



# El Observador Porteño

(The Observer of the City of Buenos Aires)

Monthly Newspaper of the Cultural-Historical Heritage Observatory

Year 2 / N° 5

March

2018

# Puerto Madero

## The new face of the City



Warehouses and grocery stores of Puerto Madero in the beginning of the 20th century.

This electronic bulletin is aimed at promoting the activities carried out by the *Juntas de Estudios Históricos* (Historical Research Boards) and the *Gerencia Operativa de Patrimonio* (Heritage Operative Management) within the framework of Resolution 1534/GCABA/MCGC/2011, which created the *Observatorio del Patrimonio Histórico-Cultural* (Cultural-Historical Heritage Observatory) of the City of Buenos Aires. We will publish information on every neighborhood of the city on a monthly basis, as well as relevant articles related to the aforementioned Board.

## Puerto Madero: the new face of the City

The port of Buenos Aires, a keystone in Argentinian history, was not created naturally. The nearest natural anchorage is located in Ensenada. For this reason, when the northern channel of the *Riachuelo* was blocked (mid 18<sup>th</sup> century), new anchoring spots were needed. These were found throughout the coast in places named by the sailors as “potholes”, where the river was deeper. *La Merced*, *San Francisco* and *Santo Domingo* ended on this river. When big ships came to the city, they had to anchor here. The most complicated part came afterwards: carrying the passengers and the merchandise in motorboats and wagons.

In 1795, the Real Consulate ordered the Galician engineer Pedro Antonio Cerviño the construction of a pier near *Pozo de la Merced*. This construction work began in 1799 but the Crown of Spain ordered its interruption. In 1802, a small pier designed by Martín Boneo was built here. It came to an end in 1817, and demolished in the 1820s. The latter was the only existing pier until the Passenger Pier was built in 1855. It was 200 meters long and it reached Puerto Madero. This avoided the tedious disembarkation described previously: moving the passengers from the motorboats to the wagons.

View of Buenos Aires from the river, Bramblia, 1794.



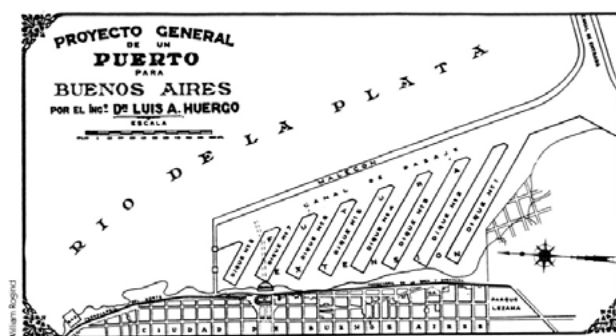
This is how we reached 1880. There were two options: the canal could be made deeper, and the installations of the *Riachuelo* could be improved or a new system near *Plaza de Mayo* should be built. The interests related to the first option were promoted by the engineer Luis Huergo, the traders, the citizens of the south of the city, and the newspaper *La Prensa*. The ones related to the second alternative were promoted by the trader Eduardo Madero, members of the national government, retailers, foreign businessmen of the city and the newspaper *La Nación*. By then, Huergo had already inaugurated a pier in the left margin of *Vuelta de Rocha*, where the transatlantic *L'Italia* was held up, the first of this type that came to Buenos Aires. There were many projects of this kind. Among them, that of the English engineer John La Trobe Bateman, who came to the country to lead the construction works of the port. In 1871, he had planned a dock that would be set up near today's Puerto Madero. This project was never fulfilled.

The project that was finally executed was the one in Madero: a port in the shape of beads in the eastern side of *Plaza de Mayo*. It capitalized the railway system and it was profitable regarding British interests. A number of credits were taken to build it. The work, which began in 1887, finally came to an end in 1898 after the Northern Canal was authorized. It included the construction of four docks, two harbors (one on the north and another on the south) with two canals and 16 docks or warehouses which were built following an English functional architecture. Furthermore, 3 million square feet were taken from the river. The *Dársena Norte* became a real neuralgic center, where the most important installations took place: it was a historical place. It is believed that towards June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1826, the *Combate de los Pozos* took place in this area during the war with the Empire of Brazil. The hydroplane

