

A Different Kind of Life in Today's Davenport

Looking through the west French doors of the New Davenport Cash Store and Pottery, Gary Scofield watches a southbound tanker tilt, dip, and angle toward calmer waters.

"She's staying inside to get out of the wind," he says, and as Marcia McDougal looks, her hammered earrings glint with winter sunlight.

Marcia is a potter and co-owner of the Cash Store (which accepts credit cards). Cement trucks, pickups, cars and RV's speed past Davenport on their way to somewhere else which is the way most people in Davenport like it.

But plenty of people stop.

Some line the tops of the bluffs hoping to get a glimpse of a migrating whale or a nude sunbather. Others go into the Whaler for a drink or wander through the Cash Store, buying enough pots and light lunches to provide a living for Marcia and husband Bruce, who is also a potter.

Scofield, the ocean watcher, is a welder at the Lone Star Cement plant and the chief of Davenport's volunteer fire department. By California reckoning, he is an old Davenport hand, having moved here in 1971.

"I love 'em all dearly," Gary says of the new residents, the artisans, who have become the new majority in Davenport. He names glassblowers, boatwrights, knifemakers, weavers, woodworkers, potters, and T-shirt silk screeners.

If there is any discord in Davenport, nobody is talking about it to outsiders. Dusky kids skateboard down the arroyo road which angles away from the high-speed highway. They are maybe Mexican or perhaps Filipino or Portugese or Italian descendants of those who came to America to pick artichokes and work in cement plants.

Cement trucks roll, skateboarders coast, and the flat-silhouetted tanker approaches the south edge of the French door. Marcia gets Gary another bottle of Bud and a San Miguel dark for the visitor to go with the jack cheese and homemade bread.

The sea is rough, the town quiet and the visitor wants to know, "Isn't there ever any trouble here?"

While there may be an occasional fight at the Whaler when somebody takes on too much beer, most of the trouble comes from visitors to the beaches. "They bring generators to amplify their music, get drunk and we have to pick them off the rocks," says Chief Scofield of the Davenport Fire Department.

Davenport has a reputation as a civics book community where everybody is aware of the rights and duties of citizenship.

"When the sewer line caved in, everybody fell out to dig a new one," says Bud Bogle, a furniture maker who has lived in "New Town" in Davenport since 1974.

"In the beginning it was hard for us to accept that kind of living," says Catherine Franklin, a long-time New Town resident who arrived at the train station in Santa Cruz in 1933 from Turin, Italy.

"The long hair, beards, all the comings and goings... unmarried couples... we were just too square... may if I'd been ten years younger..."

Catherine Franklin and her mother were Bud Bogle's neighbors on 1st Street in New Town, which Catherine calls the "upper houses." Bogle says it was a long time before his neighbors accepted him. Catherine Franklin confirms that, but says, "He was such a gentle gentleman, when my lights went out he wouldn't hear of me calling anybody. He went to his house and found some stuff to fix them."

"Before long, the minestrone was going to their house and the cookies were coming back."

Filling the American ideal of all kinds of people pulling together, Catherine and her mother ("Mother still hasn't accepted long hair") saw that Bogle was a man trying to "earn a living" and Catherine remembers pushing Bogle's old cars up and down New Town's streets.

Most of those streets run right toward the immensity of Pacific Ocean which is now navigated by that tanker staying inside the same ocean whose "... great shroud rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago" as described by Melville at the end of *Moby Dick*, after the great white whale has sunk the Pequod and drowned all aboard her save Ishmael.

Moby Dick's descendants swim by the bluffs of Davenport on their regular migrations between Baja California and the Bering Sea.

New Town was once the scene of class consciousness. Franklin says the upper houses—upwind of the cement dust which once covered everything in Davenport—were built for officials of the cement plant, chemists, and "higher workers." She says there was a feeling of separateness between those in the upper houses and the rest.

