

Yerba Buena Island

THE LEGEND OF YERBA BUENA ISLAND

Known originally as Sea Bird Island,
later as Wood Island, and quite
commonly as Goat Island

Stories of an inland island
collected by
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Dedicated to those who have peered over ferry-boat railings and
asked futile questions of those who did not know
the story of the island that centers San Francisco Bay.

M. E. B.



It lies like a jewel in the setting of San Francisco Bay, Yerba Buena Island, the hub spot of a wheel whose rim is punctuated by the thriving cities of a mainland fringing that bay. As it is geographically centralized, so too, have been directed, like the spokes of the wheel from every direction, casual interests in the earlier years, and the heightened interest and appreciation of accomplishments of the later years, the climax of which is the building of the great San Francisco Bay bridge, tying in the mainland with San Francisco by way of the island. Its completion is the *raison d'etre* for the San Francisco Exposition of 1939.

Since before the days of the Mission padres, the island has had its strata of historical interest. Recently exhumed bones in connection with the bridge building project have told the mute story in scientists' language that Indians, centuries ago, wended their way from the mainland, probably in the tule barges, their known mode of transportation, and held conference or pow-wow on this prominence.

In succeeding strata the Spanish regime in California left its mark with the traditions of Spanish grants, followed by Mexican claims and later by squatters of the early gold rush era. The argonauts that sailed through the Golden Gate in quest of the fleece cast anchor in line with the island and their captains made pleasure excursions to its rocky shores in ship's boats. In sequence of events, in 1852, the government proposed to place batteries on the island and included it in the third line of fortifications, and so it was reserved with other points of the bay.

In July, 1865, a proposition was made to the U. S. Government to lease Goat Island and to build a dry dock thereon, but it was turned down on September 18, 1865, the reason given being that "a dock of the dimensions proposed would hardly pay by its earnings for the outlay. The Navy would seldom require it, as all its appliances for repairs are at the Navy Yard, Mare Island."

On December 19, 1866, Special Order No. 352 of the Commanding General of San Francisco, read as follows:

"The Commanding Officer of Alcatraz Island will send tomorrow morning, a detachment of one sergeant and ten privates under a commissioned officer from his command to take post at Yerba Buena."

In 1868, peremptory orders came from Washington for the occupation of Yerba Buena Island in force and a detachment of 125 men of the Engineer Corps, stationed at Point San Jose, was ordered transported to the island. There had been activity on the part of the Central Pacific Railroad and its sympathizers to obtain the island as a railroad terminus and feeling had run high between the factions and their divided interests. This government order for military occupation was understood as settling negatively all claims for the occupation of the island for railroad purposes. The military reservation was used as a Quartermaster depot from 1871 to 1892, being transferred to the U. S. Engineer Department in the latter year.

Acts of the State Legislature, approved March 2 and 9, 1897, established the metes and bounds of the island.

On April 13, 1898, Congress made an appropriation for the establishment of a Naval Training Station for apprentices on the Pacific Coast and President McKinley set aside for that purpose, a portion of Yerba Buena Island.

Prior to the erection of barracks and other buildings, the apprentices lived aboard the U. S. S. Pensacola, anchored alongside, and later secured to, the island, It carried 175 cadets between the ages of 15 and 17, besides the ship's crew.

In 1908, the facilities of the island were not sufficient to meet the requirements of the Fleet, and it was recommended that another training station on the west coast be established, to be located, preferably, in the vicinity of San Diego. This was accomplished in 1923.

During the world war there were, at one time, 13,000 men under training on the island.

Navy activities on the island, following the removal of the training station, are those of conducting the Receiving Ship. The old U. S. S. Boston, famous as one of Dewey's fleet at the Battle of Manila Bay, is moored to the short dock on the east side of the island. This, officially, is the "Receiving Ship", although all of the business of the Receiving Ship is conducted ashore in the administration building. About six or seven thousand men pass through the Receiving Ship annually enroute to or from Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, the Philippines, China and other far eastern stations.

The acreage of the island is shared by three branches of the government service, there being 29.9 acres on the southeastern point given over to the United States Lighthouse Service; 11. 1 acres are assigned to the Coast Artillery Corps of the United States Army as a mine depot on the northeast point, and the remaining 107.3 acres is the portion assigned to the United States Navy as the Receiving Ship.

The lighthouse, established in 1875, is not a large one but before the days of radio beacons and sirens, it was considered one of the most important lights on the coast. It is so located as to be in line with the now defunct Fort Point and Point Bonita, and was valuable to mariners entering the Golden Gate by these bearings. The original coal oil lamp of shiny brass, whose prismatic globe amplified its rays for service is still kept at the lighthouse. The station is equipped with all the automatic devices of modern times including graphs electrically traced to leave their indisputable records.

The buoy wharf and lighthouse depot take care of supplies for all lights and buoys of the 18th Division, which includes all those on the west coast from the Oregon line to Mexico. They number in the thousands and conform as occasion demands to various sizes and types.

The accumulation of red-leaded replacement buoys of bulbous shape usually to be seen on the wharf, prompted one child visitor to the island to designate a direction as "over by all those big carrots."

Island Called By Many Names

The island has had as many names as a modern divorcee, and also in like fashion, has reclaimed a former name. From the descendant of an early settler we learn that it was first known as Sea Bird Island.



Along about 1836, Captain Gorham Nye was responsible for the nomenclature which clung for many years, he having placed goats on it for sale to trading vessels.

From the files of the "California", a newspaper published in Monterey, the first capital of the state, under date of June 26, 1847, appears the following clue to the name that stuck, and also other names of the island:

Notice

Is hereby given that the Goats on Yerba Buena on Wood Island, are the property of the undersigned. Any encroachments therefore upon our right either by shooting or taking away said goats will be considered a robbery and treated as such.

N. SPEAR

J. FULLER

San Francisco, June 5, 1847.

The first legislature on February 18, 1850, passed an act establishing the limits of San Francisco County and gave the island the name of Yerba Buena.

Officially the island was Yerba Buena until about 1895, when, upon the authority of a decision of the U. S. Geographic Board, it was changed to Goat Island.

Under date line of Washington, June 3, 1931, the following news item appeared in newspaper publications:

"The old Spanish name, Yerba Buena, was restored today, by the U. S. Geographic Board, to the island in San Francisco Bay now known as Goat Island. John J. Cameron, secretary of the board announced the decision that concluded a long series of demands for the change. "We were reluctant to change the name," Cameron said, "because there must be stability, and the name Goat Island was officially adopted in 1895. We are convinced, however, that the people have now made up their minds to use the old Spanish name. The decision was unanimous."

Yerba Buena, Spanish for "good herb", was the name applied to an aromatic little trailing vine, sometimes called California mint, and because it covered the slopes of the island, it is quite obvious why the island was so named.

