

# Elizabeth Mullen's Story

## 1. 1906 Earthquake and Refugee Camp

- Several of my ancestors belonged to the fraternal organization Woodmen of the World, as members of the Camp Richmond order. After the 1906 earthquake and fire, a refugee camp was established on Park Presidio Boulevard called Camp Richmond. I am sure the WOW members were instrumental in building the refugee shacks and helping their fellow neighbors, as the fraternal organization was known for its volunteer efforts and assisting those in need.
- My grandmother (Catherine McCarron) was two years old and living at 8<sup>th</sup> and Point Lobos Avenue when the earthquake struck San Francisco. She recalled her family living in a tent in Golden Gate Park, and her mother dressing her up in her best I. Magnin outfit.

## 2. Life in the Outer Richmond/Carriages in the Dunes

- My maternal ancestors settled in the Outer Richmond district in the late 1860's at what is today 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Geary. The story that has passed down is that they were one of the first five families to settle in the outside lands.
- Early on my family had a dairy farm, and the land was all sand dunes that were not easy to navigate – in those days it was all horses and carriages.
- There is a family story that one day a horse broke away from the milk truck it was carting and was stampeding right in the direction of my then two-year old great aunt Ethel, who was sitting on the side of the road. Her mother (who at the time was seven-months pregnant) saw the horse coming towards her daughter, and she screamed out and covered her right eye with her hand. Luckily, the horse jumped over Ethel and she was not harmed. Two months later, her mother gave birth to a baby girl with a large birthmark covering her right eye (some say it was in the shape of a hoof).

## 3. Agricultural Park/Golden Gate Driving Park

- In the early 1870's, my great-great grandfather's brother-in-law (John Cassidy) was a horse trainer at Agricultural Park (a half-mile race track), located where St. Monica's is today. He would occasionally participate in the races, although I am not sure he ever won.

- The Cassidy's owned horse stables along the Point Lobos Toll Road. Wealthy San Franciscans kept their horses at the stables and on Sundays would come out to the Richmond District to ride/race their horses and to enjoy the fresh ocean air.
- There were quite a few roadhouses along the Point Lobos Toll Road (in particular the Homestead House and the Turf House). There are stories that our family owned one of the roadhouses, and that my great-great grandfather's sister was a fabulous cook where everyone enjoyed her delicious meals. The roadhouses would also provide lodging in the event the patrons did not feel like making the trek back into the city. I do know that the farm/house where my ancestors settled (20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Point Lobos) listed my great-great grandmother as "landlord" in the 1900 census.

#### **4. Star of the Sea Church**

- From the time Star of the Sea opened in 188?, many of my ancestors were baptized, confirmed, schooled, married and had their funerals there. The existing building was erected in 1909, so this is their centennial year.
- My grandmother (Catherine McCarron) grew up right across the street from Star of the Sea and had many fond memories, in particular the parish picnics. She saved several post card pictures of the interior of Star of the Sea Church, probably from the early 1910's/1920's.

#### **5. Spanish American War/World War I/World War II**

- I had several ancestors that served in each of these wars. One ancestor was a merchant marine and served in the Spanish American War. Many soldiers were stationed at Camp Merritt during the war, which was located in the Richmond District (on the site of the old Bay District Race Track).
- My grandfather Joe Brady was in the import/export business, and mostly traded with China. WWII seriously impacted his business, as ships were no longer allowed for business trade. On Saturdays he volunteered with the Red Cross and would take his daughter with him downtown to make sandwiches.
- My aunt Joan grew up in the Richmond District and attended St. Monica's grammar school, and later St. Rose Academy high school. She recalls in the early days of WWII, they would have black-out rehearsals. One night a week around 7:00pm each home would be completely darkened, without even a candle flickering. The neighborhood volunteer warden would walk the streets with a flashlight to make sure all the neighbors were complying. There would also be the shrill of the air raid sirens to start the black-out rehearsal.

- My aunt Joan attended St. Rose Academy during WWII and recalls her school ring having the substitute stone of black onyx because red garnet was not available, and also having to wear cotton "lyle" hosiery instead of silk, which was in short supply.

## **6. How Do I See Myself in San Francisco's History?**

- I presently live in the Outer Richmond district, which is such a great neighborhood and makes me proud to be a native San Franciscan. It is inspiring to walk through the neighborhood and to think of all the wonderful contributions my family made to the community.
- Most of my closest friends to this day are schoolmates of mine from St. Rose Academy. Anyone from San Francisco knows it is all about the high school you attended. Unfortunately the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 closed the school's doors.
- I volunteer for several different San Francisco organizations to help preserve and support the rich diversity and culture of my neighborhood and the community of San Francisco.