Heritage Celebrates 50 at the Drive-In

After a year without in-person events, Heritage friends old and new came together to celebrate Heritage’s fifty-year legacy of preserving what makes San Francisco special. STORY ON PAGE 2
On Saturday, June 12, 2021, Heritage celebrated its 50th anniversary at our annual Soirée. Mindful of Covid-19 precautions, we held a socially distanced drive-in and dinner at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture (FMCAC), with a simultaneous online livestream of the festivities. Our program featured greetings from Heritage friends and founders, a special documentary celebrating Heritage’s past, present, and future, silent-auction prizes, and a fund-a-need to fuel Heritage’s continuing mission.

After the pandemic forced us to cancel our 2020 Soirée, we were so happy to finally come together to greet friends old and new and celebrate the past fifty years, launching enthusiastically into the next fifty. Thank you to all of our generous sponsors who made this event a success.

To view more photos from the event and to donate towards our important mission, visit sfheritage.org/soiree.
A New Kind of Fall Lecture Series Coming in November

Heritage's Lecture Series explores the breadth of San Francisco's cultural inheritance in historic settings throughout the city. After taking advantage of virtual programming to safely bring you our 2020 Lecture Series during the pandemic, we are excited to take these programs outside of our homes and meet all of you once again in real life.

This year, we are trying something new! For 2021, we will debut a Heritage Lecture Week in early November. Five lectures across five consecutive days will celebrate San Francisco's cultural and architectural diversity, and highlight Heritage's ongoing work to protect what makes San Francisco special. The new format will give our guests the ability to pick and choose which days to attend, although we hope that some of you will come out for all five days.

Virtual programming allows us to reach new audiences across the city (and even across the country); so while we will move back to in-person programming, we will make sure that there is always a virtual option available.

Here is a preview of the programs that we are working on bringing you in November, with dates and times yet to be determined:

- A collaboration with the American Indian Cultural District, likely at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, exploring unique approaches to preserving Native American culture.
- A lecture and walk at Lincoln Park, the former City Cemetery, with a coalition of local partners in preservation. Together, we hope to designate the city's first archaeological landmark (see p. 4).
- Each year we dedicate the last program in our Lecture Series to the late preservationist Alice Ross Carey, and explore the impact of women in preservation. This year, we will meet at Heritage's home, the Haas-Lilienthal House, to hear the stories of the women who transformed life there across generations.

Each of the programs for Heritage Lecture Week is still in development. If you would like to be involved in any of the above programs, let us know, otherwise stay tuned for more information about individual tickets and series passes in the coming months. Have questions? Please contact Kerri Young at kyoung@sfheritage.org.

In the meantime, look out for other programming from us in the summer and fall months, from collaborations in the Haight-Ashbury (see p. 10), to a new Heritage in the Neighborhoods month (we will reveal the next neighborhood in our October-December 2021 issue). Keep up with the latest news on Heritage events by following us on social media (see p. 12).
The fifteen-foot-high bronze monument in Lincoln Park marks the burial ground established by the Ladies’ Seaman’s Friend Society in the 1880s. The society cared for indigent merchant mariners, especially those with disabilities, and took it upon themselves to give these sailors proper burials at what was formerly City Cemetery.

Landmarking City Cemetery

BY WOODY LABOUNTY

Lincoln Park, in the northwest corner of San Francisco’s Richmond District, is not lacking in commemorative plaques, interpretative signage, or memorials. A garden and marker behind the golf clubhouse remembers former city champion John Susko. The California Palace of the Legion of Honor museum is a memorial to the Golden State’s fallen dead from World War I. On its east side are bronze tablets inscribed with the names of famous generals from that conflict who planted commemorative trees there. Nearby, the terminus of the Lincoln Highway is marked both with a 1920s concrete plinth featuring a profile of the president and also a more recent interpretive sign about the first transcontinental highway. The Holocaust Memorial stands a couple of hundred yards to the west, and a bit to the north is a monument to the Japanese ship Kanrin Maru. Benches all along El Camino Real Drive facing the Golden Gate are dedicated with small sponsored memorial plates. The tens of thousands of yearly visitors to Lincoln Park, drawn by the museum, the golfing, or the views, can read inscribed declarations, proclamations, and inspirational prose about a variety of topics and events. But they will find no sign or tablet recording the most remarkable aspect of the park: some 20,000 San Franciscans lie buried beneath the turf.

