



# THE GUIDEPOST

Publication of the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild

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## Juana Briones, Pioneer Settler of Yerba Buena

*By Renate Coombs*

As our San Francisco sightseeing bus approaches Washington Square, most of us put our brain into the gear that's labeled Lillie Hitchcock Coit / San Francisco Volunteer Fire Department; the colorful story under this topic will keep us going until it's time for something else like Sts. Peter & Paul church as the backdrop for the Joe DiMaggio/Marilyn Monroe PR wedding picture.

With all those tall trees along the Columbus Avenue side of the square, we might be excused for not noticing one slight eccentricity that had escaped me until recently, but fits right under our "Only in San Francisco" motto: the large bronze statue in the center of Washington Square is not a likeness of George Washington, but of Benjamin Franklin. Ah well, minor detail.

However, what strikes me as a more serious gap in my awareness of the area is the fact that I didn't know the true historic significance of this grassy island in the middle of North Beach – it was the site of the corral and dairy farm established by Juana Briones (1802-1889), possibly the first non-Indian resident of what became the Mexican pueblo Yerba Buena, the earliest version of what developed into the city of San Francisco.

There is, of course, no excuse for this ignorance. At the northeast corner of the square (corner of Stockton and Filbert), a bronze plaque informs us thus:

Juana Briones, born in Hispanic California, was a prominent woman of her time. In the 1830s and 1840s she transformed an isolated cove in the then Mexican hamlet of Yerba Buena into her rancho. At the site of this park she raised cattle and grew vegetables for sale to ship crews. She gave sanctuary to refugees and was revered as a healer and caregiver. She is honored as a humanitarian, astute businesswoman, community builder, and devoted mother of eight.

Placed there in 1997 by the State, in cooperation with the City, the Women's Heritage Museum and the Bay Area Network of Latinas, the plaque designates California Historical Landmark #1024, the second such distinction awarded this remarkable pioneer settler. (The first one is #524, the "Site of Juana Briones de Miranda Home on Rancho La Purísima Concepción" in Palo Alto, but that's a topic for another day.)

A recently published biography entitled *Juana Briones of Nineteenth-Century California* by Jeanne Farr McDonnell leaves no page unturned to document achievements that would be remarkable if accomplished today by an Anglo male, but are mind-boggling in the context of two fundamental regime changes (Spanish to Mexican to US) by a Hispanic

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## Message from the Board

Dear Members,

It is hard to believe that June is just around the corner, but here we are! Save the date! Our General Meeting will be held June 15th in the Farallon Room at The Aquarium of the Bay on Pier 39. I am pleased to announce that, as a follow up to the DMC meeting held in March, Ferris Suer of PRA has put us in touch with Diana Maier, a labor law attorney, who will be speaking to us at the General Meeting about our rights as employees in the city of San Francisco. We would like for Ms. Maier to be prepared to address our concerns, so please email your labor law questions to [board@sftgg.org](mailto:board@sftgg.org) by June 1st. Our thanks go out to both Ferris and Ms. Maier for making this invaluable opportunity happen.

This year, we have welcomed 13 new Members, 2 new Business Friends, and 4 guides were certified, 5 more are well on their way.

In April, Mentoring Chair Marilee hosted a "Stump the Guide" Trivia night at Lefty O'Doul's, and succeeded! We were all surprised that there were San Francisco trivia questions that none of us could answer. Do you know who the Mud People are? We are planning another trivia night for this summer, so watch out for that announcement.

Our Program Chairs Don & Anita have been hard at work putting together educational tours and workshops. On the docket for the near future are an Airport Training, Angel Island Tour and a Monterey/Carmel Tour. We are also looking into modernizing our roster to make it more user friendly and updating our brochures as a way to honor our 25th Anniversary.

Here's hoping business picks up in the coming months!

On Behalf of the Board of Trustees,

Michele McCurry  
SFTGG President

### Congratulation to the new certified guides!

Virginia Ferrero, Laure Spiers,  
Michael Purcell, and Pete Wilson



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## Homesick at the Academy Part Two

By Christiane Diehnel

As promised, here is the conclusion of my friend's visit to the Academy of Science and her memories of Peru.