So much for the brief highlights in the known history of the island! There are, however, interspersed between those terse facts, all the color, adventure and romance that collectors of Californiana revel in. There is the tale told of the arrival in San Francisco Bay, on July 6th, 1849,

of the ship "Edward Everett", with one, William Bernard aboard (afterward more familiarly known as "Barnacle Bill"). On the following day, accompanied by a man named Phelps, "Barnacle Bill" landed on the island. They found no person inhabiting it, and nothing alive except a few goats.

On the eastern shore, they found the remains of an extensive Indian village. There were ruins of old houses and a vast collection of bones and shells as well as the cremating pits where the aborigines of the bay burned their dead. After a few days on the island, the two men left for the Oakland shores, and later, the mines, so they were not among those who later claimed the island, although Bernard returned to live on it for a time.

A tribe of Indians known as the Tuchayunes are accredited with having occupied the island as a fishing station.

An account was printed on January 21, 1899 of the spade of a laborer on Goat Island uncovering, some three or four feet down, a human bone, and later the entire skeleton of a man about 6 1/2 feet in height. Other skeletons were also found, not quite as large as the first, but all had been buried in sitting positions, with the knees doubled almost to the chin. All were uncoffined and there were specimens of stone mortars, pestles, stone pipes and the skeleton of a dog. The locale of this discovery was on the eastern part of the island, midway in the little cove between the torpedo and buoy stations.

This is the general location of further bones and skeletons, exhumed by the bay bridge workers in the spring of 1933, when specimens were procured at that time for the Department of Anthropology at the University of California.

The Island Cemetery

But Indian graves are not alone found on the island. There is at present, a fence-enclosed area on the west end of the island, dedicated to those who have reached their life's sunset. All cemeteries are like pages from the past, and these orderly, uniform, flat gray granite headstones are headlines for stories, romantic and sad, with dates going back to 1852. There are service men, whose permanent relief from duty has thinned ranks of sailors and marines, and there are names that write "finis" to island claims.



Time was, when older headstones marked graves individually, but some, becoming mutilated by time or vandal, made re-marking of the graves necessary. The new, uniform, granite markers arrived, but in the interim the old ones had been removed. Then was the denouement! The plot naming the different graves had been misplaced and could not be found. The assignment of replacing the headstones had been given to one sergeant of marines who was not without resource in this emergency. They found him with all the gray polished slabs carefully laid out ready for installation in alphabetical order. Fortunately, if it mattered to those who slept on the

quiet slope overlooking the Golden Gate, the navy files at Washington had the correct plot for proper identification, and thus they were installed.

The Double Grave

Visitors to the cemetery have their interest piqued by the double headstone which reads, "Edward F. Lindsay, Died Aug. 24, 1842" and "Edward L. Lindsey, Died Jan, 10, 1855." The original tall marble tombstone read

Sacred
To the memory of
Edward F. Lindsey,
Formerly of England
Died in San Francisco
Aug. 24, 1842
Aged 38 years
Also
Their beloved son
Edward L. Lindsey
Died in San Francisco
January 10, 1855
Aged 17 years
Erected by the bereaved widow and mother
Life, how short; Eternity, how long.

The date of the father's demise, 1842, proved to have been an error of the stone cutter, as Captain Lindsey was born in London on February 11, 1813. He was credited with the command of his uncle's ship "Edward" at the age of 21, and was engaged by the English government to transport prisoners, the first lot of female prisoners being sent to Tasmania. Later he settled with his family in Hobarttown, Australia and engaged in shipping, circumnavigating the earth four times. The discovery of gold in California lured him to the new country. His wife and six children accompanied him on his own ship the "Palmyra", and on June 4, 1850, he arrived in San Francisco with a cargo wisely chosen to dispose of in the new land, namely, bricks and lumber. Acquisition was made of a water lot at the foot of Greenwich Street, where his ship was moored, and served as the family residence up to the time of his death. He also purchased property in the vicinity of Greenwich and Sansome Streets with the profits of his sale of cargo.

Family outings and entertainment of visiting sea captains were frequently planned by Captain Lindsey, with a trip in his yacht "Glide" to Yerba Buena, or Goat Island, as his favorite excursion. His oft-repeated suggestion that when he died, there would he like to lie, was followed in the funeral arrangements.

Funeral Cortege in Boats

It was an impressive funeral cortege which followed the services held aboard the "Palmyra". Instead of using a plume panoplied hearse that was characteristic of funeral equipages of that

period, the body of the young captain was placed on a long boat and four of his most intimate friends manned the oars. In lieu of horses and carriages following, the procession was made up of a long line of ships' boats, in which sorrowing friends made the final excursion to the island with the captain. The cause of his untimely demise was diagnosed as a heart attack.

An unmarked grave known to exist on the island is that of the mate of the bark "Melancthon", who in 1854, fell from the rigging on board ship and was killed.

Childhood Tragedy

Another grave labeled "D. R. A. Dowling, Died A. D. 1860" harbors a tragedy.

In the year 1853, Thomas Henry Dowling, perceiving the advantages of Yerba Buena Island, determined to establish his home there and did so. He saw a fortune in the strategic position which the island occupies and in the stone of which it is composed. Accordingly, he built a house and a dock and began the development of a quarry, residing there for many years. In the year 1860, one of the scows which were used for transporting stone to the city broke loose from its moorings in a storm. On that scow the child, who lies buried on the hill, was playing. The waves rose higher and higher in their fury. The scow was dashed against the rocks and the child swept overboard and drowned. When at last the remains were recovered they were buried where they now rest, on the hilltop.

True melodrama is interred, also, on that hilltop in an unidentified grave. The story goes that when the Army Engineer Corps was established on the island, came there a dashing young officer and his bride. There were other officers with their wives, and it was a gay set that gathered at the occasional entertainments. It was at one of these the young bride learned of her husband's infatuation for another. From the weight of her grief which she could not assuage, her heart was broken and she died. A continent lay between her dead body and the graves of her ancestors, so they buried her on the hill overlooking the Golden Gate where she so often sat and gazed at the setting sun. No monument was raised and the fence which surrounded the grave at one time was destroyed by fire.

Romantic Suicide

The highest point of the island is some 344 feet above low water mark, the point having been marked by a stone many years ago. On a spot about thirty feet south of that stone, there was at one time an open grave that remained for a period of years. In the late 50's, an Italian nobleman, whose name has passed from memory, arrived in San Francisco soon after Garibaldi drove King Bomba from Naples. This nobleman had been a favorite with the deposed king, and when the crown fell, the courtiers fled. Having little money and no means of making a living, the unfortunate patrician determined to end his existence in a peculiarly original manner. Crossing to Goat Island one bright moonlight night, he dug his grave upon the spot mentioned, and so arranged the dirt by means of boards set upon a



trigger, that, when he fired his pistol, the earth fell in upon him. By this means he killed and buried himself.

