

## HISTORY OF BROADMOOR VILLAGE

In 1947 a housing shortage and the needs of returning veterans from World War II prompted Stoneson Corporation to begin construction of single-story homes in an area of unincorporated Colma that would become known as Broadmoor Village. San Mateo County had remained relatively undeveloped; not ten miles from San Francisco were to be found hog farms, and potato and artichoke fields. Since 1947 the original area of Broadmoor Village has been reduced in size by annexations made by Daly City. The special police district, formed in 1948, continues to operate despite erosion of the tax base necessary for its financial survival. In 1991 Bill 24, introduced by Senator Quentin Kopp, became law, a law providing that any future proposed annexation of Broadmoor should be put "to a vote of its residents if the Broadmoor Police Protection District rules that the annexation would be harmful ..." (1).

This is an account of the history of this unincorporated island, its encirclement brought about by Daly City annexations: the community spirit that has endured during its 47 years of existence, its uniqueness as a community, and the dogged persistence of its residents to preserve their identity.

An area where once the deer and the antelope roamed, as well as Ohlone tribelets, Broadmoor Village is unique in California: it has its own uniformed Police Protection District, the last area in the state to have this distinction. Police protection for unincorporated areas is generally provided by the county sheriff's office, headquartered in the case of Broadmoor, at Redwood City, some 30 to 40 minutes' drive away. Hence Broadmoor residents sought their own Police Protection District, which was formed by resolution of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors in December 1948. (2)

Currently the strength of the eight-man police force, under the leadership of Chief of Police Timothy Guiney, is augmented by eighteen reserve officers who serve without pay "in exchange for the hours they work or for the training they receive." (3) In 1984- 85 reserve officers donated 6,009 hours, or the equivalent of 2.8 full-time positions. (4) Residents of Broadmoor benefit from the personal service rendered by the Special Police District. For

example, anyone planning to be on vacation is encouraged to advise the police, and their residence is checked on a daily basis during their absence.

From the beginning the area exhibited a strong community spirit. By 1948 the Daly City Record carried a column entitled Broadmoor Village News, bylined by Dorothy R. Levitan, who reported in October of that year that construction of hilltop homes was still proceeding, and one resident could boast a swimming-pool. (5) But a month later the Broadmoor Property Owners' Association felt compelled to place on its agenda "the ever-present problem of the hog farm" and plans for its removal by year's end. (6) Long-time residents still remember not only the hog farms but also the horses' stables on Edgeworth and Gilman Drive; occasionally a horse would get out and start chomping on people's petunias, and the householder would call on Ray Savage of the Broadmoor Police Department for help. (7) They recall the potato and artichoke fields, which had made their contribution to the enormous agricultural production of San Mateo County. According to Dr. Stanger, of the \$18 million in agricultural production in 1944, one-third derived from flowers, and one-third from vegetables. (8) Anyone who has dealt with the depredations of gophers, which thrive in the area to the detriment of one's gardening endeavors, can only admire the hard work and success of those many Italian farmers who, until this area was developed, raised enormous cabbages, and sent millions of bouquets of violets to San Francisco and back east.

In those early days one could buy a house for \$9,250.00, with \$250.00 down and payments of \$58.00 per month, including principal, interest, insurance and taxes. It sounds like the impossible dream; however people would have to plead for a loan since they barely qualified; payments were not to exceed one-quarter of take-home pay, which might be no more than \$56.00 a week. (9)

As these hopeful, early years unfolded for Broadmoor residents there was no hint of subsequent annexations that were to come, annexations that would threaten the security offered by their own police district. At no time did Broadmoor wish or seek to annex to Daly City, even when they were completely encircled by the annexations made in 1972. In order to retain their unincorporated status and their own police district, and with its financial base seriously impaired by the many annexations, in 1982 almost 74% of residents voted in favor of paying additional

taxes, a "Special Override Tax" that would be in effect for four years. (10) Again, as reported in the Daly City Record of June 30, 1990, "77% of 907 people who returned mail-in ballots ... voted to tax themselves up to \$180.00 a year for the ensuing four years to save the Broadmoor Police Protection District from bankruptcy." (11)