Ulla Kaprielian

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*"You wanted to go camping in the jungle and if you don't go soon, you may not have another chance during this visit. Alejandro will take you today after breakfast. Christiane, get ready! You want to go, don't you?"*

*"Felicitia, I do, but not if it rains. It's not going to be fun if it is pouring rain." - "It will be fine, don't worry. You will leave right after breakfast."*

*It did not sound like I had a choice, so I packed my daypack, gave Alejandro my tent to carry and hoped for sunshine. After hiking through the muddy forest for a couple of hours, Alejandro looked for a suitable spot to put up the tent. It started to rain, wet vegetation obstructed our path, the ground got very soggy, my clothes were soaking wet, and I was longing for my dry and comfortable hammock in Felicitia's house. When the tent had been put up we ate the pango (fish soup), yuca, and plantains Felicitia had sent along for our dinner. The rain fell in sheets pounding on the tent, everything seemed wet. It was going to be a long night sleeping on a bare tent floor with wet clothes on. I only took my muddy shoes off. Why had I agreed to do this? During the night I heard splashing sounds mingling with what I thought were jaguars' heavy breathing and snorting as they were passing by our tent. I was just hoping I did not have to leave the tent to pee during the night. Alejandro slept through it all.*

*Finally, morning came and we quickly gathered our things, folded the tent and set out on the trail which had turned into a fast flowing creek overnight. The water reached almost to our knees. I was right behind Alejandro. I had learned to trust my guides, what else could I do? They knew their environment and how to be safe, checking all around every few steps for snakes and other dangerous animals. I knew nothing.*

*Suddenly Alejandro stopped. He gripped his machete tightly. I could sense the tension in his body. What was it? I could not see anything in the dim light. He pulled me forward by my arm and whispered, "Christiane look! There is an electric eel! A big one! It is swimming toward us, we have to be careful. They can be dangerous."*



*The electric eel was about five feet away from us, coming straight toward Alejandro's legs. What could we do? Stepping aside might trigger an attack. Then I saw Alejandro relax, he pointed*

*his machete in the direction of the electric eel and whispered, "Look, it has a fish. See it sticking out from its mouth?"*

*What a relief, the electric eel had caught its breakfast already and when it got close to us, it casually turned left and swam away. An hour later we were back in the village. With dry clothes on I spent the day in my hammock feeling proud to have "survived" another adventure in the jungle.*

My husband and our friend have long wandered off to other exhibits and return now to look for me. I am still glued to the windows of the displays, my mind in the Amazon, but it is time to go home. On the way out we pass through a short glass tunnel. Different fishes of the Amazon swim above and around us. I spot some black armored catfish, *carachamas*. They are about 8 inches long and have very hard scales and higher ridges of these scales near their heads. They are not very tasty, but often the only fish easy to catch when the water is high and the forest is flooded. That is the time when all the fish disperse throughout the forest, making it difficult for the men to catch sufficient quantities to feed their families.



*I remember an incident when I was first learning about life in the rainforest of Peru. Old Señora Antonia would pass my house early in the mornings on her way to the neighbor's bodega to buy her first drink of sugarcane rum of the day. One time she stopped and talked me into buying a pan full of about 12 carachamas for ten soles or three dollars. When Felicitia later found out how much I had paid, she let loose a string of jungle swear words which are in no dictionary, some sounding like "robbery, cheating, criminal." She said I should have paid no more than 50 cents. Thinking about that expensive purchase now, I have to smile. Sra. Antonia probably bought a lot of rum that day.*



No doubt, the most spectacular fish in the tank is the *paiche*, the largest fresh water fish in the world. It can reach a length of ten feet and weigh up to several hundred pounds. This one is smaller, but it also takes me back to the Amazon.

cont'd on page 4

# JUST THE FACTS!

By Jason Cohen

In this column we publish questions on subjects that have potential for confusion or misinformation. Here are the questions from the last Guidepost, and the answers we have found (with sources cited). Please send questions for future columns to Jason at [jcohen1@pacbell.net](mailto:jcohen1@pacbell.net) (don't forget the "1").

## Is there any connection between the Pepperidge Farm Sausalito cookie and Sausalito, California?

Unfortunately, Pepperidge Farm (a division of Campbell Soup since 1961) did not respond to our inquiries. Neither the Sausalito Library nor the Historical Society had any information in their files. The general consensus from Sausalitans we talked to is that there's no connection. A volunteer at the visitor center, who's lived in town for 40 years, said with some resentment, "They didn't ask us! They didn't pay us!"



