

# The Reactor

Paul Azevedo



Margot Patterson Doss  
c/o the Chronicle

Dear Mrs. Doss:

Thank you for presenting the Pacifica pier to the entire Bay Area through your well-known *Chronicle* column. We Pacificans appreciate having our community known to the rest of Northern California.

Undoubtedly your story will be clipped and itself become a part of Pacifica's history, helping to perpetuate a persistent myth about Honora Sharp, so I would like to call the facts to your attention. In the course of writing my *Pacifica Tribune* column, "The Reactor" I have had occasion to research the story of Sharp Park Golf Course and Honora Sharp.

To summarize: 1) Honora Sharp died in 1905, leaving money and property to Adolph Spreckels and Reuben Lloyd, SF Park Commissioners. She left it free and clear, to get around a legal technicality. She and they wanted to build a memorial gate at the GG Park panhandle to honor her late husband, 49er George F. Sharp.

2) Her cousins fought the will. They lost, but the lawsuit dissipated much of the estate. Somewhere along the way, the idea of a park gate became unfeasible.

3) Someone, perhaps John McLaren, suggested the 410 acre ranch on the San Mateo coastside become a San Francisco park. I found the first mention of the name "Sharp Park" in a 1912 publication.

4) In 1916 Adolph Spreckels turned his share over to the city for 10 dollars in gold.

5) In the summer of 1917 Samuel Murphey (spelling correct) her executor, who had inherited Reuben Lloyd's interests, turned over his share. It was in his agreement with the city that the famous phrase "for park and recreation purposes only" is to be found.

6) SF decided on a golf course in the late 20's. It was opened to the public on April 16, 1932.

7) The present acreage of Sharp Park owned by SF includes lands purchased with \$80,000, the only cash left after the damage done by earthquake and lawsuits to the Sharp estate. This was added to the original Sharp ranch to give more level land for the golf course.

8) The community of Sharp Park resulted when Salada and Brighton Beaches took the name of the nearby park/golf course in 1935.

9) I am unaware of any Pacific Manor train station on the Ocean Shore RR. There were stations in Edgemar, Salada Beach (near Paloma Avenue), Brighton Beach, in front of what is now 2590 Francisco next to the golf course, Vallemar, Rockaway, and Tobin (on Pedro Point). As you know, only Vallemar and Tobin stations still stand.

I call your attention to the facts on Honora Sharp because the incorrect story has such a hold on the public imagination. It was repeated in Jack Wagner's "The Last Whistle," that estimable history of the Ocean Shore Railroad. When I first wrote of Honora Sharp I was told by longtime Pacifican Edna Laurel Calhan that she remembered seeing Honora Sharp at a public meeting in 1923. Mrs. Calhan was such an imperial and commanding person that I would have accepted her story, except that I had copies of Sharp's obituaries (front page in all the SF papers), and her death certificate to back me up.

Again, my thanks for your efforts to promote our city to the wide audience of the *Chronicle/Examiner*.