de Anza trail. Juan Bautista De Anza traveled near the Puente Hills on his journey from Nogales, Mexico to San Francisco in 1775-76. The Spanish government saw the need to protect their possession of the Californian coast from the British and Russians. They commissioned an expedition to forge a trail running the length of their territory to be used as a supply line. Anza, a captain of the Tubac Presidio near the present-day border of Arizona and Mexico, volunteered to lead the trailblazing expedition. The trail he forged allowed troops and supplies to travel with greater ease and speed and encouraged settlers

[28] To say the areas of National Park were "protected" when they were first founded is slightly controversial. Although they were saved from rampant development, it has taken (and some would say still is taking) the government quite sometime to figure out the most effective way to really protect the areas from human damage.

to venture into the new territory and establish themselves. He set out in October of 1775 following old Indian trails and some footpaths cut by earlier Spanish explorers. By cutting the additional trail needed to string the various paths together, he was able to lead a group of soldiers, cowboys, women, children, horses, and cattle twelve hundred miles in five months.[29]

Parts of the trail still in exist today. Although warring Yuma Indians shut down the original supply trail in 1781, ranchers, soldiers, and forty-niners used sections of the trail during the next century.[30] In 1968, Congress passed the National Trails System Act that protected and provided some restoration for many national scenic and recreational trails. However, the government did not recognize historic trails as a category of national trails until 1978. Even with this new category, the exclusion of Juan Bautista de Anza trail from the Act lasted until 1990. Despite the lack of federal recognition, the two states that shared the trail (California and Arizona) officially recognized its importance several decades earlier. In 1975, as the nation prepared to celebrate the bicentennial of the American Revolution, the California and Arizona committees directed their attention to the bicentennial of the Anza trail.

In the eyes of the two states' bicentennial committees, blazing the trail was almost as significant as the American Revolution. The Revolution established America's east coast boundaries and released America from British control, while the Anza trail established Spanish control of the west coast and secured it against the Russians and the British. Using the geographical and chronological record in Anza's journal, the committees organized a costumed reenactment of his twelve hundred mile journey. It

[29] John Thompson, *America's Historic Trails*, (D.C.: National Geographic, 2001), 18.
[30] Thompson, *America's Historic Trails*, 28.

was this reenactment that helped generate interest that eventually led to the trail's inclusion in the list of federally recognized and protected historic trails.[31]

While Anza's actually journey did not cross the Puente Hills, the recreational trail named the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail does cut up into the Hills following another trail called Skyline Trail. Jim Donovan of the National Park Service explained that they chose to establish the Anza trail there because Skyline trail provided an already established and maintained trail and the surrounding scenery was most like what Anza would have experienced.[32] It is unclear which route the 1976 re-enactment chose to follow. They did camp at Whittier Narrows as journal entries from Anza's journey show that he camped there on January 3, 1776.[33] Because the re-enactment followed Anza's journals, they probably took his original route, rather than using the recreational Anza trail.

One of the participants, Frank Riley, published a book in 1976 about his journey the previous year. Instead of riding horses in costume, he and his wife elected to ride the trail on their bicycles. He writes of their experience, "Tracing and retracing the entire route in the autumn of 1975, we wanted to find out if the Anza trail still could fascinate contemporary travelers in California…we found it to be an overwhelming sensory and learning experience."[34] He recalls biking past the Whittier Narrows Nature Center and the Wildlife Sanctuary and then watching a group of riders in full costume leaving the San Gabriel Mission and following the trail across the San Fernando Valley.[35]

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[31] Nancy Dupont, *The Juan Bautista de Anza Trail*, http://www.thepure/anza-trail/george.htm

[32] Jim Donovan (National Park Service), e-mail correspondence with Andrea Gullo, December 5, 2006. Cited with permission.

[33] *Campsites from Anza's Second Expedition*, http://anza.uoregon.edu/overviews/campsites.html.

