



Pasadena: A Mystery and a History You Can Explore

Dan McLaughlin

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The genesis in this book was when the head of the Children's Department at the Pasadena Public Library asked the local history librarian at the library to put together a brief little handout for fourth graders doing their state-mandated local history project. He really didn't do that. This book reflects his belief that children, who can endlessly discuss Minecraft, have the ability to use the computer to solve "real" problems, and the best way to engage students of any age is through questions where they are provided the tools to answer, but not necessarily the answers themselves, to questions. History is best experienced as a mystery to be solved, not as a series of facts to be memorized. As the local history librarian for the past 25 years, the author has access to the design and content to two local history databases, the Pasadena Digital History Collaborative and the Pasadena News Index, and this book is basically an extended tutorial on researching local history through these and other local history databases. Overall, the first few chapters go over how to research Pasadena, starting with the individual, and how one can learn about one's self, house, family and neighborhood in Pasadena using the computer and from the privacy of your home or classroom. There is also a discussion what might indicate when the computer is telling the user something that seems wrong or misleading, and what techniques that exist to determine what is the truth of the matter. Then using those research techniques one is introduced to more specific parts of Pasadena's History: It's Buildings; Neighborhoods; Rose Parade; Crime; Women; Pasadena at War; Sports; Ethnic Communities; Visitors; Churches; Creative Communities; Economy; Schools; and finally Government. There are also Suggested Activities scattered throughout the book. These are activities that build on the subject just presented and then invite one to do something more. From comparing proposed plans of the Rose Bowl, the Civic Center and the Arroyo Seco through their construction to their current reality; cooking recipes and exploring fashions for the past; singing songs and writing stories with a Pasadena theme; creating art or buildings in the styles of Pasadena masters, there should be a in-depth activity to appeal to the interest of anybody. Scattered throughout the text are literally hundred of trivia facts presented in the form of a question about Pasadena that can only be answered by going online. For instance: What blemish nearly cost horse loving Princess Cindy Gillette her spot in the 1961 Rose Parade? a. Academic. b. Hair. c. Moral. d. Skin. help: Gillette, cindy This book is meant to be used in conjunction with Pasadena History Headline Quiz: 690 Pasadena History Trivia Questions Taken from Pasadena Newspaper Headlines by Dan McLaughlin, which has the actual answers to the questions. While the book is rather explicit in how to search online, there are also scattered throughout the book explanations on why the search came up with the results that it did. Boolean searching; limits of the computer; advantages and disadvantages of different search strategies and tips on using non-computer resources are all included all in their own font in a friendly and accessible style. By the end, and even if one skips most of the chapters, questions and activities, the reader will have a much greater appreciation for Pasadena and its history. The reader will also have experienced the joy of a historian solving mysteries, and who knows, maybe even figured out some mysteries from Pasadena's history no one has solved yet.

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