The poor suicide was not allowed to rest in his self-made grave, for when discovered, a few days afterward, the Coroner was notified and the body was taken up, brought over the bay and buried in a pauper's grave.

A second suicide was attempted in the same grave, but the would-be suicide drank too much whiskey, and fell asleep. He was discovered by some soldiers the next morning, disarmed and sent back to the city.

Memorial Day Services

According reverence to those who have gone on, on May 30th of each year, the personnel of the United States Navy Receiving Ship, and the United States Lighthouse Service participate in Memorial Day Services led by the Chaplain of the Twelfth Naval District. School children place bouquets of white marguerites, that grow wild on the island, and a small American flag on each grave. A volley is fired and taps are sounded and thus the gesture of respect is made to the past.

Mathilda, the Horse

Of the amusing anecdotes claiming Yerba Buena Island as the locale, there is a prize one that would make material for opera bouffe. It has to do with Navy life in the pre-motor driven vehicle period, when certain forms and ceremonies were carried out regardless! The principal in the story, perhaps, is a horse, known to the island personnel by the name of Mathilda, or "Mat" for short. The setting of the story has two levels, the lower level where the administration building was located and the upper level, or plateau, where the officers' quarters were. An important member of the personnel was a general factotem who was sometimes seen in blue denims in the role of gardener, and sometimes the hostler in the stables, but more proudly the coachman, when he was attired in a faded purple coachman's coat. True, it had originally been made for a man some six or seven inches taller than he, and the waistline of the fitted style looked as though it had strangely slipped; but with it all, it had a rare air of elegance, together with the traditional coachman's hat of the period, black, and with a feather to give it a certain dash.

This happened each morning: The marine bugler sounded "Assembly" call. The gardener-hostler-coachman, who suffered from inflammatory rheumatism, limped hurriedly to his task of hitching up Mathilda, then over to where hung the gorgeous purple coat and befeathered hat, pulled the former on over his "fatigue" outfit, the unusual length helping greatly to cover muddy boots and frayed denims, and mounted the seat of the ancient Victoria. With great style he would pull up in front of the quarters of the commandant where stood at attention, the duty officer, the marine orderly, the messenger, all in line waiting for the commandant to take his place in the swaying Victoria. This accomplished, the duty officer, the marine orderly and the messenger would then rush down several flights of steps and across to the administration building where they would be all lined up ready for the arrival of the commandant, who was driving the circuitous road down from the plateau - a three minute walk as against about a ten minute drive, to arrive at the same destination.

Mathilda sensed the importance of the moment and, though somewhat spavined, she would make the trip with a great show of spirit. Her response to the crack of the coachman's whip was instantaneous, but her efforts got her nowhere in a hurry, however, the great distances that she traveled being all in the direction of up and down.

In slang parlance, Mat not only was a "kick" but she had one, so much of a kick that when she was shod, the blacksmith had to develop a system which resulted in the sinking of four concrete posts to which Mat's four legs were securely anchored before the business of getting new shoes was begun. This was usually done with an audience of some 200 cadets to cheer them on.

Upon her demise, Mat was buried on the island with a flat, concrete slab, undefiled by epitaph, to mark the spot. Into her grave was dropped a personal trinket by all who had seen service on the island with Mathilda. Among them was a good conduct medal, its owner claiming that "Mat" was more entitled to it than he.

Treasure Island

As most islands are accredited with being a depository, at some time, of buried treasure, so Yerba Buena has its tales of hidden wealth.

There is the legend of a richly laden Spanish sloop going to pieces in a storm during 1837. Its cargo was purported to have been the plate and treasure belonging to the Mission Dolores, which was being removed to Spain after the dismantling of the missions by the Mexican authorities. The vessel, the tradition says, drifted from her anchorage and struck upon the northern point of Yerba Buena. Several of the crew and one or two priests were lost, but most of the treasure was saved. It was currently reported for many years that this vessel was cast away through a conspiracy among the crew, in order to obtain the church plate and silver ornaments, and that much of it was buried on the island by the survivors, and that they never returned to reclaim their treasure.



These traditions of treasure hidden upon the island, and the gold fever of 1849 and 1850, provided unscrupulous clairvoyants then in the city, a rich field in which to harvest from the credulous and superstitious who consulted them. Many prospecting parties were sent by them to the island, and when they reported unsuccessful operations to their psychic advisors, they were told that whiskey and blasphemy had broken the spell.

During a fire in San Francisco in the early days, much stolen gold and silver was carried to the island and buried, but it was later recovered through assistance of police and detectives, and for a long period of time, the late hiding places made points of interest to visitors on the island.

Smugglers

As early as 1838, the Mexican government recognized the difficulty of preventing smuggling on the island, and it seems that there was plenty of foundation for their fears, for many tales were told of caches made on the island under cover of darkness, from some lately arrived ship in the harbor, and those same being later recovered. Piles of rare Indian goods and costly tins of opium are known to have been hidden in the jungle, and it was acknowledged almost impossible to prevent the island from being used by opium smugglers and others engaged in illicit trade.



In the fall of 1880, Hainault Holzhter, then keeper of the lighthouse, reported being out after nightfall, seeking a stray cow in the brush on the north side of the island, when he suddenly came upon three men digging a deep hole by the light of a lantern. He returned to his home for a shotgun, determined to make an investigation. On returning to the spot the men had gone and were heard not far from the shore, rowing toward the city. In the hole were plain indications of several bulky bales or boxes having been removed.

A Marriage, Too!

The account of a wedding on Goat Island was published in papers on August 22, 1892, the principals in the ceremony having been Mrs. Jennie Lewis of San Francisco, and Charles McCarthy, the lighthouse keeper of the Oakland mole. The marriage was solemnized at the residence of Captain Linne, station keeper at Goat Island, who was a mutual friend of the couple, and Rev. J. Fuendeling was the officiating clergyman. The bride and groom were attended by Miss Mary Barry of San Francisco and Captain Linne, and the setting was made festive with flowers, greenery and bunting to give a nautical touch. A wedding dinner followed the ceremony when healths were toasted in "bumpers of sparkling wine". Later the newly-weds left for a honeymoon trip to Santa Cruz.

