

John Giudici's CAPEURO

California

- 1887 *born Giovanni Giudici, March 4, 1887 in or near Castellanza, Italy
- 1911 *married Ernesta Luigia Ceriotti, November 20, 1911 at Castellanza, Italy
- 1912 *came to America (*possibly direct to Alameda, CA*)
- 1914 *first of six children born in America
Josephine 6/15/14 in Alameda
Joe 2/10/18 in Alameda
Mary 11/19/21 in Mayfield
Sylvia 6/9/25 in Palo Alto
Frank 6/22/30 in Menlo Park
Carlo 1/20/33 in Menlo Park
- ? worked on the San Francisco Exposition, in a brick yard, made cornices for buildings and worked in the ship yards
- 1928 *Traded property in Palo Alto for Menlo Park property, lot size is approx 50 by 150 During this period he worked as a janitor and a gardener, including taking care of President Hoover's garden at Stanford
- 1932 started landscaping his house (from National Register nomination form)
- 1936? his son Carlo fell into a two foot deep fish pond in the backyard of the house. John panicked and filled the pool with cement and started doing some construction which was embellished with items from the 5 and 10 cent store as well as other donated gifts from family and friends.
- 1960-70's small articles in local newspapers(*from Mary*) and visits by local school children, and others brought by Tony May from San Jose State University
- 1976-77 * prominently included in the exhibition "In Celebration of Ourselves" at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art newspaper articles in.....
*California Living Magazine - San Francisco Examiner - December 12, 1976
Palo Alto Times - December 16, 1976
* Menlo Park Atherton Recorder - June 2, 1976
John dies - after seeing exhibition
- 1977 *Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places by the California State Office of Historic Preservation
- 1979 *Capedro is prominently included in "In Celebration of Ourselves" the book, which includes 34 other CA folk art environments
- 1981 *Nominated and accepted as California State Landmark #939 by the State Office of Historic preservation. (this designation was given to 10 California sites all under the 939 number)
- 1987 *exhibition - "Documenting Capedro" at San Jose State University
- 1988 Mary dies

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During her life daughter Mary lived with and took care of John - she was estranged from the rest of the family whom she felt ignored John. She refused to give us their phone numbers or locations when we were doing research. When we attempted to interview her on tape she remembered very little. The family (Mary?) discouraged publicity about the site partly because of John's ill health and eventually hers.

We have copies of a number of early documents in Italian which needs to be translated. We hope to do a more thorough photographic documentation of the site and fill in the gaps of John's life now that we will be able to talk to still living children.

* = have primary information - prepared by Seymour Rosen (last altered 12/88)

Capidro is a house and garden located in a residential neighborhood of Menlo Park. The house is a frame structure built in the 1930's. The resource of major importance is the surrounding garden which John Giudici began landscaping in 1932. The garden is a labyrinth of cement walls and arches which are embedded with clam and abalone shells, bright ceramic tiles, chains, golf tees and the like. There are waterfalls, ponds, and windmills; colored lights illuminate the yard. Some of the walls have mosaic plaques set in them. the garden is planted with roses, geraniums, and fig trees. The environment is in excellent condition and retains its integrity of design.

from National Register of Historic Places nomination form prepared by Albert L. Hurtado 10/11/77

Mr. Giudici has created a series of tableau which include miniature Waterfalls, Ponds etc. There are also very prominent painted areas which seem to have African themes. Some of the painted areas are reminiscent of Larry Poons paintings. There is also a series of walkways in a "formal" garden with planters and sculptural elements.

The front yard is an extensive planting of tall cactus "fence posts" as you walk to the back down the driveway you are greeted by a concrete fence with the sculpture right behind it.

SR - 1988