

Harry J. Doulton

B- 1860 D- 1928

The Doulton Trophy:

Every day, hundreds of people pass between the two concrete columns at the entrance to the Santa Barbara breakwater on their way to the docks. Dedicated on June 30, 1930, the columns were built as a permanent expression of gratitude for the completion of the harbor project. The right column bears a bronze plaque honoring Major Max Fleischman for his crucial financial contributions. The left lists the names of the politicians, benefactors, and contractors who helped make the breakwater possible.

One name, however, was given special prominence. At the bottom of the dedications, in large lettering, it reads:

“THE HARBOR COMMISSION HEREBY RECORDS WITH DEEPEST APPRECIATION FOR HIS VISION AND UNTIRING EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THIS STRUCTURE THE NAME OF ITS DECEASED MEMBER, HARRY J. DOULTON.”

Harry Josiah Doulton was a descendant of the founder of Royal Doulton, the English pottery company established in 1815. His family had owned the Miramar property since the 1870s, and after running a feed store in downtown Santa Barbara, Harry eventually managed the property and its hotel. The Doultons also owned Cold Spring Tavern, which the family sold to Commodore Earle Ovington in 1941.

Even a brief review of Doulton’s contributions makes it clear why his community chose to enshrine his name at the harbor. Elected to the County Board of Supervisors in 1906, he resigned as chair in 1915 to focus on the Montecito Water District. There, he was instrumental in creating the Juncal Dam and the Toro Canyon Tunnel—later renamed the Doulton Tunnel—which continues to supply Montecito with water today. He played a central role in the creation of the breakwater and harbor, participated in the partition survey of Santa Cruz Island in 1923, and was a founding member of the Santa Barbara Yacht Club, where his son Robert served as commodore in 1926.

Doulton also shaped the city’s infrastructure in unexpected ways. In 1887, when the Southern Pacific Railroad extended its line into Santa Barbara, he insisted the tracks be laid closer to the ocean rather than inland, protecting his profitable barley fields. The tracks remain in that location today, giving modern train passengers a sweeping view of the coastline.

Local newspapers of the time reveal just how revered Doulton was. As he lay ill with pneumonia for ten days in March 1928, the *Morning Press* provided near-daily updates on his condition. He passed away at his hotel, the Miramar, on March 30. One of his employees captured the sense of loss felt throughout the community: *“I felt as if a giant redwood had gone down with a crash in the forest and left a lonesome place against the sky.”*

His legacy extended to Santa Barbara's sailing tradition as well. In 1923, he donated the trophy that still bears his name for that year's regatta, which has since been rededicated to Wet Wednesday races.

Nearly a century later, Harry J. Doulton's name remains carved into the breakwater columns. Every visitor who walks between them, should they choose to look, can be reminded of his vision, his service, and the enduring mark he left on Santa Barbara and the Yacht Club.

SBYC History Committee, Eric Peterson, 2026