



DON WEBB  
Centennial Mayor  
1821 Mariners Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660  
May 19, 2015



Patrick Alford  
Community Development Department  
City of Newport Beach  
100 Civic center Drive  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Subject: Suggested Revision/Update to the City's Historic Resource Inventory

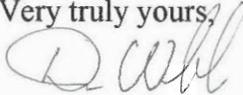
Dear Patrick,

Thank you for meeting with me last week to discuss the City's various historical resources along with the categories and lists where they are found. As I mentioned, the Newport Beach Historical Society (NBHS) is being reconstituted under the leadership of Bernie Svalstad and we are reviewing our historical resources. It has been 23 years since the City Council established the Ad Hoc Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (AHPAC) and they prepared a Historic Resource List of 61 properties. As mentioned in the Current General Plan, the inventory was never officially adopted by the City Council to have the locations placed on the City Register, but it does serve as a useful guide for historical resources that may have significance in the City. General Plan Policy HR 1.1 provides for the periodic update our Register of Historical Property. General Plan Policy HR 1.3 encourages the placement of markers and plaques at areas of historical interest. What role can the NBHS play in helping the City to implement these two goals? How can our society be a part of reviewing the Historical Resources Inventory and in selecting locations for markers and plaques?

A review of the Historic Resource List prepared by AHPAC, shows a number of the structures listed are no longer there. Also Record 61, Dunnell's Wharf, "Site of Newport's First Settlement and First Port" is listed as being SE of the Coast Hwy. Bridge (on the easterly side of the channel where the Ruben E Lee used to be located). I have attached a packet of information which includes 1870 and 1871 maps that show that both Dunnell's & Irvine/Flint's (McFadden's) wharf sites were on the westerly side of the Upper Newport Bay Channel where Record 17, Old Newport Landing, is described. Dunnell's Wharf would not have been on the easterly side of the channel because there was no road to Santa Ana on that side and the land was low enough to be covered at higher tides. The "Old Landing" site (Record 17) includes the Irvine/Flint Co. wharf, Dunnell's wharf and McFadden's Landing sites. This location is probably the most significant site in the City, since this is the first place to be called New Port, and Newport and it was where the first settlers lived and operated a port for almost 18 years. It is important that our records be updated periodically and I hope I have provided sufficient information to have Dunnell's Wharf (Record 61) combined

with the Old Landing Record 17, so that in the future, those looking to find where Newport began will have the correct site to visit.

In the past the NBHS has assisted the City in the review of historical resources and we hope that relationship can be established again. Please give me a call if you have any questions about the information that is attached. We hope that NBHS can be included in any programs you put together to update the Historic Resources Element of the General Plan.

Very truly yours,  


Don Webb  
NBHS Board Member

Cc: Kim Brandt, Director, Community Development Department  
Bernie Svalstad, President, NBHS

Attachments: Justification for Correcting and Combining Record 61 of the Historic Resource Inventory With Record 17, Exhibits A-F.

Justification for Correcting and Combining Record 61 of the Historic Resource Inventory  
With Record 17

Record 61, "Dunnell's Wharf" relies on a 1968 article by Jim Sleeper, "The First Forty Years: The Story of Old Newport 1868-1908". The article is attached as Exhibit A. On articles second page, the efforts of Samuel Dunnells and James Irvine/Benjamin Flint to apply to the LA County Supervisors for wharf rights on the west bluff of San Joaquin Bay Inlet are described. Sleeper says this was just north of the present (*in 1968*) Coast Highway Bridge. Copies of the maps filed by Irvine/Flint and Dunnells in 1870 and 1871 are attached as Exhibits B and C. The wharfs on both maps are shown on the westerly side of San Joaquin Bay Inlet. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of the 2<sup>nd</sup> page underlined in red, Sleeper states: "The Wharf was roughly where the Rueben E Lee steamboat restaurant anchors today"(*in 1968*). The photo labeled Exhibit D was taken from the westerly bluff we now call Castaways Park in the late 1970s and it clearly shows the Ruben E Lee on the easterly side of the Chanel and downstream from the Old Landing site. Exhibit E is an enlargement of the 1880-1881 photo in Sleeper's article with some notations added to explain the elements of the photo. No improvements are visible on the easterly side of the channel. Exhibit F is an 1875 map of Newport Bay from Ellen K Lee's "Newport Bay, A Pioneer History". It also shows Newport Landing at the end of the westerly bluff served by a road going northerly to Santa Ana. On the easterly side of the channel near the landing site, the area is marshland and tidelands with no road access shown.

With the exception of the reference to the Ruben E Lee site, Sleeper's article seems to fairly closely agree with the following sources which are generally accepted to be accurate accounts of Newport's early history. Excerpts of these sources are also attached to help further define the Old Landing site and justify combining Records 17 and 61 (without the reference to the site being SE of Coast Highway Bridge).

Baker, Gayle, Ph.D. *Newport Beach*. Hignell Book Printing, 2004, pages 12-27.

Cleland, Robert Glass. *The Irvine Ranch*. The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, 1978, page 85.

Lee, Ellen K. *Newport Bay, A Pioneer History*. Newport Historical Society, Sultana Press, Fullerton, 1973, pages 26, 27 & 29.

Meyer, Samuel A. *50 Golden Years, A History of the City of Newport Beach, 1906-1956*. Newport Harbor Publishing Company, 1956, Pages 9-14.

Sherman, H. L. *A History of Newport Beach*. The City of Newport Beach, 1931, pages 7-13.

The Rancho

# SAN JOAQUIN GAZETTE

Vol. II

OCTOBER, 1868

No. 4



## The First Forty Years



THE STORY OF

# OLD NEWPORT

1868-1908

Steamers running between San Francisco and San Diego touch at Newport Beach, going north and south. Besides these, steam schooners and sailing vessels from every port on the Pacific Coast touch at Newport wharf, making regular or special trips.

ORANGE COUNTY'S RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS  
Santa Ana HERALD (1897)



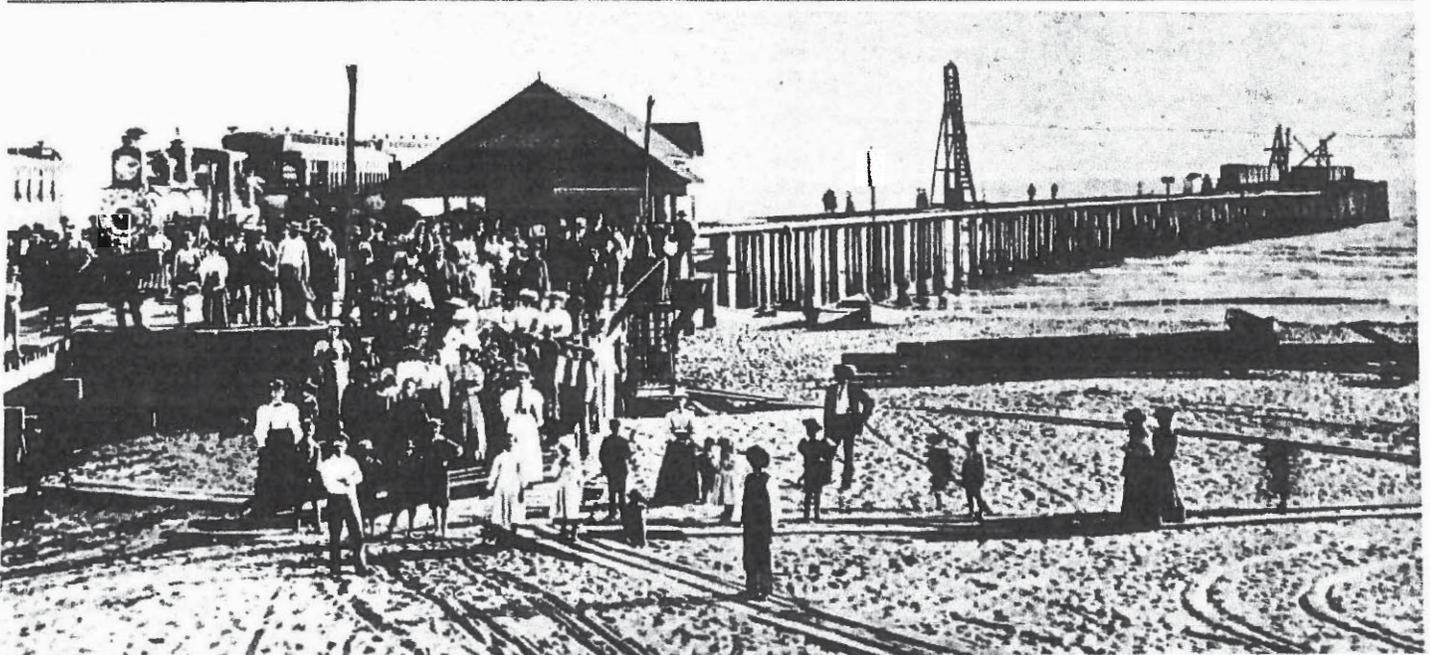
PART FROM THE STEAMSHIP *Senator*, which deposited the first Anaheim colonists near San Pedro in 1859, no ship had greater impact on Orange County than did a little wood-burning paddle-wheeler which poked its nose into the *Bolsa de San Joaquin* in 1868. That was the old name for the back bay which intersects the Rancho San

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With the revelation that these natural but shallow harbors could be navigated, a *new port* was born between San Diego and San Pedro.

This is the story of that first ship and its landing, an ocean pier and a railroad, all of which fused two words of a chance discovery into a thriving port of call with a name that celebrates a century.

The name is Newport.



LUCKY DAY FOR NEWPORT BEACH — OCTOBER 13, 1891

First Passenger Train on McFadden's "Santa Ana & Newport Railroad" Arrives

# McFADDEN'S LANDING

**J**UST WHAT prompted Captain S. S. Dunnells to cross the sandy bar off Rocky Point (now Corona del Mar) and enter the uncharted waters of Newport Bay remains a moot point. Perhaps the boilers of the *Vaquero* needed water, and there was a good spring in the willows on the west side of the Upper Bay near present-day Irvine Avenue and 23rd Street. Marked on José Sepulveda's map as early as 1841, it could be reached at high tide.



S. S. DUNNELLS

Perhaps, too, the enterprising captain sought to tap some of the business of the Irvine-Flint Company, then grazing some 50,000 merino sheep on the Rancho San Joaquin. Wool had to be sent north to find a market, and Anaheim Landing was the nearest shipping point.

Little is known about Dunnells except that he was an ex-harbor pilot at San Diego and in 1868 was also much engaged in building his "New San Diego Hotel," which became the first depot of the Seeley and Wright Stage Line to Los Angeles.

As for the flat-bottomed *Vaquero*, records fail to show whether she was a stern or side-wheeler. Probably she was a stern-wheeler because she could slide her bow up on the banks to unload. Built for ferry service on the Oakland Estuary, she was 105 feet long with a 25-foot beam. Burning either wood or coal, her greatest asset was that she drew only four feet of water even when fully loaded.

B. C. Perkins was the manager of the San Joaquin. Not much got by him. So in 1870 when Sam Dunnells engaged a partner, one W. H. Abbott, and proposed to build a *new port* on the west edge of the back bay, Perkins fired off a barrage of correspondence to the ranch's owners. In consequence, James Irvine and Benjamin Flint beat Dunnells to the Board of Supervisors with an application "for a wharf and franchise on the Bay of San Joaquin."

In addition, on October 14, 1870, the "Shepherd Kings" filed two maps proposing to lay out 16 building lots on the west bluff just north of the present Pacific Coast Highway bridge. One tract was

weirdly named "Wallula"; the second was to be called "Newport." This was the first time *Newport* would appear in print or as one word.

Undaunted, Dunnells applied for the "spring site." In a letter to another partner, Llewellyn Bixby, Irvine bluntly declared, "We made Cap. D. an offer." But Cap. D. would have none of it. On January 20, 1871, Sam Dunnells requested a second franchise "800' NE from the mouth of the Santa Ana River [which then emptied into the main bay], 250' SW from the proposed wharf of Irvine-Flint & Co."

Thanks to a bad wool year, neither Wallula nor the "projected village of Newport" nor the San Joaquin wharf were ever built. Captain Sam was luckier. He not only got a 20-year permit for a 75-foot channel, a landing site and 150 feet on either side, he got "permission to charge \$1.00 gold for every ton of merchandise deposited."

**A**FTER W. H. ABBOTT (known as "Captain Moses") purchased the *Vaquero* in 1872, he left the building of the stubby wharf and warehouse to Dunnells and a new partner, Daniel M. Dorman, owner of Santa Ana's first hotel. The wharf was roughly where the Reuben E. Lee steamboat restaurant anchors today. This was Newport's first settlement though confusingly, eight miles to the north in Gospel Swamp, a "New-

port School" opened in 1871. Its name was finally changed to Greenville in 1918.



JAMES McFADDEN

**J**AS. McFadden first entered the picture in 1873 when he ordered a ship-load of redwood from Santa Cruz. As his nephew A. J. McFadden, 87, tells it, "Uncle Jim intended to fence off 5,000 acres he'd acquired in Delhi, south of Santa Ana.

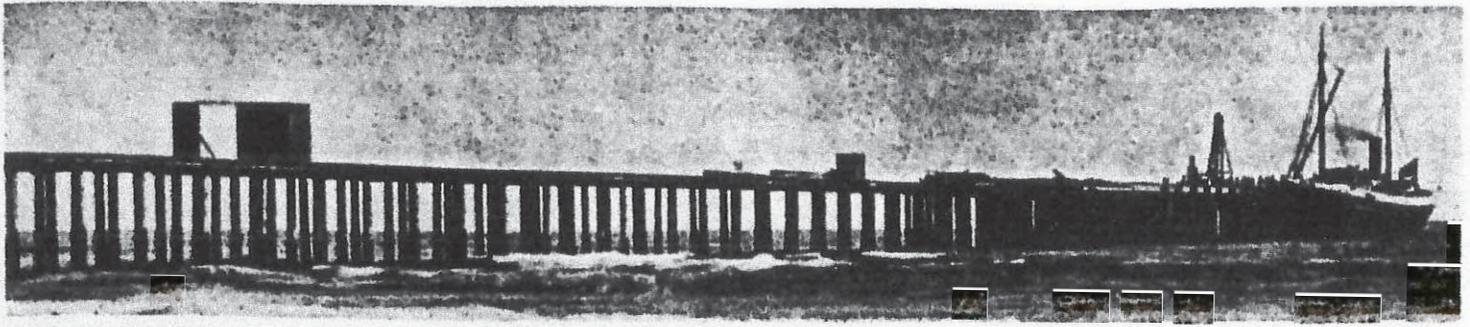
You couldn't farm it because the damned country was completely covered with wild horses."