[34] Frank Riley, *De Anza's Trail Today: A Guide to Fascinating Discoveries for Bicentennial Travel in California* (Los Angeles: Worldway Publishing Company, 1976), 2.

[35] Riley, *De Anza's Trail*, 5 & 63.

Although the 1976 reenactment is considered the most historic, smaller reenactments still occur periodically in effort to heighten awareness and raise money for trail restoration. Some re-enactments use the recreational Anza trail and some follow the original. Almost all of them make stops in the Whittier Narrows. Nancy Dupont was one of the participants in a 1996 re-enactment that stopped for a presentation in the Whittier Narrows. She recalls her experience in "Recap on the Relay." "Like Anza, we were not alone. As we passed through each of the twenty counties new riders in costume joined us to be part of a living history reenactment. Over 130 costumed riders followed us…."[36] Her itinerary of the trip shows that bicyclists, horseback riders, and runners all joined the journey at various points in the trip.[37]

The reenactments take on many shapes and sizes, from full blown costumed reenactments and relays to more humble annual walks of sections of the trails to commemorate the anniversary each year. Because of the lack of records, I was unable to determine how many have occurred and how many people have participated.

Aside from the reenactments, many people hike parts of the trail on a regular basis purely for recreation. Several historical trail guide books recommend hiking it in reverse (from San Francisco to Nogales) as traveling in that direction allows one to "depart the heavily urbanized areas of California for some of the states wilder corners---rather like taking a trip back in time."[38] The trail directs hikers to the recreational trail through the Puente Hills. The trail cuts through a truly amazing variety of ecosystems

[36] Nancy Dupont, e-mail message to author, September 4, 2006.
[37] Nancy Dupont, e-mail message to author, September 4, 2006.
[38] Nancy Dupont, e-mail message to author, September 4, 2006.

crossing coastal areas, mountains, and desert providing hikers with all the variety California has to offer.

*Painting the Hills*

The completion of the Los Angeles/Chicago railroad line in 1885 brought a real estate boom to Los Angeles. As the area grew, professional artists began to arrive and make their homes in the burgeoning city.[39] In the art world, the end of the 19th century witnessed the evolution of the French Impressionist Movement into Post Impressionism in Europe. However, in America, Impressionism was just becoming popular in 1900.

Technically, Impressionism is defined as work featuring "a wide-ranging chromaticism; an absence of black and related neutral tones; a use of colored shadows…and the exploration of light and atmosphere."[40] One of the techniques used by Impressionists, was called *Plein Air* (Plain Air) painting. *Plein Air* painting focuses on the simplicity and beauty of nature. One of its most notable attributes was that it involved finishing a painting on site rather than simply making a sketch and then completing the work back in the studio. In California, with roughly three hundred and sixty fair weather days a year and (in the early 1900s) an abundance of wilderness, *Plein Air* painting flourished.

The California Art Club, founded in 1909 by several artists, brought the artists of the area together hoping to foster a bond of fellowship among artists in the Los Angeles area. The Club also provided a venue for the women artists in the area to participate in

[39] Ruth Lilly Westphal, *Plein Air Painters of California: The Southland* (Irvine: Westphal Publishing, 1982), 20.
[40] William H. Gerdts and Will South, *California Impressionism* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998), 10.

group shows.[41] From the records of the Club's yearly competitions it was clear that *Plein Air* dominated the art scene. Many of the pieces produced during the first few decades did not have specific locations included in the descriptions. However there were many with such titles as "Golden Hills," "California Hills," and "The Canyon Road." The close proximity of many of the artists' homes to the Whittier/La Puente area made it likely that at least some of these unidentified locations were in the Puente Hills.