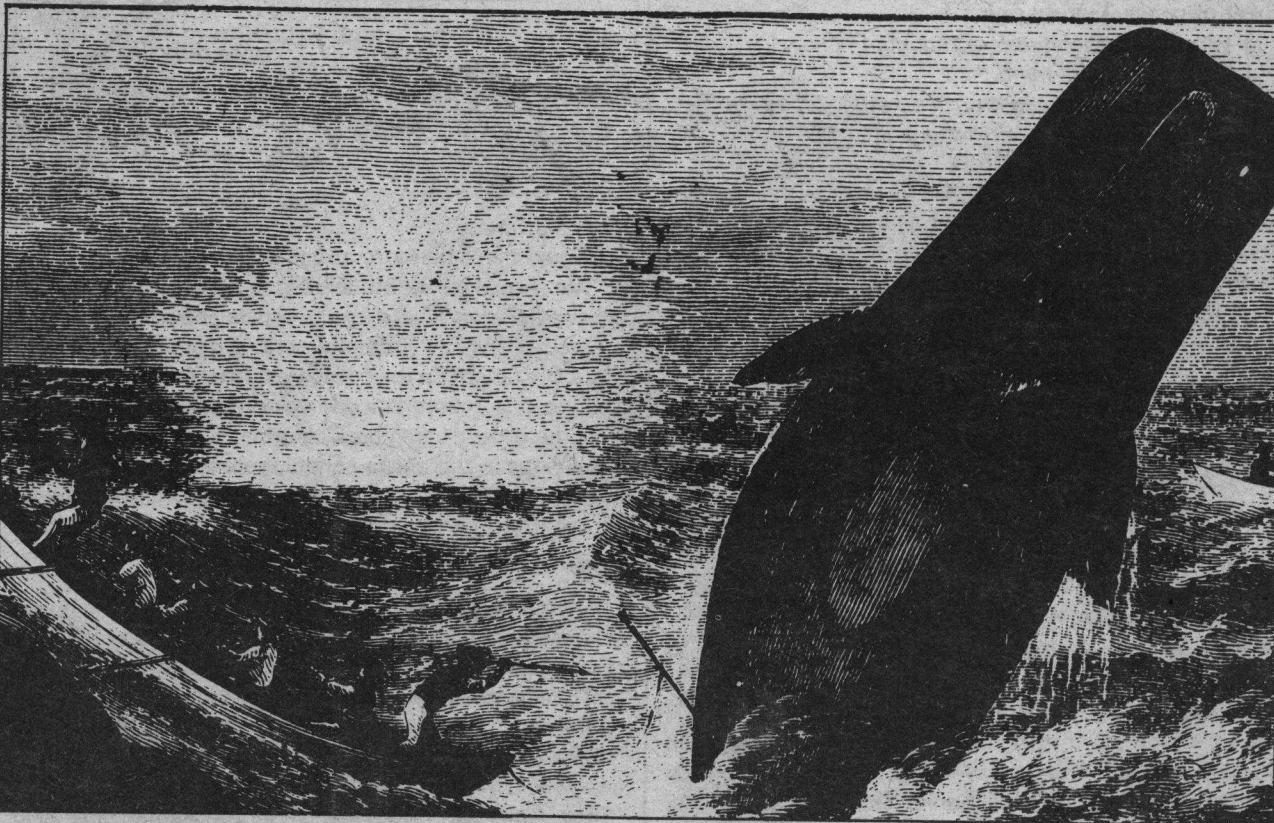
Franklin reports this without any apparent bitterness and the cement plant officials are long gone, apparently driven away by the wind which

people are finding out that there's no such place anymore."

Bogle makes the point that there isn't much land available. "It's all in large holdings, including one Italian-Swiss corporation."

"The Gregories 'owned' Davenport," Marcia says. Now they lease out the store and the gas station, and, like the cement company officials, they are gone.