Facing the same problem, farmers from "The Swamp" bought up every stick McFadden would sell. He sent for a second shipment, and when a third load sold even before it reached Dunnells' wharf, he decided to go into the lumber business. By then the wharf was owned by John Cubbon, who ran a pork-packing house in Santa Ana with Robert McFadden, James' brother. On April 19, 1875, Cubbon sold his franchise to the McFadden brothers.

Reaching what became "McFadden's Landing" was a chancy business. Storms continually changed the channel and pilots had to sound the way before each steamer's entry. Often a ship would lodge on the sand, advancing only as each high swell floated it slowly toward the wharf. In order to open the lower bay, the McFaddens induced their Gospel Swamp friends to bring 25 teams of mules and scrape out the passage at low tide.



**WHERE NEWPORT BEGAN**—Rare photo of McFadden's Landing in 1881. Two-story house belonged to Supt. Bob McFadden. Office is behind tent. Wharf is hidden by low wool warehouses which mark west end of bridge now spanning Upper Newport Bay. Barn to right of corral was a stable. Fishing net rack lies beyond lumber piles.



**NEWPORT'S FIRST CUSTOMER** — The *Eureka*, a wooden steamer out of San Francisco, on January 9, 1889, became the first commercial vessel to tie up at McFadden's Wharf. Newport pier was rebuilt in 1892, 1923 and 1939 in same location.

## McFADDEN'S WHARF

**T**WO VESSELS, the *Vaquero* and the *Twin Sisters* were regular visitors. In 1876 the McFaddens had the *Newport*, a shallow-draft steamer, built for them in San Francisco. "It was a little tub about 75 feet long which carried wool and grain up the coast and lumber and goods back." Because it put in at every "bandy-legged dock from here to Frisco," the McFaddens were soon in a rate war with the Pacific Coast Steamship Co. In 1878 a truce was declared, and the brothers sold their ship to become the "exclusive agents for PCSS in Newport."

Under the new agreement, large steamers such as the *Alexander Duncan*, the *Gem of the Pacific* and the *Los Angeles* anchored at sea, dispatching lighters to the wharf. A measure of the landing's activity is seen in its exports for 1879:

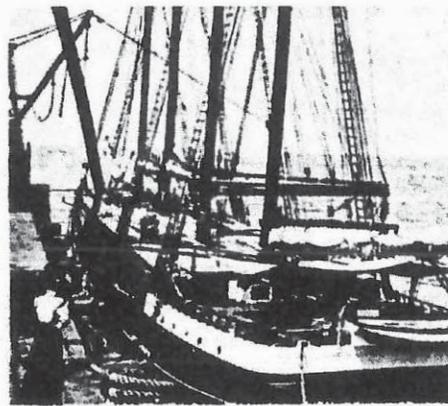
Corn	5,537,773 lbs.	Alfalfa Seed	36,407 lbs.
Barley	36,768 lbs.	Castor-beans	23,333 lbs.
Wool	42,775 lbs.	Honey	50,411 lbs.
Dried Fruit	63,748 lbs.	Beans	34,345 lbs.

In order to speed up operations, in 1880 the brothers leased an acre of Irvine land for a chute on the bluff behind the landing and built another warehouse. (The site was later occupied by the Orange County Country Club, "Mona's," and finally "The Castaways.") From this 80-foot mesa, goods could be slid down a 160-foot ramp directly into the hold of a steamer. By 1885, tri-weekly steamships bearing 50-ton cargoes were leaving with everything from asphalt to mustard seed.

According to a booster pamphlet, *SANTA ANA TOWN AND VALLEY* (1881), "Newport is one of the safest little harbors on the coast." Unfortunately, that was just C. of C. talk. The McFaddens were plagued with mishaps. In 1878, two skiffs overturned and five men perished; a two-masted schooner went aground below where the Balboa Pavilion is today, and barges were always getting swamped. As A. J. McFadden recalls, "In 1887 when their close friend and harbor-pilot, Tom Rule, drowned marking the channel for the *Newport* — that was the last straw."

The McFadden boys decided to build an ocean pier.

**I**N 1886, THE OCEAN SIDE of the peninsula that forms Newport Bay was an unglorified sand pile. Never part of a *rancho*, its title was rather vague, but presumably it belonged to the State. Eyed for some time by the McFaddens, who sought a new location for their "back bay operation," it was noted that the breakers were lowest at one point. Soundings revealed that this calming effect was caused by a submarine canyon only 1200 feet from shore. It was an ideal spot for a commercial pier. In 1887, the Newport Wharf and Lumber Co. was organized for precisely that purpose, and with a pile-driving overture Newport Beach was born.



**THE JOHN A. CAMPBELL**, a four-masted schooner, was typical of lumber ships bringing Oregon and Washington pine to Newport in 1892.

After three attempts and a year's labor, on December 1, 1888, crews ramrodded by a Major Warner completed McFadden's "outside wharf." Its pilings had been driven eight feet into the ocean floor and the pier extended 1300 feet. Twenty-two feet of water could be counted on even at extreme low tide. That was a distinct improvement over Dunnells' mud flat. When a barge floated the McFaddens' office around the peninsula and it was installed on the pier, "Old Newport Landing" closed its doors

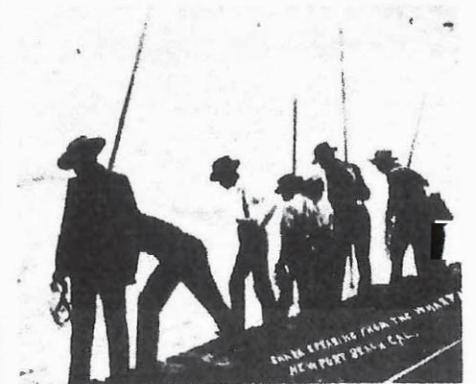
forever.

With the arrival of the first vessel on January 9, 1889, Newport Beach was treated to a double baptism. The old freighter *Eureka* cut loose with such a blast on her whistle that she sent the wharfmaster's pregnant wife into labor! Three days later, the *Santa Ana* *HERALD* touted Newport pier as "the most substantial wharf on the southern California coast." Henceforth, a steamer touched there every four days.

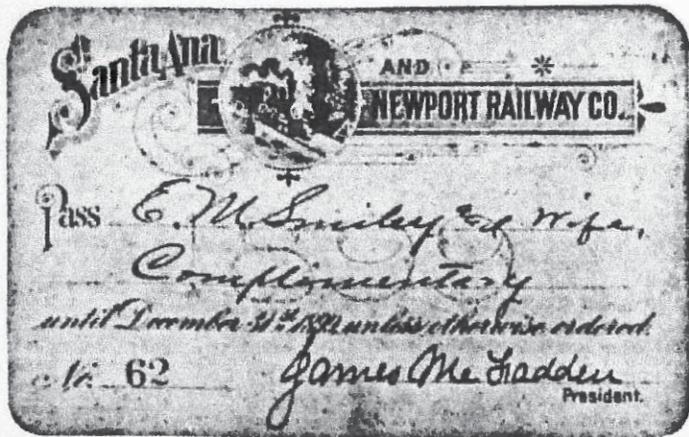
By the end of its first year, 72 vessels had taken on cargo. Most frequent callers were Perkins and Goodall's steel passenger liners the *Corona* and *Pomona*, and the cargo ships: *Eureka*, *Los Angeles*, *Santa Rosa* and *Queen of the Pacific*. At times as many as seven lumber schooners clustered about the pier waiting to unload, then return north with Santa Ana valley corn, barley, peanuts and pigs.

Their wharf was such a success that the McFaddens bought 1,000 acres of Newport (from 9th street to 40th, plus Lido and Balboa Islands), paying the State a modest \$1 an acre. Prices soared and tourists squealed as cottage and camp sites began leasing for \$8 a month. But Newport Beach was on its way.

So much so that the McFadden boys decided to build a railroad.



**HARPOONING SHARKS** for their liver and fins (sent to China) proved profitable. Record was a 2,000 lb. basking shark caught in 1911.



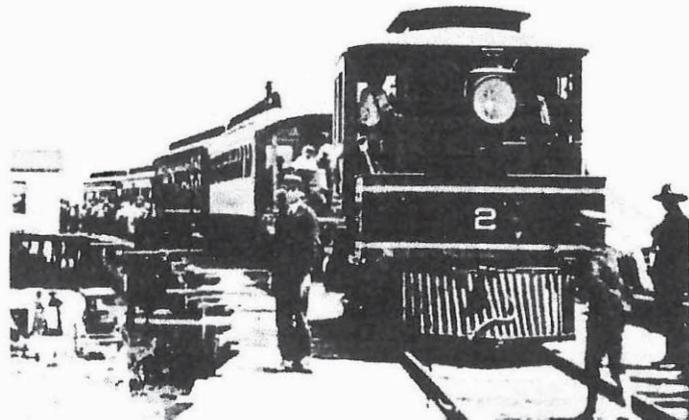
## MCFADDEN'S RAILROAD

**F**OR YEARS OX-TEAMS FREIGHTED lumber inland from Newport's "Old Landing" over a wagon road which the McFaddens helped build. It was slow-going, and as early as October 16, 1886, articles of incorporation were filed for the "Santa Ana & Newport Railroad Co., James McFadden, pres." When the brothers shifted to their ocean pier, a new survey had to be made, and it was not until November 11, 1887, that the *HERALD* could report, "A motor road is to be constructed by the Richland Development Co. from Santa Ana to Newport."

The two biggest clinkers on the route were bridging the Santa Ana River, which flowed into the bay near "The Arches," and cutting a grade up to what became Costa Mesa 40 years later. To determine the number of ties needed, James McFadden induced H. G. Forgy to drive to Santa Ana with him in a buggy with a rag tied to a wheel spoke. While McFadden drove, Forgy dizzily counted 11 miles of turns.

By January 12, 1889, a cavalry of two-horse teams finished grading the road bed and track-laying began from both ends. Ties, rails, four flat cars and a "steam dummy" were landed at the pier to work the lower end. Thanks to his father, Robert, being general manager of the line, Arthur McFadden, then 9, signed on as a waterboy for the crew out of Santa Ana, for which "I received the munificent sum of four-bits a day."

Shortly after the Joseph Bright Co. of San Bernardino drove the last spike, on October 13, 1891, the Santa Ana & Newport



MCFADDEN'S FIRST locomotive was built for the New York elevated railroad, and was acquired from the Ostrich Farm east of Fullerton. Photo shows switch engine on pier, August 1, 1891. By 1897, line had 23 pieces of rolling stock.

Railroad announced its schedule:

Leaves SA 6:30 a.m., daily exc. Sun. Leaves NP at 4 p.m. On steamer days there will be an extra train leaving SA at 6 p.m. - C.A. Mead, GA

The 11-mile trip south took 40 minutes while northbound trains made it in 30. The ten-minute difference was at the artesian well north of "Harper," near the present Santa Ana Country Club. Until 1905 when John Sharps drilled the first successful well, Newport Beach had to import all its drinking water.

Being good Scotch Presbyterians, the McFaddens never ran on Sundays. Contrary to popular belief, they *did* charge; the fare was 50¢, though it seems that half the county had a free pass.

In two years the SA-NP RR was doing a half million dollar freight business. Beginning in 1891, the railroad became a popular excursion route for parties bound for Catalina, especially over the 4th of July. Coaches and flat cars with benches transported hordes of tourists to McFadden's Wharf. There they boarded steamers like the *Hermosa II*, which whisked them off to the island in "something like three hours."



NEWPORT'S DORY FLEET as it looked sixty years ago. Pavilion held all-night Saturday dances. Sharps' Hotel stands behind store. Structure on pier was "Old Landing" office, remodeled with a gingerbread front for Newport's depot.

In 1892, a terrible storm whipped off 600 feet of the pier, carried away a small warehouse and sent three flat cars into the drink. Curiously, the warehouse washed up long enough to salvage its contents. The story of the flat cars is no less spectacular. Eventually one floated ashore four miles west of the pier, a second near 23rd Street. Twenty-three years later, on April 15, 1915, the third one, still in good condition, drifted against the old 36th Street pier. The Santa Fe was so impressed that it salvaged it for a freak exhibit.

Rebuilt with piles this time driven 15 feet deep, the dock was enlarged to accommodate six loading spurs to keep up with a cargo traffic which reached 62,520 tons in 1896 plus 12,564 passengers.

By now Newport was a bustling town boasting of a hundred homes and such civic monuments as a post office (1891), the Newport Hotel (1893), a school (1894), Sharps' Hotel (1895), and a pavilion (1896). But late in 1899, harrassed by competition from the Southern Pacific, the McFaddens were euchered into selling their wharf and railroad to J. Ross Clark, "the sugar man from Los Alamitos." Ironically, Clark turned out to be a stooge for the S.P., and the McFaddens' old rivals acquired wharf and railway on June 30, 1900. Disgusted, the brothers sold their beach property to W. S. Collins on May 23, 1902.

Squeezed off as a port of call by its new owners, an era ended in 1907 when the last steamer sailed from the pier that introduced Newport Beach to the world... a dream that began in a mud flat and went to sea.

★ ★ ★  
-JIM SLEEPER

The Rancho

# JOAQUIN GAZETTE

F  
869  
N59  
S56  
1968

OCTOBER, 1868

No. 4



## The First Forty Years



THE STORY OF

# OLD NEWPORT

1868-1908

Steamers running between San Francisco and San Diego touch at Newport Beach, going north and south. Besides these, steam schooners and sailing vessels from every port on the Pacific Coast touch at Newport wharf, making regular or special trips.