City Cemetery

In the late 1860s, San Francisco sought a new municipal burial ground to replace Yerba Buena Cemetery, which was inconveniently located where a new City Hall was planned for the corner of Market, Larkin, and McAllister Streets. In 1870, City Cemetery, also called Golden Gate Cemetery, was established on a distant, wind-swept hill miles away from the center of population and reached by a solitary road carved through the sand and scrub of today’s Richmond District. Some of the first burials were probably bodies evicted from Yerba Buena Cemetery.

In addition to having areas reserved for San Francisco’s indigent dead, sections of City Cemetery were leased by fraternal, religious, and ethnic communities for the burial of their members, including an African-American order of the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, the Italian Mutual Benevolent Society, a chapter of the Grand Army of
the Republic (Civil War veterans), Jewish congregations Beth Israel, Schaar Zedek, and Sherith Israel, the German Benevolent Society, the Scandinavian Society, the French Benevolent Society, the Japanese Colony of San Francisco, the Greek Russian Slavonian Benevolent Society, merchant mariner associations, including the Ladies’ Seamen’s Friend Society, and a number of Chinese organizations, including the Hop Wo, Ning Yung, and Kong Chow associations.

Researchers consulting interment lists from municipal reports have estimated at least 20,000 bodies were buried in City Cemetery by the end of 1897, although gaps in the reports point to a considerably higher number.

The City of San Francisco halted interments in City Cemetery beginning on January 1, 1898, and in 1901 banned new burials anywhere within city limits, as large cemeteries created in San Mateo County became the final resting place for the majority of San Franciscans. After passing an ordinance directing any interested parties to disinter and relocate remains from City Cemetery, the Board of Supervisors in 1909 reclassified the land as a city park. Individuals and associations who protested the eviction of their relatives and members were dismissed as hindering progress, an argument reflected in one San Francisco Chronicle editorial headline: “The Dead Must Not Be Permitted to Injure the Living.”

But comparatively few bodies were actually moved in the rush to create Lincoln Park. Most of the associations and organizations could not bear the financial cost of relocating their members. The city itself declined to move the indigent dead it had buried over the years, with one city supervisor saying, “It is no desecration to make drives and beautify the grounds with trees and flowers.” Disinterments were done on a limited and ad hoc basis over a decade while a new golf course was laid.

**Remnants**

As a municipal cemetery, City Cemetery lacked elaborate gateways or landscaping. The county provided pauper graves with simple numbered wooden headboards. The dues paid by members of different associations generally didn’t cover expensive marble grave markers. In landscaping Lincoln Park the city mostly removed, razed, or buried any caretaker cottages, windmills, tombstones, curbing, and fencing left behind by the associations. By the 1920s, essentially no above-ground evidence of the cemetery remained, with two notable exceptions. Left in place on the Lincoln Park golf course were most of a structure used by the Kong Chow Benevolent Association and a bronze obelisk honoring the Ladies’ Seaman’s Friend Society. Perhaps it was easier to do so, or there was specific intention that the monuments made picturesque hazards for the golfers.
The far more significant remnant of City Cemetery is below ground, where tens of thousands of individuals still lay, some just a half-foot below the sod. Maintenance and infrastructure work in the park such as road and irrigation repairs often uncover human remains and burial materials. Most notably, the 1994 renovation and expansion of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor unearthed more than 900 burials, with 578 adults and 173 children excavated and reburied in Colma, California.

**FirstArchaeologicalCityLandmark**

Late in 2020, Heritage rallied support from a coalition of community organizations, some with historic connections to the use of City Cemetery, to advocate for a city landmark designation of Lincoln Park. The diverse group includes the Planning Association of the Richmond, the French-American Comité Officiel and la Société de Bienfaisance Mutuelle, the Chinatown Community Development Center, the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, the Western Neighborhoods Project, and the Hop Wo Benevolent Association.

In response to the request, city supervisor Connie Chan announced in April 2021 her intention to introduce a landmark initiation. Heritage is now working with the Planning Department and the Recreation and Parks Department to identify the character-defining features for a potential landmark ordinance focused on the land’s use as a cemetery. Twentieth-century elements of the park, such as the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, the golf clubhouse, and the Holocaust Memorial, would not be part of the designation. Surviving tree and vegetation boundary lines may be included, while the two monuments and the thousands of early San Franciscans still beneath ground will certainly be called out. Researchers recognize the site as one of the largest collections of 19th-century skeletal remains from the Western United States, and a designation of Lincoln Park would represent the city's first archeological landmark.

