



# THE BOARD AND BATTEN

*Newsletter of the Pacific Grove Heritage Society*

October/November 1993

## The Inside Stories

### ☞ William "Bathhouse" Smith

Pioneer Developer of  
Pacific Grove Beach

### ☞ Down The Piney Path

Whale Fight!

Separate School for  
"Little Mongols"

The Tax Collector  
Cometh

### ☞ New Years Day Fire

Grove sadly in need  
of better fire fighting  
apparatus

### ☞ News From The Tide

Weekly digest of  
news concerning  
Pacific Grove,  
Monterey and Carmel



*William "Bathhouse" Smith 1859 - 1947*

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Eloy Rogers

*Christmas At The Inns*

Tuesday December 7, 1993

## Pioneer Developer of Pacific Grove Beach Dies at Rest Home

Requiem Mass was held Saturday morning at the San Carlos Catholic church for William Fielding Smith, who passed away after a long period of illness.

Smith, who was instrumental in the development of the Pacific Grove waterfront, was born on November 7, 1859, in San Juan Bautista, came to Monterey in 1864 where his father, the late James Bennet Smith, served as the sixth sheriff of Monterey County. In 1904, Smith purchased the site of the present Pacific Grove beach, and in spite of opposition, blasted out the rock, and set up a bathhouse, bathing resort and boathouse, later cut back the sea wall, lengthened the beach, and built the stone wall and pier.

Mr. Smith left the Grove in 1910, after selling his interests to the father of Reginald Foster, and embarked upon years of travel, spending two years in Spain, seventeen years in Mexico, five years in Cuba, and long periods in Italy, San Domingo and Haiti, where he operated a sugar plantation during World War I. He spent the last few years of his life in Pacific Grove.

He is survived by his brother, Police Judge Fred Smith of Tulare; a daughter, Mrs. Constance Ferguson of Fall River, Mass.; a niece, Mrs. William Kesemann of Ventura; and a nephew, James F. Smith of Oxnard. Funeral services were held at the Paul mortuary, and interment followed in the Monterey Catholic cemetery.

(From the Pacific Grove Tide of 3/21/47)