ORANGE COUNTY'S RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS  
Santa Ana HERALD (1897)



PART FROM THE STEAMSHIP *Senator*, which deposited the first Anaheim colonists near San Pedro in 1859, no ship had greater impact on Orange County than did a little wood-burning paddle-wheeler which poked its nose into the *Bolsa de San Joaquin* in 1868. That was the old name for the back bay which intersects the Rancho San

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LUCKY DAY FOR NEWPORT BEACH — OCTOBER 13, 1891  
First Passenger Train on McFadden's "Santa Ana & Newport Railroad" Arrives



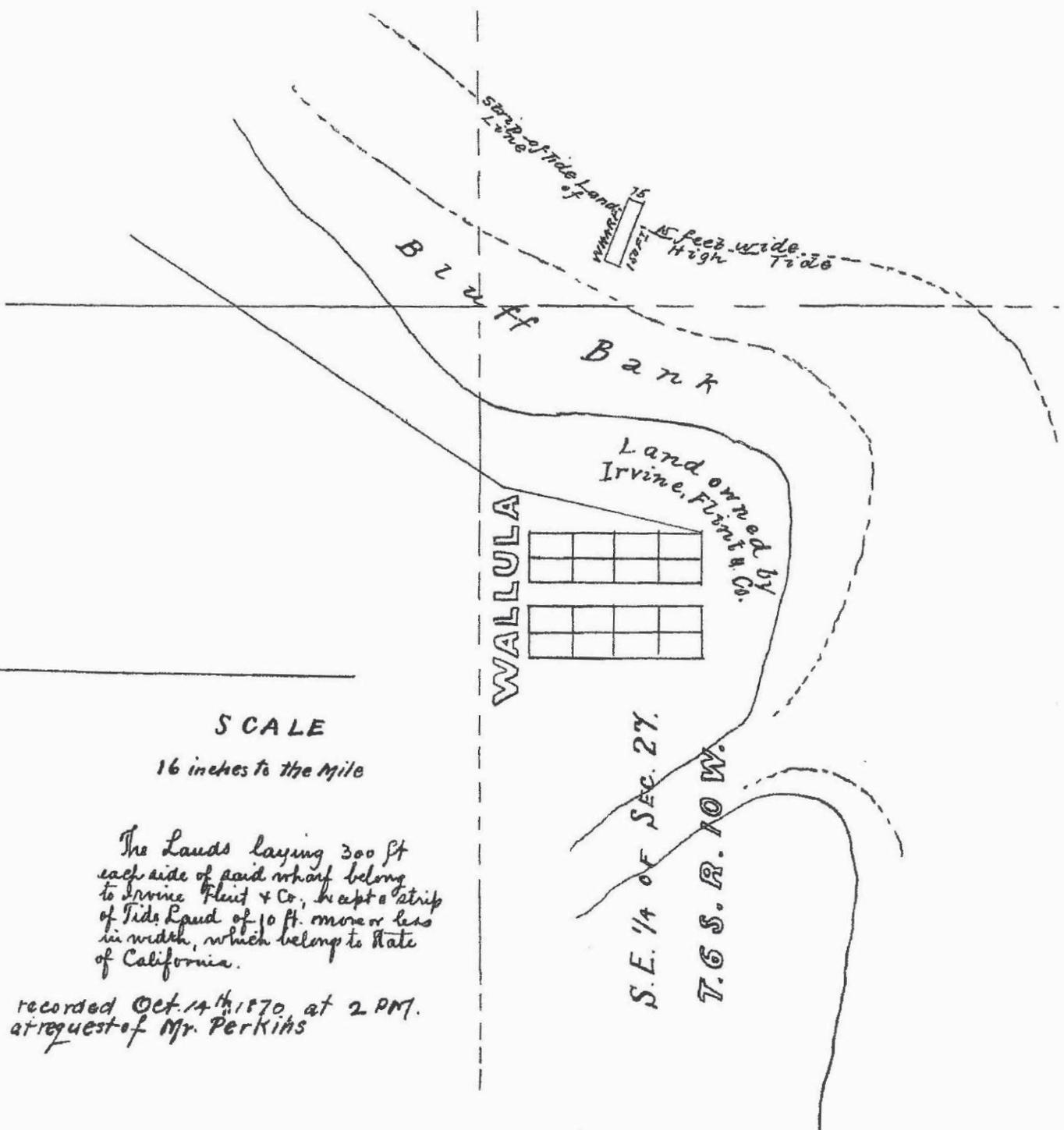
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# SAN JOAQUIN BAY INLET



### SCALE

16 inches to the mile

The Lands laying 300 ft each side of said wharf belong to Irvine Flint & Co, except a strip of Tide Land of 10 ft. more or less in width, which belong to State of California.

recorded Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> 1870 at 2 PM.  
at request of Mr. Perkins

S.E. 1/4 OF SEC. 27.  
T. 6 S. R. 10 W.

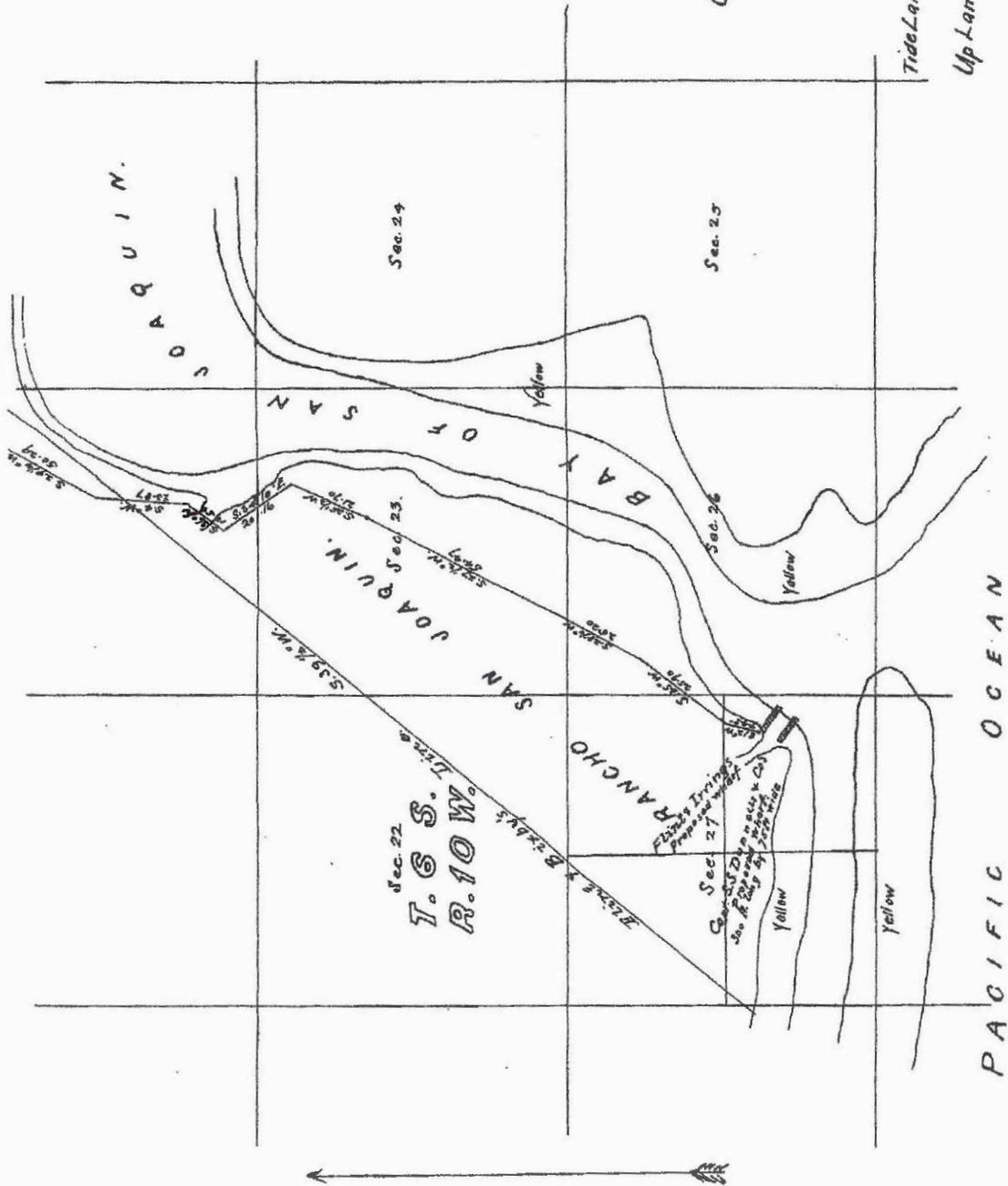
# PLAN

Showing Location

of  
Capt. S. S. Dunnells and Co.  
PROPOSED WHARF

Scale 30 chains to an inch  
Var. 14° East.

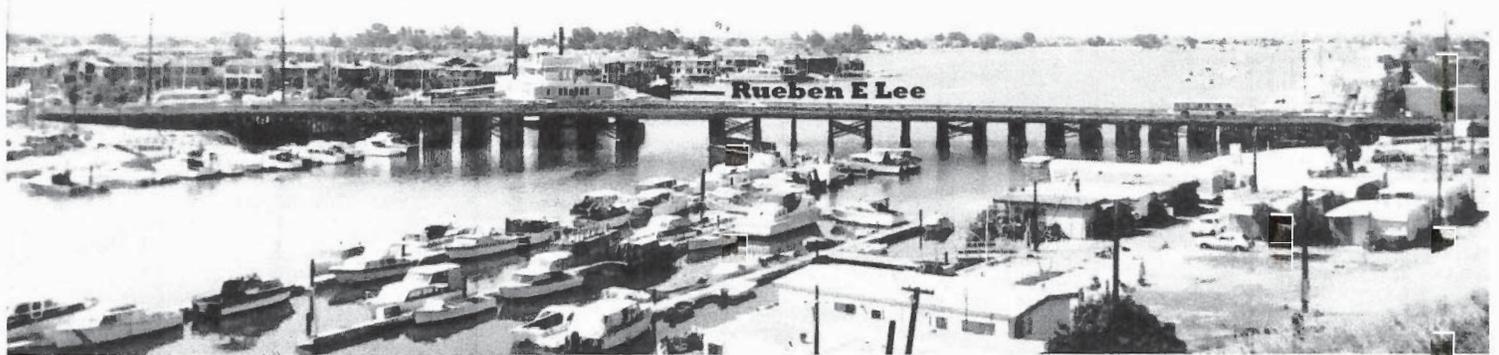
Tide Lands owned by Glassell & Chapman  
colored yellow  
Up Lands owned by Benj. Flint and  
Jas Irvine, in water color.



