

## Chief Tackapousha, where are you when we need you?

Recently, when I wrote an article on Rockaway Beach for La Peninsula, the magazine of the San Mateo County Historical Association, I referred to my copy of the Illustrated Dictionary of Place Names. It said the name Rockaway came from the Rockaway Indians, an east coast Algonquian tribe, and means "sand place." La Peninsula's editor wisely questioned the name, which is why I fudged a bit. I used words like "reportedly" and "reputedly." Just as well. When I checked the Internet web site for Far Rockaway, New York, it says "the Rockaway peninsula was deeded by Chief Tackapousha, of the Rockaway Tribe of Indians, to John Palmer. There are conflicting reports on the origin of the name: as a corruption of either 'Reckonwacky,' a name given it by the Indians and meaning 'place of our own people,' or 'Reckanawahaha,' meaning "the place of laughing waters."

Good old chief Tackapousha. We could use him in Pacifica. As for those "laughing waters," sounds like a slogan for a brand of home-made beer. Far Rockaway is also located on a peninsula, but on the eastern end, adjacent to Nassau County, New York.

There's another Rockaway Beach, in Oregon, with about 600 good folk, stretched along a "sandy place" not far from Tillamook, where that great ched-

dar comes from.

They also have a web site or two.

I've been curious for years just where the Rockaway Ocean Shore railroad station was located. No one could tell me. Some didn't think there had been one. I finally drove to Redwood City, where the county Recorder's office had a subdivision map. Turns out the railroad paralleled Harvey Way on the west side, meaning the Ocean Shore's tracks went right down the middle of what is now the east lane of the highway to a point just south of the Rockaway intersection, then headed southwest to get around Point Rockaway. The station was located right in the middle of what is now the Rockaway Beach Avenue-Highway One-Fassler Avenue intersection.

The names of our Rockaway, and our Brighton Beach, imitate those of east coast beaches fashionable in their time. The first Rockaway had some reason for being, what with Chief

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Tackapousha and all that. The name doesn't mean much around here.

The local Indians are several layers of history removed from us. I wonder if we may be as ephemeral as the Spanish, or the Mexicans, or the Italian and Portuguese farmers and dairy-men, each of whom has come and gone in the last 250 years, each of whom thought they had become the permanent "people of the land." The Ohlones were here for millenia. Where are they now? Pacificans may be here for 1,000 years, or we may last as long as the Spanish, who arrived in 1769 and lowered their flag for the last time in 1822. The Mexicans lasted only a generation, until 1846. Then they too were gone.

The farmers lasted for 80 years or so, and we city folk for about 50 years. Who knows who will replace us, and when they will arrive? **The Reactor can be reached by E-mail at reactor@wenet.net**

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