

Heritage Newsletter

Dedicated to Maintaining the Historic Beauty of Cypress Lawn
A cemetery serving the San Francisco Bay Area with an unsurpassed tradition of caring since 1892

A publication of the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation

Summer 2008

Volume 6 No. 1

Calendar

Aug. 2, Saturday, 1:30 pm
**Walking Tour: An Afternoon
of Horticultural Delights**
Docent: Dennis Granahan
Start at Noble Chapel

Aug. 16, Saturday, 1:30 pm
**Walking Tour: The Streets
of San Francisco at
Cypress Lawn**
Docent: Terry Hamburg
Start at Noble Chapel

Aug. 17, Sunday, 2 pm
Reception Center
Lecture: Michael Svanevik
**Road to Mount Rushmore –
Striving for Ultimate
Memorialization**

Sept. 20, Saturday, 1:30 pm
**Walking Tour: A Second
Splendor in the Glass Visit**
Docent: Terry Hamburg
Start at Reception Center

Sept. 21, Sunday, 2 pm
Reception Center
Lecture: Kenneth E. Varner
**Bridging the Past and Present
with the Future
of Cypress Lawn**

Oct. 18, Saturday, 1:30 pm
**Walking Tour: Gargoyles, Foo
Dogs and More: Interesting
and Unusual Memorials
at Cypress Lawn**
Docent: Terry Hamburg
Start at Noble Chapel

Oct. 19, Sunday, 2 pm
Reception Center
Lecture: Angi Ma Wong
**Feng Shui Tips
for a Better Life**

All events are FREE!

650.550-8810 (Tour Line)
650.550-8811 (Lecture Line)

The McNears of Petaluma

By Kent L. Seavey
Art and Architecture Historian

The McNear family of Petaluma in Napa County figured prominently in the founding and development of Cypress Lawn Memorial Park.

George P. McNear and his nephew George W. McNear, Jr. were two of the five founding directors of the memorial park's parent organization, the Cypress Lawn Improvement Company in 1892. A third McNear, George W. McNear, was one of the first Trustees of the Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association incorporated in 1894.

The McNears were Petaluma pioneers and philanthropists whose name appears prominently throughout the community. McNear Park and McNear Elementary School were some of the contributions to the up building of the Napa County port town and evidence of the McNear's high sense of public service. The Petaluma Golf and Country Club and Cypress Hill Cemetery are further testaments to their civic generosity.

George P. McNear's business maxim was know your business, like your business, and attend to business. George P. was the son of John Augustus McNear, who at twenty years of age had been a trading ships master along the Maine coast. Arriving in California in 1856, the senior McNear made use of the resources he had at hand, lending out his capital at interest, and taking in partners to share the costs and responsibilities of business.

By 1860, McNear had the necessary capital to establish a shipping business in order to take advantage of California's golden harvest of cereal crops. He brought his younger brother George Washington McNear, also a ship's captain, from Mississippi to become his partner in the grain commission business. Together in 1864, they built California's largest grain warehouse at Petaluma and the first to use concrete in its construction.

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From the President's Desk



Kenneth E. Varner

Know your business, like your business and attend to business, a quote from George P. McNear one of the McNear family members. The McNear's, captains of industry, built fortunes in the storage of grains, shipping and banking. They were founding directors of Cypress Lawn and between family members they shared over 58 years of service to the care and development of Cypress Lawn. Read about their unique history in this installment of the "Heritage Newsletter."

Another piece of California history is Cypress Lawn's connection to a cocktail that was created by a San Francisco salon owner named Duncan Nicol. The cocktail was called "Pisco Punch" that had a secret recipe punctuated with Peruvian Brandy. The concoction was legendary worldwide. The recent San Francisco Convention of Mixologists from around the country paid homage to this unique libation. Read about Duncan Nicol and his legendary creation in this installment of the "Heritage Newsletter."

Also, please read in this installment the case for making Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation one of your considerations for support as penned by our Executive Vice President of Development Martin Jacobs. Cypress Lawn is a treasure of human histories, the lives and memories of significant contributors to California's history

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Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association

Cypress Lawn is a 501 (c)(13) not for profit corporation established in 1892 by a group of prominent and responsible citizens, headed by Hamden Noble, determined to provide a decent cemetery for all creeds and races as well as “an attractive and pleasing place for meditation of the living.” Today, over a hundred years later, Cypress Lawn stands as a testament

to the vision of these men when they proclaimed, “...in the fullness of time, the cemetery... will form an extensive park, rich in foliage, flowers, mausoleums, statuaries and other works of art... a handsome gift to posterity.”