recorded March 21<sup>st</sup> 1871, at 10 AM  
at request of C. A. Gardner

## 2nd Newport Bay Coast Highway Bridge

Opened January 1932, Demolished December 1981

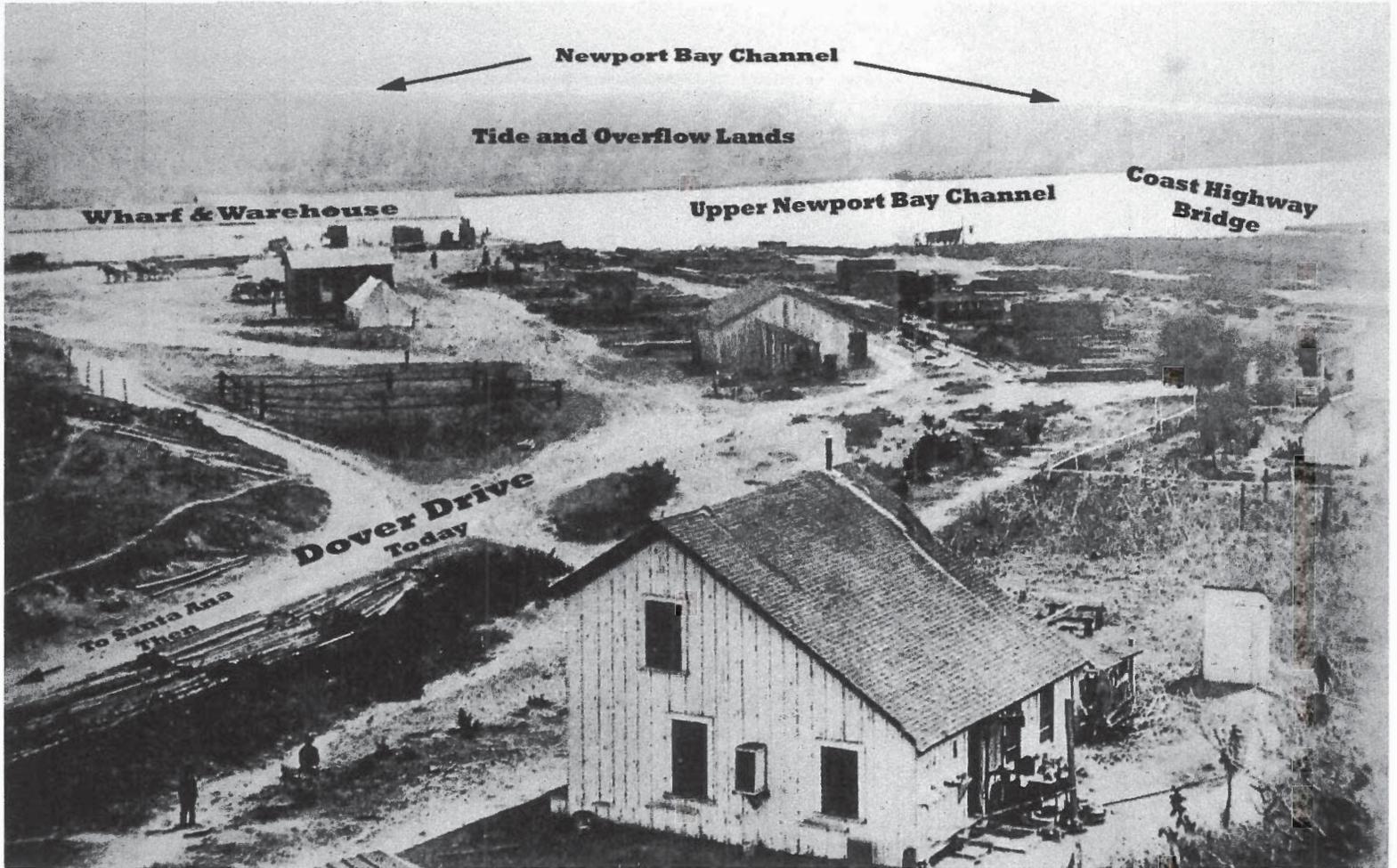


Rueben E Lee

← Old Landing, Dunnells Wharf, McFadden's landing, Newport →

**Photo taken in the late 1970s looking southerly  
from Upper Newport Bay westerly bluff .**

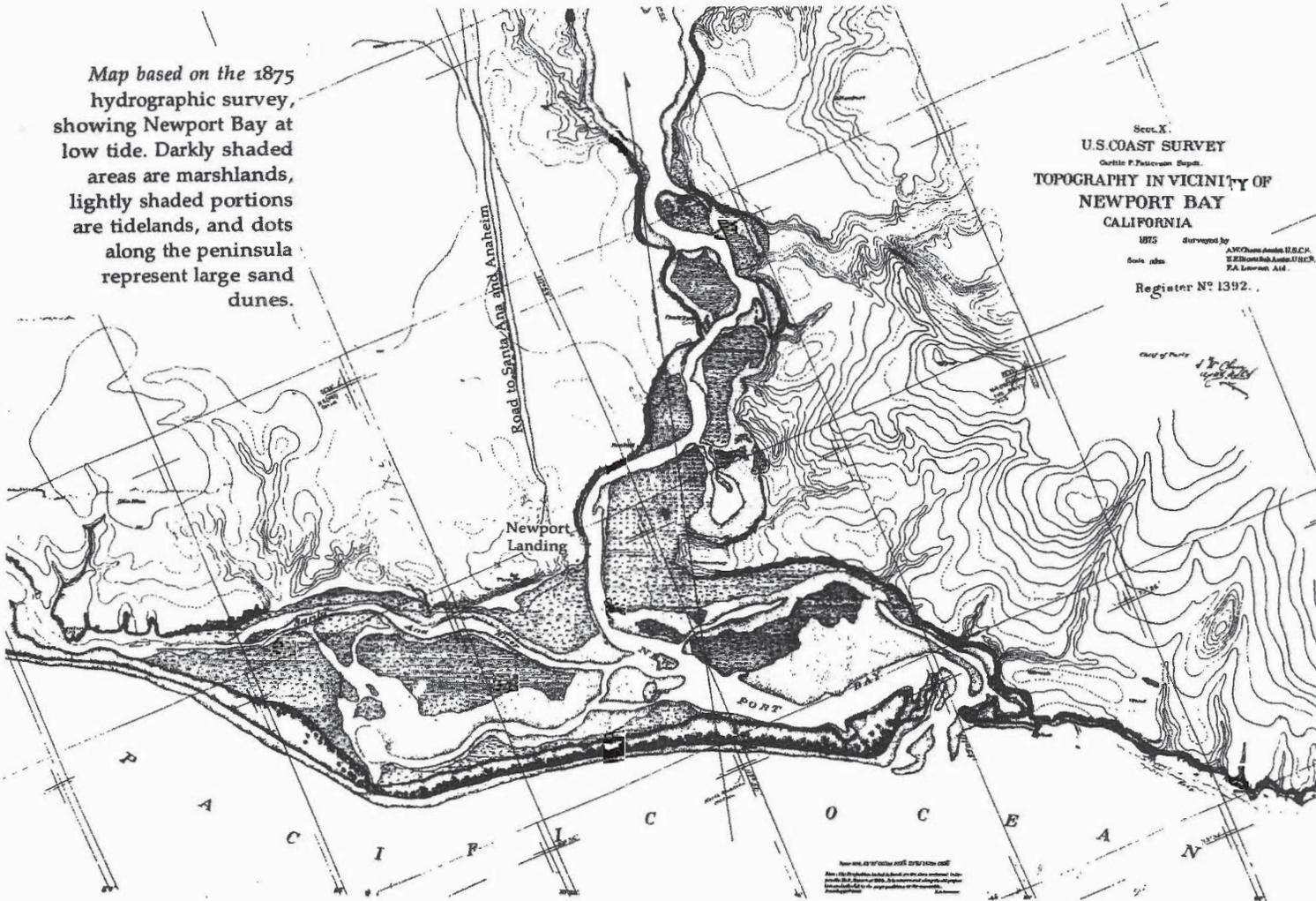
EXHIBIT (D)



**McFadden's Landing**  
**ca: 1880-1881**

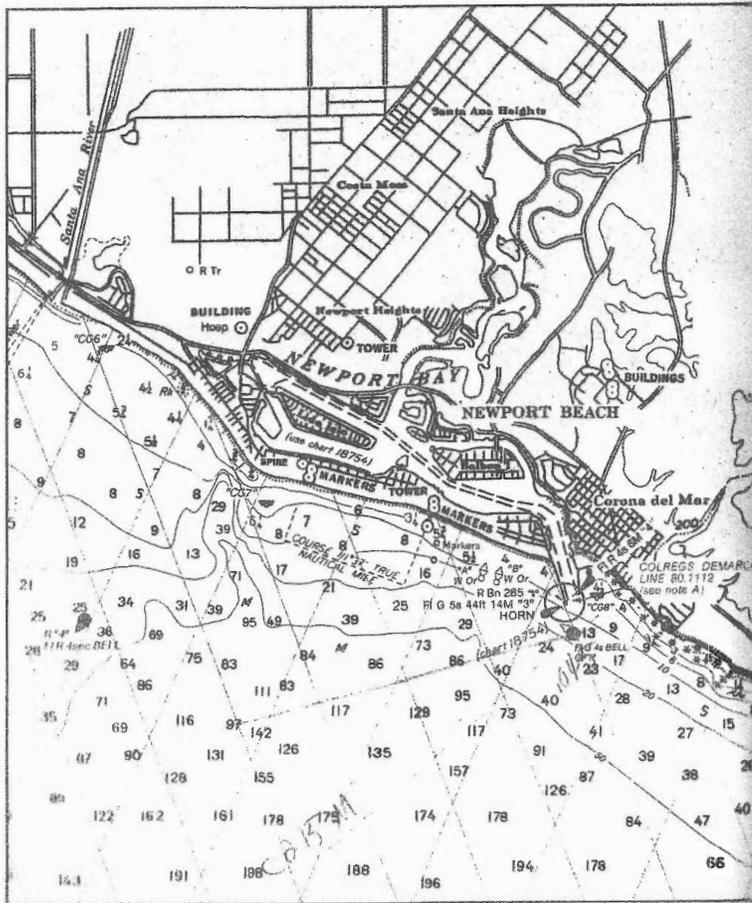
EXHIBIT (E)

Map based on the 1875 hydrographic survey, showing Newport Bay at low tide. Darkly shaded areas are marshlands, lightly shaded portions are tidelands, and dots along the peninsula represent large sand dunes.

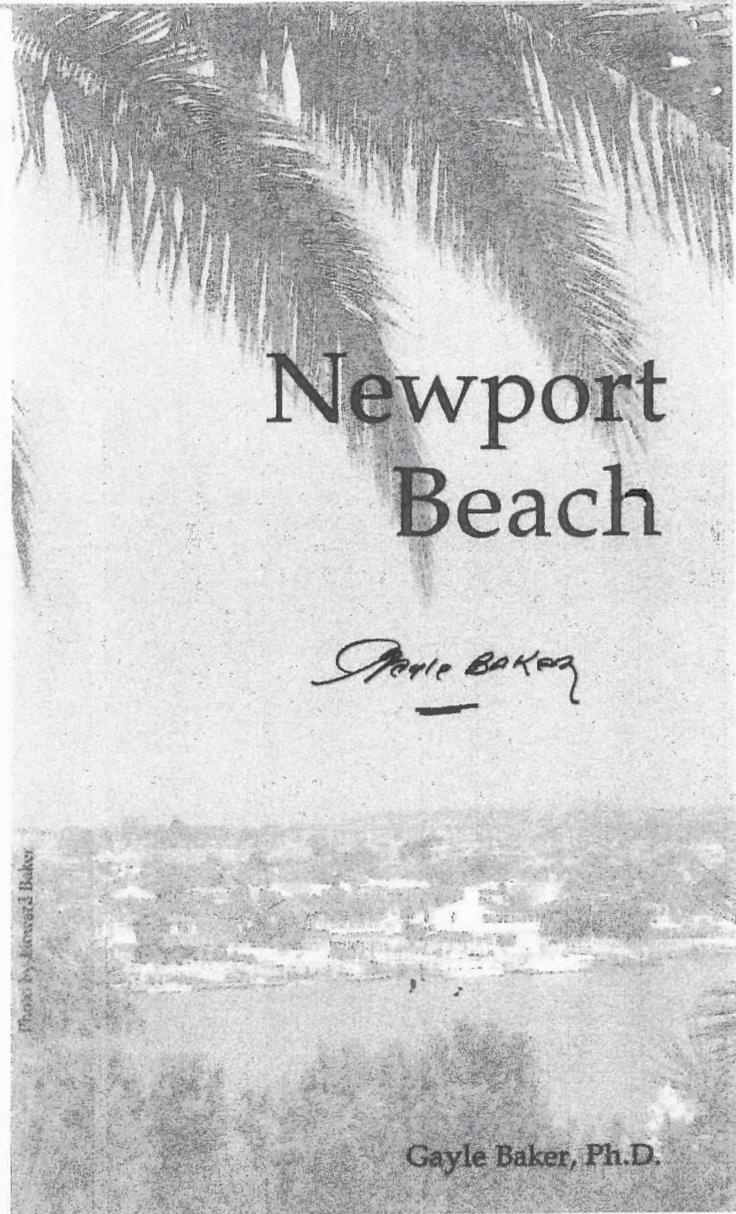


Sect. X.  
**U.S. COAST SURVEY**  
 Curtis F. Peterson, Supdt.  
**TOPOGRAPHY IN VICINITY OF**  
**NEWPORT BAY**  
**CALIFORNIA**

1875 Surveyed by A.W. Chambliss U.S.C.S.  
 E. Elmer Fish, Asst. U.S.C.S.  
 EA Larson, Aid.  
 Register No. 1392.



Reproduction from NOAA nautical chart 18746



# Newport Beach

*Marie Baker*

Gayle Baker, Ph.D.

Other books by Gayle Baker:

- The Wet Mountain Valley*, 1975
- Trial and Triumph*, 1977
- Catalina Island*, 2002
- Santa Barbara*, 2003
- Cambria*, 2003

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I. Title

PCN 2003114784

Cover watercolor by *Larry Iwerks*, who studied at San Francisco State University, the Mendocino Art Center, and at the Santa Barbara Art Institute under veteran landscape painter Ray Strong. Larry continues to paint Western landscapes from his studio/home in Santa Barbara.

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Photo Courtesy of Newport Harbor Nautical Museum

Mudflat, Seen Beyond and to Left of Square-rigger, Became Balboa Island

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## Envisioning a Commercial Harbor, 1864-1888

**W**hen Ranchos San Joaquin and Santa Ana were sold, some interesting entrepreneurs were drawn to the Newport area. Its abandoned beaches and primitive marshlands were about to disappear, as enormous changes loomed. Of those entrepreneurs, two pivotal men, **James Irvine** and **James McFadden**, emerged as leading visionaries, each with markedly different dreams for Newport. James Irvine arrived with a love of the land and plans to prosper by amassing a great deal of ranchland. James McFadden had an entirely different dream—he was going to create a town by dividing his land into small parcels and selling it to as many as would buy. Convinced that the more settlers he could entice to Newport, the sooner it would emerge as an important commercial center, he was Newport's first passionate promoter. While Irvine saw acres of ranchland rich with produce and herds, McFadden envisioned a bustling and prosperous town.

### The Irvine Ranch

Since its inception, the Irvine Ranch has been intricately intertwined with the history of Newport. It was established when the debt-ridden Sepulveda was forced to sell his Rancho San Joaquin to Flint, Bixby, Irvine, and Company in 1864. **Benjamin Flint**, **Dr. Thomas Flint**, and **Llewellyn Bixby** were from Maine, while James Irvine was born in Ireland, the eighth of nine children of Anglo-Irish farmers. In 1846, at age 19, he joined the parade of immigrants crossing the Atlantic to New York. Years later, as the prosperous owner of an enormous ranch and the forefather of a foundation known for its philanthropic generosity, he recalled his trip: "I tell you a boy cast upon the world with not a dollar in his pocket. . . is in a position to appreciate the value of a helping hand."

During that trip he met **Collis Huntington**, soon to become one of the Big Four railroad magnates. Rather than cementing a friendship during that trip, the two visionary entrepreneurs had a disagreement that lasted throughout their lifetimes. When one of the Big Four's railroads, the Southern Pacific, needed to use Irvine's land to extend its rails from Santa Ana to San Diego, Irvine refused. Forced to give a railroad right-of-way through his land, he gave it to the Santa Fe, the Southern Pacific's competitor.

Irvine had spent two years in New York before journeying to San Francisco, via Panama, to participate in the Gold Rush of 1849. In addition to mining, he worked as a merchant, providing food for the ravenous miners. By 1854, he had been so successful that he was able to buy an interest in a San Francisco produce and grocery business. Though he prospered as a merchant, it was the land that attracted him, and, as soon as he had the money, he also began to invest in real estate.

Before long, he joined forces with the Flints and Bixby. When they had amassed enough money by providing meat to the hungry gold-seekers, they journeyed to Illinois to buy sheep. They drove approximately 2000 sheep to California, and, by the late 1850s, had established a wool business. Their timing could not have been better. As soon as they were established, the Civil War erupted. As the war made acquisition of cotton virtually impossible, wool was a welcome and profitable substitute. During the drought years of 1863 to 1865, their sheep, needing less forage, survived, while cattle were perishing by the thousands.

By the end of the drought, they had the cash to buy Sepulveda's Rancho San Joaquin. They were also ready to buy more land when the Yorbas' and Peraltas' Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana was dissolved by court order. Before long, they were the largest landholders in the region, owning over 100,000 acres. James Irvine took the lead in the company's ranch project and, by 1868, had built himself a home for the considerable sum of \$1000 for his wife and one-year old son, **James II**. He focused his attention on ranching and tireless efforts to identify the most lucrative agricultural uses for his land. When he died in 1886, trustees, left in the control of the ranch until

James II turned 25, tried to sell it at auction. When this auction was declared illegal, his young son took over the reins of the huge ranch and accelerated efforts to increase its agricultural production.

### James McFadden's Vision

In the 1860s, when the ranchos were being broken up and offered for sale, one early purchaser was James McFadden. One of 11 children of Scottish farmers who had settled in Delaware County, New York and a widower, McFadden first traveled to California in 1868. He visited Wilmington just before journeying to Newport and was immediately convinced that Newport Bay had far more potential than Wilmington as the region's premiere commercial deep-sea port—a conviction he maintained for almost four decades.