"There are few of the old Filipino families," Franklin says. "The young ones are all educated



"Gets to you as you get older," according to Catherine Franklin ("But you learn to do outside things in the morning and put on a sweater," she adds.)

The Lone Star cement plant could be a source of conflict between the old and new residents.

"It's 90% better," says Gary Scofield. "I raise roses in the back yard. It does get a little gucky in the summer."

"They cheat a lot," says Marcia McDougal.

Bud Bogle says that they used to use natural gas at the cement plant, but now they are using fuel oil and will soon convert to coal. He says the Monterey Pollution Control District has lost some of their inspectors due to Proposition 13 cutbacks.

It's clear that there is far less cement dust and crud in the air at Davenport. But continued improvement seems to rest on technology. And the newer residents, the artisans, mistrust that technology.

The difference in feelings about the pollution from the cement plant is best summarized by Catherine Franklin, who says, "Maybe I just remember hard times too well. I'm grateful just to have hot water in the house."

Oil Rigs And Nuclear Plants

Back in the Davenport Cash Store, with ferns hanging from the ceiling on macrame ropes, Scofield and McDougal reveal a disagreement on nuclear power plants. (P.G. & E. had proposed one for Davenport.)

"Some say the warm water is good for marine life, others say it's bad. I don't know," says Scofield. He remains firmly unopinionated on the subject.

"They scare me," says McDougal, but flushes a little, as she did when they disagreed about the cement plant, as if she doesn't like an outsider seeing community members in disagreement.

The tanker passes the south side of the French doors and Gary answers a question about the proposal of the Bureau of Land Management to drill for oil off the north coast:

"No way, shape, or form do we need them. I've seen oil spills and birds and fish on the beach with that stuff on them."

Scofield doesn't think oil wells offshore would be good for the economy of the area. "We don't need them," he says, but in talking about the possibility of stopping them, he says, "The voice of the people is gone."

Changes

Things are changing in Davenport. Bud Bogle would prefer that nothing be done to call attention to what a great place it is. Marcia McDougal likes it because it's an "undisturbed burg, but of course

and work at Watkins-Johnson."

Franklin is gone, too, driven to town and a mobile home by the wind which gets to you. But she loves Davenport and remembers the sunsets from the kitchen window.

"Sometimes, mother says, 'Let's drive up the coast,' and we do and I'll circle the old house and say that I'm going to circle it once more, but:

'Once is enough,' mother says."

The Captain's Legacy

Captain John Pope Davenport died in Santa Cruz on Lincoln's birthday four score and six years ago.

But his name lives on in local lore as the eponymous founder of the incorporated town of Davenport, just up the coast, as they say, from Santa Cruz.

Although the town's economy is now based on the big cement plant there, one still thinks of whales and the old whaling boats when the name Davenport is mentioned.

Captain Davenport saw immense schools of whales as he approached the California coast, where he settled in Monterey in 1852. He built the first brick house in California, a house that still stands in Monterey as a historic landmark.

But his destiny lay further up the coast, in a beautiful cove at the mouth of Agua Puerca Creek, about a mile north of where the present Davenport is situated. Here he built a 450 foot wharf, which became known as Davenport Landing. A lively village grew up around it, with hotels, a livery stable, a blacksmith shop and a general store. Whaling gear and the blubber melting pots were located near the wharf.

Davenport is as close to the migrating whales' route as any other spot on dry land along their 5,000 mile journey. Captain Davenport devised a plan whereby he and his men could go out from shore in a whale boat, make the kill, and tow the whale back to the land station where the blubber could be removed and dried out in huge pots. This method kept the crews with their families on a daily basis instead of out to sea at long stretches.

The Davenport Landing wharf was abandoned in 1880 because of reduced business volume and high operation costs. The Santa Cruz Portland Cement Company began their operations in 1906 and the present town was developed by the Coast Dairies and Land Company. Most of the original buildings have been destroyed by fires, but still standing are the old 1914 jailhouse and the 1915 St. Vincent dePaul Catholic Church.