Plus Ultra landed 100 years later. This plane carried out the first flight between Spain and America.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Puerto Madero became obsolete and, in 1907, the construction of an extension in the shape of a comb was authorized. Huer-go had considered this. These works began in 1911 and came to an end in 1919 with the construction of five harbors. It was baptized as *Puerto Nuevo* (New Port). In 1925, it was authorized completely and it was the most important port of the southern hemisphere. By then, the Municipal Bathing Area opened in *Costanera Sur*. It was one of the coolest spots for the *porteños* until the 1970s, when the Municipality prohibited swimming in the waters due to its contamination. There were many emblematic buildings, such as *Cervecería Munich* (today Humor Museum), which opened in 1927. In the 1970s, the project “Broadening of the Central Area” began and it was aimed at creating a satellite city in front of the *Costanera*. It wasn’t successful but, after the pieces of land arose, a Nature Reserve was created. This project came to an end with the construction of two motor-ways: 25 de Mayo and Perito Moreno. The 350 hectares taken from the river were part of this as well. It was officially created by the *Consejo Deliberante* (Deliberative Board) in 1986.

With time, Puerto Madero became an abandoned place. For this reason, the *Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A.* was created in 1986 to recover and urbanize the area. It was a public corporation constituted by the National Government and the Municipality of Buenos Aires. Afterwards, 170 hectares were transferred. These belonged to the *Administración General de Puertos*, *Ferrocarriles Argentinos* and *Junta Nacional de Granos*. The Municipality took on its administration and decided to urbanize it. The recovery works began in 1992. This project



General Project for a port of Buenos Aires by Dr. Luis Huer-go.

transformed the old stores into fast-food restaurants, offices and lofts with incredible views to the river. In the east, a number of exclusive skyscrapers were built. This is how the new face of the city was finally built with the last but one neighborhood of the city, which was officially created following a By-law on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1996.



Construction works on the port. Dock 2. Rimathé, 1890.



## Timeline

**1799** Pier of Cerviño.

**1826** Combate de Los Pozos.

**1855** Passenger Pier.

**1887** Construction works of Puerto Madero.

**1889** Opening of Dársena Sur.

**1898** End of construction works of Puerto Madero.

**1918** Opening of the Municipal Bathing Area.

**1925** Puerto Madero stands idle.

**1926** The Plus Ultra lands on Dársena Norte.

**1927** Opening of Cervecería Munich.

**1970** Contamination of the Bathing Area.

**1986** Creation of the Nature Reserve.

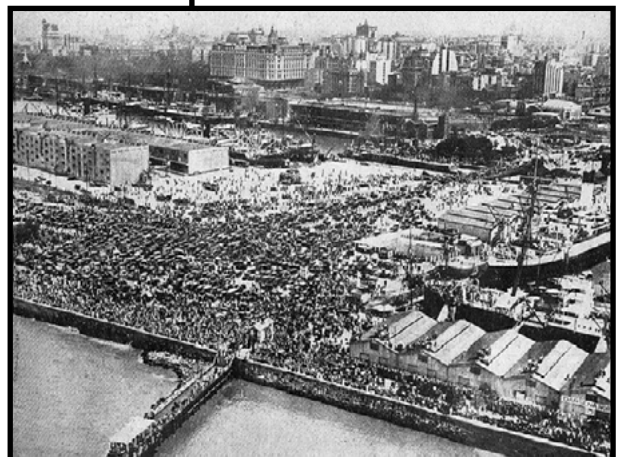
**1989** Corporación Antiguo Puerto Madero S.A.

**1992** Recovery works of Puerto Madero.

**1996** Creation of the neighborhood Puerto Madero.



Pier, Benito Panunzi, ca. 1867.



Landing of Plus Ultra.

## Did you know that...?

...the Streetcar of the East was a tram line that operated in the neighborhood between 2007 and 2012?

...Puerto Madero Station of the *FC Sarmiento* (Railway) operated for a short period of time as a passenger train?

...“open-top buses” were long vehicles which took the citizens to the Bathing Area during the weekends?

...the successful film “Nueve Reinas” (2000) was shot at the Hilton Hotel (Macacha Güemes 351)?

