

Columbian Exposition Survivor Found At Muir Woods

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On a recent trip to Oakland, California, on a whim we took a side trip to Muir Woods National Park north of the Golden Gate Bridge and not far off US Route 101 and 1. We hopped into our rental car and headed across the Bay. Following winding roads lined with stately eucalyptus trees, we found the entrance to Muir Woods in a valley on Marin Peninsula. We learned that the valley with its virgin stand of redwoods on 295 acres had been saved from logging which had otherwise denuded the surrounding area. The owners, Senator Kent and his wife, gave the property to the U.S. in 1905 for preservation as a park for all to enjoy. The name was chosen to commemorate John Muir, famous naturalist and writer, who had spent many hours in the valley and enjoyed its natural wonders and magnificent giant trees.

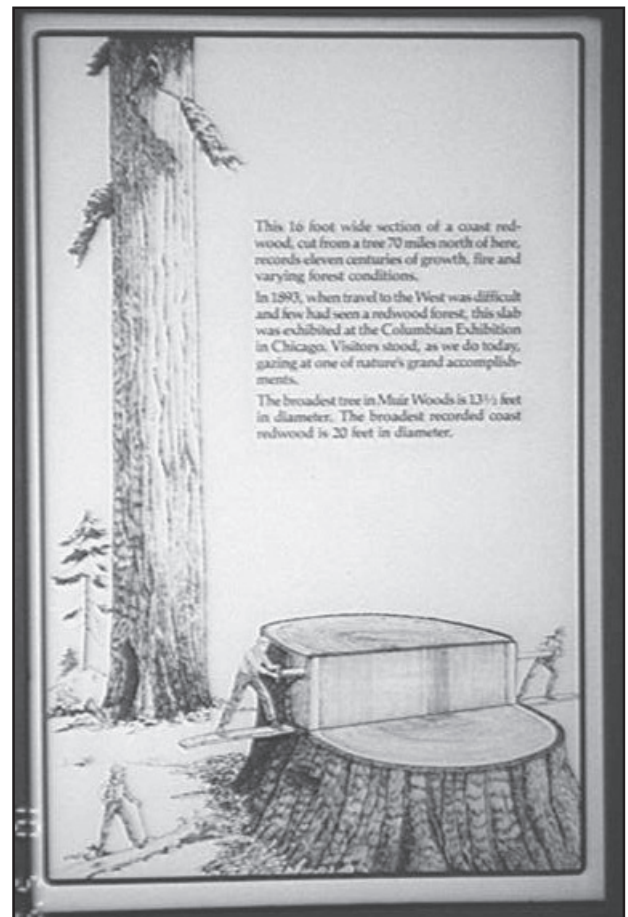
We walked from the sunlit entrance area into the park and immediately felt the chilly air: the high dense canopy above keeps the moisture on the forest floor in and direct sunlight out. Consequently, before we began hiking the trails, we decided to have a hot cup of coffee at the concession building a short distance inside the entrance. As we got up to the building, imagine our surprise at seeing a sixteen foot wide by five foot high and five inch thick slab of redwood on the exterior wall with a plaque identifying the slab as having been shown at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. We forgot coffee for the moment and took pictures, which we reproduce here.

Eventually the coffee was consumed, and we tramped the trails carpeted with fallen pine needles. Walking warmed us up, and the scenery was inspiring. The redwoods, growing in circles from burls at the base of the older trees, are impressive even after they have fallen to the forest floor. If you are in the Bay Area, we recommend visiting Muir Woods and the Mammoth Redwood Plank exhibited at the Exposition.

The Book Stops Here. 1108 Rocky Pt. Ct. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87123-1952.



Redwood Plank and Plaque (left). The triangles imbedded in the plank are metal markers showing old forest burns during growth.



Plaque Describing The Slab