There's a discussion of Pepperidge Farm cookie naming on the website of IgorInternational.com, a branding / identity agency. They say "A less savvy marketing department would have pushed for a direct correlation between geography and ingredients. That would have resulted in the name "Kona" for a cookie with macadamias and milk chocolate, because that is where the exotic nut is grown...Well, the milk chocolate with macadamia nut version is called 'Sausalito'...Had Pepperidge Farm gone down the literal road, they would have named the cookies after towns and regions that best represent oatmeal, toffee, pecans, raisins, chocolate, and so on. Instead, they chose the names for the positive images, evocations, and aspirations that they conjure from our collective consciousness."

According to the Pepperidge Farm website, the company was founded in 1937 by Margaret Rudkin, a Connecticut housewife, when one of her sons had an allergy to commercial breads that contained preservatives and artificial ingredients. The company was named for her family's farm in Fairfield, Connecticut.

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*The first time I returned to Iquitos from the jungle not as part of a tourist group, I traveled by river launch, the public transportation in that area. These river launches transport people, animals, and all kinds of cargo up and down the rivers and stop at almost every village on the way to pick up people and cargo. Many of the*



*local people and I had gotten onboard the "Ferris" around midnight at a designated place on the banks of the Amazon River. I had hired two local guides, Alejandro and Segundo, to accompany me and they had strung my hammock among hundreds of other hammocks on the decks of this river launch. That's where I had slept the rest of the night, more or less.*

*Before daylight I suddenly heard loud motor noises, people shouting, and general commotion. Curious, I got up and made my way to the railing stepping over kids sleeping on the floor, baskets of fruits, chickens tied together, and colorful large plastic bags stuffed full with personal belongings of the travelers. In the twilight I saw several speed boats loaded with people approaching our launch. They pulled up alongside and the passengers, men and women, jumped onboard. Apparently they had been expected, the lids of large boxes stowed on deck were opened and the dealing began. The newcomers were here to buy fish, produce, chickens and ducks which they would take to the market in Iquitos. Several of the large storage containers onboard contained a fresh catch of paiche, the first ones of these big fish I had ever seen. Their black bodies still glistened with river water, but they would soon be served in restaurants in Iquitos. I managed to take some pictures before they were hauled off.*



*I wave good bye to the paiche and its companions in the tank in the Academy of Sciences. The skepticism I felt has disappeared. I leave with many of my Amazon memories fresh in my mind again and a touch of homesickness for the rainforest of Peru.*

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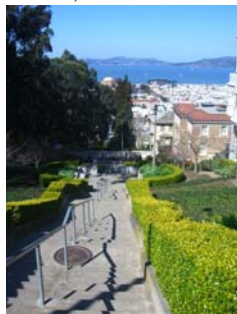
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female married to a non-provider, abusive husband who sired a dozen or so children (the eight children mentioned on the plaque only refer to biological offspring surviving into their teens and do also not include various godchildren, grandchildren or Indian foster and adopted children). While an invaluable source for historical detail, I found the book quite hard to read due to its densely packed facts. But it will surely remain in the front row on the shelf with frequently consulted California history books.

Juana excelled through her sound business judgment, her open-mindedness towards people regardless of race, status or cultural background, her medical skills and, above all, her enormous self-reliance. This latter quality was nowhere as clearly manifested as in her tenacious and ultimately successful struggle to hang on to her land. When many of her compatriot landowners, most of them men, found themselves robbed, cheated or otherwise bamboozled out of their property rights during the statehood turmoil, Juana used her hard-earned money to hire the best lawyers to prosecute her case in the federal courts.

During the 14-year struggle, she was never lulled into a false sense of security, even though the courts invariably sided with her. The challenges kept coming. Anglo newcomers, probably fueled by a sense of God-given entitlement to the California land, tried to grab parts of her property, but they were no match for this smart old lady. Despite the dual handicap of being illiterate and not being a native English-speaker, she went all the way to the US Supreme Court and prevailed.

In the long run, as widow of Apolinario Miranda and mother of his children, she even managed to assert her rights to Ojo de Agua de Figueroa, even though she hadn't lived there with him for decades. Ojo de Agua was a miniscule land grant (less than 2 acres) on the eastern border of today's Presidio. Looking north at the imposing Lyon Street Stairway (254 steps from Green Street to Broadway) in this stunningly beautiful, upscale neighborhood makes one want to fantasize that Juana "knew" what she was fighting for.