Poet Appreciation

Poets are usually accorded an appreciation of beauty of landscape, but not always are they accorded the desire to help make that landscape beautiful. It was the California poet, Joaquin Miller, who bestirred himself and fellow citizens of the Bay area to plant forest trees on Goat Island and make it more beautiful. The correspondence in part, which attended that enterprise, included approval and promised co-operation from the Commanding General of the Headquarters Division of the Pacific, Presidio of San Francisco, in a letter dated August 23, 1886. This was followed up by a letter from Mr. Miller to the San Francisco "Call", in which he publicized the plan, its beauty, simplicity and value as a fog and wind break, which latter he deemed a "fit subject for a full chapter". "Briefly then, as to a rude outline of the work, if it is left to me, we propose to lay out the Greek cross by the points of the compass over the apex of the highest point on the island, in a double row or lane of trees. This is simple, and with the four points of the cross reaching down from the top of the hill in all directions, it will be shapely and in proportion. The first day we may not be able to plant many trees, as we are all poor men and have to work every day, but from time to time others will, perhaps, add to the points of the cross

as they stretch down toward the water, and thus a very few trees will assume the appearance of a forest, to some extent, and will have quite enough body to break the force of the densest fog. But this simple plan, of course, as I said before, is subject to all sorts of modifications. We have agreed that the 30th of October is a good day to begin with. And on that day, at 12 M. if others do not come forward to take the work off our hands, the Greek cross will be laid on the apex of Yerba Buena Island by myself and some others writing for the press, and left to grow and do good like 'the still small rain!.'

California's First Arbor Day

As a promotor of California's first Arbor Day, Joaquin Miller proved most successful and ceremonies were held on November 27, 1886, not only on Yerba Buena Island, but also at the Presidio and Fort Mason. Thousands of school children assembled at the appointed spot on the top of Yerba Buena by 11 o'clock. A circuitous pathway had been prepared for the ascent and the picture must have been a colorful one. Passengers were landed at the wharf and illustrated souvenir programs were issued, timely phrased, and themed, "The gods, who mortal beauty chase, Still in a tree did end their race".

Music was provided by the United States First Infantry band. The plan of a Greek cross suggested by Mr. Miller had been followed in preparing the grounds, the proportions for the longer part being 300 by 30 feet, and the transverse part, 150 by 30 feet. Most of the participants in the planting brought young trees with them, balled or potted, and a consignment of trees was contributed by Adolph Sutro.

The exercises were begun by the reading of a poem by Joaquin Miller.

General Vallejo was to have delivered the address but he was unable to climb the hill, and the belated arrival of the horse he was to have ridden to the ceremonies made it necessary to have his message read by Fred M. Campbell, of Oakland: It read,

"Ladies and gentlemen and scholars: This occasion brings us back to the year 1806, when a cadet from Texas was sent with a force of soldiers to recover some horses which had been stolen from the Mission Dolores by a tribe of Indians, a very numerous band of the name Tuchayunes, whose headquarters were on the mainland of Tuchayune, who possessed on this island a fishing station and also a large Turkish bath, named by them Temescal, considered both a luxury and a sovereign remedy for all ailments. At this period the island bore the name of Yerba Buena, and on the founding of San Francisco, in 1835, it gave its name to the municipality. Up to 1836 San Francisco contained eight to ten houses, whose first occupants were Jacob P. Lease, M. Leidesdorff, John Fuller, Nathaniel Spear and others. The year previous Spear brought some goats from the Sandwich Island and made Fuller a present of a pair, which became so destructive to the flowers and garden truck that the latter gentleman took them to this island where they increased rapidly; hence the name of Goat Island, which it now bears. In 1849 there were nearly 1,000 goats here, but they were soon destroyed by the immigrants.

"My hope is that the plantation we inaugurate today may result in a garden of the herb of which we heard in my theology in boyhood's days. It is pleasant to be here today . . . and I am glad I

have the honor of being here on this occasion with Donna Chonita Fuller de Ramirez, the daughter of the original owner of this island. My words fail to express my delight with the contrast between this island today and what it was in the older days in the possession of the Tuchayunes. Surely the wand of the higher civilization has passed over us, for all of which I have thanks. I thank also the Committee of Arrangements for their kindness in inviting me to be present."

There were cheers and more speeches from ex-Governor Perkins and General Howard before the formal tree-planting was begun. The first tree was planted by Adolph Sutro, the second by Mrs. Ramirez, the next by Joaquin Miller, and another by General Vallejo after which the planting became general, with several organizations planting plots assigned to them.

More Trees

During the year 1904, Navy records show that some 6,000 new trees were set out on the island, including Monterey pines, Monterey cypress and some eucalyptus.

Railroad Aspirations

Many people living in the Bay regions, neither remember nor know of the battle waged in the late 60's to prevent the Central Pacific Railroad from obtaining Goat Island as a terminus for their line. A resume is given from Hittell's "History of San Francisco," published in 1878.

"The relation of the city to the Central Pacific Co., continued to be a matter of absorbing interest. The supervisors having refused to give a subsidy for a bridge at Ravenswood, the company urged its application previously made to Congress for a permission to occupy Goat Island. Little attention had been given to the idea of making a terminus at the island; but now the opinion prevailed that the establishment of that terminal business there, with a bridge to the Oakland shore, and numerous warehouses and wharves on the island would result in serious, if not immense damage to San Francisco. The press and public meetings denounced the scheme and a committee of 100 prominent citizens was organized to take proper measures for protecting the public interests supposed to be endangered by the bill.

"Goat Island had been reserved by the government of the United States for military purposes and the federal army engineers in response to an inquiry whether there was any objection to the occupation of the island as a railroad terminus, replied that such occupation would seriously diminish the military value of the position which might become very important if some hostile vessel should succeed in passing through the Golden Gate. The coast survey engineers, when requested to give their opinion, said that any bridge or solid causeway from the Oakland shore to Goat Island would check the currents along the eastern shore of the bay, cause the deposition of a large amount of sand and mud, diminish the tidal area, reduce the amount of tide water flowing out of the Golden Gate with the ebb, and lead to a shallowing of water on the bar, thus injuring the value of the harbor."

Conflicting interests of the Atlantic and Pacific Companies and the Central Pacific with much conference in committees, resulted in the agreement that the latter should abandon the

application for Goat Island and enter San Francisco by way of the peninsula, which compromise failing to command favor of the people or supervisors was later abandoned also.

If Ever a Bridge

In view of the great interest which the public has developed in the San Francisco Bay Bridge construction, it is apropos that some of the publications for and against a bridge across the Bay which appeared at the time of the so-called "Goat Island Grab" be quoted.

In a communique from the mayor of San Francisco and a committee of prominent citizens, who recognized the unsettled and feverish state of public opinion in San Francisco, touching upon the connection of the city with the railroad system of the state, they wrote to the Engineers Corps of the United States Army and the United States Coast Survey for an opinion.

In part, the preamble to an interesting list of questions said: ("Alta", issue of April 1, 1872.)

... "Situated as it is upon the extremity of a peninsula and consequently cut off by the water of the Bay from direct railroad communication with the country on whose trade it depends, the problem of making it the railroad center as well as the commercial metropolis of the State seems to present grave difficulties. The engineering obstacles are aggravated by the facts that the city has no voice in the management of the railroad, while the railroad company has no such interest in the city as to lead it to make sacrifices merely for the accommodation of its people. In connection with these considerations the contests hitherto waged between the several points at which the company has secured large tracts of land, apparently for terminal purposes, to say nothing of their designs upon Goat Island, have created a distrust which exerts a most baneful influence upon the future prospects of our city.

