

Early Days at Pebble Beach

by Neal Hotelling

While today many of us enjoy living at Pebble Beach year round, for the earliest homeowners it was mostly a summer getaway. The William Lee Hathaway family of San Francisco was one of the earliest to regularly make the gossip columns beginning in 1914 for escaping to, and entertaining at, their lovely summer home in Pebble Beach. Their home, immediately west of The Lodge, was later known as *Canary Cottage*. Hathaway, raised in the Pacific Northwest, became associated with the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York in 1892 at the age of 25. He was put in charge of West Coast operations at San Francisco in January 1906, and is largely credited with transforming the system of insurance agents still used today. His connection with the Eastern firm was also responsible for attracting many millions of dollars used to finance the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake.

Among the other notable early homeowners that rarely made the columns were artists Chris Jorgensen (1860-1935) and Detlef Sammann (1857-1938). Sammann was German born and immigrated to New York in 1881 and California in 1898. He was based primarily in Pasadena until he “retired” to Pebble Beach in 1912. Here he painted more casually and exhibited at the Del Monte Gallery. His home was further west along the cove from Hathaway, nearer Pescadero Point. He left Pebble Beach in 1921 to return to Germany. Jorgensen had a studio in Yosemite much of the year. Earlier he built a home in Carmel (transformed to today’s La Playa Hotel) before moving to Pebble Beach and building his home near the site of today’s post office.

By 1919, when Samuel F. B. Morse formed Del Monte Properties Company and began transforming the development, there were only 17 homes at Pebble



Evening Rays-Del Monte Forest - Detlef Sammann

Beach. Three were added in 1919, 11 in 1920, and 10 more in 1921. While the 1920 U.S. Census showed eight owner-occupied residences in January, a December 1921 company report showed that other than company employees and caretakers, there were only three year-round residents. **Raymond Austin James** (1885-1960) was a home building contractor who showed on the 1920 Census as living with his parents, Harry C (b. 1856) and Mary (b. 1858). Photographer **Martha Ewing Newcome** (1870-1959) was the Ewing of the celebrated Washington D.C. studio of Harris & Ewing. She purchased two lots above what is now the 14th tee of Pebble Beach Golf Links when her partner bought her out in 1915. The home she built was known as *Sunset Hill*. **Llewelyn Arthur Nares** (1860-1939) was in banking in England and Canada before moving to California’s central valley and becoming a land speculator (Lanares, CA was named for him). As president of the Consolidated Canal Company he had been an associate of Morse during Morse’s earlier role as manager of the Crocker-Huffman Land and Water Company at Merced.

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Martha Newcome's home, Sunset Hill, provided a commanding view of golfers and Carmel Bay - Julian P. Graham/PBC Lagorio Archive

Others on the 1920 Census included **Jorgensen** (who summered at Yosemite) and **Sammann**, who had left by the end of 1921, but was likely a year-round resident until then. There was also **Lewis B. Thomas** (1892-1959) and wife Frances, he a surgeon. **Fred Ruhl** (1876-1961) was a building contractor who had been a building superintendent for Pacific Improvement Company. **Valerie Beatty** was living in their home on five acres above Stillwater Cove with her niece. Her husband, William, may have been taking care of business in Chicago, where he headed Austin Manufacturing Company.

Lady Teazle's gossip column in the San Francisco Chronicle of 6-May-1921 gives a clue to the eclecticism of other early home owners. Among those referenced as headed to Pebble Beach to open their summer homes were Louis Hill of St. Paul, Dan Murphy and Fred Flint of Los Angeles, George T. Cook of Kansas City, Alvah Kaime of Santa Barbara, Colonel J. Hudson Poole and S. C. Fertig of Pasadena, David Low and E. E. Chase of San Jose, and Sarah Parke of Detroit.

A little sleuthing in history reveals that: **Hill** (1872-1948) was president of the Great Northern Railway and owned most of the hill above Pescadero Point. **Murphy** (1855-1939), had earlier worked for the Central Pacific RR and helped transform Needles into a real town. Investments led to his becoming

president of the Portland Cement Company, and he made a fortune in oil speculation. He was generous with his funds, especially with the Catholic Church, and in 1931, Pope Pius XI titled him Commander of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher. **Flint** (1872-1958) was a major real estate developer in Los Angeles. They bought a few acres west of The Lodge above the cove. **Cook** (1871-1945), like Murphy, had earlier worked for the railroad, but made his fortune in manufacturing as president of the George T. Cook Nut and Bolt Company. The above had all been associated with Morse's predecessor, A.D. Shepard (1852-1925), an executive with the Southern and Central Pacific railroads for many years before serving as general manager of the Pacific Improvement Company from 1902-1915.

Kaime (1897-1937), was a relative youngster and newlywed to San Francisco debutante Alejandra Macondray. He had been raised in Santa Barbara, where his father sold insurance. Alvah, was a Yale graduate and oil speculator. **Poole** (1878-1940) was a retired marine officer that became the principal of the Buena Vista Plantation in the Philippines. His home, *Villa Hebe*, was designed by Lewis Hobart. **Samuel Coldren Fertig** (1883-1971) ran National Oil, formed by his father John Fertig when he hit oil in Titusville, PA in 1859. **Low** (1872-1952) was a partner and General Manager of the Pratt-Low [fruit] Cannery. **Elmer Ellsworth Chase** (1861-1939) had been Mayor of San Jose from 1916-1918. In 1919, he and Edmund Richmond formed the Richmond-Chase [fruit packing] Company in San Jose. **Sarah Parke** (1861-1937) was the daughter of druggist Hervey Parke, who partnered with George Davis and formed the Parke-Davis pharmaceuticals company in 1869.

The population of Del Monte Forest continued to grow, and by 1925 there were more than 70 homes, with the number exploding in the late 1920s following the opening of Monterey Peninsula Country Club. But in the early days it was a small, diverse group of mostly seasonal residents centered near The Lodge that comprised the property owners of Del Monte Forest.☞