A few artists did identify their pastoral landscapes as being from the area in question. Tom Lewis (1909-1979) spent much of his professional life in Southern California. He painted a picture entitled "San Gabriel Valley" which was exhibited in the California Art Club's annual competition in 1933. John Frost (1890-1937), a more famous Southern California Plein Air painter, also painted a picture with the same title. Frost exhibited his painting at a competition a decade earlier, in 1923. Jane McDuffie Thurston exhibited a painting in 1923 entitled "Puente Hills" although almost the only record of her or her painting was the listing from the Club's competition that year.[42]

While many of the Plein Air painters of California occasionally may have ventured to the Whittier area to paint the hills, at least one painter spent a good portion of his life there. Walter P. Temple Jr. (1909-1998) grew up in the areas surrounding the Hills. He was the great-grandson of ranch owner William Workman. In 1917, when Walter was eight years old, his family purchased 75 acres of the original Workman family homestead. They began renovating and remodeling the buildings which had fallen into disrepair. As a grown up, he spent many hours painting in the Puente Hills and surrounding area. His daughter, who recorded his life's work in a recently published

[41] Eric Merrel, *California Art Club*, http://www.californiaartclub.org/home/history.shtml.
[42] Eric Merrel, *California Art Club*, http://www.californiaartclub.org/home/history.shtml. Other organizations had previously denied women the right to show their paintings in group shows.

book entitled *The Gentle Artist of the San Gabriel Valley: California History Preserved Through the Life and Paintings of Walter P. Temple* (Stephens Press: 2004), recalled his passion for capturing images of the area:

> "Inexorably, time was bringing changes to Father's life and his beautiful city….He knew that, if future generations were to value the history of the areas, such landmarks must somehow be preserved. He began to record them in sketches, watercolors, and oils as gifts to share with those who might appreciate them."[43]

Most of his work is still owned by the Temple family, however the previously mentioned book contains a very good collection of his paintings for all to see.[44]

*Driving*

In the early part of the 20th century, an invention came along that revolutionized American life, particularly recreation. Henry Ford developed a factory that used an assembly line to mass-produce the Model T automobile.[45] Mass production allowed Ford to keep the price of the vehicle low enough to be affordable to middle class Americans. Sales skyrocketed as Americans took to the roads. In 1909, Ford's factory produced 11,000 Model Ts. The following year, it produced 19,000 and by 1920, almost a million.[46]

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[43] Temple, *The Gentle Artist*, 18.

[44] I contacted the Whittier Art Galley to ask about the local interest in painting the Hills. Very few artists have painted in the Hills recently, but several of the local artists are putting together a group in hopes of changing that.

[45] One of Henry Ford's descendents, Benson Ford Jr. donated eight acres of land to the Habitat Authority in 1997. He also provided $20,000 to clean up home site that had been destroyed in a fire. Andrea Gullo, e-mail message to author, December 5, 2006.

[46] Arthur Evans, *The Motor Car* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 18.

The Model T dramatic changed the way Americans lived. With individual means of transportation for family units now available, people ventured out to explore.[47] Driving itself became a new form of recreation. People packed up family and a picnic in the car and headed out to enjoy the scenery. In 1915, just seven short years after the first production line Model T hit the market, a book was published entitled *On Sunset Highways: A Book of Motor Rambles in California*. The author, Thomas D. Murphy, extolled the benefits of automobile travel particularly in Southern California. He writes, "One can not get the best idea of this wonderful country from the railway train….The motor that takes one into the deep recesses of the hill and valley to infrequented nooks long the seashore and, above all, to the slopes and summits of the mountains, is surely the nearest approach to the ideal."[48] His descriptions did not include any drives up through the Puente Hills, although he did describe a pleasant drive through Whittier including the best places to stop for picnics.[49]

His omission of any roads in the Puente Hills is not surprising. Turnbull Canyon Road, considered one of the first scenic roads through the area, was under construction the year his book was published. In 1913, three developers built a new subdivision called North Whittier Heights (now known as Hacienda Heights). To provide easy access to the new subdivision from Whittier, they began construction of a road through Turnbull