"Public opinion, distracted by the opposing views of newspaper writers, by the ever-changing rumors of the intentions of the railroad company and by the interested advice of railroad men and real estate operators, has been unable to settle down upon any one plan as better than all the others suggested. Accurate knowledge, whereon to base correct opinion is lacking. There is abundant capital ready for investment in that project which shall most surely and permanently anchor the railroads to the city. But the question is what is that project, what plan of operation is most feasible and most certain to decide the vexed question of the terminus in favor of the city of San Francisco?

"It has occurred to us therefore, to address you, as the highest local authority on engineering matters as being professionally familiar with all the elements of the problem; and wholly disinterested in solution, in the hope that you will be inclined to favor the public of this city with your concurrent opinion on the following questions:

Pertinent Questions

1. What would be the effect, if any, in shoaling the harbor and bar of San Francisco consequent upon the erection of a bridge resting upon piers, connecting Goat Island with Oakland Point?

2. What would be the effect upon the harbor and bar of a solid causeway between those points; what the effect of a continuation of the present pile bridge?
3. Is it possible to build a permanent bridge or causeway across the Bay of San Francisco at any point south of the city?
4. If yes, between what points on the two sides of the Bay, everything carefully considered, would you recommend such bridge or causeway to be located.
5. What description of bridge or causeway would you recommend? If a bridge, what would be its length, breadth, height above high water mark, distance between the piers? Where would you locate the draw; what would be the approximate cost of such a structure? And what would be the effects in shoaling the harbor and bar?
6. Do you consider that a bridge, wherever located, or however constructed, would be economical, or any more direct, or any more effective in fixing the terminus at San Francisco, than the use of steam ferry boats of sufficient capacity to accommodate an entire train of freight or passenger cars? Etc.

Bridge Recommendations of 1872

Answers in part were sent as follows:

1. A bridge on piers between Yerba Buena and Oakland point would have no appreciable effect in shoaling the San Francisco harbor or bar if the bridge were built on small piers with spans of 300 or 400 feet. In other words, the number of piers reduced to a minimum and also of the least possible width consistent with safety, and so placed and shaped with reference to the channel and the direction of the tides as to offer to them as little obstruction as possible. The superstructure of such a bridge with long spans would have to be of iron. The cost would depend to some extent on its character, whether a simple railroad bridge or one combining the two purposes of railroad and highway traffic and travel; the cost would be from 4 to 6 million dollars.
2. A solid causeway between Yerba Buena Island and Oakland Point would work immediate direct and irreparable injury to the harbor of San Francisco, and though the injury to the bar would be indirect and not so immediate, it would be not the less certain or irreparable. The immediate effect of such a structure would be to cause "dead water", a stoppage of the tidal current now flowing between Yerba Buena Island and the Oakland shore, commencing at a point at low water opposite to Hunter's Point, and extending in a line slightly concave toward the east to the western extremity of Yerba Buena Island. The main ebb current would follow this line, forming whirls and eddies on the perimeter of the curve with dead water toward the Oakland shore and the causeway. The mouths of San Leandro and San Antonio estuaries would gradually fill up. The current now reaching the western side of Yerba Buena Island would here move with a cutting velocity and take off all assailable angles or points of the shore. Reference to the accompanying chart will show what the island had done unaided by artifice in forming a shoal upon its north shore, This is the simple effect of the dead water caused by the interposition of so large a body as the island to the flow of the tide; a causeway to the Oakland shore with its

additional obstruction to the current would effect a connection of the shoal north of Yerba Buena with Point Richmond, seven miles to the northward on the eastern shore of the Bay. It is safe to say that a tidal area of not less than forty square miles (25,600 acres) in the Bay of San Francisco would be directly obstructed by the causeway suggested, while the indirect effect upon the regimen of the tides in other parts of the Bay can hardly be predicted or estimated with safety.

To continue the present pile wharf from Oakland Point to Yerba Buena Island would produce the same effect, though in less degree, as to build a solid causeway, a single decade would, in all probability go far toward shoaling the water on either side of such a bridge, leaving the bottom bare at least at every low tide and with rapid subsequent progress toward a closure of the channel between the island and the Oakland shore.

3. The interests of the United States, of California, of commerce and the mandates of science all protest against the building of a causeway or any other solid structure anywhere between any points across the Bay of San Francisco.

It is entirely within the range of possibility to build a permanent bridge across the Bay of San Francisco south of the city. The difficulties of obtaining secure foundations for piers are as yet unknown, but they can scarcely be greater than those which have already been overcome by science in other localities, and as regards the whole structure, we may appropriately quote from the report of the Chief of Engineers for 1871 (page 432):

"It is proper to state here in regard to long spans of 400 feet and upward that they are not impracticable at reasonable expense, and that when properly proportioned they are more stable and safe than smaller spans because their own weight is so great in proportion to the moving load that the latter changes the permanent strain but little. High piers, proportionally widened and lengthened are just as firm as low ones, and the greatest pressure the stone has to sustain is not one-tenth of its crushing load."

4. The answer to this question must be conditional upon the location of the railroads and their convenience of transit to a point on the city-front adjacent to the center of business. If the main trunk roads of the continent are likely to converge at a given point on the opposite side of the Bay, the eastern end of the bridge should, of course, be as near that point as the three collateral elements of the shortest line, the shoalest water and the least impediment to navigation will permit. To illustrate this, select a given point on the opposite sides of the Bay, as the supposed point where all the main roads can most conveniently unite; locate the terminus on this side of the Bay, and, using a chart for the purpose, draw a line between the two points; the true bridge line should be as near to this imaginary one as the collateral elements of the question mentioned above will admit.

5. As to the description of bridge, it may be stated that if it is necessary to build a bridge across the Bay of San Francisco, the material should be as nearly imperishable as possible; the piers of as little width as may be consistent with safety and sharpened at the ends so as to offer the least resistance to the current; the width of the piers between high and low water should not exceed ten or twelve feet, their length, depending upon the width of the bridge, should be parallel with the current; the distance between the piers should be not less than 400 feet over the main

channel; the height of the bridge need not exceed ten feet above high water; the piers should be of masonry, the superstructure of iron.

The total length of a bridge between Alameda and Hunter's Point would be a fraction under five miles, this would require 65 piers, if 400 feet spans were used. Suppose the average thickness of the piers be 15 feet, they would aggregate the sum of 975 feet taken from the waterway, which would be one twenty-seventh part of the width of the Bay between the points named. The first two miles of the eastern end would be through shoal water, commencing on the shore at zero and running to 18 feet, the average depth about 9 feet at low water; the western 3 miles would be across the main channel of the Bay, the least four fathoms, 24 feet, the greatest 12 fathoms or 72 feet at low water; the average of this part of the line would be not far from 44 feet, at low water.

