What the Newspapers Said About Daisy

“Long live the festive Daisy!”
- The Kansas City Times 26th February 1889

“A shop girl of extraordinary beauty … a pretty fly female generally.”
- Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner 26th October 1889

“Once a soiled butterfly in New York and now the wife of a German nobleman.”
- New York Herald 10th November 1889

- San Francisco Chronicle 28th February 1891

“As a romance I think her career so far is equal to that of Cleopatra or Theodora.”
- Oakland Tribune 24th October 1891

“One of the most accomplished adventuresses of two continents.”
- San Francisco Chronicle 4th March 1895

“Ordinary mortal would shrink from the rugged road over which the milliner girl travelled to reach her goal, but to her it was a path of roses, and she ungrudgingly paid the price.”
- San Francisco Chronicle 29th October 1896

“Baroness de Buren, of Budapest, a former Mayfield, Cal. girl, who has become notorious in Europe, is again in San Francisco.”
- Hawaiian Gazette 27th December 1901
The Tug Boat Captain

Daniel Henry Haskell was born in Maine and came to California in 1869, when he was just 15 years old, on-board the British ship *Commodore*.

Dan, as he was known by all, sailed for a time in coasting vessels and entered the tow boat business as a deck-hand on the tug *Neptune*. He was to go on to become one of the most successful men in the business at picking up derelicts and bringing in salvage ships. His first command was as captain of the Pacific Mail tug *Millen Griffith*, from which he went on to captain the *Alert*. In 1883, when the *Relief* was built and launched in the East, Captain Haskell was sent to Cramps to fetch her to San Francisco. He brought the handsome vessel out in record time for her class and later set a record with her for the longest tow by bringing the bark *Sharpshooter* from Central America safely to San Francisco.

His final command was of the *Fearless*, which was the largest tow boat in the United States when she was launched in 1891. The boat was 153 feet over all and registered at 365 tons. During her launch, Captain Haskell was standing in the bow of the boat and gracefully bowed his acknowledgement as three cheers were given for him.

One of Captain Haskell’s more unusual duties with the *Fearless* was to carry out trials of the latest technology in ship-to-ship communication: a speaking-trumpet. This was demonstrated to representatives of the Alaska Packers’ Association on St Patrick’s Day, 1896, as reported by *The San Francisco Call*:

In order to satisfy themselves as to its merits S. B. Matthews, the company’s cannery superintendent, and Sydney S. Smith, chief clerk, went out in a Whitehall boat yesterday and took one of the instruments with them. When away beyond the British ship *Reliance* they could hear every word distinctly and Captain Dan Haskell and Mr Matthews kept up quite an animated conversation although fully a mile apart.
The monitor Camanche was within hailing distance and the watch aboard was ordered to go below and take a stiff horn of whisky in honor of St Patrick. The men looked around in bewilderment but they did not go below – as the demijohn was empty. The Reliance was decked with flags in honor of Ireland’s patron saint, and Captain Haskell turned the tube on the ship while Messrs Matthews and Smith awaited results a few boat-lengths away. “Reliance, ahoy!” called Captain Dan, and the men on deck ran to the side. “Hurrah for ould Ireland!” and the crew took it up and the answering cheer was heard at Folsom-street wharf.

The Alaska Packers’ Association is so pleased with the new instruments that it will equip all its vessels with them. There will be one for each boat and when the men are away from the vessel and caught in a fog they will have no difficulty in reaching the schooners.

A career afloat brings many hazards, but perhaps one of the most unexpected came later that year, on 1st September 1896, when Haskell was towing the Hawaiian ship John Ena down from Mare Island. When they were opposite Pinole Point, Haskell’s powerful tug, the Fearless, quivered and almost came to a standstill while the big John Ena heeled over as though in a heavy gale. The nitro-glycerine house at the nearby California Powder Works had blown up.

“I never saw anything like it in all my life,” said Haskell. “The explosion was terrific in its force and the flame shot a hundred feet into the air. Then the
smoke and vapor spread out until it looked like a gigantic umbrella, the handle being the thin column of smoke that connected the earth with the covering. The second explosion was not as bad as the first, and it seemed to spread right from the ground. Immediately afterward there was a third, and then we heard several light ones as we steamed along. By the aid of glasses I saw a number of houses in ruins. And I guessed from that that the loss of life would be considerable.”

