

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Off Point Pinos

Today again we will enjoy Malcolm W. Steel's description of life on the Monterey Peninsula in the early 1900's.

We already have referred to Mr. Winston's ice cream parlor add restaurant, where ice cream was served only on Sunday, and now Mr. Steel writes: "Besides operating Pacific Grove's best restaurant, Mr. Winston was an energetic man with a derby hat and one who looked for other things to do for 'progress' seemed to be his motive other than just feeding mankind.

"Having had a sizeable launch constructed at Tiburon in Marin County, he brought her down the coast to Pacific Grove, her new home port, where she proudly rode at anchor off the beach. We would say that the 'Queen Ester' was some 40 feet in length and was entirely enclosed, in a long cabin and bore the Stars and Stripes on a large flag at her stern.

"We do not know whether Mr. Winston had received the necessary papers; however, in our young minds, he was an 'admiral' in command of the flagship of the Pacific Grove Navy. One can say 'navy,' for he was to add a smaller one to the fleet at a later date. It would be thought that an admiral should at least wear an admiral's cap. However, in this case, the black derby apparently, served the purpose. He was always the chief navigator on trips now and then to Santa Cruz and almost daily on a thriller around the whistling buoy at Point Pinos.

"Old time masters of sailing vessels at San Francisco frequently told of the terrors of rounding Cape Horn (or 'The Horn') in the dead of winter, but we will say right here that for those who were unable to swim, it indeed must have been a thrill when 'rounding the buoy' in a heavy sea. Again, the Biblical story of the unfortunate Jonah was brought home to us when one of these monsters of the deep crossed the bow of 'Queen Ester.'" However, we always arrived back in port safely, moving cautiously through Mr. Sprague's glass-bottom boats and fishing craft.

"Little experiences of this sort served to raise one's courage 11 years later while passing through the dangerous submarine zone in the North Atlantic on an Army transport.

"No doubt Mrs. Emily Fish, in command of Uncle Sam's lighthouse at Point Pinos got her thrills in watching the 'Queen Ester' fighting it out off the point. It does seem appropriate for having to do with a lighthouse and the sea, that she should have the name of Fish. If ever there was an efficient lighthouse keeper, it was she and particularly on visitors' day for then it was 'boys and girls, don't touch this and ' don't touch that, for I have spent the morning polishing the brass work.' "

Another small touch of early Pacific Grove history was this, according to Mr. Steel: "Along with our bicycles we always brought our tennis rackets to Pacific Grove. Not being in line for the Davis Cup at that or any other time, there was no law on the books which said one could not seek a match with anyone who chanced to be on hand at the tennis court near Edward Berwick's house down at the east end of town near the railroad tracks. On one or two occasions, Mr. Berwick chanced to be looking for a match as well. I do not recall who won; no doubt it was he, for he was a fairly good player.

"Mr. Berwick, as I recall, had settled in Pacific Grove after having arrived in this country from London. He operated a pear orchard in Carmel Valley, which was a long distance away in those days. If one is permitted to slow down to 50 or 60 mph on the Valley road by the impatient drivers in back of him today, no doubt he will see the Berwick sign about 5 miles up the valley."