In a practical sense, landmark designation will not change much in the operation and use of Lincoln Park. The procedures the city follows in the discovery, handling, and respectful reinterment of human remains will not alter beyond a possible formalization of notification and consultation with descendant communities. Museum operations, golfing, and routine maintenance of the park, playground, roadways, and golf course should go on without any additional regulatory hurdles for city agencies or the organizations that use the park.

For more than a century the city turned away from the story of City Cemetery. A burial ground used primarily for immigrant communities and the poor, its existence was pointedly downplayed during the creation of Lincoln Park and publicly ignored in the decades since. A city landmark designation would represent an important first step by San Francisco to recognize a chapter of its history and honor thousands of pioneers still with us under winding cart paths and green fairways.

Thanks to researchers Kari Lentz, John Martini, and Alex Ryder for their assistance.
Grete Miller is an award-winning filmmaker and passionate LGBTQ+ history advocate and activist. She crafts impactful media, harnesses storytelling to make the invisible, visible, and creates inclusive opportunities through creative tech. Miller is a member of the Friends of Lyon-Martin House (FOLMH), which leads a broader coalition of groups (including San Francisco Heritage) to successfully designate 651 Duncan Street, home of lesbian pioneers Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, as a city landmark. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved the landmark ordinance in May 2021.

**How did you get involved with the landmarking effort?**
In September 2020 I learned about the sale of the Lyon-Martin home through a Facebook post from architectural historian Shayne Watson. Passionate about preserving LGBTQ+ history and stories, I didn’t think twice about finding a way to help this effort. After attending the first community call, I volunteered to write the first FOLMH petition to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. I created a user-friendly landing page to help with the collection of community signatures and drive awareness around Phyllis and Del’s story.

**In your own words, tell us why 651 Duncan Street is so significant. Why should people care about what happened here?**
The house is an important repository of significant moments that contributed to social reform and drove intersectional progressive change for marginalized communities throughout California and beyond. As a lesbian in the movement, I’m continuously inspired and in awe of my queer foremothers. Inside the walls of 651 Duncan, history was made and new leaders were born into the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Phyllis and Del organized activists to validate and decriminalize my life and the lives of many others. From inside their house, they forced the world to change and turn toward the side of justice. There is power in knowing your history and being able to touch your story. The strength of your elders teaches you what is possible, and that your life has purpose. I know that because they did, I can.
The landmarking of the Lyon-Martin House was a truly community grassroots effort. Can you describe your experience seeing different groups working together to make this happen?

It’s been an awesome collaboration. We’re working with multiple stakeholders who bring diverse expertise and perspectives to this project, and it’s marvelous! The level of care, support, and energy that people have demonstrated has been overwhelming. It is a testament to the power of communities and what we can accomplish when we come together and organize for what is right.

Is there something you’ve come across in your own research of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin and their life at 651 Duncan Street that particularly stands out to you?

Through talking with community members, I’ve become aware of the full record of Phyllis and Del’s lives. They did not lead single-issue lives; their politics were coalition-based. They saw the LGBTQ+ and lesbian-rights movements as integrally interconnected with broader social-justice movements. Lyon and Martin were active in the movement for African-American civil rights and in organizing against police violence. They also worked extensively to stop domestic violence, and championed inclusion and policy reform on behalf of older adults. These women were pioneers and change-makers!

Now that the house has received landmark designation, what is the first priority there? What’s the next step for Friends of the Lyon-Martin House?

Our next milestone is to digitally document the site. To mitigate the risk of losing visual data and storytelling elements, I thought it was important that we collect the visual story of the house, create an accessible digital experience for the community, and preserve that raw data for future generations. This summer FOLMH will be working with the preservation organization CyArk on this effort. We’re very excited about this collaboration and to see Phyllis and Del’s home receive this level of documentation. Afterwards, we’ll begin outlining community planning and educational programming initiatives.

Documenting the spaces of marginalized communities is vital for individuals whose stories have been forgotten, overlooked, or purposely neglected. If we can preserve not only the physical site but the full visual story and experience of iconic places like the Lyon-Martin House, decades later we will have a valuable collection of content to look back on. Each still, moving image, and 3D scan will make visible what was invisible, and preserve the source of a movement and make it accessible to others. In doing so, these mediums push back against erasure and celebrate diverse communities and people whose stories haven’t been told. It allows us to be a part of another person’s truth and grow through their incomparable contributions and legacy.

What do you personally hope for the future of this site in perpetuating the legacy of these two extraordinary women? How can others get involved?