According to McFadden's memoirs, printed in the *Santa Ana Blade* of September 7, 1915:

*... the question of the depth of the water in the so-called San Joaquin slough [Newport Bay] became of interest, and through the assistance of a Mr. Goodrich, who was then the foreman of the San Joaquin Ranch, I secured the services of an old whaler who was herding a band of sheep for Mr. Goodrich, and who owned or secured a flat bottomed boat, and took me over the bar at what he claimed to be mean high tide. I found between 10 and 11 feet on the bar. This was disappointing to all of us, but it was claimed to be more than either Anaheim Landing or San Pedro had at the time.*

Disappointed, but not discouraged, he and his brother, Robert, began purchasing land until they had acquired a large portion of the future site of Newport, including the oceanfront of Newport Beach, much of Balboa Peninsula, and the sandbars that were to become its islands.

The McFaddens' plan, quite different from Irvine's, was to sell as soon as possible. They subdivided their land and returned to their homes in the East to wait until enough land had been settled to support a town and, hopefully, the development of a seaport. They were optimistic that their land would sell quickly for the end of the Civil

War and the breakup of the ranchos had spurred migration to California. Intent on escaping the blood-soaked East and inspired by land offered at under \$10 per acre, thousands arrived by steamer and wagon, seeking opportunity. According to the December 19, 1868 *Los Angeles Star*:

*Not a day passes but long trains of emigrant wagons pass through town. . . . The great ranchos having been divided up, induces emigration, and we understand land is offered on such reasonable terms as to hold out superior inducements to settlers. For soil and climate, the southern counties are unequalled in the state. They have long been overlooked, and treated with but very little consideration, if not subject to contumely and contempt, but the time has at last arrived, when their waste places will become habitations and their deserts be made fruitful and blossom as the rose.*

This parade of settlers increased dramatically when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. With the railroad, travel to California was suddenly infinitely easier. Although most of these settlers sought land away from coastal areas, some did gravitate to the area that was to become Newport, and, before long, the McFaddens sold some of their land.

### *Vaquero*

In 1870, the first *Pacific Coast Pilot* was published, containing strong warnings about the danger of entering Newport Bay:

*On the bar there is a very heavy swell in all stages of the tide, rendering it dangerous to cross in boats of any kind. . . . There is no safe anchorage off the entrance, and the low straight beach. . . affords no protection whatever. . . . The attempts to pass the bar were, in all cases, attended with risk, and the entrance may for general purposes, be regarded as impracticable.*

Despite the warning, homesteaders and settlers on farms as far inland as San Bernardino wondered about the potential of the unexplored bay. They sought convenient, inexpensive transportation for

their ever-increasing array of produce, and were not content to depend solely on the services offered by either the Port of Wilmington or Anaheim Landing (today's Seal Beach).

**Captain Samuel Sumner Dunnels**, a hotelkeeper in San Diego who dearly missed his seagoing days, was soon in a perfect position to explore its potential. He found a way to get on the water again by carrying passengers and delivering freight up and down San Diego harbor. The need for his services was so great that, by 1865, he had acquired and launched *Vaquero*, a 105-ton, sturdy, flat-bottomed wood-burning steamer designed for shallow-water river navigation. **By 1870, Dunnels had expanded his route from San Diego harbor to include coastal ports north of the city.**

**As he traveled up and down the coast, he observed farmers' desperate need for an inexpensive and convenient transportation link. He also noted the intriguing, unexplored Newport Bay, then known as San Joaquin Bay, and wondered if it could provide the needed link.**

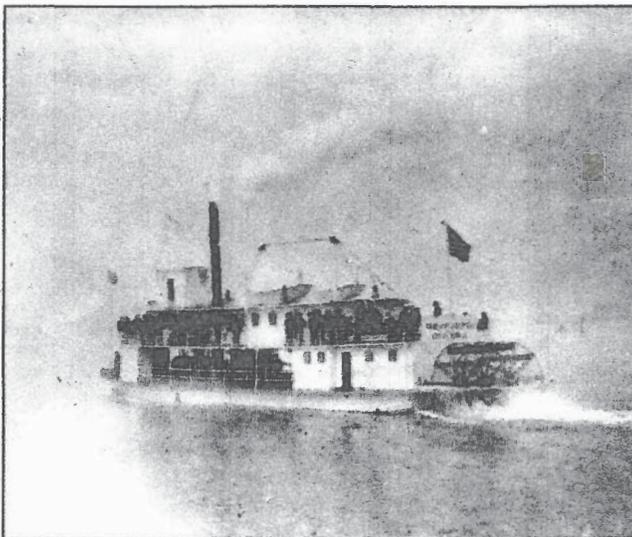


Photo Courtesy of Newport Beach Historical Society

Shallow-draft Sternwheeler Similar to *Vaquero*

Aware of the bar that blocked most ships from entering into its calm waters, Dunnels believed that he had the only boat that could successfully navigate it and was anxious to find out. In addition to seeking a prosperous new port that only he could use, Dunnels was probably seeking a way to avoid the most commonly used port in the area, Anaheim Landing, where he owed a great deal of money.

On September 10, 1870, the *Vaquero*, loaded with 5000 shingles and 5000 feet of lumber from San Diego, entered the bay slowly and cautiously. The entry was successful and uneventful. Dunnels unloaded near the convergence of the upper and lower bays and loaded *Vaquero* with local hay and grain. According to the September 15, 1870 *Los Angeles Star*:

*The steamer Vaquero landed a cargo last Saturday at a point east of the Santa Ana River. . . . It is said that a good landing can easily be made at the place referred to. If this is a fact, it is of great importance to those settling on the fertile lands east of the Santa Ana River.*

Thrilled that he may have found a "new port," he soon built a small, temporary wharf there and scheduled regular trips. Also in 1870, Flint, Bixby, Irvine, and Company applied for a wharf franchise in the bay and, by November, it was granted. The location they had selected was adjacent to Dunnels' wharf, and they offered him use of their wharf. He declined. It was rumored that he refused because of a conflict with the ranch manager. He moved his wharf 200 feet down the beach and applied for a franchise of his own.

This franchise was granted, but Dunnels never used it due to financial woes. When the rush of settlers slowed in the early 1870s, businesses suffered. Dunnels had borrowed a great deal of money and could not withstand a decline in revenue. Additionally, *Vaquero* was more expensive to operate than he had anticipated as she was fueled by wood and burned a great deal on her ocean-going ventures. To compound his problems, Dunnels announced that he was opening up a new port for local farmers. He made a strategic mistake: Anaheim Landing and Wilmington were embroiled in an intense competition for dominance as Southern California's port. Neither port welcomed the news that a "new port" was about to compete for

the agricultural trade. His Anaheim creditors moved quickly to make sure he was not successful in establishing the new port, by immediately pressing charges for unpaid debts. By April 1872, Dunnels had lost *Vaquero*, and commercial shipping ceased until the McFaddens were able to revive dreams of a commercial seaport.

### Naming of Newport

During the early years, Newport had many names. It was sometimes known as Bolsa de Gengara (derived from an early tribal settlement, Geng-Na) and early maps referred to it as Bolsa de San Joaquin. When settlers from the East began to arrive, they wanted a new, easier to pronounce, and more prestigious name, and Newport was perfect. Although there is no proof concerning its origin, most believe that it came from one of two sources:

- \* Some credit Dunnels, who returned to San Diego after successfully crossing the bar in 1870, exuberantly proclaiming that he had found a "new port."
- \* Others believe that an Irvine Ranch employee suggested it during a meeting concerning commerce on the bay between the Irvines and the McFaddens.

Whatever the source, "Newport" was soon the widely accepted name for the remote and lonely tidal estuary dotted with sandbars that held such promise.

### Transportation Needs Grow

James McFadden returned to Newport in 1873 to try farming the land that had not been sold. Although he planted corn as his staple crop, he also tried a variety of other crops. Although crops grew well, they were soon trampled by wandering cattle. Convinced that he needed to fence his property, he and his brother Robert went to San Francisco to purchase lumber for fencing. He had it shipped, but was surprised to discover that the need for lumber in Newport was

so great that it was sold to other settlers (at a solid profit) before it had even arrived. When the same thing happened to a second shipment, the McFaddens knew they were out of farming and into the lumber business.

James McFadden journeyed East to prepare for his permanent move to Newport, while Robert and their brother, John, stayed to oversee lumber sales and sell land at prices ranging from \$8 to \$15 an acre. The influx of settlers had dwindled and land sales were slow, so slow that Robert even traded some of the land for hogs. Convinced that a convenient sea landing was essential if they were going to sell their land and succeed in their lumber business, they looked again at the marshy bay with the frightening sandbar blocking its entrance and began planning a landing there.

Concerned about the potential competition posed by the McFaddens, the owners of Anaheim Landing leased Dunnels' abandoned wharf and warehouse and employed two brothers named Wilson. Once Scandinavian fishermen, they rented boats and tackle, but were actually charged with using their base at the landing to stifle commercial activity in Newport Bay.

Their task became impossible when James McFadden arrived with his new wife and two daughters to settle in Newport, building a house that would be his home almost 40 years. Totally committed to the promise of Newport Bay, he immediately focused his energy on transforming Newport into the vibrant seaport he envisioned. To do this, he knew that he had get rid of the Wilson brothers and establish his own wharf and landing. He began by petitioning the state for the 20 acres of swampy beach on which portions of Dunnels' wharf and warehouse, occupied by the Wilson brothers, had been built.

By 1876, California agreed that it was swampland and sold it to him as tidelands for \$1 an acre. McFadden then purchased the portions of Dunnels' wharf and warehouse that had not already been granted to him as tidelands and evicted the Wilson brothers. When they refused to leave, the McFadden brothers broke into the warehouse they now owned, took out all of the Wilsons' belongings and dumped them on

a sail on the ground. A fight broke out when one of the Wilsons attacked with a crosscut saw. The good guys won when one Wilson was knocked out and the other tossed into the water. The Wilsons left the area and the McFaddens were free to focus their considerable energy on nurturing bay commerce at their Newport Landing.

### *The Newport*

While working to acquire the land he needed for a landing, James McFadden also commissioned a vessel that could successfully navigate the sandbar. He ordered a 133.5-foot long, 25.5-foot wide steamer that only required 9 feet of water when fully loaded. Designed to have a large capacity, it could carry 1000 sheep, in addition to providing several staterooms for passengers. Weighing 331 tons, it was the first of a group of "steam schooners" that were unique to California. Capable of landing in small, rough coves up and down the coast, they were especially well-suited for carrying lumber from Northern California to the increasing number of settlers who had chosen California as their new home.

While his steam schooner was being built, McFadden improved a trail across the mesa to Santa Ana and brought supplies to Newport by wagon. He also encouraged schooners to venture into the bay to bring much-needed supplies and lumber. He was successful at enticing them through the shallow entrance, and, in the summer of 1875, six small schooners successfully entered the bay, bringing needed supplies. Despite their success, the schooner trade was both difficult and expensive. Requiring perfect weather and favorable silt conditions, it was dangerous even in the best of circumstances. Additionally, only the smallest of the schooners could even attempt to enter the bay, schooners so small that they could not carry enough cargo to net a profit large enough to justify the danger. Although the six schooners were successful at navigating the sandbar and swampy waters during the summer of 1875, all knew that schooner trade was not the convenient and economical option Newport needed, and anxiously awaited the completion of the McFaddens' new ship.

The McFaddens' steam schooner, *Newport*, was completed during the summer of 1875. When she arrived in Newport Bay on September 3, 1875, many believed that she would transform Newport into a commercial seaport. According to the September 11, 1875 *Anaheim Gazette*:

*The McFaddens' new steamer arrived at Newport last Friday with a cargo of one hundred and fifty thousand feet of lumber. The arrival was quite an important event in the history of Southern Los Angeles County. The immense number of people in the farming section, of which Newport is the natural outlet, are, of course, deeply interested in having facilities for the shipment of their produce. On Sunday last . . . over 100 persons visited Newport for the purpose of inspecting the vessel and exchanging congratulations on the auspicious event.*

The *Newport* immediately began hauling cargo and was soon arriving every other week at high tide with lumber from Trinidad and transporting local meat, grain, produce, wool, and stock to San Francisco. In addition to meeting the needs of local small farmers, the *Newport* was welcomed by James Irvine, as it carried produce and stock for the increasingly prosperous Irvine Ranch. This powerful little steamer ushered in a 25-year era of McFadden domination of Orange County shipping.

Although the area was still sparsely settled and remote, the *Newport's* first years were good ones. An especially good year, 1876, brought new settlers and new customers for the *Newport*. Another cause for local exaltation was the demise of Anaheim Landing. When the Southern Pacific Railroad completed a spur from Anaheim to Los Angeles, Anaheim farmers no longer needed to transport their stock and produce by sea. They could use the faster and more efficient rails instead. It soon became clear that Anaheim Landing could not compete with the railroad, and it was abandoned. Although Newporters celebrated their victory over Anaheim Landing, the more astute may have seen the victory of rails over sea transport as the first of many that would virtually eliminate sea commerce.

Despite the progress during those good years, commerce in the bay was still a challenge. The average depth of the sandbar at high tide was only 8 feet, a foot less than the *Newport's* draft. The McFaddens had to time deliveries for extremely high tides to negotiate the bar. Adding to the difficulty was the discouraging fact that shifting sands constantly changed the entrance and channel, making navigation even more dangerous. On many occasions, Robert was tossed into the roiling water at the entrance to the bay while helping the *Newport* enter safely, and it soon became clear that something had to be done.

The McFaddens' solution was to build two lighters, barges that were propelled by poling. In addition to helping the *Newport* enter the bay, the lighters were used to transport cargo to the bay from ships anchored outside the entrance. Although an excellent solution to the challenge of low tides and shifting sands, even these lighters were not able to protect cargo when the breaking seas turned the entrance into a maelstrom. During those conditions, lumber was swept overboard, forcing the crew to retrieve as much as they could as it was swept onto the beach. That became such a common occurrence that the McFaddens established a lumberyard on the bluffs so that soaked wood could dry before being sold.

### McFaddens' Difficult Years

The acquisition of the *Newport* ushered in several prosperous years for the young settlement—good years for the McFaddens. John took a leadership role in California politics, eventually becoming the Mayor of Santa Ana. James managed maritime business contracts and marketed McFadden enterprises, while remaining an impassioned promoter of Newport Bay. Robert supervised Newport Landing, working and living there until 1884.

Although 1876 was regarded as a good year with encouraging growth in business and the demise of its strongest competitor, Anaheim Landing, it also began a difficult era for the McFaddens. Despite the prosperity of that year, the drought of 1876-77 sowed

the seeds of a depression. The ensuing decline of produce slowed growth, and trade at Newport stagnated.