Possible Bridge Terminals

The distance between Alameda Point and Rolling Mill Point is a little less than 5 miles. A bridge between these points would pass for the eastern 2 miles through water averaging 9 feet in depth at low water, the extremities being zero and 18 feet; the 3 miles across the main channel would be in depth varying from 4 fathoms, 24 feet, to 9 1/4 fathoms, 56 feet, the average depth would be about 40 feet at low water. The comparative evenness of the bottom on this line and its direction being at right angle to that of the current in this part of the Bay, would, other things being equal, make it more desirable.

The draw, if but one, should be about one mile from the San Francisco shore, of a width of not less than 400 feet.

If such a bridge is ever undertaken, it ought to be first-class in every respect.

The interests connected with it, after completion would be too great to permit the risk of its destruction by fire, or any other causes within the compass of man's ability to prevent.

It ought to accommodate a double-track railroad overhead and roadways for ordinary transit below.

The cost would depend to a considerable extent on the nature of the foundations.

If no very great difficulties should be encountered, except from the depth of the water, the approximate cost of such a bridge would be 15 million dollars.

6. We believe it will be preferable to use properly constructed ferry boats for the present. Looking at the question of economy transit only, we think that the railroad interests, and the commerce of San Francisco will have to be greatly increased before the construction of a bridge across the bay will be justified.

For instance, if the cost of the bridge is \$15,000,000, the interest on the cost at 7 per cent per annum will be \$1,050,000, to which must be added the cost of keeping the bridge in order,

painting, attending the draw or draws, etc., etc., say \$25,000, making the total annual cost of the bridge and its maintenance \$1,075,000.

Now the cost of keeping up and running a first-class ferry boat between the city and Oakland, capable of transporting twenty freight cars at a time, would not exceed \$100,000 per year, so that the city or the railroad, as the case may be, looking at the question of expenditure only, had better keep a free ferry between this city and Oakland, consisting, if necessary of seven ferry boats at an annual cost of \$150,000 each rather than to build and maintain a bridge at an annual cost of \$1,075,000.

While, therefore, we admit the practicability of building a bridge across the bay, and the possible necessity of its being built at some future day, the large expenditure necessary for its construction should make it a question to be left to the judgment of those most interested, whose ideas of the urgency of the measure may well be qualified by their ability to meet that expenditure.

We are fully aware that there are other considerations bearing on this subject, but, as we have already said, we have neither the time nor the special information to enable us to discuss them at present."

"Goat Island Grab"

It was during this time, also, that the value of the shoal lands on the north of the island was recognized as possible increase of acreage (although as early as 1862 the San Francisco Directory said that "on the easterly side is a wide, shoal bay, dry at low water, which, with the present material on the island, could be filled up, so as to be more than double its size.") From newspaper files of the period, scraps of articles and phrases to mould public opinion stand out:

"Visualized the city of Goat Island controlled and owned by private company to the detriment of San Francisco."

"San Francisco opposition to the continental railroad use of Goat Island is entirely based on individual and local interests in total disregard of the commercial and agricultural interests of the state and nation."

"Desert rock - should be utilized in interests of commerce."

"Warped ideas of property owners in south San Francisco."

"Depth of water at San Francisco water front, three feet, not allowing the ships to dock and no railroad facilities. "

The resolution of a citizens' mass meeting was sent to Congress with the opening paragraph, "Resolved: That in the name of commerce, trade and civilization this Board does respectfully and earnestly protest against any action on the part of the Congress of the United States which threatens to impair the usefulness of the Bay and harbor of San Francisco."

In the columns of the "Alta" published on April 1, 1873, the story was written that the House of Representatives had passed the Goat Island Bill, granting it as a terminus for the railroad, and timid persons had thought the great railroad monopoly was invincible, but "it was finally referred to the military committee before whom it was most gallantly fought and mortally wounded by our friends. The committee reported it back to the Senate without recommendation and it fell dead on the clerk's table." Had it not been for the efforts of the representation of the citizen's committee, Goat Island would now be in the assets of the railroad company.

Island Claimants

Of island claimants there were many, but none had any title which was recognized. The stories of their claims are more interesting than fiction, and some of them dragged through court battles, but to no avail. Piecing the stories together, it is difficult to name the claimants in orderly sequence as their dates generally overlap.

Captain Gorham Nye seems to have been the original claimant and was credited with placing goats on the island in 1836, and claimed to have title by Mexican grant to its possession.

Hittell's "History of California" says:

"There were two cases . . . of grants purporting to have been made by Governor Alvarado in 1838 and 1839, under a special order of the Mexican government, of islands in San Francisco Bay, which were probably genuine; but on account of being out of the ordinary line of grants, they were not properly authenticated and archived, and for that reason mainly, if not entirely, were rejected . . . one claim was that of Joel S. Polack to Yerba Buena Island. It purported to have been made by Governor Alvarado to Juan Jose Castro on November 8, 1838. The object of the Mexican government in this . . . seems to have been to prevent smuggling, and the order was made in the expectation that, if the islands were granted in private proprietorship and occupied, offenses against the revenue laws would be rendered more difficult. Whatever the object, there is no very good reason to doubt that Alvarado at the time actually made the alleged grant; and, so far as that fact was concerned, there was testimony enough on the subject. Accordingly, when the matter came up before the land commission there was on May 22, 1855, a decree of confirmation. But on appeal to the United States District Court, a great deal of additional testimony was taken, from which it appeared that the papers had never been properly authenticated and filed and in fact, nothing remained in the way of documentary evidence but a copy of the grant. There was also, . . . a question of possession and occupation. It appeared that in 1837 there were a number of goats on the island, from which circumstances it was often and indeed very usually called Goat Island; but it was apparently not then claimed by the owner of the goats or anyone else. Soon after the grant of 1838, Castro, who lived at San Pablo, not far distant, appears to have put some sheep and hogs on the island and sent a few Indians for a time, at least, to look after them; but, as said before, the archives contained no evidence of the grant, which was doubtless at that time considered hardly worth looking after; the proofs of possession and occupation were not satisfactory, and the claim was rejected. From that time the island was regarded as belonging to the United States, in whom the title is still vested, though there was for a time, and until it was understood that the government reserved all the islands in the bay for military or other public purposes, much litigation in relation to possessory claims upon it."

(Note: Castro was the father of Martina Castro who became the bride of Alvarado, she having been married by proxy at the above mentioned home at San Pablo, which still is in existence, a splendidly preserved adobe residence.)