Speaking of being handicapped in the fierce struggle for economic survival in 19<sup>th</sup>-century California, Juana might have suffered, but apparently didn't, from yet another disadvantage, that of race discrimination. I had first come across her name in a small exhibit (on loan from elsewhere and since removed) at the African-American Museum and Library in Oakland

(AAMLO) about African-Mexican Californios. Reading about her life, I halfway expected to find her story revolving around her mixed race – not so. While the San Jose census of 1778 lists her maternal grandfather Felipe Tapia as “mulatto,” that fact can't have been of much consequence, as it is never mentioned again. (Having been child-members of the historic overland trek, both Juana's mother and mother-in-law were “Anza aristocracy.”)

Being the extraordinary woman she was, Juana had learned to cope with gender discrimination, particularly in her fight for legal separation from an abusive husband. But nothing could have prepared her fully for the increased discrimination against women in combination with the rampant racism against Hispanic, Chinese, and African-American people as well as Indians that arrived with the fortune seekers from the East Coast.

To appreciate the full depth of the gender discrimination, one might consider Juana's status as one of the Big Three who settled Yerba Buena, Jacob Leese and William Richardson being the other two. Hubert Howe Bancroft made a huge exception when he mentioned Juana at all as a woman in her own right, but only in a footnote; he never sent an interviewer although that had been urged by an eye witness of Juana's historic role.



Living in the East Bay as I do, you may have enjoyed some gentle hikes in Briones Regional Park with an occasional glimpse of Briones Reservoir. While the land was once part of Pinole Ranch, it did not belong to Juana, but to her older brother Felipe. And yet, the tale of how Felipe's widow managed to authenticate her full ownership after her husband's death surely celebrates Juana's spirit.

To learn more about this thorny topic, you should go to the Oakland Museum of California and see their current exhibit entitled “**The African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present.**” Organized by the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, this is the Oakland Museum's last hurrah before it closes down on August 23 for the final phase of reinventing itself from the ground up.

Historic Landmark No. 1024, honoring Juana Briones.



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What percentage of San Francisco's population is gay and lesbian?

We found a recent, scientifically derived answer of 14%.

This is the conclusion of work published in October 2008 by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law. The Williams Institute “advances sexual orientation law and public policy through rigorous, independent research and scholarship, and disseminates it to judges, legislators, policymakers, media and the public,” according to its website.

In the publication *Census Snapshot: California Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Population*, October 2008 (<http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/CA%20Snapshot%202008.pdf>), two sources of data are combined.

Information about the state's overall population came from the 2003 and 2005 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). According to the Williams Institute report, CHIS is a project of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the California Department of Public Health, the Department of Health Care Services and the Public Health Institute. More than 40,000 California households are surveyed, to provide a representative sample of the population. People aged 18-70 are asked their sexual orientation plus questions about their economic status, health characteristics, etc. The Williams Institute combined CHIS data from 2003 and 2005 to increase the sample size and accuracy.

The second data source is the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS provides interim updates to each 10-year census, and contains detailed information about the members of each household. Beginning with the 2000 Census and the subsequent ACS reports, the person filling out the form has been able to select “unmarried partner” as a choice to describe how they are related to others in the household, as an alternative to “roommate.” If the other household member is of the same sex and is an unmarried partner, it is logical to conclude that this is a gay/lesbian household. The Williams Institute averaged ACS data from 2005 and 2006.

The *Census Snapshot* concludes that among California counties, San Francisco has the highest percentage of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, at 14%. Since San Francisco County and City are identical, 14% is also the answer for the City.

Percents are much lower elsewhere, e.g., Alameda County (4.2%), Marin and Santa Clara counties (3.3%), Santa Cruz and Lake Counties (5.0%), and Los Angeles County (3.9%).

The study also concludes there are approximately 861,000 lesbian, gay, and bisexual men and women in California, comprising 3.2% of the state's adult population. There are an estimated 108,734 same-sex couples in the state (9 of every 1,000 households).



One-third of lesbian couples in California, and 18% of gay male couples, are raising children, versus 53% for opposite sex couples.

The authors of this study are Gary J. Gates, Senior Research Fellow at the Williams Institute, and Research Assistant Christopher Ramos. Dr. Gates holds a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University.