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Restoration Spotlight: John Henry Boalt Memorial

The Restoration Spotlight of the Spring 2007 issue of the *Heritage Newsletter* featured the memorial for John and Elizabeth Josselyn Boalt at Cypress Lawn.

Mrs. Boalt had agreed to pay the entire cost of constructing a new home for the University of California Berkeley’s Department of Jurisprudence in honor of her late husband which was to be called the Boalt Memorial Hall of Law. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 changed her plans. The two pieces of property she owned in San Francisco that was to be sold and \$100,000 of the proceeds to be given to the University was in the “burned zone” and therefore only one was sold, the proceeds of which was not enough to cover the

construction of the entire building. As a result, the department decided to construct the building in two phases, the first phase using Mrs. Boalt’s gift and other donations from the lawyers of California. The building still carries the Boalt name.

At the time of the article, the memorial at Cypress Lawn was in urgent need of restoration and cleaning shown in the left photo.

Earlier this year, VP Operations and Horticulture Mike Mathiasen and his masonry restoration crew worked on cleaning the Boalt memorial. Pressure washing removed most of the moss, dirt and grime that have accumulated on the century-old memorial. The photo at right shows the restoration efforts of our crew ❖



← Before



After →

Who Am I?: Answers on Page 6

1. I was a retired president and Chief Executive Officer of Bank of America credited with fostering the bank’s computerization and instrumental in the creation of the first credit card. Who am I?
2. My first venture was in the general merchandise business and the manufacture of breakfast foods but I eventually entered into the business of selling fine china. Later my company, under my son’s leadership, merged with Emporium, the first department store in California. Who am I?
3. As president of the New California Jockey Club, I threw open the Club doors in Emeryville to homeless people after the 1906 earthquake. Who am I?
4. The son of an Italian fish merchant, I became a prominent attorney and a popular mayor of San Francisco. Who am I?
5. I was responsible for changing the name of the town of Lomitas to San Carlos. Who am I?

SF's Glorious Cocktail Culture in the Late 1800's

In the years immediately following the Gold Rush fever, Parker's Bank Exchange Saloon emerged as one of the most important meeting places of San Francisco's financial royalty. The drinking emporium, which catered only to the most decent and reputable of men, opened in 1853 in the Montgomery Block - located at the junction of Washington, Montgomery and Columbus Avenue. At that time, Montgomery Block was the most important professional address in San Francisco. Eventually, the saloon and bar changed hands with Duncan Nicol taking over the ownership.

A multitude of spirits were served at the Bank Exchange. Pisco, a Peruvian brandy, was reportedly first served at the Bank Exchange in 1853 and was relegated as just one of those "ardent spirits that inspired men." However, the moment Nicol took over the bar, a new concoction was created with pisco as the main ingredient that eventually became legendary worldwide. Travelers from all over the world made the Bank Exchange one of their destinations in San Francisco to get a taste of that Duncan Nicol potion called Pisco Punch. He reportedly kept the recipe secret and prepared the brew himself.

Leading writers of the era including Rudyard Kipling and Mark Twain wrote lyrical accounts on the impact of Pisco Punch in San Francisco's culture and history.

The legendary Lucius Beebe, writing about Pisco Punch in the 1950's, said that the "speculative contents of a Pisco Punch were as much a conversation piece of San Francisco as its undeniable authority, its guileless approach, and its invariable triumph over the partaker who partook too well. . . . Nobody got drunk on one of Nicol's punches. On the contrary, communicants acquired a perhaps unwonted courtliness

of manner; benevolence radiated from features usually stern, noted curmudgeons were gentled into fraternal attitudes of good will. Under its spell, misers donated liberally to good causes. The Pisco drinker was at peace with himself and with the world around him."

Nicol exuded a totally different personality from the stereotypical rough bartenders of the era who were recruited from the Barbary Coast. Radiating decency and respectability, Nicol reigned over the Bank Exchange with authority. He limited two drinks of his powerful concoction to a customer. If favored patrons like Fire Chief of San Francisco David Scannell or Nevada Bonanza

King James Flood wanted more, they dutifully had to leave the bar, walked around the block, and came back into the saloon qualifying them as new customers. It was said that even the richest man in America at that time, John Mackay, played by his rules.



