

## The House that Water Built

The first developer of Cardiff by the Sea was not lacking in imagination. While other areas remained idle in providing help to bring water to their residents, Frank Cullen built his community water system.

In 1910, Frank Cullen and his wife Esther came to fulfill their dream. Frank had been a painter. This dream was to create a new coastal town. It began with the purchase of Hector MacKinnon's 600 acre farm on the coast south of Encinitas.

Initially, Cullen put Spanish street names on the survey map. This was what many others were doing on the coast. Esther had a far different idea. Esther's wish was to use Cardiff, Wales as the town's name, with streets named after English towns. I am sure Esther's wish gained harmony at home.

Cullen's initial construction established the early town center with a hotel, school, train station, and a water tank. The tank was built in 1911. The location was Chesterfield and Glasgow, the highest point in Cardiff. The water source was Cottonwood Creek, three miles away in Encinitas. The water was carried through a two-inch main pipe attached to a gasoline engine. Much to the dismay of the Cardiff residents, the gasoline engine was frequently unreliable. Cardiff Market owner, Ira Connor said, "We were always running out of water..."

The construction of the tank was quite impressive. The reinforced concrete walls are 9 inches thick and 20 feet high above ground. A redwood roof structure covered the water in the concrete circular container. A west side pump house provided water pressure to the homes.

In 1923, Hodges Dam became the permanent water source. The pump at Cottonwood Creek was abandoned. The newly formed Encinitas Irrigation District provided the water piping to the Cardiff Community. The Tower stood on the hill unused until 1927.

Ernest V. Woodward I and his wife Ora bought the Tower property from Cullen. Ernest hired a builder, who made a 1200 square foot room in the tower. Two doors and 2 windows were cut through the concrete. The original Ponderosa fur

floor is one that remains today on the second floor with a stone fire place. At a later time the third floor living area was constructed above the tower. Outside stairs we made to the second and third floors, and remain as the entrances. The basement today holds all types of tools and saved items of many years. The 12 inch water release pipe is safely covered. The entire two living spaces are a total of 2,400 square feet.

In 1941, Mary Margaret Lee came to San Diego and that same year married Ernest Woodward II, who coined the phrase, "Ye Old Tank Tower", in all of his correspondence. Ernie's training as a fireman provided the opportunity to man the fire station at the Del Mar Racetrack for the California Forestry Department. It was a two man station, and one job was for Mary. She pulled hose and did all the fireman tasks. She may have been the only women fireman in the State of California at that time. When they went for a night at the La Paloma Theater, the fire truck went with them. Telephone communication was prearranged by asking the management to get them if the emergency call came. One serious fire that they fought was the Black Mountain Fire. To keep the fire from spreading the Marines were called, and a total disaster was prevented.

In August 1944, Mary and Ernest established a third Woodward generation with the birth of Ernest III. Mary took a leave of absence. She was told that her job would be open for her, however she did not return. "Her name is probably still on the register", she said. Mary's community service did not end with retirement. She formed the Cardiff Mother's Club, the parent support group for Cardiff School. One activity she remembers was preserving the damaged bell of the Old Cullen School. She solicited the money for the repair, and the bell was saved.

During World War II, her home became housing for extended family. Housing growth stopped. Relatives came to live in all the possible Tower places, even in the basement. War worker's accommodations in North County were nil. Mary remembers making six lunches for the families who worked at Camp Pendleton during this time.

Corky Woodward, her son, is now assisting his 91 year old mother. A west balcony has added to mother's pleasure by her son's carpentry skills. I had the

feeling that she is very pleased with it. The historic Cardiff Water Tower is 101 years old and is in good hands.