It also saw the beginning of a four-year disagreement between Newport's founding fathers, McFadden and Irvine. Irvine had bought out his partners in 1876 and gained control of the enormous Irvine Ranch, later certified by the State Board of Equalization to cover 105,000 acres. The same year, when California granted McFadden the right to buy the 20 swampy acres of Newport Bay at \$1 each, Irvine claimed that McFadden had been acting as his agent when the request was submitted and that the 20 acres belonged to him. Irvine demanded his land and threatened to evict the McFaddens from the contested land, including their wharf and warehouse. Newporters watched the conflict with concern, for they knew that if the McFaddens were evicted from their landing, the promising commercial activities of the *Newport* would be severely crippled, if not destroyed.

The conflict lasted until 1880, when a judge declared that the land belonged to James Irvine and that he had the right to evict the McFaddens. Popular opinion did not support the decision. Not only were the McFaddens popular civic promoters, they also provided extremely important shipping services to the young community. Many worried that Newport would wither without the McFaddens. Unlike the McFaddens, Irvine did not enjoy local support. Citizens blamed him for the fact that they did not have a railroad. They knew that his refusal to give the Southern Pacific a right-of-way across his ranch was delaying the completion of a transportation link to San Diego. Irvine was sensitive to public opinion and allowed the McFaddens to continue landing on the beach and to lease some of the contested land. Pleased with the compromise, the McFaddens continued to base their shipping business there and even expanded their warehouse to three stories.

Still, troubles for the McFaddens continued. The sandbar, always challenging, was getting even more difficult to cross. As farmers began tilling the soil, they cleared the willows and brush that had been trapping much of the silt. Without the brush, the bay and

entrance silted up rapidly. The channel soon became so difficult to navigate that the McFaddens had to hire a pilot to help the *Newport* navigate its ponderous journey to their landing. As silting worsened, the channel shifted so often that the pilot was soon forced to sound it before each arrival. Despite his soundings, the *Newport* frequently went aground and cables had to be installed along the route to pull her out of the mud.

In April 1878, the *Newport* was stuck on the bar again amid ferocious waves, endangering both boat and crew. Lifeboats were lowered for the mate and three sailors. When the mate disobeyed orders and rowed directly into the surf, the lifeboat capsized. Watching in horror, the captain lowered another boat for himself and two more crew and began rowing to the rescue. Their lifeboat also capsized in the unrelenting waves, and all seven men floundered helplessly in the breaking waves. While two crewmen were saved, five drowned, including the *Newport's* captain. The McFaddens mourned the loss, and many believe that James never fully recovered from his grief.

Those years also brought what James McFadden considered to be a betrayal. Strongly supportive of eventually getting railroad service to his beloved Newport, he contributed thousands of dollars to the Southern Pacific so that it would extend rails to Santa Ana. As soon as the railroad to Santa Ana was completed in 1877, the Southern Pacific mounted a war against the McFaddens' shipping business by offering cheaper rates to local farmers. For just over a year, the McFaddens continued to operate the *Newport* at a loss of more than \$6000. Finally, in November 1878, they gave up and sold their steamer to the Pacific Coast Steamship Company. Although she continued to journey between San Francisco and Newport Landing each week, her trips north to collect lumber were over forever, and settlers were again forced to depend on schooners for their lumber. Unable to enter the bay, the schooners anchored offshore while lumber was either floated ashore or poled to the landing on one of the McFaddens' barges. Although Robert McFadden continued to operate the landing and act as the steamship company's agent, James McFadden's visionary passion for the commercial potential of the bay no longer fueled the gutsy steam schooner named *Newport*.

## Big Changes for Newport Beach

By the early 1880s, the Santa Fe Railroad began to serve Orange County, breaking the strangling monopoly of the Southern Pacific. Finally, the produce from Orange County's rich agricultural land began to bring a profit to farmers. Reflecting optimism and pride, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on August 3, 1883:

### *A Few Things That Newport Can Crow Over*

- \* *That we have raised the most corn to the acre than any other locality in the county.*
- \* *That we have raised the largest beet that was ever raised in the county, weight 230 pounds.*
- \* *That we raise and export more fat hogs than any one shipping point in the valley.*
- \* *That we have the best resort for pleasure seekers in the county.*
- \* *That we have the advantage over any other place for shipping our produce, either from Newport harbor or the Santa Ana depot.*
- \* *That we will soon have a No. 1 pork-packing house; also a large cheese factory is in progress.*

The boom brought growing demands for lumber. For a while, the McFaddens tried to meet the need with the schooners anchored offshore, but it soon became clear that a new solution was needed. In 1887, after years of agitation, the federal government finally approved an appropriation for a survey to determine the feasibility of dredging and building jetties at the entrance of the bay.

Unfortunately, the difficult entrance again dashed hopes for a commercial port in Newport Bay. Army Corps of Engineers surveyors were forced by fog to spend the night in a rowboat outside the entrance before entering the bay. They were not happy. Several weeks later, their discouraging report was released that estimated a cost of over \$1.5 million to construct two jetties and dredge the bay. According to the 1888 report by the Chief of Engineers, **W. H. H. Benyaurd**:

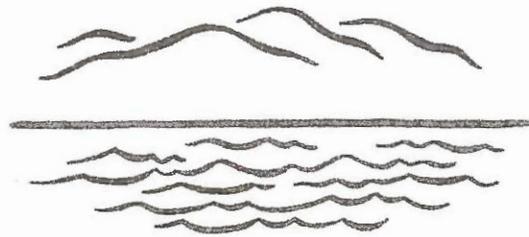
*It [Newport] was at one time the shipping and distributing point for the adjacent county. The construction of the railroad to Santa Ana, 12 miles distant, changed the method of transportation and the business of the harbor declined. One small steamer arrives twice a month from San Francisco. This, with an occasional small lumber vessel, constitutes the carrying trade of the harbor. The cost of construction and maintenance of the works intended to give a permanent increase of depth at the harbor is entirely incommensurate with the advantages that would accrue to commerce.*

Based on his report of a minimal amount of trade, Newport Bay expenditures were denied, while large appropriations for the more promising ports at San Pedro and Wilmington were approved.

Despite extreme disappointment with the findings, the report did offer a suggestion that resulted in great changes to Newport. The engineers noted the quiet water off the beach west of the entrance. They recommended a hydrographic survey of the area, for they suspected that the quiet water signified unusually deep water—the perfect location for a large commercial wharf. They were right, and Newport was soon swept into its glorious decade as a flourishing shipping center.

In a few short decades, Newporters welcomed settlers, watched Irvine Ranch prosper, cheered the *Vaquero* and the *Newport* as they struggled through the treacherous entrance to the bay, and saw their hopes for shipping in the bay wither. Instead, by 1888, this young settlement began to turn its attention from its swampy and fickle bay to the promise of a large commercial wharf on their beach. And they watched with hope as it neared completion.

**THE  
IRVINE RANCH**



BY ROBERT GLASS CLELAND

*Revised with an Epilogue by*

ROBERT V. HINE

THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY  
*San Marino, California*

1978

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racers, red-racers, man-faced owls, cat-owls, screech-owls, blue-jays, skunks, wood-peckers.

As early as 1865, a small steamer called the *Vaquero* paid regular visits to Newport Bay, chiefly to collect hides, meat, and tallow from the nearby ranchos. In 1873 the well-known brothers—James, Robert, and John McFadden—already owners of some four or five thousand acres formerly belonging to the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, bought a small dock and warehouse that had been built a few months before on a site below the bluff or palisades at the dividing line between Upper and Lower Newport Bay, northwest of Linda Isle, and began importing lumber on a large scale (at least for those pioneer days) and shipping out grain, wool, and a few other agricultural products.

The McFaddens called the prosperous new shipping center Newport and helped to construct a good road for the shipment of freight to Santa Ana.<sup>4</sup> In 1888, to overcome the difficulty of entering and navigating the winding bay, the brothers erected a pier, on the site of the present Newport pier, running some 1,200 feet from shore, and in 1892 laid out the town of Newport as a beach resort. Like the Irvine Company in later years, the McFaddens leased rather than sold lots in the new town. The first hotel in the beach resort was built in 1893.

With the completion of the pier at Newport, the McFaddens undertook to build a railroad from Santa Ana to the harbor; but the line was not actually completed until 1892. Thereafter it is said that between five and six hundred cargoes were handled over the Newport pier during the course of a single year. As business increased, the Southern Pacific Railroad sought to acquire both pier and rail-

<sup>4</sup>The town was later, for a time, called Port Orange.

By *ELLEN K. LEE*

# NEWPORT BAY

*A Pioneer History*



*Foreword by DON C. MEADOWS*

*Newport Beach Historical Society*

*Sultana Press: Fullerton 1973*

*Newport Bay  
A Pioneer History*

received its name: "Until 1870 the present bay of Newport was known as the San Joaquin slough. In 1870 the name 'Newport' was suggested by a Mrs. Perkins, who, with her husband, was in the employ of Irvine, Flint & Company, living at their house on the San Joaquin ranch, and this suggestion was accepted by James Irvine, Sr., Benjamin Flint, my brother Robert, and myself, all of whom were stopping at this new frame house at the time." The Los Angeles *Star* announced the new name, but offered no congratulations. *Newport* was a "threatened calamity"<sup>3</sup> that would join Anaheim Landing in drawing business away from Wilmington.

Flint, Bixby, Irvine & Company applied for a wharf franchise at the shark fishermen's beach and, on October 14, 1870, filed maps of two new townsites, *Newport* and *Wallula*, each to contain sixteen lots. *Newport* was located on the west banks of the upper bay, in today's Baycrest subdivision. *Wallula* was on Castaways Bluff, just above the location Dunnells had chosen for his landing. When the ranch owners' wharf franchise was granted in November, they made Dunnells a proposition for use of the wharf they planned to build, but the captain declined.<sup>4</sup> Apparently Dunnells and B. G. Perkins, interim manager of the San Joaquin Ranch, did not get along with one another. Saying only that he wanted a landing of his own,<sup>5</sup> Captain Dunnells moved his lumber 200 feet down the beach, applied to the Los Angeles County supervisors for a second franchise, and began to build a warehouse.

John Cubbon, a young Englishman who had left San Diego because of disappointment in the boom, arrived to work at the new landing. He built "a levee to keep the tide water away from the lumber." Next he graded

a trail up the bluff that a Portuguese fisherman, Manuel, had been using for his pony cart, and went off to the Santa Ana River bed to cut willow firewood for the *Vaquero*.<sup>6</sup> William Tedford, the first farmer to plow ground on the McFadden lands, rode horseback down to the landing and arranged to sell Captain Dunnells a load of potatoes to take to San Diego. Returning to his farm he marked out the future road across the mesa "by gathering dry cattle bones [remaining from the drought of 1863-64] and placing them in piles on prominent places along the way to designate the course back to the steamer."<sup>7</sup>

Dunnells' wharf franchise was granted after a delay of several months, but there seemed to be little potential for the *Vaquero* in a San Diego-Newport Bay trade. Business declined all over Southern California because of a drought in the winter of 1870-71. Additional lumber for the yard at the landing, now managed by William A. Abbott, would have to be brought from northern California. Even if his relations with the San Joaquin Ranch owners had been friendly, Dunnells could not have taken their wool to San Francisco, the only west coast market for it. Firewood for the *Vaquero's* engine was expensive, and she often sailed in ballast from San Diego to Newport, Anaheim Landing, or Wilmington. With his finances in the red, Captain Dunnells steamed off to San Pedro where he spent the summer of 1871, probably using the *Vaquero* as a freight boat during the construction of the first small breakwater there.

In the meantime, a sailing vessel had entered Newport Bay. In May the schooner *Golden Gate*, "laden with fence posts, sailed from off the briny ocean right into Newport, below Santa Ana. No soundings were taken and no diffi-

culty was experienced."<sup>8</sup> Four months later, in early September, the schooner *Solano*, with a cargo of lumber from Stewart's Point, went aground on the bar in the entrance to Newport Bay. A telegram to Wilmington for help brought no response. A month later the ship was still on the bar. The *Anaheim Gazette* stated: "The schooner *Solano* is still on the inside bar at Newport, and not likely to leave there except in pieces. Part of her bottom is gone, also the rudder, and she proves to be much more damaged than was at first supposed. Every effort has been made to save her, without avail."<sup>9</sup>

Three weeks later the *Vaquero*, missing from the local scene for months, steamed into the bay. Captain Dunnells promised to bring help to the stricken *Solano*. First he obtained a load of hay and grain at Anaheim Landing, gave the German proprietors a promissory note, and went off to San Diego. He returned to Newport with "apparatus for getting the *Solano* on the ways, where she will be repaired."<sup>10</sup> After rescue operations that took several weeks, Captain Dunnells towed the *Solano* to the landing. By Christmas, 1871, the schooner was afloat again. Dunnells returned to San Diego, his vessel laden with hay, grain, and "a lot of wine" from Anaheim.<sup>11</sup> But the captain's financial picture was no brighter. He owed \$487.95 to the grain merchants at Anaheim Landing and \$551.72 to an Anaheim hardware store.

Considering the pride that Anaheim Landing took in its San Bernardino trade, Dunnells' next move was probably unwise. He announced early in April, 1872, that he would explore the coastline to find a new landing for San Bernardino. Immediately afterward, his Anaheim creditors went to their lawyers. Dunnells faced two law-

suits, both demanding that the *Vaquero* be seized and sold. On April 18, 1872 the San Diego sheriff received a writ of attachment and seized the sternwheeler.<sup>12</sup> There is no evidence that the Maine sea captain ever set foot aboard her again. Six weeks later the sheriff released the *Vaquero* to Captain Dunnells' partner, William A. Abbott, manager of Newport Landing. As "Captain Abbott" he took the ship to Newport Bay, apparently intending to use her as a lighter to transport cargoes from ocean vessels into the bay. But the barley crop in the Santa Ana Valley was abundant that year, and the overworked *Vaquero* took several loads to San Diego. On July 20 she left San Diego for Newport but returned disabled, her boilers leaking and fires out. In seven days of repairs she was "thoroughly refitted and put in seaworthy condition."<sup>13</sup>

Early in August the *Vaquero* sailed out of San Diego Harbor for the last time. She continued past Newport, Anaheim Landing, and Wilmington — making her way up the coast to San Francisco. She spent the remainder of her days on the inland waters of San Francisco Bay, until taken out of service in the year 1881. Captain Dunnells returned to managing his hotel, but soon built another sailing sloop. During the lean years that followed the San Diego boom he supplemented his income by fishing, drying his catch, and shipping it to San Francisco. For more than a decade he served as one of the two official pilots for the port of San Diego. His son, Edwin, succeeded him as port pilot. San Diego remembers him as a "good citizen." He is remembered also as the captain of the *Vaquero*, a small river steamer that went to sea more than a hundred years ago and found a "new port."

