

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

November 14, 1962

Recalling Early Pacific Grove

It has been said that the area now known as Pebble Beach was at first considered as a location for the Methodist campground that became Pacific Grove. Perhaps it would have been chosen had it not been for a transportation difficulty.

By 1906, other churches had been established in the town, including the little Episcopal church "St. Mary's-by-the-Sea". About this time, a Frank Powers, I believe of Sacramento, had become interested in a development over the hills which he called Carmel City or just plain Carmel. Malcolm W. Steel of Carmel believes it was a member of the congregation of St. Mary's who made the suggestion that Powers name it Carmel-by-the-Sea. True or not, it does sound logical.

"Nevertheless, Pacific Grove adhered to strict religious principles almost going back to, Puritan days. The curfew bell on the old fire house rang promptly every night at 9, although in 1906 no one paid any attention to it except to set their clocks and watches. Intoxicating liquors have never been permitted to be sold within the city limits to this day, although it was suspected that some of the old boys of the day had a nip now and then, unbeknown to the little lady of the house," according to Mr. Steel.

"Down on Lovers' Point," Mr. Steel continues, "was located the Hopkins Marine Laboratory of Stanford University and during each summer was filled with students who lived in private homes about town. Many were members of the Stanford football team, full of vigor and vim, and others just plain cut-ups as is usually the case with youths of 18 to 20 years. The townspeople may have lifted their eyebrows at the goings-on of these college youths who would no doubt be called 'squares' by the fast-moving boys of today. Squares or not, as grammar school youths, these powerful athletes possessing unlimited physical ability, certainly became our heroes and our idea of men as they went through football practice on Lighthouse Avenue shouting number signals and going through intricate formations and tying up horsey-car traffic in the bargain.

"Saturday being a day of rest for them, usually saw them off to the old Del Monte Beach bath house, just

beyond the eastern end of the Southern Pacific yard's in Monterey. Of course, it was a must for us to follow our heroes and nice to have any one of them so much as to say 'hello' to us kids, not as yet even high school freshmen. However, it was a day of rest for the Pacific Grove townspeople."

The students having paid their fares to Del Monte, quite naturally could not afford to pay a visit to the 'Half Way House', as it was called. However, being men of great wisdom, they had a better idea. They hopped off at the Custom House, much to the delight of the conductor - driver, dropped in at a nearby bar and rejoined the car as it returned down Tyler street after having made the run up Alvarado street. Then the argument started as to whether they should be charged another fare from the foot of Tyler street to the baths. The argument kept up pro and con, with no decision being reached until the cry went up, 'Here we are' 'Goodbye and good luck, old man.' Such was the life of a motorman on a horse car.

This recollection by Mr. Steel is historical; "On many an occasion the annual Chautauqua Conference was held in the Grove with numerous well-known speakers on hand. On one particular occasion, none other than the great William Jennings Bryan appeared. The young people of today, would hardly know who one was talking about should he mention the name of the 'Great Commoner,' the 'Silver-tongued Orator' and 'Defender of the Common Man,' who was to become Woodrow Wilson's secretary of state after failing to attain the presidency."