Duncan Nicol

Nicol held court in the Bank Exchange until it was closed in 1920 due to prohibition. Aside from being known for his famous secret formula, Duncan Nicol also marked a milestone in American history when he opened the first lounge catering only to ladies.

Nicol died in 1926 reportedly taking his secret formula with him. He rests in the Catacombs of Cypress Lawn with his wife Mary who died a year later. ❖

Photos below: Mixologists led by Diego Loret de Mola (right) gathered in front of Duncan Nicol's crypt to toast the legacy of the Pisco Punch creator last May. Diego is president of spirits retailer BevMax based in Connecticut. He is a native Peruvian and an avid promoter of Peru's national drink pisco and heads a group of mixologists campaigning to bring back the glory of Pisco Punch.



Ken Varner Elected to ICCFA Leadership

Cypress Lawn President and Chief Executive Officer Kenneth E. Varner was recently elected Treasurer of the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA).

Mr. Varner also serves as the Chairman of ICCFA's Finance Committee and a member of its Executive Committee for 2008-2009.

Founded in 1887, the ICCFA is the only international trade association representing all segments of the cemetery, cremation, funeral and memorialization professions. Its membership is composed of more than 7,200 cemeteries, funeral homes, memorial designers, crematories and related businesses worldwide. ❖

The MacNears of Petaluma

(Continued from page 1)

The McNear brothers soon branched out into banking and railroad building, the former as a capital investment and the latter to support his shipping business.

In 1874 the brothers ended their partnership, as George W. McNear had determined to concentrate his efforts in the grain shipping business. In a very short time the former sea captain became the "Grain King of California."

He established Port Costa on the Carquinez Straits as a primary storage, milling and shipping point for California grain to the rest of the world, and became a prominent citizen of Oakland.

In Oakland, McNear promoted the first street railway and became president of the First National Bank of Oakland. His keen foresight, bargaining ability and honesty

for business, the teenager soon put the Oriental Mill on a sound footing and opened a feed store on its ground floor.

The national economy slowed in the 1890s as did Petaluma's economic progress. However, just after the turn of the century local inventor Lyman Bryce developed a crude wooden incubator, and Petaluma's farmers began entering the egg business.

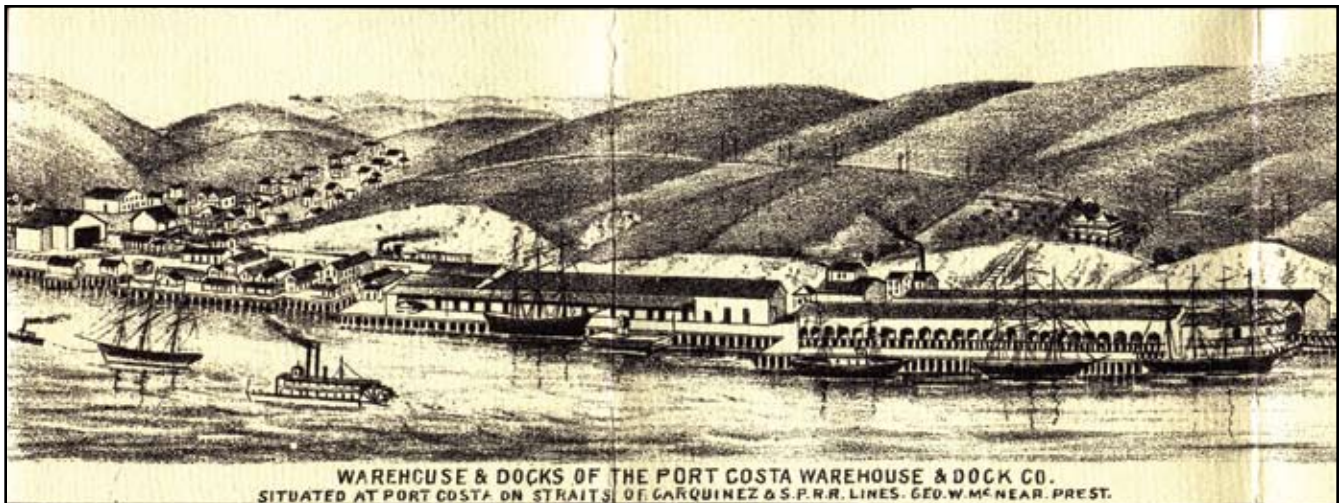
Young George P. McNear saw the potential in the new industry and helped Bryce establish his first incubator factory, next door to McNear's Feed and Seed business. Once the egg industry took off, George P. McNear was able to concentrate his energy on banking and finance.