...the Monumental Fountain *Las Nereidas*, created by the sculptor Lola Mora, used to be located in today’s Av. Leandro N. Alem and Perón?

...the corvette ARA Uruguay led the famous rescue of Otto Nordenskjöld’s Antarctic expedition in 1903?

...the most important archaeological discovery of the city took place in 2008 when a Spanish merchant ship (Pecio Zencity) was discovered in Puerto Madero?

...the statue of Luis Viale pays tribute to an Italian trader which had an heroic participation in the shipwreck of the steamship America in 1871?

...the day to celebrate this neighborhood is on March 8<sup>th</sup>, on International Women’s Day?

...Yacht Club Argentino, the Reproductions Museum and the Monument to Spain are not located within the official limits of this neighborhood?

Exit of the tunnel of *FC del Oeste*.

Archive Edgardo Rocca.



### Streets in Puerto Madero

Most of the streets of Puerto Madero are named after women. The first bylaw that named them takes back to 1995. Then, it was completed with other names.

**Cossettini, Olga** (1897-1987), teacher and pedagogue.

**Dealessi, Pierina** (1894-1983), actress.

**De la Barra, Emma** (1860 or 1861-1947), writer.

**Eyle, Petrona** (1866-1945), doctor and feminist.

**Ezcurra, Encarnación** (1795-1838), politician, Juan Manuel de Rosas’s wife.

**Gorriti, Juana Manuela** (1818-1892), writer.

**Grierson, Cecilia** (1859-1934), first Argentinian doctor.

**Güemes, Macacha** (1776-1866), patriot, Martín Miguel de Güemes’s sister.

**Guevara, Trinidad** (1798-1873), Uruguayan actress.

**Langer, Marie** (1910-1987), psychologist and psychoanalyst.

**Lanteri, Julieta** (1873-1932), doctor, politician and feminist.

**Lorenzini, Carola** (1899-1941), aviator.

**Lynch, Marta** (1925-1985), writer.

**Maizani, Azucena** (1902-1970), singer.

**Manso, Juana** (1819-1875), writer, translator, journalist, teacher and feminist.

**Mora, Lola** (1866-1936), sculptor.

**Moreau de Justo, Alicia** (1885-1986), doctor and politician.

**Ocampo, Victoria** (1890-1979), writer, translator and editor.

**O’Gorman, Camila** (1825-1848), major figure of a tragic love story.

**Pacini de Alvear, Regina** (1871-1965), lyrical soprano.

**Painé, Aimé** (1943-1987), singer.

**Rawson de Dellepiane, Elvira** (1865-1954), doctor and feminist.

**Sáenz, Manuela** (1795-1856), patriot, Simón Bolívar’s partner.

**Salotti, Martha** (1899-1980), educator and writer.

**Sánchez de Thompson, María** (1786-1868), patriot.

**Vera Peñaloza, Rosario** (1872 o 1873-1950), educator and pedagogue.

**Villafior, Azucena** (1924-1977), social activist, founder of *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*.

## Legends and Curious Stories of Puerto Madero

As in the case of the most important cities of the world, Buenos Aires has a magical space: there are a number of myths, legends, and stories that make up a considerable part of its collective memory, and they took place in Puerto Madero precisely. Here are some of them:

**The “Reservito”:** the Nature Reserve is an ecosystem that emerged between the 1970s and 1980s. It was finally finished when the pieces of land were finally filled with the construction remains of the 25 de Mayo and Perito Moreno Highways, and it was officially created in 1986. Today, it is one of the most popular spots for the citizens to visit. However, there are people who say that there is a supernatural being in the Reserve, half dog and half rat, which frightens tourists and citizens that stay until its closing time. It was baptized as the *Reservito*.

**Mermaids in the Río de la Plata?:** The story regarding the existence of mermaids (half women, half fish) in the *Río de la Plata* is a constant feature of the mythological history of the city; in fact, during the times of the conquest, the existence of these nymphs was already highlighted, both in the river and in the *Riachuelo*. In his book *Misteriosa Buenos Aires*, Manuel Mujica Láinez tells a story that took place in 1541, in which a mermaid felt disturbed with the presence of the Spanish that were ready to set sail on the ships anchored to the river, and she fell in love with the figure of a figurehead in the bow.