I hope the Lyon-Martin House can serve as a safe space for LGBTQ+ creatives, social-justice activists, and students — an idea that we are still exploring. We will be researching more options in our next planning phase. It would be wonderful to see this extraordinary site carrying on the progressive advocacy work of Phyllis and Del through the hands of our future change-makers. FOLMH welcomes all volunteers! People can learn more by visiting our website at www.friends-of-the-lyon-martin-house.com or by emailing us at lyonmartinfriends@gmail.com.
Heritage Receives Interior Easement on Reserve Building

In March 2020, Heritage heard that RFR Holding LLC, the New York-based owner of the Old Federal Reserve building at 301 Battery Street, planned to renovate for modern office use a majority of the second floor, including the historic board rooms of the Federal Reserve Bank. These rooms, as well as the connecting hallway and lobby, feature fine wood paneling, marble fireplaces, intricately carved wood moldings, and molded plaster ceilings. While the George Kelham-designed building is City Landmark #158 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it was unclear that either designation adequately protected the upstairs interior elements.

Heritage reached out to RFR and, after a site visit, design reviews, and months of negotiation, reached an agreement in which the intact lobby and historic rooms of the second floor will be preserved, with wood paneling from the hallway reused in the new design plan.

As part of the agreement, the owners have granted Heritage a 30-year easement on the historic second-floor spaces, ensuring oversight by the preservation community and protection from any future proposals incompatible with the historic interior.

Heritage’s Projects & Policy Committee thanks RFR and its local representative, Reuben, Junius & Rose, for their responsiveness and attention to the preservation of this important building.
Preserving the Haight's History and Culture Through Art

**Heritage** will support a number of new projects in the Haight-Ashbury this summer, with our historic Doolan-Larson Residence and Storefronts providing the creative focal point for exciting new art and performance.

**Jimmie Fails as Artist-in-Residence**

In June 2021, artist and actor [Jimmie Fails](https://www.sanfranciscoheritage.org) moved into the Doolan-Larson Residence as our third artist-in-residence. The star of The Last Black Man in San Francisco (2019) follows in the footsteps of composer Ben Juodvalkis (who completed his residency in May) and visual artist Jeremy Fish. During his residency, Fails will compile a collection of poems, short stories, and journals, as well as continue his work on a script about his experience growing up in a group home with nine other boys from differing backgrounds. While he is most known for acting, he has been eager to get his personal writing out to the public, and sees the Doolan-Larson Residence and other Haight-Ashbury historic properties as inspiration. In his proposal for the residency, he wrote:

"It's places like [the Doolan-Larson Residence] that spark my creativity and keep me inspired to make art. As a San Franciscan, I am truly honored to take on this residency with SF Heritage and complete some culturally beneficial projects for the city and neighborhoods, especially the Haight, which I have loved and dreamt of living in. I'm excited about how the house will inspire me."

Heritage launched its artist-in-residence program last fall. The vision for the Doolan-Larson Building is to promote art, equity, and the interpretation of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and the overall Counterculture Movement. All Heritage programs further our mission to enhance and preserve San Francisco’s unique architectural and cultural history.

**Eye Zen Presents OUT of Site: Haight-Ashbury**

OUT of Site: Haight-Ashbury, the newest addition to [Eye Zen Presents](https://www.eyezenpresents.org)'s performance-driven, queer-history tours, celebrates the Haight-Ashbury’s contributions to the Gay Liberation Movement. Award-winning actor Tina D’Elia is playing two key figures from the era, Peggy Caserta and George Harris III aka Hibiscus, while steering audiences on a series of virtual and live-street theater performances throughout the Haight. Caserta, an openly bisexual woman, owned and operated clothing store Mnasidika in one of the Doolan-Larson Building’s storefronts from 1965 to 1968. As the first “hip” store in the neighborhood, Mnasidika was instrumental in the development of Haight-Ashbury as a hippie enclave. Hibiscus founded the pansexual theater collective known as the Cockettes, and left a lasting mark across the worlds of drag, theater, music, and fashion.

The Doolan-Larson Building anchors these performances. Following a sold-out opening weekend, tours continue until July 25 (see p. 12 for more information).

**Time of Change**

In collaboration with Heritage, choreographer [Joe Goode](https://www.joe-goode.com) and San Francisco legacy business [Joe Goode Performance Group](https://www.joe-goode.com) (JGPG) will perform Time of Change from September 1-12, 2021. Featuring the Doolan-Larson Building, this show will guide small audience groups through the streets of the Haight-Ashbury to experience several moments of movement, music, and monologue.

In April, Heritage got an exciting first look during rehearsals on the building’s exterior, led by Time of Change co-director Melecio Estrella, associate artistic director of famed aerial company BANDALOOP and a member of JGPG since 2004.

