

## **BRINGING HOME THE USS OLYMPIA (C-6)**

**Dennis Kelly**

**OLYMPIA Project Manager**

The OLYMPIA project committee continues our work to acquire this great ship, but first a little more of Mare Island's ties to Admiral Dewey.

### **Kate McDougal and the Mare Island Light House**

The first lighthouse to mark the entrance to Carquinez Strait was built at the southern end of Mare Island in 1873. For most of its years of operation, the Mare Island Lighthouse was kept by Kate McDougal. Kate's husband, Charles McDougal, was the son of the Mare Island's third commandant and served as an inspector for the Lighthouse Service. In 1881, Charles made an inspection trip up the California coast aboard a lighthouse tender. As he approached Cape Mendocino, Charles strapped on a money belt containing the keepers pay in gold coins and boarded a launch for his trip to shore. In a tragic moment, Charles drowned in the surf along with two other crewmembers when the launch passed through the breakers and capsized.

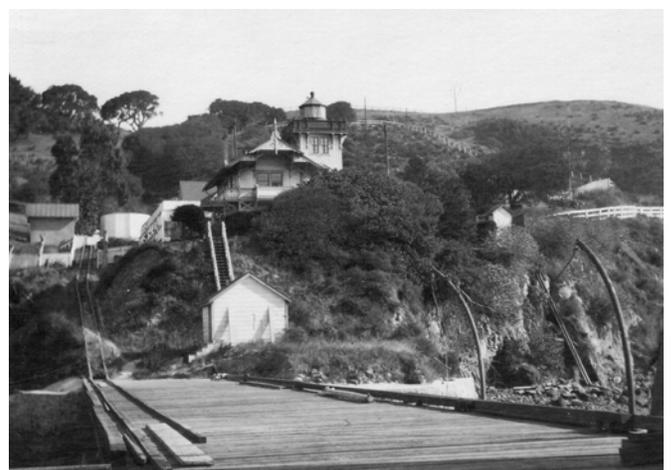


**Cape Mendocino Lighthouse**



**U.S. Manzanita from which Charles McDougal departed by Launch for the Lighthouse**

In those times Kate McDougal would have been left to fend for herself, but inspector McDougal's friends in the Navy made sure that his family was looked after. One of those friends was none other than George Dewey, a classmate of Inspector McDougal at the Naval Academy and the future Spanish-American war hero. At the time George Dewey was the naval secretary of the lighthouse board and in a unique position of influence. He arranged for Kate to serve at Mare Island as the keeper of the Mare Island lighthouse when Mrs. Watson, the prior keeper, resigned soon after Charles McDougal's unfortunate death. For her first Christmas at the station, the naval officers from Mare Island strung a telephone line from the Navy Yard out to the lighthouse. This helped ease some of the loneliness Kate initially experienced at the station. She certainly must have learned to enjoy her life at the lighthouse, for she would remain its keeper until it was discontinued in 1917 35 years later.



**George Dewey arranged for Mrs. McDougal to be employed as the Mare Island lighthouse keeper when her husband was killed in a tragic accident**

**OLYMPIA Acquisition Status:** On February 27, 2013 both South Carolina effort and ours jointly submitted a letter to the Independence Seaport Museum (ISM) requesting a 6 month delay in the next submission from May 1 of 2013 to November 1 of 2013. On March 25, 2013 we received a response from the ISM response approving the requested extension to November 1, 2013 for the Phase IIB required submittal for the OLYMPIA. The response required a second interim report be submitted by 1 May, 2013 and we met that requirement. The challenge remains to raising the required \$20M to acquire the OLYMPIA and we are pursuing a number of avenues towards that end. A key part of our plan going forward is visibility and we have purchased the booth as shown in the photo to provide a presence at events to spread the word of our effort.

We have demonstrated that the display of the OLYMPIA at Mare Island Is; **financially viable** with respect to annual operating costs and revenues (we have two economic feasibility studies supporting this conclusion); the **facilities are available** (we have secured a letter of intent to lease Dry Dock 1 which will allow us to display the ship safely out of water); we have a **proven history operating our museum**, two mansions and Saint Peters Chapel; and, we have established a **significant historical connection** between the USS OLYMPIA, the Asiatic Squadron of which she was part and the Bay Area and Mare Island; therefore, the addition of the ship to the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation's ongoing operations is not only viable, but relevant to our location. In lesser news, the dredging required for opening the dry dock is now permitted leaving only relatively minor entitlements and permits required to make the move happen. What remains is to raise the capitalization funds for our effort. When we overcome that hurdle, the USS OLYMPIA will be set to pass through the Golden Gate for the first time in 117 years since she last left Mare Island on an August morning in 1895.



**USS OLYMPIA Booth**

**Interested?** If you are interested in assisting with the important task of saving and bringing the OLYMPIA back to Mare Island, please consider helping us man our booth at events, assisting us with grant applications or donating to the MIHPF at <http://www.mareislandmuseum.org/> and click on "ships", "OLYMPIA" or contact Dennis Kelly directly at [drkelly107@gmail.com](mailto:drkelly107@gmail.com). Write to: 107 Lassen Pl, Petaluma, CA 94954 or call 707-778-0915. Learn more about our effort at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93M\\_8YE1RT0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93M_8YE1RT0)

**Spanish American War Factoid from Jack Gray:** In 1898 funding of the Spanish American war was partially addressed by the imposition of a "Temporary" tax on the rich. Specifically a tax on telecommunications since only the rich had telephone service at the time.

We are still paying (a somewhat modified) form of this "Temporary" tax. Congress voted in 2001 to rescind this tax but our then president Clinton vetoed this action.