Nature Reserve.



Aerial View of Puerto Madero, ca. 1925.

Photographers: Enrique Broszeit and Juan Bautista Borra. Archive Borra Family.  
Courtesy Juan Carlos Borra.

**Vietnamese Chef:** According to what Víctor Coviello and Guillermo Barrantes managed to gather in their saga *Buenos Aires es leyenda*, legend has it that there was a Vietnamese chef who prepared exquisite dishes using a “wok” in an exclusive restaurant. However, the guests did not know that most of his dishes were prepared with human flesh of his girlfriends, which he froze after he killed them. He is known as Wokman.

**Forever *porteños*:** when Juan de Garay founded Buenos Aires, he named it “Ciudad de la Trinidad en el Puerto de Santa María de los Buenos Aires” (City of the Holy Trinity in the Port of Saint Mary of Buenos Aires). This name made reference to the arrival to the port, which had taken place on the day of the Holy Trinity, and the name of the port was a tribute to the settlement of Pedro de Mendoza. Even though there has never been a formal regulation to change its name, destiny wanted the name of the port to prevail among the name of the city. Towards the 18<sup>th</sup> century, habits and customs managed to replace the name “La Trinidad” for “Buenos Aires” in official documents: the importance that the port of Buenos Aires had throughout history can clearly be seen in this momentous event. This is why a person born in Buenos Aires will always be “porteño” (from the port) and not “trinitarian”.



## Touring Puerto Madero

**1- Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat Art Collection:** this private collection, open to the public, has works of art by Renoir, Turner and Peter Brueghel II.

**2- Corvette ARA Uruguay:** the oldest ship built in our country that can still stay afloat. It was a training ship of the Argentine Navy between 1877 and 1880. Today it is a museum.

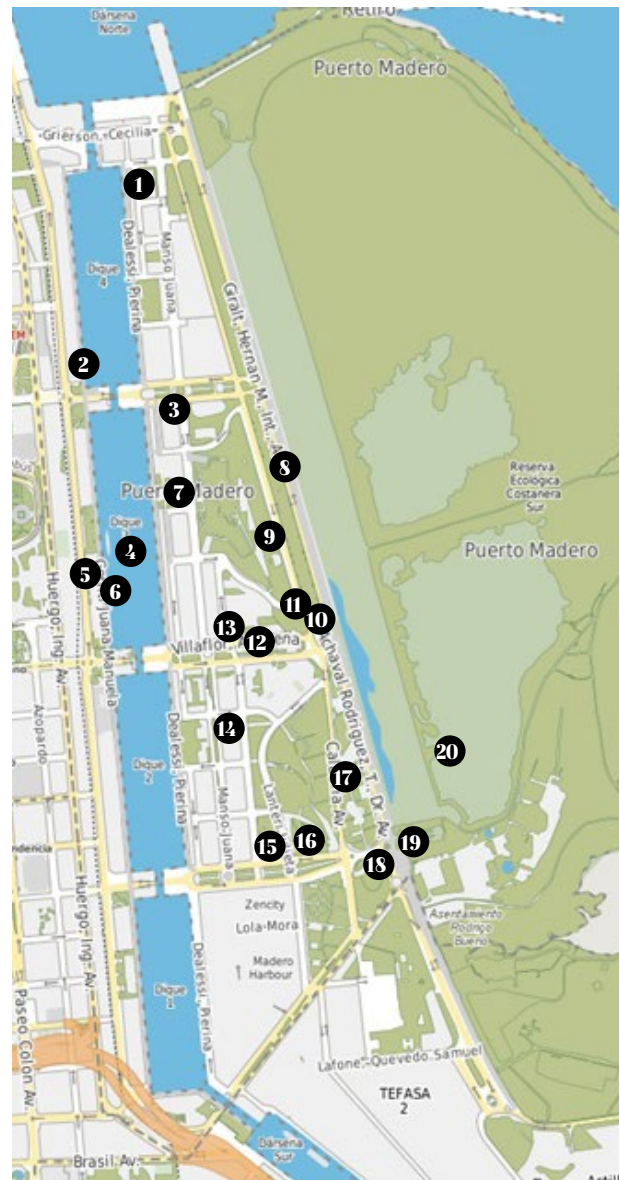
**3- Hilton Hotel:** this five-star hotel opened its doors in 2000. It was created by Mario Roberto Álvarez and Associates.

