

NOV. 13, 1996

GINGER BROWN
DICK UTTER
#48**A SEASHORE WALK ALONG POINT FERMIN
3 Miles One Way**

Description: A lighthouse on Point Fermin to mark the entrance to the Port of Los Angeles was first proposed by citizen Phineas Banning in 1854. That wish became a reality 20 years later with the opening of the Point Fermin Lighthouse. Utilizing a 2,100-candlepower oil lamp and lens, its beam could be seen 13 miles offshore. To meet increased traffic and to battle the deadly spring fogs that shroud the Palos Verdes coast, an even more powerful electric lamp with an 18-mile range was installed in 1925. In 1942, as part of the costal defense network during the war with Japan, the light was removed and a radar emplacement installed. Since 1948, the historic lighthouse, now retired, has served as the residence of a park superintendent.

On this trek along the shoreline, you will ~~visit~~ visit the ruins of a health resort predating the 1920s. You'll then round White Point and Point Fermin with its famous lighthouse before reaching the white sands of Cabrillo Beach near the mouth of L.A. Harbor.

A word of caution: negotiating the shoals at the foot of Point Fermin can be difficult if not impossible except at low tide. Check the tide tables in the *Los Angeles Times* or call the Coast Guard for information. If the combers are booming at Point Fermin, ~~save this walk for another day~~ we will stay on the road at top.

~~Driving: This is a scenic drive requiring two cars.~~

Follow the Harbor Freeway (I-110) to its southern end at Gaffey Street in Long Beach. Turn left on 6th Street, then right on Pacific Avenue and continue to Stephen M. White Drive. Turn left and park at Cabrillo Beach Park. We will begin the hike here and follow the directions below basically in reverse order on the outward leg and return as described below.

Directions: Your hike ~~begins~~ ^{turns} at the ruins of a beachside resort. At one time, sulphur springs emanated from below these palisades, and

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a hotel was built here in 1915. The Royal Palms Spa was a popular spot with Southlanders through the 1920s but was severely damaged in the 1933 earthquake and never restored. You then walk south along the edge of the Palos Verdes Peninsula and, dodging combers, pick your way around the prominent monolith of White Point. You'll come across numerous tide pools, so be on the lookout for starfish, sea urchins, jellyfish, and tiny hermit crabs. Watch your footing as you travel along the slick rock-strewn shore. And do pause to take in the view. Out to sea you may be able to pick out 21-mile long Catalina Island.

Perched above you is the Point Fermin Lighthouse. Surrounded by cliffs and the swirling Pacific, this place seems strangely wild even though the city begins just beyond. After carefully rounding the point, continue walking below the sagging cliffs to the white, palm-shrouded sands of Cabrillo Beach.

You might want to enjoy the rest of the day relaxing here at the beach. Or allow some time to check out the Cabrillo Marine Museum. It's well worth a visit.

TOPO: San Pedro

ANY QUESTION?

G. BROWN / R. UTTER