## The McFadden Brothers /8

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY at Newport Landing ceased after the last departure of the *Vaquero* in the summer of 1872. Captain Abbott left the small wharf and warehouse and moved to Santa Ana. Although Hubert Wakeham, a settler on the McFadden lands, noted in his journal that a schooner went aground in the Newport Bay entrance in 1873, there is no other evidence of renewed shipping business until 1875. In the meantime, a small population and lack of capital hindered the growth of the area which Newport Landing might have served. Anaheim Landing, however, enjoyed its greatest prosperity in the fall of 1872 when the *Anaheim Gazette* observed: "From thirty to forty teams per day arrive and depart with loads of export and import and we believe as high as seventy teams have been at the Landing in a single day this season."<sup>1</sup>

Robert McFadden, younger brother of James McFadden, no doubt dreamed that some day Newport Landing would be as prosperous as Anaheim Landing, but progress on the east side of the river was slow. After the meeting at the San Joaquin ranch house in the fall of 1870 when Newport received its new name, he had remained at Santa Ana while James returned to the east coast. Robert's job was to sell his older brother's acreage at prices ranging from eight to fifteen dollars an acre.

So few buyers appeared that he went to work clearing brush on a neighbor's land. When he and a settler, Jerome Porter, decided to start a dairy, they found no good fresh water although shallow wells of brackish water were plentiful. Borrowing equipment, the two young men drilled into the ground with a four-inch pipe and soon had a tall fountain of artesian water bubbling from the top of the pipe. Before long numerous wells tapped the Santa Ana Valley's bounteous underground reserves of pure water.

On one occasion McFadden traded some of his brother's land for a few hogs. John Cubbon, who had helped Dannels and Abbott at the landing, joined him in a venture to cure ham and bacon. When the meat was ready, they could find no market. Cubbon finally loaded up a wagon and took it to the mining camps of Arizona but never collected all the money due him. Remembering pioneer days Robert McFadden once told Terry Stephenson: "Farmers here had a lot harder time in those early years than people who came in later years could imagine. The outlook was far from bright."<sup>2</sup> When Cubbon contracted typhoid fever, a doctor rode muleback from Anaheim to prescribe for him, and McFadden took care of his sick friend.

Although Flint, Bixby, and Irvine's platted settlement

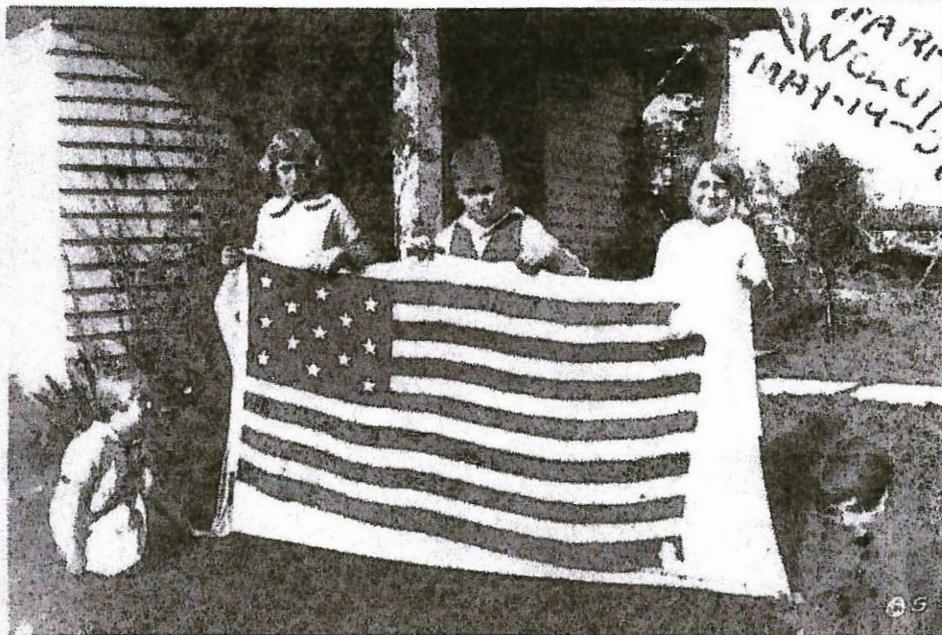
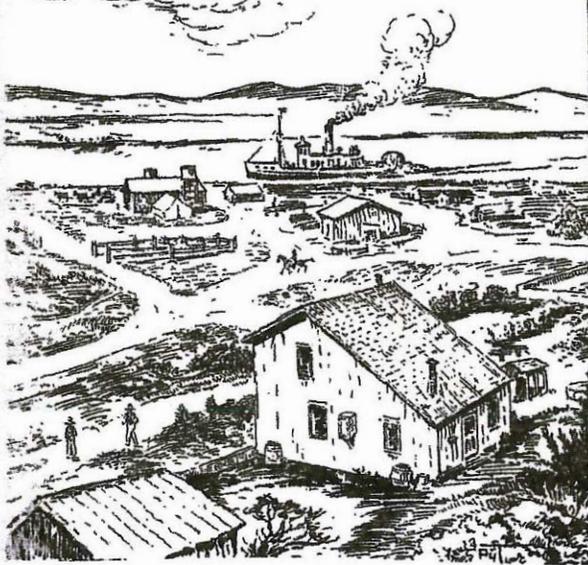
# **50 Golden Years**

**A History of the City of  
Newport Beach**

**1906 - 1956**

**Compiled by Samuel A. Meyer  
Publisher of The Newport News (1921-1946)**

*Old Newport Landing ~ 1865*



(Upper left) — Sketch made by M. Claude Putnam from old photos. (Right upper) — Newport's "Flightless Diving Goose." Fossil remains of this extinct Bird were discovered, 'tis said, in Shale Beds of Upper Bay. (lower) Flag said to have been used by Migrants who camped on bluffs above Newport Bay in 1890, enroute to Oregon from Boston.

# Discover New Port

## Chapter the First

Captain S. S. Dunnels was a hearty, seafaring man of chesty distinction and Skipper of the stern-wheeler "Vaquero" which was built, supposedly, in 1859 at San Diego. Capt. Dunnels was proprietor of San Diego's first hotel and later a port pilot. Dunnels operated the "Vaquero" in the 1860-70's "running up and down the coast", which is unusual for a stern-wheeler, and also is the first hint that such a craft ever navigated on San Diego Bay.

Dunnels, in passing the rocky bluffs of what is now Laguna Beach and Newport Beach, was often strongly tempted to "put in" and investigate the terrain along shore. But it was not until about 1868 that he decided to explore a quiet body of water between a long strip of sandbar and the cliffs to the west and north that extended for miles along the coast. He found a long stretch of still water about a mile wide flowing in from the ocean and cautiously followed its devious course until he was able to land in an inlet of deep water at the base of the hills now designated as Coast Highway and Irvine Avenue.

Dunnels, on his return to San Diego, declared he had found a new port and in the gossip that soon followed, it became known as New-Port. Thus, nearly 100 years ago, Newport Beach was born.

John Sharps, one of the early citizens, and Newport Beach's first water works operator, (he got his water via shallow wells almost anywhere in old Newport) in 1885 met the captain of the "Vaquero" at Soledad, San Diego county, and verified the "New-port" version. It was not long until the bay became known as "Newport Landing". The "Vaquero" made many stops at Newport Landing, picking up grain, hides and live stock, mostly from the San Joaquin rancho, mostly owned and operated as early as 1810 by the first James Irvine, grandfather of Myford Irvine, today's owner.

There is an interesting sidelight on the fate of the "Vaquero". In a most interesting letter from Jerry MacMullen, director, Junipero Serra Museum, a branch of the San Diego Historical Society, the story goes: "The Vaquero" brought a load of wheat to San Diego from Newport, for which her charterers apparently neglected to pay; on her next trip back to Newport, she is said to have been attached for the unpaid bill . . . and San Diego never saw her again."

Bearing out this yarn to some extent, comes the story that the "Vaquero" was acquired in the latter part of 1873 by Capt. Moses Abbott, who is said to have continued to operate the vessel. Capt. Abbott and his descendants owned property at Balboa for many years and continued operating the craft.

Director MacMullen says further: "Captain Dannels had a son, who, the last I heard of him was master of one of the Standard Oil tankers . . . but that was several years ago. The more you dig into the story the more intriguing it becomes . . ."

Continuing, Mr. MacMullen gives his version of another "Vaquero," thus: "There was a stern-wheeler VAQUERO which, I believe, ran at one time on the Sacramento river. She was of 105.92 tons, 100 feet long, built (no information as to where) in 1865, and not listed in any register later than 1885; in fact she is not even in the 1885 issue of 'List of Merchant Vessels of the United States.' One of our members, Dr. Horace Parker, lives at 217 Grand Canal, Balboa Island, and is a real 'eager beaver' on historical research."

#### YET ANOTHER VERSION

Origin of how Newport Beach acquired its name has been difficult to ascertain, so far as accuracy is concerned. Now comes Robert Glass Cleland, author of a volume about the Huntington Library, and other books, who was employed by the Irvine interests in 1952 to write the history of "The Irvine Ranch of Orange County," (1810-1950), Cleland says:

"As early as 1865, a small steamer called the Vaquero paid regular visits to Newport Bay, chiefly to collect hides, meat and tallow from the nearby ranches. In 1873 the well-known brothers . . . James, Robert and John McFadden . . . already owners of some four or five

thousand acres formerly belonging to the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, bought a small dock and warehouse that had been built a few months before on a site below the bluff or palisades at the dividing line between Upper and Lower Newport Bay, northwest of Linda Isle, and began importing lumber on a large scale (at least for those pioneer days) and shipping out grain, wool and a few other agricultural products.

"The McFaddens called the prosperous new shipping center Newport and helped to construct a good road for the shipment of freight to Santa Ana. In 1888, to overcome the difficulty of entering and navigating the winding bay, the brothers erected a pier, on the site of the present Newport pier, running some 1200 feet from shore, (presumably into the ocean) and in 1892 laid out the town of Newport as a beach resort. Like the Irvine Company in later years, the McFaddens leased rather than sold lots in the new town. The first hotel in the beach resort was built in 1893.

"With the completion of the pier at Newport, the McFaddens undertook to build a railroad from Santa Ana to the harbor; but the line was not actually completed until 1892. Thereafter it is said that between five and six hundred cargoes were handled over the Newport pier during the course of a single year. As business increased, the Southern Pacific Railroad sought to acquire both pier and railroad but the McFaddens, thanks to a long-standing feud with the Southern Pacific, refused to sell, and it was not until 1899 that the Huntington interests, by using a dummy purchaser, obtained the properties. Newport's day as a shipping center, however, was then almost over and a few years later commercial shipping was abandoned."

#### JOHN SHARPS' VIEWPOINT

John Sharps, whose daughter, Mrs. Ethel Crego still lives here (1956) had his own version of the naming of Newport, which coincided in large degree with the San Diego story. His tale was printed in an edition of the Newport News about 1920 and follows:

"In or about the year 1868 a little vessel by the name of "Vaquero" was plying between San Diego and San Pedro and on one of its regular trips the captain decided to explore an inlet which he discovered on his

way to San Pedro. Consequently on his return trip he entered the inlet and landed at a point just below the place where the Country Club is now located. (The Country Club is now occupied by The Castaways, a night club, and is located on the bluffs above a trailer park formerly owned by County Supervisor Heinz Kaiser. The club house served a nine-hole golf course built by the Irvine Co. and long since abandoned. The building was destroyed by fire in November 1956.)

"In 1874 two brothers, James and Robert McFadden, purchased the Vaquero from Captain Abbott and continued the lumber and produce business. But instead of plying between Newport Landing and San Diego they plied between this place and San Francisco. In the latter part of 1875 or the early part of 1876 the McFadden Brothers had a steamboat built in San Francisco which they christened 'Newport.'

"The Vaquero first came into the bay in a channel the west shore of which was about where the rest stations at the end of Central Avenue were later located. This channel was used by all sailors coming into Newport Landing up until the spring of 1876 when the bar at that point became so shallow and rough that the McFadden Brothers decided it was unsafe to risk the 'Newport' in making an entrance. (The rest rooms to which reference is made were located at the far end of the peninsula near a lagoon on which was located the home of Dr. and Mrs. Conrad Richter, a pioneer and beloved physician for many years. This lagoon was later filled under the direction of R. L. Patterson employed by Leeds & Barnard, Los Angeles engineers, Mr. Patterson later serving for many years as city engineer and now (1956) in private practice in Newport Beach.)

"As a consequence the McFadden Brothers made a thorough investigation of the tides and currents at this section, which has always been known as 'Rocky Point', and came to the conclusion that an artificial entrance at that point could be made. This is the place where the entrance is now located. (Mr. Patterson states that 'Rocky Point' is where the East Jetty is located on the Corona del Mar side of the entrance into Newport Bay.)

"In order to accomplish the making of this artificial entrance the McFadden Brothers enlisted the services

of their friends and neighbors at Gospel Swamp. This is where Greenville is now located. (Greenville is two miles north of Orange Coast College.) Twenty-five teams were taken down to the point and at high tide the work of removing the sand with ordinary slip scrapers was started. (The 'high' tide may have been an error instead of 'low' tide as several feet of water coursed over the bar.)

"It required two days and one night to complete the job. As soon as a channel had been started the force of the outgoing tide caused the water to run through with a scouring effect with the result that the water itself did a large part of the work of opening the channel. On the next high tide the channel was opened and the steamer 'Newport' entered and from that day to this, except in case of severe storm, the ocean has never entered the bay at any other point.

"Because of this heavy business a wharf on the ocean front was considered with the result that the McFadden Brothers took in five more men as partners and formed the Newport Wharf and Lumber Co., and in the early part of 1888 work was commenced on what was later the Southern Pacific Wharf (now owned by the City of Newport Beach) but which at the time was known by no other name than the Newport Wharf and Lumber Co., and so continued until it was transferred by the McFadden interests to the Southern Pacific about June, 1903.