**4- Women's Bridge:** It is an icon of the neighborhood, designed by Santiago Calatrava and opened in 2001.

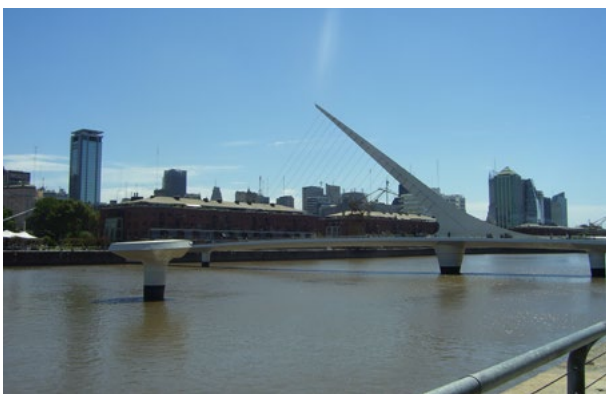
**5- Antique docks:** they were built following an English functional architecture and they were reconverted in the 1990s to be used as fast-food restaurants, restaurants, offices and lofts.

**6- Fragata Presidente Sarmiento (Frigate):** it is a training ship of the Argentine Navy. It made 37 instruction trips between 1898 and 1961, and managed to make 42 round-the-world trips. Today, it is a museum.

**7- Silos of the Junta Nacional de Granos (National Grain Board):** among the silos and storage units that the Board had in Puerto Madero, the concrete structure of one of them still exists, though it is abandoned.



Women's Bridge.



Silos of the National Grain Board.



## Touring Puerto Madero

**8- Monumental Antenna:** also known as the “Flagpole of the Italian”, it was donated by the Italian community after the visit of Prince Umberto of Savoy in 1924.

**9- Former *Cervecería Munich*:** today, the *Dirección General de Museos* (General Administration of Museums) of the City and the Humor Museum operate here. This Art Deco piece of work was inaugurated in 1927 to be used as the *Cervecería Munich*.

**10- Monument to Luis Viale and former Bathing Area:** it was inaugurated in 1918. The former bathing area was one of the most popular places for the citizens to spend their

summer. The monument to Luis Viale is located next to the pergola of the promenade.

**11- Former Red Cross House:** the Red Cross ordered it to be a “model house”. Today, it houses the Beit Jabad Community Center and Temple in Puerto Madero.

**12- Tall Towers:** most of the tallest buildings of the city were built in the beginning of 2000 (See Top 10 Tall Towers).

**13- *Los Molinos* Building:** two buildings of the *Molinos Río de la Plata* Complex were recovered and transformed into a housing complex, commercial shops and cultural center.

*Former Cervecería Munich.*





## Touring Puerto Madero

14- **Faena Hotel:** originally, it was the *Molino Porteño*, one of the most important silos of Puerto Madero. It was recycled in 2000 by Alan Faena.

15- **Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza (Church):** one of the only churches with its main headquarters in our city. It was inaugurated in 1994.

16- **Micaela Bastidas Park:** this eight-hectare green park was inaugurated in 2003. It stood out as a result of its embankment with steps.

17- **Former *Brisas del Plata* Restaurant:** today, it is a reception salon. It was one of the constructions led by the architect Kalnay in *Costanera Sur* for the gastronomic industry.

18. **Monumental Fountain *Las Nereidas*:** this was an emblematic work created by the sculpture Lola Mora. It is located in today's location since 1918.

19- **Monument to Plus Ultra and Breakwater:** this monument pays tribute to the hy-



Faena Hotel Buenos Aires.

droplane Plus Ultra which landed in Buenos Aires in 1926. The breakwater of 1918 is the entrance to the Nature Reserve.

20- **Nature Reserve:** it was born as a spontaneous ecosystem in 1986. Today, it is one of the most important touristic points of the city.

Monumental Fountain *Las Nereidas*.



