

4914 Crystal Drive
San Diego 9, Calif.
April 13, 1963.

F145-14A

Mr. Jerry MacMullen, Director
Serra Museum
San Diego, Calif.

Dear Sir:

An article, by you, reminiscent of the old tug-boat Santa Fe, appeared in the issue of Sunday, March 3rd. of the San Diego Union. It started me to do a little reminiscence of my own, somewhat along the same line.

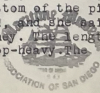
First of all, your opening lines about the "Nancy brig" recalled to me the next line- and a midship-mite and a bosun tight, and the crew of the captain's gig. I had read that old ballad, among many others, many years ago in a copy of Bell's Elocution, that we had in the family book-case.

Next-You straightened out my wrong notion that the old tug belonged to the Santa Fe Railroad. The Santa Fe wharf was a landmark, as I remember.

My father was a captain of a number of different vessels carrying lumber on the Pacific Coast (sailing vessels). Sailing with him on my summer vacations, I learned to navigate when I was about 15 years old. After my return to Stanford University, following the close of the War with Spain, I got a job with him as ships carpenter in the summer of 1900. We carried a load of lumber from the West-side mill at Olympia, Washington to San Diego. The deck-load consisted of about 80 piles-50 to 60 feet long, on top of which was a load of Washington fir- 2 x12", 36 to 40 feet long, for delivery to the Russ Lumber co of San Diego. The piles were to go to Ensenada.

We arrived outside Pt. Loma on the morning of July 4, 1900. (a holiday). We waited outside all forenoon waiting for the tug Santa Fe to come and take us in tow. Finally the captain decided to sail in. The only ticklish part of the job was in rounding the sand spit by the quarantine (or immigration) station, which, as I recall, was just below the layout of Madam Tingley's Theosophical Society. We made it without any trouble. The vessel was the bark, Vidette.

We anchored in the bay, a little beyond the Coronado ferry, right in front of the Russ Lumber Co's lumber-yard. At that time San Diego harbor was not like it is now. We unloaded into lighters which were moved to the wharf (so-called) and when the tide went out, the barge was on the mud-flat. With the top part of the deckload out of the way, a little steamer, called the St. Denis (or Dennis-I have forgotten which) came alongside for the piles. My job as ship-carpenter also included the running of the donkey-engine. The housing on the steamer was such that there was no space or deck-room to lay the piles flat on the deck. So they had to be placed, end up, in the two hatches. My job was to raise them up toward the mast head, swing them to the end of one of the yard-arms and lower them into the hatch. The last part was the ticklish job. I had to have a man, in a position of vantage, indicate, by the distance between his outstretched hands, how near the bottom of the pile was to the bottom of the boat. We finally got them all aboard, and the barge sailed for Ensenada. I wouldn't have gone on that boat for love or money. The length of the piles, standing on end, would make her more or less top-heavy. The rest of the unloading went without incident.



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I hope that I have not taken too much of your time with a lot of trivia.

I have read, with much interest, many of your articles on the early history of this area. I am quite well acquainted with Lt. Cdr. Clifford Lishman, who lives a block away. He has mentioned your name as being a member of the Historical Society, to which he belongs.

Following that trip, I was never again in San Diego till I moved here five and a half years ago, from the San Francisco area, where I was born and lived all the rest of my life. I might add that I put 50 years in education and have been a loafer (retired) for almost eleven years.

Very truly,

Rebt. W. Dodd

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