The year before, in 1895, Haskell had been a very sick man. His physician diagnosed heart disease and ordered him to take a voyage to a warmer climate. Haskell went to Honolulu and, on his return on board the Australia, was reported as saying: “I enjoyed my trip to Honolulu, but how I did long to be back on the old vessel. Honolulu is a splendid place in which to spend a vacation. And I enjoyed it thoroughly. Still the bay of San Francisco is good enough for me and I am ready to go back to work tomorrow.” However, it may have been his illness that prompted him to accept an appointment as a pilot for San Francisco later in 1896.

Haskell was assigned to the Bonita, described as “the smartest pilot-boat on the Pacific coast.” His first job as pilot was to bring in the British tramp steamer Flintshire from sea and then take out the British ship Eastcroft. The San Francisco Call, reported that “He made a splendid showing in both instances thus proving he is equally good as a towman or pilot.”

It was said that during his entire career, Captain Haskell never met with an accident. However, the same cannot be said of his leisure pursuits. Back in 1890 he met with a very serious accident during a shooting trip to Sherman Island with a friend. While Haskell was pulling his fowling-piece through a fence, the gun went off and a full charge of bird shot entered his groin, inflicting a very serious wound. But it was Haskell’s sailing skills that were on the minds of a group of School Directors out for a pleasure trip on the Fearless in November, 1897, when they discovered first hand what the life of a tug boat captain and pilot could be like:

The Fearless was out with the School Directors and their friends, and among the latter was Captain “Dan” Haskell, the pilot. Haskell was the first to sight the Shenandoah and as the tug was homeward-bound Captain Randall ran down to the big ship. A small boat was lowered and Captain Haskell was put aboard to pilot her in, while the Fearless’ hawser was put aboard also. Then the School Directors and their friends had an experience they will not forget in a hurry. When everything was made fast and the Fearless began to forge ahead the excitement began.
When the *Shenandoah* would be on the crest of a mountainous wave the *Fearless* would be down in the trough of the sea, and to the eyes of the frightened excursionists it looked as though the big ship was coming right on top of them. The next minute, however, the positions would be reversed, and the people on the tug thought they were going to be pulled back on top of the ship. In fact so sure were some of the excursionists that this was going to happen that two or three of them seized axes and wanted to cut the hawser. It was a heavy tow, but the *Fearless* moved along as though she were running light, and the excursionists soon got over their scare and enjoyed the sight. The seasickness that had laid hold of everybody aboard disappeared and the last part of the trip, though by far and away the roughest, was voted the most enjoyable.

Haskell’s career as a pilot proved to be but brief. He died in 1899 – just in his mid-forties – after what had proved to be a lingering illness. He left behind his widow, Sarah, who had been born in New York of English parents. Together, they had a daughter, Emma, born at the end of 1878. Perhaps other children had followed and this had prompted the Haskells to look for help in looking after the children. For it was into this family that Daisy Newman came as a nursery maid. But if Sarah had no control over the hazards facing her husband at sea, she could at least influence those at home – as the *Kansas City Times* recalled (although Daisy was 14 not 16 years old):

> It was some time in 1882 that Daisy came up from her humble home in Mayfield. Her parents were poor but reputable people. She tired of the humdrum life down there and resolved to broaden her sphere of action. She was
a good girl then, but quite conscious of her fatal gift of beauty, and, though but 16 years old, had already resolved to coin that gift into wealth and influence.

She was not ambitious at first. She was even demure and retiring. She had a wealth of fair hair, a pair of ox-like eyes, but eyes which shone with a dangerous light, and a form that rivalled Hebe’s. The benevolent Captain Haskell, of the tugboat *Relief*, into whose family the embryo baroness first gained standing as a nursery maid, was so entranced with the glory of Daisy’s eyes that he secretly formed schemes to advance her interests. The captain in his benevolence omitted to mention to Mrs Haskell what these schemes were, but he had some vague notion of training Miss Daisy’s voice and sending her to Europe for that purpose. He also thought of teaching her grammar and one or two other little things she seemed in need of, but all these charitable impulses were one day squelched by the captain’s incautious zeal in praising his protege’s beauty in the hearing of the lady of the house.

The captain’s wife admired his benevolent spirit, and with him thought it would be a great thing to do something to elevate Daisy in the social scale; but, somehow, she concluded somebody else than the captain had better do it. At any rate she found a new nursery maid, and for several days afterwards the genial Captain Haskell was in the sulks at the thwarting of his benevolent purposes.