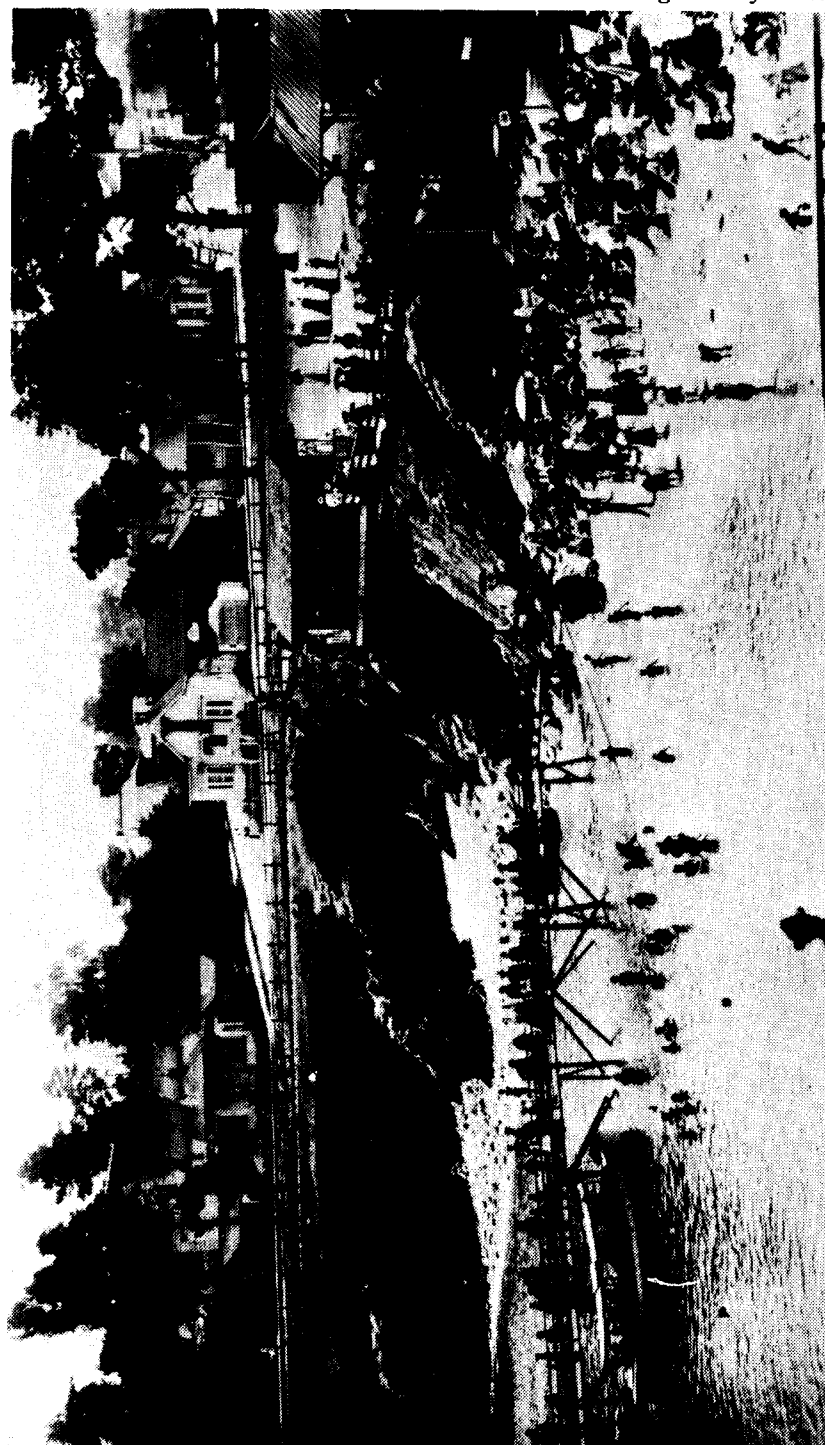
## Christmas At The Inns—Tuesday, December 7

The 9th Annual Christmas At The Inns Tour will be held on Tuesday evening, December 7th from 6:30 to 9:30. This is your chance to see the Centrella, Martine, Old St. Angela, Gatehouse, Gosby House and Green Gables Bed & Breakfast Inns in all their holiday glory.

Tickets are still only \$10.00 each and should be purchased in advance at the Chamber of Commerce office at Forest & Central during normal business hours. Please get your tickets now. This event is mainly for the locals and we need your attendance to be successful. Get a group of your friends together and join us. Proceeds are divided equally between the Heritage Society and the Pacific Grove Art Center.

Please call 373-3304 for more information.

Heritage Society Photo



Lover's Point around 1890 with the first bathhouse. Most of the small seaside cottages on Ocean View Blvd are now gone, but you can see portions of other houses still there today.