Tickets for Time of Change ($20-$125) go on sale **July 1**. The run will likely sell out, so reserve your place early. JGPG is offering a special 20% discount on full-priced tickets for Heritage members: use code **SFH20** at checkout.
Mapping Our Progress Toward Cultural Equity

In order to be transparent with our efforts to boost cultural equity within our preservation work and to build accountability, we are committed to updating the public through regular progress reports. For a look at our ongoing activities, visit sfheritage.org/commitment-to-racial-and-social-equity. If you would like to offer your ideas or comments on our work, reach out to Kerri Young at kyoung@sfheritage.org.

Below are some highlights of new and significant movement in the past quarter:

• After an April presentation by the American Indian Cultural District’s (AICD) Sharaya Souza and Gregg Castro in April 2021, the Heritage board reviewed and passed a resolution in June formally adopting a Ramaytush Ohlone land acknowledgement and a commitment to working meaningfully with the Native American community. Excerpted here, the full acknowledgement is posted at sfheritage.org:


We acknowledge that San Francisco Heritage stands on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone, the original inhabitants of the San Francisco peninsula and an integral and active community in the Bay Area and beyond. Heritage affirms their sovereign rights as First Peoples and pays our respects to the ancestors, elders and relatives of the Ramaytush Community. We are grateful to work with the American Indian Cultural District, who are leading efforts to preserve and share American Indian cultural heritage here in San Francisco, and we join with them to honor these ancestral grounds that we are gathered upon and to support the resilience and strength of all indigenous people.

• Began work with AICD on a series of monthly posts spotlighting American Indian legacy businesses within the district.

• Together with supervisor Connie Chan, Heritage is leading a broad coalition advocating for landmark designation for Lincoln Park (see p. 4). The grounds include the Kong Chow funerary monument, a remnant of a sprawling burial ground used by San Francisco’s 19th-century Chinese community.

• Actively supported the successful landmarking of the Lyon-Martin House (see p. 7), the first city landmark specifically honoring lesbian history.

50th-Anniversary Booklet

In commemoration of our 50th anniversary, Heritage created a special 84-page glossy booklet that we gifted to our Soirée supporters. From milestones to big wins and losses, this inspirational keepsake documents our history of protecting and preserving San Francisco in the face of rapid change. We have a limited number of copies that we are making available for $12 each (including shipping). If you are interested in receiving a copy, please email Rachel Wolf at rwolf@sfheritage.org.
Saturdays and Sundays Until July 25, 2021

OUT of Site: Haight-Ashbury

Tina D’Elia portrays Peggy Caserta at 1506 Haight Street during a performance of “OUT of Site” near the original site of Caserta’s shop, Mnasiidika [see p. 10].

July 2021

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS IN 2021
Haas-Lilienthal House self-guided tours
2007 Franklin Street
The Haas-Lilienthal House is open for self-guided audio tours every Saturday and Sunday 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM. Walk-ins are welcome, but we encourage reservations as space is limited. Visit haas-lilienthalhouse.org/house-tours for more.

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS, UNTIL JULY 25, 2021
OUT of Site: Haight-Ashbury
The newest addition of Eye Zen Presents performance-driven, queer-history tours celebrates the grassroots uprising that made San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury neighborhood a hub for the Gay Liberation movement from the 1960s to ’80s. Actor Tina D’Elia leads audiences on a journey from the Doolan-Larson Building to the erotic underground of Buena Vista Park to the former site of the notorious Haight Theater. Tickets at $45 are now on sale at eyezen.org.

MONDAY JULY 26 - 30, 2021
#DismantlePreservation
Virtual
This year’s free “unconference” works to continue pushing conversations on culture resources in a range of directions, and features current students and recent graduates from around the world. Register at sarahmarsom.com/dismantle.

THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2021 at 6:00 PM
Annual Meeting
Virtual
Join us for our Annual Meeting! During this virtual gathering of members and supporters, we will provide an update on Heritage’s 50th-anniversary activities and post-Covid-19 plans in 2021, including public-policy and advocacy priorities. This event is free and open to the public, and will take place on Zoom. Find details soon at sfheritage.org/upcoming-events.

September 2021

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 1 - 12, 2021
Time of Change
See the world premiere of Time of Change! Tickets go on sale July 1 and range from $20-$125. Use code SFH20 for 20% off tickets. Find details at joegoode.org/event/time-of-change-full-show.

For more information about upcoming Heritage events, please visit sfheritage.org or call 415.441.3000.