

# William hammond hall

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s William Hammond Hall William Hammond Hall was born in Hagerstown, Maryland USA. He was a civil engineer and is considered to be the first State engineer of California. He served the U. S army engineers in the Civil War and then spent considerable amount of time in surveying the Western parts of the United States so that he could prepare geographical maps. In 1870, the Park commission invited several bidders for a geographical survey, this bid was given to Hall and hence he was given the post of Golden Gate Park's first superintendent in 1871 (Young 71). As the superintendent, he tried to improve the Park, the major challenge was that the outer area of the Park had many sand dunes and those had to be removed. The place looked like a desert with no sign of any vegetation. Hall decided to plant trees in that place. The process of tree planting thus began under him and continued till 1879 when there were 155, 000 Blue gum, Eucalyptus, Monterey pine and Monterey Cyprus trees. He was elected as a member of the California Academy of Sciences. A legislature act, later allowed him to become the first State engineer of California in 1878 (California State Water Project History, Hall). The act was about devising solutions for problems related to irrigation and also investigating the reasons. It also dealt with improving rivers and proper reclamation and disposal of mining waste. The act was passed under Governor William Irwin. During this time, he retained his position of consulting engineer of the Golden Gate Park. The two posts, greatly added to his responsibilities, but he was successful in balancing them. As California's State Engineer, he worked on a design for proper water supply and flood control system for the Sacramento valley. These types of achievements deserve acclaim but it is sad to notice an absence of a memorial of William Hall in the Golden Gate Park today. The caretakers of the Park however still <https://assignbuster.com/william-hammond-hall/>

recall his name and call themselves ‘ William Hammond Hall Society’

William’s education was not enough to secure his future career. His father had been a lawyer, and a successful one at that, along with being a legal counsel to Charles Weber who founded Stockton. He gave support to his son till he was 30 years old. William went to a private school in Stockton for seven years after which he had to join West point as a cadet. However, the Civil War shattered these plans and he had to join the army corp. of Engineers where he worked very hard. Slowly and gradually he started gaining experience through surveying many different parts of the Pacific coast. He also studied the antique English and Dutch literature so that he could deal with the problem of blowing sand. English and Dutch people have found ways to combat this problem and he found that information very useful. William was a very intelligent person; he had a very keen understanding of how the world actually worked. An in depth observation of his letters would reveal the countless efforts he made to stay connected with rich and influential people and get favors. He also made good use of his father’s political connections. Also, one of his uncles held a high position in the Government. But he winning the bid or getting the contract for the park could not be attributed to this factor. Later, he married his favorite cousin, Emma. One would assume that Hall must have been recognized as a very successful architect and designer but this has not happened. This is because he rose to the level of landscape designer only once and then returned to civil engineering. He never did any landscape designing again. But this does not mean that we cannot learn from his work; he did a commendable job by coming up with solutions for problems related to terrain and climate. Hall tried to study many books on horticulture and landscaping during his tenure

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as superintendent, the list of books is quite extensive and it is amazing how he read all of those. He understood that due to the topographical and climatic difference of the Pacific Coast, it would require a different school of architecture and landscaping from the ones that had already developed in Europe. It is also amusing how he remained steady and successful in his practical work only by reading books. In March 1889, he was appointed as Supervising Engineer of the United States Irrigation Investigation including the entire Western region and also the Rocky Mountains; he secured this post till June, 1890 (Mann 333). He deserved enough to be amongst the three engineers who conducted the first United States Government irrigation investigation. Later, from July, 1890, to June, 1896, while he was in charge of important irrigation and water supply work in California and in the State of Washington. Mr. Hall also went to Europe and South Africa to study the irrigation systems there. In London, he worked as a Consulting Engineer on Irrigation and Water Works. He was the head of construction for a huge plant and was in charge of supplying water to important mines in Johannesburg. He also made a contract with the Commissioner of Public Works of the Cape Town Government and came up with an irrigation law of his own. He went to Russia in 1899, where he examined irrigation reports and great canal projects. He also worked in Central Asia with the Minister of Agriculture. He was the holder of the Norman Medal and a member of the Pacific Union Club. However, he resigned from it later. He died in 1934 and it was a big loss for the nation. The progressive movement for USA was an effort to invent solutions facing the country and in my opinion, Hall is a great figure and should be remembered in this aspect. Works Cited California State Water Project History, Hall. 22 October 2011 . Mann, William A. Landscape <https://assignbuster.com/william-hammond-hall/>

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