## Down The Piney Path

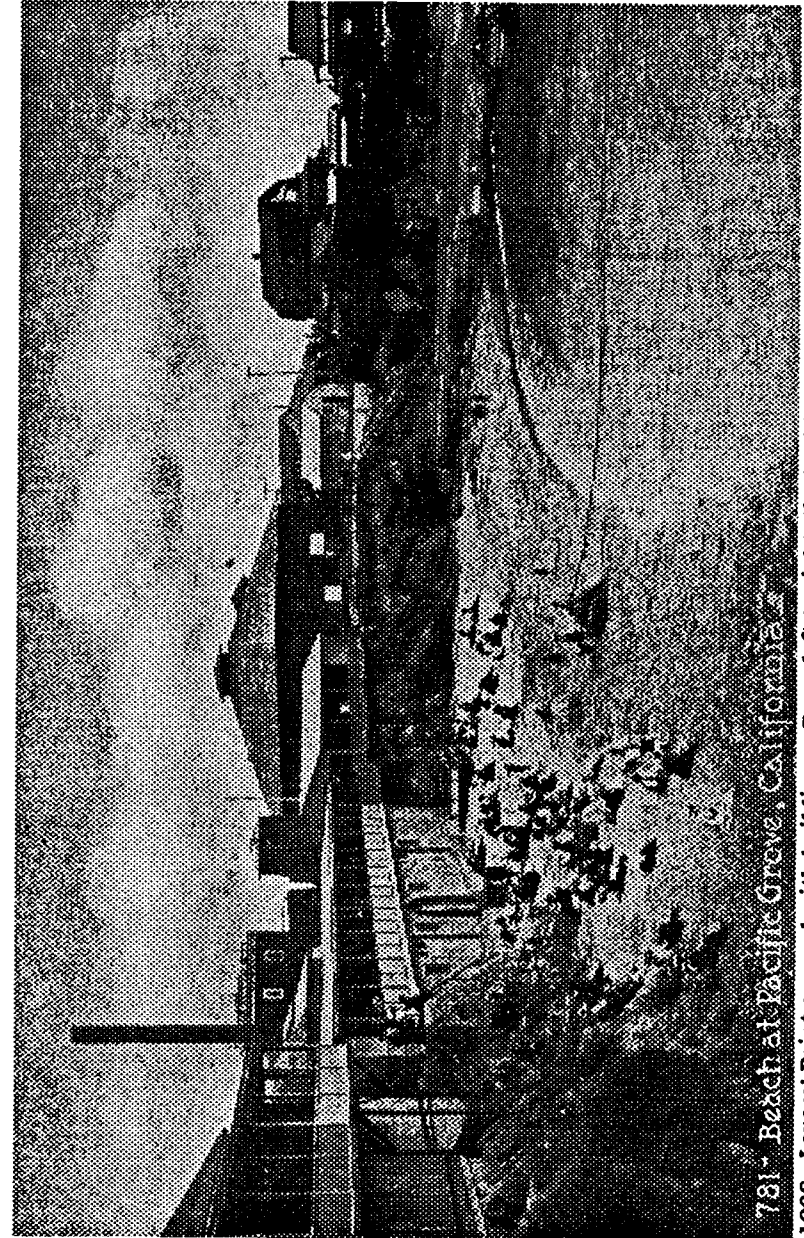
*News of old Pacific Grove from the Pacific Grove Review  
(November-December 1890)*

◆ by E. C. Davis

- + The little park opposite Tuttle's Drug Store has been removed.
- + A fight was seen from Garfield Peak between two whales. The larger of the two monsters, during the fight, jumped about fifteen feet in the air.
- + Take time by the forelock and buy a lot at Carmelito.
- + Plans are made to run a street railway from Del Monte to Pacific Grove.
- + The citizens of Chinatown petition the Trustees for the right of their children to attend public school. The Trustees decide to build a separate school. This is placed on P.I. land and comfortably fitted. Mary E. Sackett, an Oberlin (Ohio) graduate, holder of a California Life Diploma, is hired. The school was opened October 27th with "eighteen bright looking little mongols."
- + The inevitable tax collector will be in the Grove on Thursday. There is no use kicking. Walk up to the Captain's office and pungle.
- + The Review accepts a bag of chili beans in exchange for a subscription.
- + A fifty dollar reward is offered for information concerning anyone hunting or shooting without permission within El Pescadero and Pt. Pinos Ranches.
- + Citizens complain about restrictions on dances.
- + Several trees blow down at the back of the Central Hotel.
- + The rails for the street car line have arrived and are now being unloaded.

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## Others Saw Us Through Postcards



781 - Beach at Pacific Grove, California

Circa 1908. Lovers' Point covered with buildings. From left to right: the bathhouse, dance pavilion, small photographer's studio, home of William "Bathhouse" Smith, Tea Garden. Note: Mr. Smith's house was moved and is now at 116 Fountain.

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Lovers' Point around 1905. Buildings from left to right: partial view of Mr. Smith's house, Japanese Tea Garden and the second Lookout built by the Woman's Civic Club.



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## New Years Day Fire

### Pacific Grove Starts New Year With Small Blaze

The fire bell aroused the town on New Years' night about seven o'clock, and the fire department responded promptly to the call, but fortunately there was no need of their services. The alarm was occasioned by an incipient fire at the home of Miss E. L. Virgin at 135 16th Street near the Home Inn.