The most recent annexation by Daly City in 1991 comprised 31 acres of mostly commercial property, including blocks along Junipero Serra Boulevard, Serra Bowl, Lucky Market, and a small shopping center, having an assessed value of \$10 million, but effectively four to nine residents. Since areas of less than twelve residents are treated as "uninhabited" land, a few commercial owners can easily account for more than half the assessed value, facilitating the annexation process. (12) In the San Mateo Times of November 23, 1990, Daly City Manager David Rowe is quoted as saying: "We're doing this for the tax revenue." (13) (Financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a report prepared for Daly City in 1968 by Livingston and Blayney, City & Regional Planners, in discussing annexation, states that "sales tax revenues from commercial property east of Junipero Serra Boulevard also would be a plus factor" (14) and the pattern of annexations suggests an aggressive long term policy.)

What is remarkable is that this 31 acres includes the BART storage yard and valuable tax-producing commercial property, but does not include the new BART station. It should be observed that the BART station produces no tax revenue since it is owned by a public agency. Moreover, although BART has its own police, the Broadmoor Police District is also responsible for this area. (15)

To cite each annexation would be tedious (the Daly City Record of October 14, 1991 refers to 47 previous annexations of Broadmoor land; suffice it to emphasize that it is the annexations which have impaired the tax base of the Broadmoor Police District. With the passage of Bill 24, referred to on page 1, Broadmoor residents hope they will have some say in their future, but Daly City has not ruled out going to court, should they seek annexation of other parcels in this area.

At this point it is pertinent to review the role of LAFCO (a Local Agency Formation

Commission that each county, except San Francisco, must have according to legislation passed in 1963). Each commission is composed of five members: 2 county supervisors, 2 city council members, and one at-large or public member. The purpose of the commission is to discourage urban sprawl and to ensure an orderly development of local government. In addition to determining the sphere of influence of each city and special districts within the county, LAFCO reviews requests to change the organization or boundaries of an existing agency, considers the impact of such changes on the residents and agencies affected, and on the distribution of property tax. Proposals brought before LAFCO may be rejected, approved, or modified. (16) One cannot avoid the conclusion that LAFCO sympathies are not with Broadmoor, and in this respect, in asking "the staff to look at why this unincorporated area of around 5,000 residents is unique enough to warrant being the only one in California with its own police jurisdiction," (17) LAFCO Commissioner Mary Henderson's remarks seem particularly revealing. Yet in a letter dated February 17, 1971, to George V. Ng, a Broadmoor resident, Assemblyman Leo Ryan states: "While LAFCO was set up by legislation authorized by Assemblyman Knox, he has agreed that the piecemeal annexation which has been allowed in the Broadmoor area is contrary to the intent of his legislation." (18)

In researching the sequence of events in Broadmoor history, and its inhabitants' resolve to remain independent, one observes the strong role played by the Property Owners' Association, in conjunction with the Special Police Protection District: meetings are held and a newsletter is put out each month; neighborhood activities, an Easter Egg Hunt, Fourth of July parade, Halloween Party, and a Santa Claus Parade continue to be held.

Another area of interest has been the subject of incorporation which was discussed in 1954-55, but, although incorporation would have protected Broadmoor from piecemeal annexations, incorporation was never adopted. An incorporation study was also made in July 1967 by Dwight E. Sanders, a Coro Foundation intern in public affairs, (19) but a Broadmoor Property Owners' Association directors' resolution was forced to conclude that, lacking business and industry, or facilities to attract new industry, incorporation would be detrimental to the best interests of the people of Broadmoor.

The most recent development in this saga has been the filing of arguments with the

County Clerk's office, whereby residents will vote at a special May 24 election on Measure A, which would allow the district to continue to levy a parcel tax of up to \$140.00 a year for police services. This will be the fourth time that a tax measure similar to the one first enacted in 1982 and expiring every four years, has been put to the voters, and they have consistently demonstrated their support for the Police Protection District.

The future of Broadmoor is not automatically assured by the passage of Bill 24, since the law is effective for only five years, at which time it will have to be reconsidered by the Legislature before it can be extended. (20) Although Daly City intends to challenge the law we can be equally certain that Broadmoor and the Special Police Protection District will put up a strong fight to keep their cherished independence.

