



Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum
41st Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest
For 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders

2025 Theme – Rooted in Time: Hidden Villa

Essay Prompt

Background:

Walk through the green gate and come to explore the rich history and natural beauty of Hidden Villa. Begin your journey through the eyes of Frank and Josephine Duveneck. Follow in their footsteps as you experience the lasting legacy that they left behind on this land. Discover the stories that are brought to life through the photos, narratives, and artifacts. Appreciate the roots and heritage of this special place.

Come to the Museum any time before March 1, Thursday-Sunday, 12-4 p.m., to view this exhibit. For more information on this exhibit, please visit this website:

<https://www.losaltoshistory.org/exhibit/rooted-in-time/>

Also, you could visit Hidden Villa during their Centennial Celebration this year. Their many events honor 100 years since Hidden Villa was founded. Hidden Villa is located in Los Altos Hills and has a farm with animals, many hiking trails and more. Their website is <https://www.hiddenvilla.org>

Hidden Villa is one of many outdoor locations where families enjoy the natural environment. Perhaps you have visited Hidden Villa, or you have gone to a similar site that allowed you to actively investigate the natural habitats on your travels.

Writing Prompt:

To begin, think back to an experience you had at Hidden Villa or at a similar place your family visited together. This could be a local park, a National Park, a forest, a rock canyon, or another natural habitat. Have a conversation with your family to reflect on your adventures. Here are some questions to bring your memories to life:

Where did you go on your adventure? What did you do when you were there? What sounds did you hear, what sights did you see, what items did you touch? Who joined you on this experience? What will you never forget about this special place?

Either before or after writing, illustrate your memory with a drawing, painting or photograph. Your visual contribution will enhance your personal narrative, but its inclusion is not part of the rubric. (It is not required to send in a visual.)

Now, take your memories and use them to tell us your personal story. As you write, use interesting vocabulary and communicate your ideas in a creative manner. Originality and descriptive language are greatly encouraged. You are encouraged to include your drawing, painting or photos with your personal narrative when you submit it. We can't wait to read about your adventures in the great outdoors!

Win Prizes

1st Place - \$50 2nd Place - \$30 3rd Place - \$20
3 Winners Per Grade Level!