"With the completion of the wharf in 1888 the steamer Newport ceased to come inside the bay and all cargoes were discharged and taken on from the new ocean wharf and Newport Landing was abandoned. In order to distinguish between the two places the location near the new wharf was called by early settlers 'Newport Beach' and Newport Landing was referred to as 'Old Newport.' (According to Mr. Sharps, Newport Beach obtained its name in this way and not from or because of any other Newport; hence 'Newport Beach' was eventually evolved from 'new port'.)

#### PURCHASE OF TOWNSITE ACREAGE

"On or about June, 1904, W. S. Collins and Charles Hansen of Riverside, bought from the McFadden interests the sandspit comprising 981 acres. The northwest line of this tract was what is now Block 61 of the city of

Newport Beach. (Block 61 starts at 61st street in West Newport.) The southeast line is now what is Ninth street in East Newport. Except Bay Island and Balboa Island and including Sugar Loaf (now Lido Isle) all the land between these points became the property of Collins and Hansen. They subdivided the tract and laid out what is now the western part of the city of Newport Beach.

"A man by the name of Abbott (not the skipper of the Vaquero) owned from Ninth street on the west to a point beyond what is now Main street in Balboa on the east. The late Joseph Ferguson owned from Abbott's east line to the end of the sandspit. F. W. Harding, Chris McNeil and W. W. Wasser of Santa Ana, and E. J. Louis, J. P. Greeley, E. E. Richardson and C. L. Chamberlain were promoters of the tract now known as Balboa. J. J. Schnitker (at one time mayor) W. W. Wilson and others promoted what was known as East Newport. In 1907 the three communities, consisting of Newport Beach, East Newport and Balboa were incorporated under the name of the city of Newport Beach." (Official records give incorporation date as September 1, 1906.)

*A History of*  
**NEWPORT BEACH**

*Compiled by*

**H. L. SHERMAN**

*Chairman*

Board of Library Trustees



*Published by*

**THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH**

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*In Cooperation With the*

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H. L. SHERMAN

Balboa, August 25, 1931.

## CHAPTER I

### *Early History*

#### THE VAQUERO

THE upper, or original Newport Bay, was formerly known as "Bolsa de Quigara," meaning bay with high banks. It was also called the Bolsa de San Joaquin on the old maps of the San Joaquin ranch, a property later acquired by the Irvine interests. The overflow area near the bay was known as the Cienega de las Ranas, or swamp of the frogs. Before the ranchos of Santiago de Santa Ana and San Joaquin were developed more intensively by settlers from the Eastern states, there was little human activity of any kind in the vicinity of Newport Bay.

A small side-wheel steamer, the *Vaquero*, made occasional trips to Newport Harbor as long ago as 1865. The small ship would negotiate the somewhat uncertain entrance to the bay and tie up to the bank near the present west end of the coast highway bridge, across the north arm of the harbor. Cargoes of hides and tallow from the Rancho de San Joaquin were the incentive for these trips of the *Vaquero*, which made San Diego its home port. About 1868, the *Vaquero* was bought by an old seafaring man, Captain Moses Abbott. A son of this Captain, F. W. Abbott, is the owner of Abbott's Villa, on Central Avenue ✓ between C and D streets.

In 1868, the heirs who had inherited the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana decided to divide the estate into individual holdings. Pending court settlement of the contemplated subdivision, various heirs sold their respective interests. Theoretically the divers shares were to be similar in area, but as the nature of the land varied somewhat, the ultimate units into which the property was divided were chosen with the view of an equal value rather than extent.

## HISTORY OF NEWPORT BEACH

The Banning family bought the unit nearest the sea, comprising the bluffs and lowlands to the north and west of the present West Newport section, and much of this land is still retained by heirs of the original purchasers. Next to the north came the unit of Don Eduarado Pofflerino. This tract comprised what is now known as the Fairview and Paulefino sections, and adjoining it was a four-thousand-acre unit which was bought by James McFadden. The next adjacent section of eighteen hundred acres would have been divided almost equally by Santa Ana's South Main Street, if that thoroughfare had existed in those days. It was purchased by a Mr. Cozad and later sold to James McFadden and his brother, Robert.

### GOSPEL SWAMP

The Greenville section was rich and well watered, for Orange County's great subterranean reservoir had not been tapped in the '60s and '70s, let alone depleted as it is today. Amongst the early settlers there was an ex-Baptist preacher named Isaac Hickey. Although local society at the time was not sufficiently organized to support a regular church, the Rev. Hickey let no opportunity escape to hold divine services. After several such affairs had been held, one of the local youths jocularly suggested that the place be called "Gospel Swamp." This term became popular immediately, and for a number of years the district in question was known by that name.

With the settlement of Gospel Swamp, business began to pick up for Captain Abbott and his little side-wheeler. Walter B. Tedford, whose father was one of the early settlers in the district, writes: "My father rode down through the tall mustard across the mesa on horseback the day the steamer came in, to arrange for shipping some potatoes to San Diego. On his return home he marked out the road to be to the landing by gathering dry cattle bones and placing them in piles on prominent places along the way to designate the course to the steamer."

"When we were ready to deliver our potatoes, father rode ahead on horseback and I drove the team, following him: that made our first delivery to the little steamer *Vaquero* in Newport Harbor. This little steamer burned wood for fuel and John Cubbon and Dan Boyd, both living in Santa Ana today,

## HISTORY OF NEWPORT BEACH

contracted with Captain Abbott to supply wood for the return voyage. I remember seeing them pass our home place daily while the steamer was in the harbor, driving a 'spike team' hauling wood to the steamer."

It must be remembered that in the early '70s Orange County had no certain means of land communication with territory to the north or south. Such roads as existed in those days were out of commission when the various rivers were in flood. Consequently, Orange County and Riverside as well were more conveniently served by water via Newport Harbor than by any other means. Los Angeles, a large pueblo town, was of no commercial value to the area lying back of Newport Bay. As to produce, it was a direct competitor to Orange and Riverside counties, and in those days Los Angeles was not a jobbing center for manufactured products essential to the development and maintenance of agricultural communities. San Francisco was the only real commercial center on the Pacific Coast, and even San Diego was more important in this respect than Los Angeles.

Consequently, Orange County was forced to seek other markets for its produce than Los Angeles, and of necessity had to buy its supplies from San Francisco or San Diego. Fortunately, the latter offered a good market for the hay and grain, which were Orange County's chief crops in the early days. A trans-continental stage line had its terminus at San Diego, and this concern was a big feed buyer. As a result, a very nice business was developed by the owner of the little *Vaquero*.

Prior to the arrival of the Gospel Swamp settlers, there had been no agricultural development. The two great ranches, whose common boundary was near what is now Newport Boulevard, devoted what activity was exercised to the raising of cattle, for in those days American rush and bustle were not the order of the day in Southern California. Much of this stock roamed the coastal plain in a semi-wild state, and the recently-arrived ranchers found it necessary to fence their fertile acres.

### McFADDENS START BUSINESS

The McFadden brothers, James and Robert, took the initiative in a fencing program, and, in 1873, had shipped into Newport Bay a consignment of fence lumber for their own use.

## HISTORY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Lumber was a very valuable commodity at that time and place, and the McFaddens sold their entire shipment at a profit to the settlers who were arriving continually, to be used in the construction of homes. Another shipment was made, and before they knew it the McFaddens were in the lumber business. John McFadden, who had settled in Northern California, came to Newport Bay to assist in handling the newly-developed timber trade.

To facilitate the handling of their lumber, the McFaddens, in 1873, bought the dock and small warehouse which had been built the previous year by D. M. Dorman and Captain Daniels. This landing, dock, or pier, has been called by so many different names it is somewhat confusing to one who reads accounts of early events. It was known variously as Port Orange, McFadden's Landing, and occasionally merely "the old landing," as distinguished from the "new landing," or ocean pier, built in later years. It is not generally realized that the name "Port Orange" is a recent one, having been coined at the time the Port Orange subdivision was placed on the market in 1907. During the years of commercial activity at the McFadden Landing this name was unknown. The McFaddens established their lumber yard on the small land bench below what in future years was to be the bluff site of the Orange County Country Clubhouse.

While San Diego had worked up a good trade with the inland territory tributary to Newport Bay, it is not to be supposed that San Francisco interests were permitting grass to grow beneath their feet in this respect. The north had a monopoly on lumber shipments, and returning vessels were in a position to carry Orange County's agricultural produce at a reasonable rate. Furthermore, San Francisco jobbers were in a better position to serve the needs of local settlers than were firms in the little pueblo of San Diego.

Two sailing schooners, belonging to the John Hooper Company, were placed on a regular San Francisco-Newport Bay schedule. This small fleet, consisting of the *Mose* and *Susie*, was increased two years later by the *Twin Sisters*. In 1876, the McFaddens had their steamer, the *Newport*, built. It was constructed of shallow draft to permit entering the bay without undue difficulty. An idea of the cargoes taken out of Newport

## HISTORY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Bay in the early days is given by items in Santa Ana papers of the time.

On August 2, 1877, the "Santa Ana Weekly Times" gave the number of teams that had been working to load the *Newport*, which had sailed the preceding Saturday for San Francisco with a full load of corn. June 30, 1883, the "Santa Ana Herald," also a weekly, listed the cargo of the *Newport* on its current trip to San Francisco. The items were: Beans, 416 sacks; Asphalt, 100 tons; Mustard Seed, 23 sacks; Eggs, 15 cases; Pears, 18 sacks; Beeswax, 3 cases; Peaches, 3 sacks; and 80 Hogs.

Another San Francisco firm, Messrs. Goodall and Perkins, entered the local shipping business in the middle '70s. Their ship, the *Alexander Duncan*, was the largest in the coastwise trade. The tariff on barley to San Francisco was higher than James McFadden knew to be reasonable, so he approached the local grain growers, and tied them up on a long-term contract at a lower rate. When the McFaddens started to haul all the grain, Goodall and Perkins, who did not like the idea of what appeared to them a presumptuous competition upon the part of a small independent, invited James McFadden to call at their offices when in San Francisco. There they told him they would cut rates still lower if he insisted on maintaining his tariff, and put him out of business. McFadden told the San Francisco men they could haul barley from Newport Bay for nothing if they wished to, but as he had all the ranchers tied up by contract he would collect the freight while they transported the grain.

McFadden's enterprise and ability impressed Goodall and Perkins so favorably that they came to terms with him, and made him their agent at Newport. The junior member of the firm, who afterwards became U. S. Senator from California, continued a friend of James McFadden, and in later years performed a great favor for him. Details of this will be given on another page. As a result of an amicable settlement of their differences with Goodall and Perkins, the McFaddens sold the *Newport*, in 1878, to the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, for which concern the former were the general agents. The steamship company maintained the *Newport* on the same run for a number of years afterwards, however.

## HISTORY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Owing to the fact that the entrance to Newport Bay was defined by banks of shifting sand, the channel was tortuous and continually meandering. The work of getting small steamers into the harbor required considerable knowledge of local conditions, and it was necessary to employ a man who specialized on pilot service. The pilot position was held for a time by a man named Snow, and from approximately 1879 until 1884 was filled by James McMillan.

McMillan, a seafaring man by upbringing, shipped aboard the *Newport* at San Francisco on that vessel's third trip, and soon became a general handy man about the ship. He was especially valuable to the captain in matters pertaining to making landings. In those days, freight and passengers were picked up from small wharves along the coast in a manner which would bow a modern skipper with premature age. After working three years on the *Newport*, James McMillan shipped for a time on the *Eureka*, also operated by the Pacific Coast Steamship Company.

### NEWPORT BAY PILOTS

About 1879, McMillan was employed by the McFaddens to pilot ships entering Newport Bay and calling at their dock. At this time the *Newport* was making regular fortnightly trips, and occasionally another ship would come in. The pilot had to go out the day previous to all expected arrivals and ascertain the exact location of the channel.

Even when the precise position of the deeper water was known, it required skill to bring the vessels into the bay, for they frequently scraped the bottom, which rendered steering difficult if not impossible, and sometimes were grounded until a rising tide floated them. The following item from McMillan's note-book illustrates a typical occurrence. "The *Salinas*, Captain Mark Robins, came in April 21, 1880, and stuck in the channel inside about twenty minutes." The power of steamers was augmented by cables stretched to buoys along the course of the channel, with which the ships were warped upon their way.

The pilots' duties required only a few days of the month for their fulfillment, however, and the remainder of the time these men devoted their energies to other tasks. An example of the wide range of duties which they were called upon to perform

## HISTORY OF NEWPORT BEACH

is shown by one of McMillan's experiences. By way of preface, it must be explained the McFaddens had leased some old government barrack buildings at Wilmington, which adjoined what was known as "the mud wharf." These buildings were used as grain warehouses where barley, for shipment to San Francisco, was stored between steamer calls. At the time, the McFaddens were rivals of the Bannings, who employed a Captain Browning to handle their port affairs.

Early one morning, McMillan was sleeping sailor-fashion in a hammock slung from the rafters of the old Port Orange office building. A fellow-employee of his, Tom Rule, woke him up and said he would like his aid in recapturing the mud wharf warehouse, which had been taken by Captain Browning. Before McMillan was fully aware of what it was all about, Rule shoved a six-shooter and a box of cartridges at him. The latter explained there probably would be no need to use the gun but it was often well to have one on exhibition. The sight of the weapon completely awakened the sleepy pilot.

Arriving at Wilmington, Messrs. Rule and McMillan were put ashore in a small boat. Rule, as leader of the two-man expedition, stationed McMillan near the main door of the warehouse, while he went to the office. Rule got the Banning man in charge of the place to step outside, and slipping between him and the building, locked the door. McMillan then stepped forward and seized the main entrance. Thus the building was recaptured for the McFaddens without the burning of powder or letting of blood.

While still engaged by the McFaddens, James McMillan began to buy the ranch in the Smeltzer district where he now lives, and, in 1884, gave up his position at Newport Bay for life on the farm, although he returned occasionally to seafaring labors. McMillan was followed in the harbor position by Captain William Kelley, formerly a pilot at Port Chalmers, New Zealand.

Captain Kelley and his wife took up their residence in a small frame building, near the Port Orange Landing, when they arrived, November 1, 1884. During the years Captain Kelley was engaged upon his harbor duties, Mrs. Kelley ran a boarding house for men employed by the McFaddens about their dock and lumber yard. Not only did the pilot have to bring in the