A foot-note from "The Bay of San Francisco", vol. 1, p. 324 has the following:

"Every site suitable for defenses in the Bay of San Francisco was covered by private claims. The places chosen were Fort Point, Alcatraz, Goat Island, or Yerba Buena, and Angel Island. The Yerba Buena, or Goat Island, was claimed by one, Castro, who had placed goats to pasture there from 1841. Nathan Spear bought the island from Castro in 1847, and with Jack Fuller also kept goats on it until the early part of 1849, when Spear sold it to Edward A. King for a nominal sum. The property was later surveyed and re-surveyed and portions of it changed hands. Troops of the United States took possession of the island in 1867, disregarding the claims of Thomas J. Dowling and John C. Jennings, who alleged that they had occupied it since 1849. As late as 1878 it was made to appear that Dowling and Jennings had sold the island to Ben Brooks, E. Johnson and J. Turner, who claimed pay for it, alleging that the original title to the property had been derived in 1855 from the city of San Francisco, and an act of Congress in 1864."

In 1848, Thomas Dowling took possession of the property, with a view of becoming its owner through residence upon it. With him, a man named Jennings inhabited a small fenced-off portion, and neither infringed upon the rights of the other. Jennings' claim, however, afterward lapsed. Captain Gorham H. Nye then sold his nominal claim to Mr. Dowling and lived with him for many years. In 1855, Mr. Dowling's family came from the east to join him there in family residence until 1869 or 1870. His was an independent estate with a house on the northwest side, a truck garden and his own stock poultry. He "pulled across" to the mainland for grocery supplies. He was developing a stone quarry on the island, and in 1864 he leased it to John Center and Egbert Judson for the term of one year. The lease was not renewed, but the house where the quarry men boarded was taken possession of by one, J. Peltret, who claimed a right to the property. A feud arose that almost took pistols to settle.

The United States authorities, remembering their own claims, took steps to assert them. It had been specially provided in the articles of concession by the Mexican government that "all islands should become United States property and that certain sections of the territory ceded, among them Goat Island, should be exempt from the usual condition opening them to settlement." The occupants of the island were notified to vacate the premises and present their claims in the proper quarter in Washington, so 1869 saw all the settlers landed in San Francisco.

Mr. Dowling went to Washington and succeeded in selling one-quarter of his individual interest to J. Cook & Co., bankers, for about \$50,000, and remained in the east where he died in 1871, without having established his claim.

The experiences of the Dowlings, when on the island, made a book of adventures. Mention has already been made of the venturesome young son of the pioneer Dowling, who was drowned while at play on one of the quarry barges that broke anchor,

Another son served as the envoy who "ferried" back and forth to the mainland for family supplies and also those of the quarry workmen.

An idea of the workmen's "grub fund" is obtained in the wage scale which paid ordinary workmen \$5.00 a day, and the foreman received \$5,000 a year.

Manhood Came Early in Pioneer Days

"Young Dowling", as a grown man in 1888, was interviewed for reminiscences, and his memory of one of the crossings he made to San Francisco is an outstanding experience for any boy of 12 years and upward!

Sudden squalls are not uncommon on the bay at certain times of the year and there is a strong current between San Francisco and Goat Island. The passage therefore, in a small Whitehall boat laden down to the gunwale was often exceedingly perilous. One day during a very severe winter, he had to go over to the city to buy flour. "We had to have it and I was the only one who could be spared for the job," said Dowling. "Not that there was any doubt about my capability. I was a thorough boatman at 9 or 10 years of age, but the weather was ugly. A storm had been making things lively for three days. It had subsided for the time, and father thought I could get over and back before it started up again. I got over safely in the Whitehall boat, and purchased a barrel of flour, which I stowed in four India-rubber bags, besides other articles."

"I was about to start across again when the storm set in. It blew a fifty knot breeze from the southeast and I knew I could do nothing. I remained all day waiting a chance to go, and about 10 o'clock at night the rain ceased and a beautiful moon rose through silvery clouds. The wind was still blowing about 25 miles an hour and there was a heavy sea running, but I thought I would try to get across. They were waiting I knew, for the flour."

"Stepping my little sail sufficiently to start me, but not filling up the 'sprit, I headed for home. The scene, I can see it now, was magical. The moon's rays on the lumpy water, where my little boat literally leaped from wave to wave, converted it into a veritable sea of fire. The hour and the hazard of the attempt, perhaps, contributed to excite my perceptive and imaginative senses, but certainly the weird beauty of that night remains with me still."

"But I had no time to dream; I had to attend to business, and very serious business it soon became. When about 350 yards off the lighthouse point, a squall struck me and carried my sail and mast clear away. I was paralyzed for a moment, but after waiting for the squall to blow over I got out my sculls, and with infinite labor, such as seems to me now incredible, pulled out to our house, entering a quiet cove just as I was utterly exhausted. As the boat grounded, 25 or 30 men walked out in the surf and carried me and the boat ashore. They had been watching anxiously for me, afraid of some accident, and when I told my story I was the hero of the island."

Racketeering Is Not New

Aside from the troubles the pioneer Dowling had with claim jumpers and litigation over property titles, he had at least two very close calls from desperados who infested the country. On one occasion, about the year 1850, a boat went over to the island containing two men who claimed to be castaways. Mr. Dowling had only a two-roomed house then, but being very hospitable, he readily accorded the food and shelter asked by the strangers.

After the evening meal, the men were shown to their room and the host retired to his own room adjoining, with only a thin partition separating them. Following his custom, Mr. Dowling was enjoying a long smoke, and was almost ready to knock the ashes from his pipe, when he heard a few alarming words from the next room, accompanied by the ominous clicking of pistols. Being cool headed, Mr. Dowling placed in readiness weapons, which in those days were kept handy, and awaited further happenings.

When his two guests considered he ought to be asleep, they approached his door and attempted to get in, but precaution had been taken against that. Mr. Dowling gave them warning to clear out and they ran down stairs. At the foot of the stairs they commenced firing into the house, and their one-time host followed them down stairs, returning fire until he drove them out of the house, which he barricaded and guarded all night.

Another incident of the same kind happened in broad daylight, when a man and a woman called at the island, and while Mr. Dowling was conversing with the man, the woman held a pistol at his head and pulled the trigger. Luckily the cap snapped, Dowling grappled the pistol, and as the woman's companion came to her assistance, he knocked him down. Before the woman released hold on the pistol, Dowling was obliged to drag her over the beach on her back. He dashed for assistance and when he returned, the two foiled accomplices were gone.

