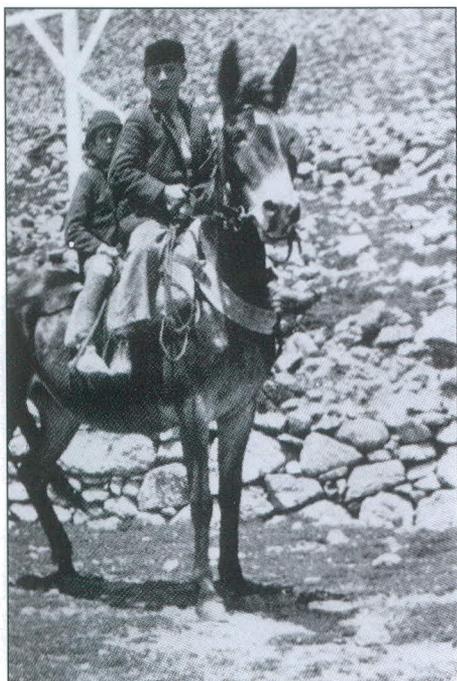


When the Steamer Came to the Farallones

by Milton Ray



Paddy, the second Farallon mule, giving a couple of the keeper's kids a ride. The T shaped structure in the background carried signal bell wires between various buildings on the island. Peter White photo.

Jerry, the mule purchased by Hartman Bache, continued to live on the island even after construction was finished. Jerry hauled supplies from the landing and oil to the lighthouse until he died on Christmas night 1874. At the time of his death he had the distinction of being on the island longer than any other resident. Jerry's replacement was Paddy, a mule also destined to live a long and productive life. To the annoyance of the keepers Paddy learned that "boat day" meant work day. On boat day Paddy was required to haul supplies, so when the tender's whistle was heard, Paddy would run off and hide among the rocks until she was brought back to do her duty.

Right—Cargo being lifted aboard the east landing of Southeast Farallon Island. The tender *Lupine* is hove to in the distance and both of the ship's boats are in view. The tender called once a month, weather permitting, to deliver food, mail, coal and other supplies. USLHS photo.

It always was a month at least,
'Till the steamer arrived from the shore, east,
And then the busiest days began
Of the uneventful, island year.
When, gladly acclaimed, the ship came at last,
With trail of smoke, and deafening blast
That far in the echoing caves would ring,
The sea lions swift to the surf would slide;
And out from many a lofty ledge,
Where sheer cliffs wall the harbor edge,
Would scatter far and wide in fear,
Ten thousand querulous birds a-wing.
And the lone, gray mule in the pasture drear,
Who had been staring out to sea,
Or munching wire grass leisurely,
Now, stiff-legged and stumbling ran,
From bitter tasks to vainly hide
'Neath the lowering roof of some cave mouth, near,—
Poor, old, gray mule, bony and slim,
The steamer brought no joy for him!
The ship's boat, loaded high and deep,
From the anchored craft to the landing plied,
Where a long-armed crane swung o'er the tide.
Then up the rock-rough tower trail,
Zigzag, narrow, long and steep,
Which climbs the dominant Tower Crag,
That laboring mule with its pack of oil,
Forced and slow would slaving toil.
Or an unwilling car he now would drag
On dull, unhappy, creaking wheel,—
Along the track of rusty steel,
That from the landing lazily led
Round beach-coves strewn with storm-tossed wood,
Through the high-walled pass with its whistling gale,
And then, with the gently sloping bed
That down the south slope slowly wound,
Across the isle to open ground.
Here, on the broad and stony turf,
Below the lone, wind-swept Tower Light,
And facing towards the southern surf,
The dwellings of the keepers stood,
Red-roofed and spotless white.