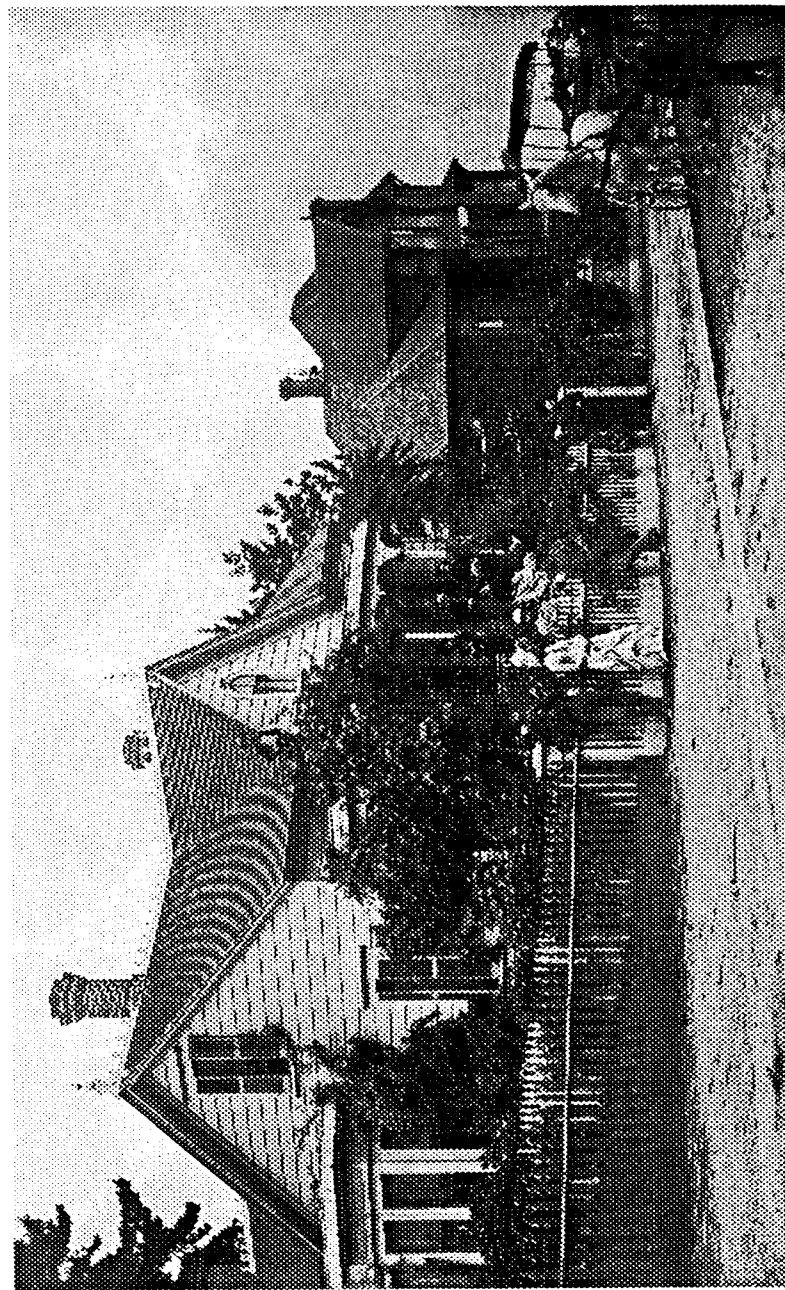
Miss Virgin was absent from home at the time of the fire, and knew nothing of it until she returned and found her rooms filled with people engaged in extinguishing the flames. During her absence someone took a lamp from its accustomed place and carelessly set it where it stood within a few inches of the art burlap which takes the place of plaster upon the walls and ceiling. The lady who moved the lamp and then left the room and on returning in a few moments she found the burlap ablaze and the room filled with smoke. She at once gave the alarm, and pending the arrival of the fire apparatus those who responded to the call promptly brought garden hose into play and in a few moments they had the fire extinguished, and when the fire laddies reached the scene there was nothing left for them to do. They showed their willingness, however, by responding to the call of fire as promptly as they could, and their services would have proved invaluable had not the garden hose been sufficient.