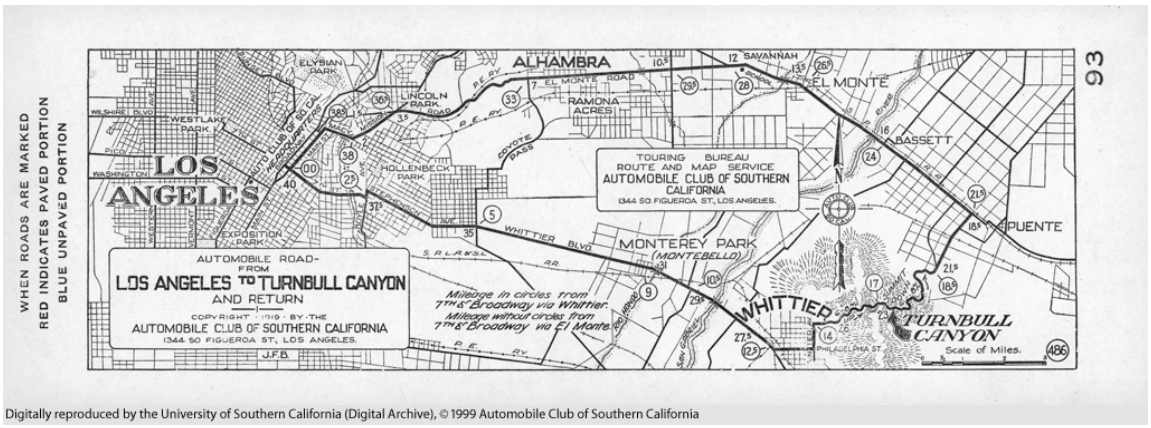
[47] People did have access to trains and stagecoaches, but for the everyday and weekend trip purposes, the automobile opened up many new possibilities.
[48] Thomas D. Murphy, *On Sunset Highways: A Book of Motor Rambles in California* (Boston: The Page Company, 1915), 1st page of preface.
[49] Murphy, *On Sunset Highways*, 33.

Canyon.[50] A postcard dated 1915, showing the construction, suggests that it was at least two years before the road was finished.


Postcard from 1915 showing Turnbull Canyon Road
Courtesy of Workman Temple Museum

Although the road was built to provide easier access to a subdivision, it was not long before it also became known as a scenic drive. The Automobile Club of Southern California, which was founded in 1900, offered small strip maps entitled "Automobile Road from Los Angeles to Turnbull Canyon and Return" as early as 1919.[51] The maps provide round trip directions, indicating that the Auto Club clearly designed them to guide the motorist through an afternoon or weekend recreational drive (rather than to simply provide directions to North Whittier Heights). The automobile had become a means for escaping city life.

[50] Loverne Morris, *The Historical Volume and Reference Words: Volume II, Los Angeles County* (Whittier: Historical Publishers, 1963), 84.
[51] Automobile Club of Southern California, *Map of Turnbull Canyon*, http://digarc.usc.edu:8089/cispubsearch/objectdetails.jsp?objectname=acsc-m84.





Automobile Road from Los Angeles to Turnbull Canyon and the Return 1919
Copyright 1999 Automobile Club of Southern California
USC Digital Archives

As exploring by automobile grew in popularity, various cities and organizations built roads to allow access by car to areas previously inaccessible. In the early 20th century, head of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather, pushed for improvements to Tioga Pass Road which crossed over the Sierras and drops into Yosemite Valley. He also lobbied for the creation of the Going to the Sun Highway through Glacier National Park.[52] The author of a tourist guide to California published in 1935 noted that "Mountaineering by motor is a summer recreation well established in this Western land….Not a few of California's peaks, as we have seen, are scaled by winding automobile boulevards…."[53] Apparently some Californians were frustrated when they were unable to drive all the way up to a vista point. In the previously mentioned *History of Whittier*, Arnold and Clark bemoaned the fact that nobody had taken the initiative to pave a road to the top of Mount Lookout (present-day Workman Hill).[54] Their dismay at the lack of access certain lent credibility to the statement of another tourist guidebook

