

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Peninsula In 1906

The following paragraphs should give a fair idea of life and places in the Monterey area during the period, let us I say, from 1900 to 1909 as observed by a youthful summer visitor and his friends from San Francisco.

Malcolm W. Steel write us from his home in Carmel. Mr. Steel also contributed the delightful story about the early trips on the Del Monte Express last month.

"As we had just been through the terrible catastrophe which struck Sai Francisco in 1906, a year which we will never forget, we will assume it was during this year that we stepped from the Del Monte Express at Pacific Grove station with joy in our hearts," writes Mr. Steel.

The trip from 3rd and Townsend streets in San Francisco was fully described in the Issues of Oct. 5 and 8 of The Herald. However, Mr. Steel adds to the picture and describes the frightful destruction caused by the terrific earthquake and fire which lasted three days, with gigantic tongues of flame leaping 300 feet into the air. The only manner of describing the scene would be to refer to the familiar pictures of the shattered buildings in Europe during the two great wars.

"Our baggage was taken care of by a husky young man, Ed Gross, who operated the leading transfer concern during the 1920's. No doubt, on hand at the station was Mr. McGeorge with his horse-drawn stage labeled "17-Mile Drive and All Drives." I say horse-drawn stage for the reason that the comparatively new "horseless-carriage" had hardly made its way to the Monterey Peninsula at this time.

"Our host, James S. Painter, a veteran of the Union army during the Civil War, was on hand with his rig and reliable mare, "Daisy," to pick us up and take us to his home on 19th street above Lighthouse avenue. We might say for the benefit of those just born 'yesterday' that the dense forest was but two blocks south of the avenue, with a trail here and there through it to the sand dunes. Lake Majello and what we called Moss Beach (now known as Asilomar Beach)."

In a portion of the story appearing in the recent issues of the Peninsula Diary, Mr. Steel mentioned the fact that the living horse of the day was unafraid of horse cars, but could not tolerate any one of the Southern Pacific's "Iron Horses," to say nothing of the electric

cars of the M&PG Ry., which replaced the horse cars shortly after.

In this respect, "Daisy" was no exception, for the Steels always knew that after rising on her two hind legs at the sight of one of these monstrous demons conceived in the minds of men, they were indeed in for the ride of their lives when she came down on all fours. At that point she could probably make a modern Carmel Valley motorist appear to be moving at snail's pace.

"We never know what Mr. Painter's rank was in the Union army. However, as a matter of courtesy, we elevated him to that of captain and presented him with a souvenir 8-inch sword, no doubt purchased at Holman's.

"Yes, Holman's had been there on there on the south side of Lighthouse avenue since 1891, in accordance with the inscription on the north wall. Advised of the annual July 4th parade on the avenue, we took our places in front of Culp Brothers Cyclery, which always had a stock of the latest bicycles on hand. Boys of that day were all interested in bicycles.

"With the lapse of so many years, it is most difficult to recall other than Long & Gretter's Drug Store, Mrs. Howe's Dining Room and Tuttle's Drug Store on the south side of Lighthouse. Yes, they did get sick in Pacific Grove in those days, but as far as anyone knew, not from intoxicating liquors.

"On the north side of the avenue, Winston's Restaurant stood out in everyone's mind as the only place serving ice cream, that on Sunday only. We wonder how modern youth would endure the great hardship of having but a small taste of ice cream only once a week, that on the Lord's Day. Yet if 'Mr. Teen-ager' of today were required to turn and turn a crank of an ice cream freezer of those days in order to get a taste, he probably would do it only once and no more and wait until Sunday.

"On Lighthouse avenue, one might have a young man pointed out to him as a Mr. Thomas A. Work, one with great business ability and foresight and one who someday might become the president of a bank. No truer prediction was ever made," Mr. Steel concluded.