Miss Virgin has no insurance, and her loss will be about three hundred dollars, as near as she can now estimate it. The burlap was burned from the ceiling all through the cottage, the wood work was charred in many places, the rugs practically ruined and the furniture damaged.

This fire showed conclusively that the Grove is sadly in need of better fire fighting apparatus and a well drilled fire department. Had there been a light chemical engine at hand, it could have been taken to the scene of the fire in a few minutes time. Even the location of the fire hydrants is not well enough known to make prompt service possible, and much valuable time is lost in locating the one nearest the fire by those who run with the hose cart. Something should be done before we have a serious conflagration and big loss of property. Had the fire gained headway it would certainly have stood a good chance of sweeping over a number of blocks, for the houses are very close together in that neighborhood.

(Note: The above is from the January 2, 1908 edition of the Pacific Grove Daily Review. The cottage still stands at 135 16th Street.)

California State Library—Circa 1890



The house on the left was 112 Fountain, which is no longer there. It was built in 1892 for George Laus and later owned by Fannie Taylor, Mary Polhemus, Ida Palache and Julia Flatt. The house on the right is the Page cottage, now known as the Seven Gables Bed & Breakfast.

## News From The Tide

(The Tide was a weekly digest of news concerning Pacific Grove, Monterey and Carmel published in the late 1930s and early 1940s.)

### Can You Beat It?

Wednesday evening we had a picnic supper on the beach. At 6:30 o'clock, the swimming pool still had a large number of customers and there actually were several swimmers in the surf. When we left an hour later, there still were many people in light, summer garb, enjoying the balmy evening. We saw householders sitting on front porches of houses, speaking kindly to friends out for an evening stroll. We set this down for the benefit of posterity. You'll live a long time before you see such goings-on in Pacific Grove again.

(5/22/42).

### Pooch, After Shopping Around, Found New Home

A "mostly Cocker Spaniel" named Pooch will start 1946 with his owners, the M. Beresons and their small son whom he adopted, dog-fashion several weeks ago. The Beresons, an army family, who liked the little black dog immediately because he was "so good with children," checked his license Saturday.

A phone call revealed that he was being kept by Miss Edith Gordon of 288 Central, with whom he was left when his owner, Dixie Lee Ray moved to Washington D.C. Miss Gordon, who had retrieved him several times from the 17th street neighborhood where the Beresons live, said she was pleased with the arrangement. "He hasn't seemed happy since Miss Ray left, and now he seems to have found a new home," Miss Gordon said. Miss Gordon had recently taken out a new license for Pooch.

(01/04/46).

### Storm Damage Is Slight To Grove Houses, Streets

In marked contrast to a few years ago, when any continued rain-storm brought many wash-outs to Pacific Grove streets, the 12 day storm with which 1940 started has done practically no serious damage in this city. New storm drains, installed under the direction of City Manager Erwin Dames, are held responsible. The new drains installed above Sinex avenue have taken care of water conditions which formerly washed out Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets. The Short street drain has stopped much damage, as have other drainage projects.

City Manager Dames indicates that extensive projects will be necessary in the western portion of the city as the acreage tracts are built up. Washouts at the eastern end of Pine and Laurel avenues also need attention, but can be cured by street surfacing, he indicates.

(01/12/40).

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## Horsin' Around

### Runaway On Saturday Evening (P.G. Review—Dec. 6, 1907)

A team belonging to Giocomazo of Salinas ran away in the Grove on Saturday evening. They dashed down Spruce avenue to 19th street and then ran down 19th street into the forest, where they collided with the trees and came to a halt.

Little damage was done to either the harness or the vehicle, while the horses escaped with but a few scratches.

## New Members

Patricia H. Byrne

Joe & Joyce Nunes

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gunn

William Yeager

Ned Heringer

### Share The Heritage With A Friend Annual Family Membership \$10.00

Members receive *The Board and Batten* newsletter of the Heritage Society of Pacific Grove.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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*The  
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