[52] Richard Sellers, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale Univeristy Press, 1997), Chp 3, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sellars/intro.htm.
[53] Aubrey Drury, *California: An Intimate Guide* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935), 546.
[54] Arnold and Clark, *History of Whittier*, 388.

published in 1948 that explained, "They [Californians] are more addicted to motor cars than any other people."[55]

Addictions aside, the accessibility of cars transformed the concept of weekend recreation. It provided people access to more remote areas, allowing them to enjoy nature without the physical exertion. This made nature accessible to more people. However, the advent of recreational motoring also aided in the decline of purely "natural" places. Along with easier access came development, pavement, and crowds, all of which detracted from the "nature" that people were seeking. The debate about how best to protect areas, while still providing access, gained intensity and led to some parks (such as Zion National Park and the Giant Sequoia Grove in Yosemite) banning private cars from particular areas.

*Recreational Hunting*

For many years, the ramblers and painters shared the Hills with an older but more controversial recreational activity. The first written record of recreational hunting in the Puente Hills occurred in 1906. Charles Frederick Holder, a naturalist and hunter from the Pasadena area, wrote a book about his experiences hunting in the local area. While Holder did seem prone to exaggeration, there was probably some truth to his tales. He described one of his favorite places to hunt as "the hilltops here…form the spur of the Sierra Madre, that reaches down toward Los Angeles and the east, merging into the Puente Hills, a splendid winter highway for game where there is cover, and for coyotes

[55] Lee Shippey, *It's an Old California Custom* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1948), 26.

any time." He recalled spotting mountain lion tracks around the San Gabriel Mission and tracking the lion with the hounds until they lost the scent as the lion entered the Hills.[56]

Holder's stories of tracking mountain lions seemed to be typical of much of the hunting in Southern California during this period and illustrate the controversial nature of the sport. Mountain lions were notorious for attacking livestock and, occasionally, people. For the first half of the 20th century, the state of California offered a bounty for lion pelts. Renowned lion hunter Jay Bruce claimed to have killed more than five hundred lions in California during his career.[57] However, the tide turned in the early 1970s. Fearing extinction, the state legislature placed a four-year moratorium on mountain lion hunting. Through various extensions, the moratorium eventually spanned sixteen years. In 1990, much to the dismay of many big game hunters, Proposition 117 made the moratorium permanent and established that California must spend at least thirty million dollars a year on the protection of wildlife habitat until 2020.[58]

Written records contain little detail about hunting in the Puente Hills after the 1950s. As the population of the surrounding cities grew and the preservation battles for the land began, recreational hunting in the area dwindled.[59] Now the land is considered a sanctuary for many different species of animals, forcing recreational hunters to look elsewhere for large and small game.[60]

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[56] Charles Frederick Holder, *Life in the Open: Sport with Rod, Gun, Horse, and Hound in Southern California* (New York: G.P. Putnams, 1906), 21.
[57] Neasham, *Wild Legacy*, 131.
[58] Dr. Gerald H. Meral, *The Mountain Lion Foundation*, http://www.mountainlion.org/prop117guide.asp#How%20it%20works.
[59] As the Puente Hills became a popular recreation area, the danger hunting posed to other people in the Hills probably became a contributing factor to the hunting restrictions however I found no documentation of this.
[60] Unfortunately, rangers still occasionally find deer that poachers have injured with arrows. Andrea Gullo of the Habitat Authority, e-mail correspondence with author, December 5, 2006.

The history of hunting in the Puente Hills outlines the controversy that surrounds the sport. Those who enjoy hunting often found themselves losing favorite hunting grounds to development or preservation. Groups on both sides of the issue (like the Humane Society of the United States and the National Rifle Association) lobbied the government for legislation to either protect animals or the rights of hunters. Most of the tension between the two groups began when hunting shifted from being a necessity to a recreation.