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The gathering of the details which have gone into this account would not have been possible without the interest of a great many people, whose help I deeply appreciate and wish to acknowledge:

Linda Biagini made available files of the Broadmoor Property Owners' Association. Shirley Burgett made helpful suggestions as to where I might find sources of information.

Glynnis Carreira loaned me a copy of La Peninsula, The Journal of the San Mateo County Historical Association, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Fall 1992, which provided an historical perspective of this area before post World War II development.

Kenneth and Bunny Gillespie, who staff the Mini Museum of the History Guild of Daly City/Colma every Tuesday between 1:00 and 2:30 p.m. at Serramonte Library, kindly made available to me files containing newspaper clippings about Broadmoor and Annexations.

Timothy Guiney, Chief of Broadmoor Police Department, gave graciously of his time. Librarians in the Reference Library at SFSU, who helped me find sources of information on LAFCO.

The Reference Desk at Serramonte Library also provided me with source material. San Mateo County, Assessor's Office, Drafting Department, Redwood City, made available four files on Daly City annexations. Although I have not quoted detail from these files they gave me a better understanding of government procedures and jargon.

There were many others to whom I chatted on the phone, and although at times you may find yourself referred, for example, from the recorder's office, to the assessor's office, to the drafting office, all leads have to be followed up for, like a detective, you never- know which one is going to strike the Comstock Lode. And then there is the bonus: the people you meet who are genuinely interested, and wish to be helpful. In addition, you have a greater appreciation of the work put in by those historians who have gone before, and who combine style and thoroughness in weaving their tale. You also learn the importance of making good notes. How easy it is to make a copy of a newspaper clipping and, later, find that you didn't make a note of the date or source!

Another bonus was all the things I discovered on the way, as when one goes to a dictionary to look up a word and stops at a lot of other interesting words en route.. Annexations by Daly City of Broadmoor parcels of land are but the most recent examples of disputed land. Indeed, one local dispute was finally resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court: Robert Thornton, who came around the Horn in 1851, had title to land in this area, and was chosen to represent his neighbors as well as himself in court when their property was claimed by others and they were evicted. Only his persistence in taking the matter to the Supreme Court brought them, some years later, reinstatement of their title.

Instead of the layers of history being revealed, as in an archeological dig, we can read the succession of historical accounts and bring to life in the mind's eye the succeeding episodes that have occurred since Portola first stopped in 1769 at Sweeney's Ridge, a distance of approximately ten miles from the heart of Broadmoor Village. Working on this paper has brought the land to life, and I shall never look at the area again with quite the same unseeing eyes.

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### Notes & Bibliography

- (1) San Mateo Times, November 21, 1991
- (2) Data taken from the Broadmoor Police District 1985 Annual Report, p.1
- (3) Ibid., p.10
- (4) Ibid., p.10
- (5) Daly City Record, October 7, 1948
- (6) Daly City Record, November 18, 1948
- (7) Conversation with Ken Gillespie, February 8, 1994
- (8) Stanger, Frank M., Ph.D., Peninsula Community Book, (San Mateo Co., Calif.), A. H. Cawsten, Managing Editor & Publisher, San Mateo County, 1946, p.195
- (9) Conversation with Ken Gillespie, February 8, 1994
- (10) Data taken from the Broadmoor Police District 1985 Annual Report, p.5
- (11) Daly City Record, June 30, 1990
- (12) The Times, (San Mateo), April 23, 1991
- (13) The Times, (San Mateo), November 23, 1990
- (14) Contained in Broadmoor Property Owners' Association file
- (15) Conversation with Chief of Police Timothy Guiney, February 24, 1994
- (16) League of Women Voters of California, Sacramento, Guide to California Government, 14th ed., 1992, p.154
- (17) The Times, (San Mateo), January 17, 1991
- (18) Copy of letter in Broadmoor Property Owners' Association file
- (19) Broadmoor Incorporation Survey, July 1967, made by Dwight E. Sanders
- (20) Daly City Record, March 16, 1994