## TOP 10 Tall Towers

**1- Alvear Tower (Bv. Azucena Villaflor 559):** still under construction, it will be the tallest tower in the country with 235 metres.

**2- YPF Tower (Bv. Macacha Güemes 515):** it was built for Repsol and designed by César Pelli. For a short period of time, it was the tallest building in the country.

**3- Mulieris Towers (Bv. Azucena Villaflor 489):** it is part of MSGSSS and it was finished in 2009. It is taller than YPF and El Faro.

**4- El Faro Towers (Julieta Lanteri 1202):** it is the second block of towers of the neighborhood. When they were built (2000-2003), they were the tallest buildings of the country.

**5- Madero Office Tower (Bv. Cecilia Grierson 355):** it belongs to the ICBC. It is an emblematic building located at the end of Dock 4.

**6- Renoir Residencias de Altura (Marta Lynch and Aimé Painé):** it is a set of two towers. The tallest one will be the tallest building of the country until the Alvear Tower is finished.

**7- River View Tower (Juana Manso 740):** these were the first tall buildings of the area. In 2003, they were known as the “twin towers of Puerto Madero”.

**8- Le Parc Puerto Madero (Bv. Azucena Villaflor 550):** The district attorney Alberto



Mulieris and El Faro Towers. Archive Leonel Contreras.

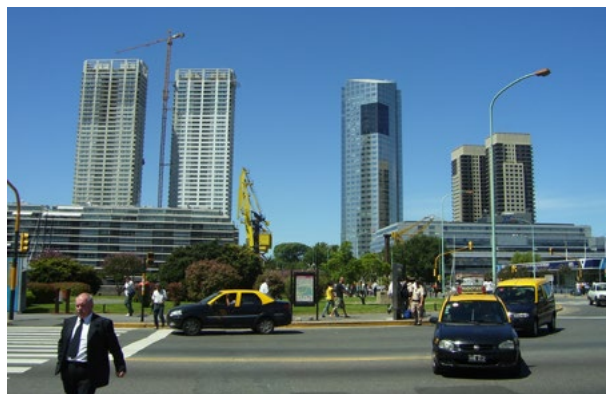


Tower Complex: Mulieris, El Faro, Chateau and Le Parc in 2010. Archive Leonel Contreras.

Nisman was found dead in 2015 in one of the apartments of these three towers built by Aisenson.

**9- Chateau Puerto Madero Residence (Julieta Lanteri 1331):** it has a neocademicist style, and its twin tower, Chateau Libertador, is located in Núñez.

**10- Yacht Towers (Juana Manso 530):** they were finished in 2010 and both of them were designed by the MSGSSS Studio.



Repsol YPF Tower, Riverview Towers and Yacht Towers under construction towards 2010. Archive Leonel Contreras.



## Skyscrapers of Puerto Madero

Six of the ten tallest buildings of the country are located in Puerto Madero. This is the ranking:

**1- Alvear Tower** (Puerto Madero, under construction)  
54 stories, 235 m.

**2- Renoir Tower 2** (Puerto Madero)  
49 stories, 175 m.

**3- Cavia Tower** (Palermo)  
43 stories, 172,8 m.

**4- Mulieris Tower** (Puerto Madero)  
42 stories, 161,4 m.

**5- El Faro Tower** (Puerto Madero)  
47 stories, 160 m.

**6- YPF Tower** (Puerto Madero)  
36 stories, 160 m.

**7- Le Parc Tower** (Palermo)  
49 stories, 157,9 m.

**8- Chateau Puerto Madero** (Puerto Madero)  
48 stories, 155,7 m.

**9- BBVA Tower** (Retiro)  
33 stories, 155 m.

**10- Galicia Central Tower** (San Nicolás)  
32 stories, 143 m.

YPF Tower. Archive Leonel Contreras.



Le Parc Puerto Madero. Archive Leonel Contreras.





## Image Gallery



Skyline of Buenos Aires from Puerto Madero in 1910.



Protest after the death of Umberto of Savoy, 1900,  
*Caras y Caretas*, AGN.



View taken from the square of Customs, Deroy, 1861.



Captaincy General and Passenger Pier in the 1880s.  
Witcomb collection.