An earlier study by the Williams Institute (October 2006; <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/publications/samesexcouplesandglbpopacs.pdf>) concludes that there are 8.8 million LGB people in the U.S. Among states/districts, Washington, D.C. has the highest percentage of LGB people, with 8.1% of the population, followed by New Hampshire, Washington, Massachusetts, Maine, and California. Among cities, the San Francisco area ranks highest in the country in terms of percent of gay and lesbian people. Of course, since the San Francisco area is smaller than some other metropolitan areas, the actual number of lesbian and gay people is higher in other places. The New York metro area was estimated to have 569,000 LGB people, followed by the Los Angeles area with 442,000, the Chicago area with 289,000, and then the San Francisco area with 256,000.

Presumably, since the data used in these studies is gathered from individuals disclosing personal information, there may still be lesbians and gay men who are unwilling to disclose information for fear of discrimination, and thus all the numbers may be higher than reported, but by an unknown amount. For example, the studies show a “growth” in the numbers and percents of gay and lesbian individuals and households in recent years, but this is likely due to people being more willing to self disclose rather than an actual increase in the population.

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Did Andrew Hallidie really see a horse dragged down a hill by a runaway wagon on a rainy day and therefore decide to create a better way to transport people up hills?

It appears that Mr. Hallidie himself claimed this story is true, but it was a horse drawn streetcar, not a wagon.

We found one reference in his own words, in a pamphlet dated December 1, 1885. Apparently a draftsman he had employed was claiming undue credit, so Hallidie was setting forth exactly what happened to protect his honor and his patents. He wrote, "About the time I matured my ropeway system [for hauling mining ore], my attention was drawn to the great difficulty experienced in hauling the streetcars ... up one of the steep streets of the city of San Francisco, and the great cruelty and hardship to the horses engaged in that work."



In another pamphlet, "Andrew Smith Hallidie – Originator of Cable Railway Transportation," by Edgar Myron Kahn, 1940 (reprinted from the California Historical Society Quarterly, June 1940), Kahn quotes from a report to the Mechanics Institute (October 7, 1890, quoted in a typewritten manuscript in the Hallidie Papers at the California Historical Society).

Kahn quotes Hallidie, "I was largely induced to think over the matter from seeing the difficulty and pain the horses experienced in hauling the cars up Jackson Street, from Kearny to Stockton Street, on which street four or five horses were needed for the purpose, the driving being accomplished by the free use of the whip and voice, and occasionally by the horses falling and being dragged down the hill on their sides, by the car loaded with passengers sliding on its track."

Another source gives more detail but without directly citing its source. It also proposes a note of caution. In *Cable Cars Past and Present* by FJ Clauss, 1982, the author states that the event in question occurred in the winter of 1869. "A cold drizzle had fallen most of the day, and halfway up two of the horses slipped on the wet cobblestones and fell... the car started sliding backwards down the hill...until it reached level ground... Hallidie himself helped release the crippled and mutilated horses from the harness."

But Clauss continues, "That, at least, is the account Hallidie gave out a few years later when he was trying to raise capital to finance his first cable car line, and it's been repeated over and over in the romantic lore... It may be true, or it may only have been a good story to help solicit funds".

As always when we're researching this column we find interesting information not directly related to the question. In Hallidie's pamphlet (the first source cited above), he lays out this timeline for the development of the cable car:

- 1868-70 Experiments with his mining ropeway system
- 1870-72 Patents and installations of the mining systems
- 1870 He surveys California Street with eye toward a rope railway for transporting people
- June 1873 Begins construction on the Clay Street line
- August 1, 1873 at 5:00AM Makes the first run on the Clay Street line



Hallidie's original line, Clay Street, was taken out of service in 1942.

All research for this question was conducted in the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor History Room at the Main Library.

**New Questions**

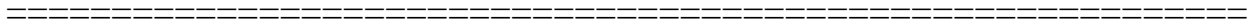
1. What's the real story of the fortune cookie? Was it invented in San Francisco, and if so, when?



2. What is now the tallest building in San Francisco?

3. We know that Juan Manuel de Ayala named many of the landmarks around San Francisco Bay during his mapping visit in 1775. Why specifically did he give the name "Angel Island"? What angel was he referring to?





***SFTGG PROGRAMS***

June 15                      General Meeting  
6-8 pm                      PIER 39, Aquarium, Farallon Room

Future programs:        Airport Training, Angel Island, Monterey/Carmel

For detailed information check our website at [www.sftgg.org/programs](http://www.sftgg.org/programs).

If you do not have access to a computer, call:  
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or Don deLaura at 925-373-9005 – [tangerine.travel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tangerine.travel@sbcglobal.net)

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