No clear shift from hunting out of necessity to hunting for recreation is evident. In the United States, proof of recreational hunting exists from the 18th century. In 1787, Mary Dewees recorded in her diary, "The gentlemen pass their time in hunting deer, turkeys, ducks, and every other kind of wild fowl, with which this country abounds."[61] While they probably ate what the men killed that day, the phrase "pass their time" suggested that the activity was one of pleasure rather than necessity.

As it became more recreational, some people became upset with what they viewed as unnecessary killing. The treatment of animals became an important issue for some people. Animal rights groups began forming. In 1877, a group of people galvanized by a horrific child abuse case, joined together to form the American Humane to promote the ethical treatment of children and animals.[62] They lobbied the government for animal friendly legislation. Groups like the National Rifle Association (which had formed six years early) did their best to protect the hunter's rights. As open space became scarce, environmental groups joined the fight against hunters in effort to preserve nature habitats and endangered species.

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[61] Mary Coburn Dewee, *Mrs. Mary Dewees's Journal from Philadelphia to Kentucky, 1787-1788* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1904), 17.
[62] Marie Wheatley, *American Humane*, http://www.americanhumane.org/.

In California, the state legislature became involved because of a rapid growth in population. The massive influx of people during the Gold Rush in the 1850s caused certain species, such as elk, antelope, deer, quail, and mallards, to become drastically over-hunted. In an effort to control the problem, the state legislature approved a law in 1852 that provided a "closed season" for hunting in eleven different counties. Two years later, they extended the "closed season" to all counties including Los Angeles. In 1907, the government passed a law requiring all hunters to purchase annual licenses. The government used the money collected from the licenses to establish game farms to help replenish the animals killed during the season.[63]

*Mountain Biking*

Bicycling became popular in the United States around the 1850s.[64] However, mostly men enjoyed the activity. In the 1890s, new developments in bicycle design made it appealing to women as well. It became so popular with women that by 1897 the Sears Roebuck Catalogue offered several pages filled with bicycle leggings for women and "The most easy, most popular, and most scientific bicycle shoe ever made!"[65] Marie Ward wrote an entire book in 1896 called *The Common Sense of Bicycling: Bicycling for Ladies*. The book included information on mounting and dismounting, how to fix a bicycle, and what to wear while engaging in the activity.[66] For women particularly,

[63] Aubrey V. Neasham, *Wild Legacy: California Hunting and Fishing Tales* (Berekley: Howell-North Books, 1973), 161.
[64] Federick Alderson, *Bicycling: A History* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), 33.
[65] Fred Israel, ed. *Sears Roebuck & Company 1897* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968), 207.
[66] Marie Ward, *The Common Sense of Bicycling: Bicycling for Ladies* (New York: Berntano's, 1896), table of contents.

bicycling opened up a new world for them. It allowed them to escape outside the sphere of family surveillance and control their destination.[67]


Advertisement from the Sears Catalogue, 1897.
*Sears Roebuck & Company 1897* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968), 207.

The bicycle craze of the 1890s slowed down as the middle class bicycle market experienced saturation. Soon, advertisements for cars replaced the advertisements for bicycles in magazines.[68] However, the bicycle remained quietly popular. When the building of the Whittier Dam in the 1950s created the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, bicyclist flocked to it.

While biking in the relatively flat Whittier Narrows proved to be a popular pastime, the much more recent development of mountain biking allowed people to actually bike up into the Hills. Mountain biking did not make an appearance in the

[67] Ellen Garvey, "Reframing the Bicycle: Advertising-Supported Magazines and Scorching Women," *American Quarterly* 47, no.1 (March 1995): 74, http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.libraries.claremont.edu.
[68] Garvey, "Reframing the Bicycle," 96.

written records of the Puente Hills until the 1980s. Some debate about the birth of the sport exists, however, the most popular story credits Gary Fisher, a bike mechanic, with inventing the bicycle now known as the "mountain bike." In 1974, Fisher took a 1940s bike with big balloon tires and modified it by adding gears and a few other pieces of equipment salvaged from other bikes. He called his contraption "Clunker" and proceeded to ride his new invention around on hiking trails in the area.[69] With the wider knobby tires and the variety of gears, the bike was well suited to hill climbing and the rough off road terrain. As word spread of the "Clunker," orders poured in. Soon, mountain biking was well on its way to becoming a full fledged outdoor sport.