First ships in the newly-inaugurated docks following the Old Customs.  
Witcomb collection.



Municipal Bathing Area in *Costanera Sur* in mid 20<sup>th</sup>  
century.



Skyline of Buenos Aires from Puerto Madero  
towards 1940.

## Central Board

### Central Board of Historical Research

by *Arnaldo Ignacio Adolfo Miranda*

The Central Board of Historical Research of the City of Buenos Aires was created on October 31st 1968 as a non-profit association dedicated to the rescue, preservation and promotion of the historical heritage of the city and its neighborhoods. Currently, it comprises seventy-three entities that, with special diligence and dedication, have reactivated the study of the city's past.

The institutions are divided into four statutory categories, such as, permanent members, acceding members, correspondents and institutional honorary members. In this sense, it is important to stand out that, from the aforementioned entities, forty-four act as permanent members representing each of the forty-four neighborhoods of the city. Currently, the presidency of the board is led by Prof. Nélide Rosa Pareja.

In order to provide the board with a definite institutionalization and better organization, towards 1997, a new statute that was presented to the General Inspection of Justice was passed on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1999, and it has been operating as a legal entity since then. From then on, the membership was limited to the four categories that were previously mentioned. The president of each institution is the natural delegate. There can also be a permanent and substitute member for each federate member.

The coat of arms of the City of Buenos Aires has been used as a logo since 1981. It was created at the request of Governor Jacinto de Láriz in 1649. This coat of arms corresponds to the second Coat of Arms of the city-port, which was made official in the session of November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1649.

The long path of the Board can be guaranteed due to the fulfillment of a number of works carried out throughout its history with the

#### Central Board of Historical Research of the City of Buenos Aires

Federation

Non-profit association

Legal Entity C 1657583

#### Location and Library:

Piedras 1417, PB C (C1140ABE)

City of Buenos Aires

Tel.: 4307-3413

Email: [juntacentralbuenosaires@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:juntacentralbuenosaires@yahoo.com.ar)

Webpage: [www.juntacentralba.com.ar](http://www.juntacentralba.com.ar)

Twitter: @juntacentralBA

Facebook: Junta Central de Estudios  
Históricos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires  
[@juntacentralbuenosaires](https://www.facebook.com/juntacentralbuenosaires)

assistance of all its members. Some of the activities are:

- Expert advice to public organisms.
- Library and newspaper library specialized in the history of the city and its neighborhoods.
- History Congresses of the City of Buenos Aires every 3 years.
- Institutional agreements with public and private entities dedicated to training, teaching education, exchange of publications, academic cooperation and fulfillment of investigation projects.
- Courses, seminars and conferences.
- Book Fair of the History of the City of Buenos Aires
- Magazine *Históricas de la Ciudad*, unique in its type.
- Various publications.

## Cultural-Historical Heritage Observatory

The Cultural-Historical Heritage Observatory was created under resolution 1534/GCABA/MCGC/2011 and it functions as an agreement between the *Gerencia Operativa de Patrimonio* of the DGPMYCH and the different Historical Research Boards of the neighborhoods, through the Central Board of Historical Research of the City of Buenos Aires. Its main goal is to work with the Historical Research Boards (through the Main Board) in different topics related to the Cultural-Historical Heritage of our city. Its responsibilities are: a) gather information and investigate on the heritage values of the neighborhoods of the City of Buenos Aires, b) cultivate knowledge and information related to the city and its neighborhoods, c) promote training lectures, archive courses, investigations related to our work at the *Gerencia Operativa de Patrimonio*, d) identify potential archaeological and/or paleontological sites and e) organize a



network that would identify and monitor buildings and/or a collection with heritage interest for a future preservation.

Among the actions carried out with the Boards of Historical Research, you can find:

- **Maps “Memory Tours”**: aimed at rescuing its valuable existing tangible heritage in the 48 neighborhoods of the City of Buenos Aires.
- **Cycle “Urban Prints”**: aimed at rescuing areas of the city’s urban layout with peculiarities worth highlighting.
- **Cycle “Football Landmarks”**: aimed at rescuing all the sites of the city used to create the history of the most popular sport of our city, which has the most stadiums in the world.



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