The Bull Patrol

Goat Island became a favorite resort for holiday-makers and at times they were a tax on the Dowlings. However, an ingenious device for keeping off intruders was adopted, by allowing a bull, with a marked antipathy for strangers to range about the island. His presence, together with his reputation had the desired effect. Finally the bull became a menace to those living on the island and a hunting party was organized to despatch him. Not finding him for a time, the party divided and one of the divisions came upon him suddenly in an open path. The situation was dangerous, but not without humor, the six sportsmen, armed to the teeth, taking refuge in the upper branches of neighboring trees. But in their haste, they dropped their weapons and these the bull trampled into uselessness. However, that evening Taurus was ingloriously noosed and executed in cold blood. A reminder of this terror of the island remains in the doggerel:



"On Goat Island's secret shore
Many's the hour we've whiled away
Listening to the breaker's roar,
Which haunts the beach, both night and day
When we landed on the isle,
Dowling met us with a smile,
And his bull gave us a roar
As we left Goat Island's shore."

Picturesque Claimant

The claim of ownership to Goat Island by Samuel Moore, was never credited, but his interview printed in the "California" on August 6, 1888, is an interesting picture of the times.

"I was born", said he, "in Cape Town, South Africa, about 1826, my father being a Brazilian and my mother a native of Chile. When only 9 years old, I ran away from home and got over to England on a sailing vessel. Afterward, I came out to America and entered the United States Naval Service, serving on the sloops Yorktown and Waterloo, under Captain (afterwards Commodore) Nicholas. I was still young when I left the United States service at Valparaiso, where I tried running a coffee-stand as a business requiring small capital, but with little success.

"In 1847, I was 21, and stories of California and its resources were beginning to be bruited about. I came up here and started a coffee-stand on the corner of Clay and Washington Streets near the Plaza, under a tent, where I prospered. I did a little speculating too, in real estate and gradually accumulated enough money to purchase a pretentious coffee store known as the Golden Bale.

"This was in the 50's. The gold rush had attracted crowds of people and as the agricultural possibilities of the country were discovered, still more came in. Money was plentiful, but for all that, amusements were scarce and in great demand. It occurred to me that something might be done in this direction with Goat Island, then called Sea Bird Island. It was near the city and yet sufficiently removed to make it the easy object of an afternoon's row boat excursion. If a person, I thought, were to put some attraction there he would speedily be reimbursed for his outlay and might make a fortune.

"The idea grew upon me and I went to Alcalde Leavenworth one day, and in the presence of several witnesses, bought the island of 80 acres for \$400, or at the rate of five dollars an acre. The witnesses were Mr. Morton, afterward connected with the Hibernia Bank, and Martin Radbury, who kept a hardware store at Valparaiso. I obtained a perfectly regular acknowledgment for my money from the Alcalde. Thereafter I used frequently to go over to "my island" on a Sunday with my friends and make a picnic of it. Beyond this and sending over some lumber to build a house there, which for some reason was not built, I never prosecuted my idea of making it a pleasure resort, but held onto the receipt, believing the property would be valuable some day.

"In the meantime, I opened a sailor's boarding house on the corner of Battery and Broadway, and here with outside speculation I amassed considerable money. But I had too many irons in the

fire, and about 1862, when the war was in its infancy, I failed to the tune of upward of \$1,000,000. At this time I naturally looked into my resources and came across the acknowledgement of my purchase of Goat Island. I pushed my claims then, and afterwards, at one time through ex-Attorney General Montgomery, formerly of Oakland, and latterly of Washington. At length, in 1868, I grew desperate and writing out a full account of my title, I forwarded it, together with the all-important receipt, under cover to General Grant, at that time President, believing that I could be certain of justice at the hands of America's chief executive. He never acknowledged the letter, and from that time to this I have never set eyes on the documentary evidence of my purchase which, by the way, was never recorded."

The Signal Tower

On the apex of the island there stands a signal tower and twenty-four hours of every day that signal tower is occupied by marine sentries, whose written log tells the daily observances.

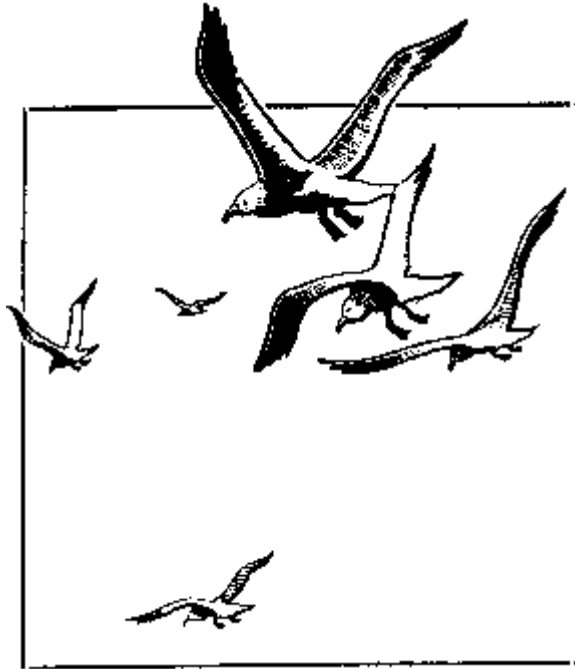
It is hard to credit the island and its personnel correctly for the number of lives that have been saved by the prompt and efficient help proffered those in boat disasters. So many small craft have grounded on the shoal north of the island, by day and by night, and unfortunate experiences have been no more than that, when, lacking the prompt help, they would have been tragedies. Pioneer Dowling remembered that he had saved no less than thirty-nine lives during his residence on the island.

Its strategic position in the Bay center with the increasing traffic in water craft of all sorts, makes this feature alone, an important one of island service.

From the top of this above-mentioned signal tower, there is a panoramic view that is awe inspiring because of its beauty. For unreality and an impression of fairy land - that is this lookout view on a moonlight night when the wind is blowing. It is cold and clear, with star dust above and diamond dust scattered below on the sloping hills that irregularly sketch their luminous outline around the far reaches of the bay. Ferry boats, like glow worms on mirrors, creep between the shores. Far down to the south, a straight line of wee fairy lanterns tells us that in truth we see the seven-mile-long San Mateo Bridge across the lower San Francisco Bay. Now the picture is enriched by the tracery of steel in silhouette with rosettes of light, proclaiming that Yerba Buena is no longer a thing apart. The shuttling trains and motor traffic will soon become an accepted thing.

The Sea Gulls

How could the sea gulls have been left out of this little story? They have been a picturesque and integral part of Bay life and activities since time immemorial and ante-dated the goats in naming the present Yerba Buena Island. Countless generations have flapped their way over the fog and sun-kissed slopes in aerial espionage. They have been winged escort for ferry boats in thousands of trans-Bay crossings. They circle and zoom with passing airplanes that split the atmosphere with the vibration of modernity. Will they resent it when high-over-the-water spans bear roaring "commute" trains daring them to keep pace?



Source: Boyes, Marcia Edwards. *The Legend of Yerba Buena Island*. 1936: The Professional Press, Berkeley, California. Copyrighted 1936 Marcia Edwards Boyes.