As the number of mountain bikers grew, tensions flared between hikers and riders. In 1964, before the invention of the mountain bike, Congress passed the Wilderness Act which prohibited the use of any motorized or mechanical transportation in areas designated as wilderness.[70] Because a bike is considered "mechanical" it was excluded from any area protected by the Wilderness Act. With groups like the Sierra Club supporting the ban of mountain bikes from wilderness areas, the mountain bikers formed their own groups to prevent the closure of any more trails.[71] The first such group was the National Off-Road Bicycle Association founded in 1983.[72]

It is unclear when mountain biking found its way to the Puente Hills. However, a newsletter published by the "Friends of the Hills" in 1988 mentioned the sport as one of

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[69] Chris Hayhurst, *Mountain Biking! Get on the Trail* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2000), 11.
[70] Dennis Coelle, *The Complete Mountain Biker* (New York: Lyons & Burford Publishers, 1989), 107.
[71] It should be noted that many Sierra Club chapters now include a mountain bike committee whose sole purpose is to foster good relations between hikers and riders.
[72] Hayhurst, *Mountain Biking*, 13.

the many activities taking place in the Hills.[73] Another of the "Friends of the Hills" newsletters from February of 2000 states that a group of bikers had riding regularly for fifteen years, putting the starting date in 1985.[74] As there is very little written record about this form of recreation in the Puente Hills, it is nearly impossible to know when the first mountain biker rode through the Hills. However, it is obvious that at least since 1985, mountain biking has been an important part of hillside recreation.

*Conclusion*

Many of the activities mentioned in this paper still occur on a regular basis in the Puente Hills. Mountain biking continues to be popular, albeit slightly controversial. On-line reviewers of the trail urge fellow bikers to stay on the trails and yield to hikers. Occasional conflicts between the two groups occur.[75] Members of the Boy Scouts of America and the Sierra Club both regularly hike in the Hills.[76] Also, the Whittier Chapter of the Audubon Society holds regular bird walks in Sycamore Canyon.[77]

Renowned naturalist John Muir wrote:

"The tendency nowadays to wander in the wildernesses is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that

[73] "Friends of the Whittier Hills" "Hillside Herald" Vol 5 #12 Record Group 2, Unit A Shelf 14, Box 1& 2 combined
[74] "Friends of the Whittier Hills" "Hillside Herald" Vol 17, #1, Record Group 2/2/17, Unit A, Shelf 14, Box 1&2.
[75] *Mountain Bike Trail Reviews*, http://www.socalmtb.com/socal/trails/turnbull.htm?list=reviews.
[76] Andrea Gullo of the Habitat Authority, e-mail message to author, December 5, 2006.
[77] *Sycamore Canyon Sunday Morning*, http://www.whittieraudubon.org/arroyo_pescadero_sunday_mornings.htm

> mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."[78]

That particular passage referred to the importance of national parks. However, it could easily be applied to any area of open protected space. The variety of recreational activities covered in this paper have two things in common: they provided an escape from cities and civilization and they required open wilderness. Without the wilderness, the escape ceases to exist. If we are to believe John Muir, this escape is a crucial part of maintaining our humanity.

Each activity mentioned in this paper holds an important place in the history of California. While some, like the Anza trail re-enactments, are more obvious than others, they all tell the story of an evolving state. Fortunately for us and future generations, that story is now protected along with the land on which it was created. The Puente Hills may be only a small part of the vast land that was once untouched wilderness, but it is a crucial part of California history and needs to be protected.

[78] John Muir, *Our National Parks* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1901), 3.

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