George P. McNear's cousin, George W. McNear, Jr. was only twenty years old when he and his brother John A. McNear took over operation of the George McNear Company. By

Francisco.

Collectively, McNear family members sat on the various boards of Cypress Lawn Memorial Park from 1892 to 1950, a total of 58 years of dedicated service to the west's foremost Victorian garden cemetery. "Their visions and their dreams came true."

Kent L. Seavey has been an independent historic preservation and museum interpretation consultant since 1978 and has taught art and architectural history at the Monterey Peninsula College since 1976. He has prepared historic resource inventories for several California communities including historic San Juan Bautista, Belmont, San Carlos, and Colma. He was preservation consultant to Clint Eastwood whose design of the Mission Ranch



saw his industry rewarded by the incorporation of the George W. McNear Company, with branches in London and Liverpool.

Just two years after the amicable dissolution of the McNear Brothers partnership, John A. McNear acquired a new partner, his nineteen-year-old son, George P. McNear. Not yet out of high school, the younger McNear was tasked with running his father's milling operation in Petaluma. A willing worker with his father's head

the time of the younger McNears' ascendancy, the company owned, among other things, twenty-five warehouses throughout the interior of California with a capacity of eight million bushels of grain. To his credit he expanded the business into one of the leading oil and grain shippers of the west coast. At the time he became president of the Petroleum Products Company of California, he was also serving as president of the Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association in San

recreational complex in Carmel, California garnered the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation in 1993. He is currently preservation consultant for several historic complexes in Monterey County.

Mr. Seavey has been a member of the Board of Directors of Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation since its inception in the late 90s.

Photo credit: www.portcosta.com

Legacy Corner

Terms of Endowment



Martin S. Jacobs
*Executive Vice President
for Development*

I am often asked where we find the money to keep Cypress Lawn in such great condition. Well, some of you may have seen the signs around the park that state we are an Endowment Care Cemetery. That means when a family purchases cemetery property at Cypress Lawn, a small portion of the funds collected is placed in trust for the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery. This is called an Endowment Care Trust Fund. The State of California monitors the fund and establishes the minimum amount that must be collected.

As permitted by state law, Cypress Lawn collects a little more than the minimum to build its fund. Only the interest earned by the fund is used for the maintenance and embellishment of our beautiful historic cemetery and arboretum. That can include any needed infrastructure such as roadways, waterlines, horticulture, etc., as Cypress Lawn expands to accommodate new

families.

I am pleased to tell you that Cypress Lawn has the largest Endowment Care Trust Fund in Northern California.

Why then does Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation request contributions?

As you know, Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation was established to provide and fund educational programs that promote Cypress Lawn as the Guardian of California's Heritage. But, its other main mission as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit is to locate funds for the restoration and care of Cypress Lawn's non-endowed assets. That includes carefully restoring beautiful old memorials and artwork that have fallen into disrepair, because the Endowment Care Trust Fund does not cover memorials or artwork unless funded by each family separately.

After time, when all family members passed on or heirs cannot be located their memorials face the elements of time and nature. Many of you on our walking tours have pointed out unique structures that need to be restored to their original condition.

Nothing would please us more than to see all the grand historic memorials and artwork shining like new again,

but we cannot do it without your help. So, when you are considering your charitable contributions this year please think about keeping the heritage of California alive for future generations to enjoy by donating a portion of your charitable giving to the Heritage Foundation.

Your gift will help ensure the continued educational mission of the Foundation and the preservation of Cypress Lawn as a place of beauty and one of the most important garden cemeteries and arboretums in the nation. We have many tax-advantaged planned giving options for you to consider.

For example, with a legacy gift from your estate you are making a promise to future generations that the beauty, history and enjoyment of Cypress Lawn will always live on. You can also make philanthropic gifts in kind. Also, I want to encourage you all to become more involved. If you enjoy our lectures, walking tours and events, please spread the word and if there are ways we can make your experience with the Foundation more pleasant and enjoyable, let us know.

We always welcome fresh ideas, including suggestions for naming opportunities.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at upcoming Foundation events. I can be reached at (650)550-8892 to answer any questions. ❖

Restoration Gallery

On the right are two of our important art works in need of restoration. The Jennie Roosevelt Pool angel (left photo) created by sculptor Antonio Bernieri and the Lloyd Tevis monument designed by architect John Galen Howard with the bronze figure being only one of a few commissions in the Western United States by sculptor Herbert Adams.



From the President's Desk

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and development. As our State continues to develop and diversify we need to educate and preserve the unique history of California for generations to come.

Please attend the Foundation's events and support our continual efforts to educate the community and preserve our individual and

collective histories. Cypress Lawn will continue to record and retell the histories of the individuals that make up this unique family of Californians. Cypress Lawn is a place of remembrance for the community and the families that have come to rest here, never to be forgotten. With your support we pledge to continue to educate the community on the individuals that have come to rest and will come to rest at Cypress Lawn while preserving the flora, arboretum and art of Cypress Lawn. ❖

Answers: Who Am I? Questions on Page 2

1. **S. Clark Beise** (1898 - 1989): Mr. Beise was the son of a Minnesota doctor. He decided in high school that he wanted to be in the banking business. While pursuing his business administration degree from the University of Minnesota, he worked as a bank messenger on the side. While working as a federal reserve system bank examiner, the late Bank of America founder A.P. Giannini was so impressed with his knowledge of banking that he said, "We can use a man like you, and you'll find the way open clear to the top if you make good." Beise replied, "I'll make good. When do I start?" Beise became a vice president his first year in the company in 1936. He was named president in 1954. Beise was instrumental in the automation of check-processing operations in the bank and is credited with introducing the first credit card, BankAmericard. *Section L Lot 167*
2. **Frederick W. Dohrmann** (1842 - 1914): Born in Germany, Dohrmann migrated to Davenport, Iowa in 1858 but eventually settled in San Francisco in 1862. Dohrmann had already made a reputation in the San Francisco area in the general merchandise and flour milling industries when in 1897 he orchestrated the merger of the first department store in California, the Emporium, and the Golden Rule Bazaar. His son, A.B.C. Dohrmann, became instrumental in reorganizing after the merger and was its president at the time of the elder Dohrmann's death. Frederick was also one of

the organizers of the San Francisco Hotel Company which operated the St. Francis Hotel. In addition, he was also a member of the San Francisco Park Commission and served as a regent of the University of California from 1903 until he died. *Section K Lot 227*

3. **Thomas Hansford Williams, Jr.** (1859-1915): The son of the seventh Attorney General of California who was also an organizer of the Republican Party in El Dorado County, Williams, Jr. raised thoroughbred horses and was one of the most influential contributors to the history of California turf records. He served as president of the New California Jockey Club which controlled the tracks at Ingleside, Tanforan and Emeryville. After the 1906 earthquake and fire, he turned over the buildings at Ingleside to serve as semi-permanent homes for the 1906 fire victims. *Laurel Mound*
4. **Joseph Lawrence Alioto** (1916 - 1998): A native-born San Franciscan, Alioto was a 1937 magna cum laude graduate of St. Mary's College. He was credited by Sen. Dianne Feinstein as "the first mayor that made San Francisco into a big city." He pushed for construction of two of the City's signature structures: Transamerica Building and Embarcadero Center. Former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown noted that Joe Alioto was "a champion of racial diversity long before it was fashionable." He added that Alioto's "imprint on San Francisco is indelible - from the city's downtown landscape to its cultural institutions to

**Cypress Lawn
Heritage Foundation**
A non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation
dedicated to promoting Cypress Lawn Cemetery
as a rich historical and educational resource
for the Bay Area Community

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Leni D. Panopio
Managing Editor

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- its public parks." *Section D Lot 468*
5. **Nicholas T. Smith** (1829 - 1907): Smith was an official of Southern Pacific Railroad and succeeded his friend Timothy Hopkins as its treasurer. He played a major role in developing the Peninsula town of Lomitas which he later renamed San Carlos. He designed and built the San Carlos railroad depot, a brownstone building often referred to as the most unique train station on the Peninsula line. *Section I Lot 76*



**Be a Guardian
of
California's Heritage**

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