

## 'Dan the Miner'

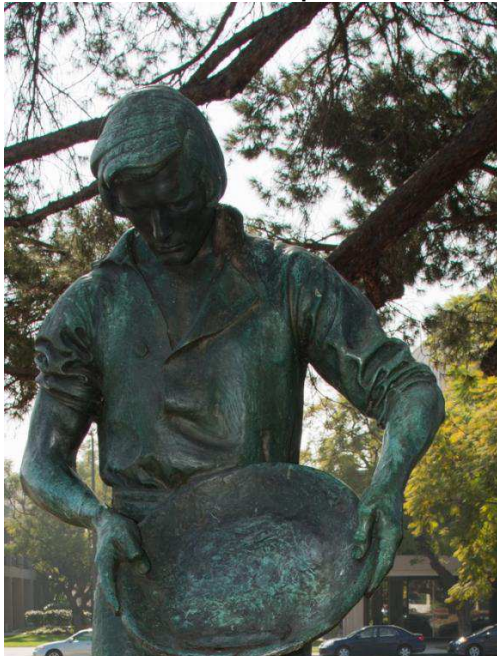
Murder, searching for gold, and being cut in half?

The memorial statue of Daniel O. McCarthy and the Pioneers of '49



Surrounded by faux rocks and under a large, sprawling tree, the bronze statue of Daniel O'Connell McCarthy stands seven feet tall, and the plaque indicates it is a memorial to the pioneer spirit of the many thousands who, like McCarthy, tried their luck in the 1949 Gold Rush.

Originally the statue was located near the Carthay Circle Theatre movie palace. When the theater was demolished in 1969, this statue was moved to Carthay Circle Park, little more than a triangular pocket park-cum traffic island at McCarthy Vista/San Vicente Boulevard. McCarthy is intensely focused, his head bowed down as he looks into his pan for granules of glittering gold, though the large pond that used to nearly encircle him was replaced by a gravel pathway in 1969 too.



Sculpted by Henry Lion and weighing in at over 500 pounds, the statues that locals call “Dan the Miner” was erected in 1925 by a member of the Native Sons of the Golden West. McCarthy, who was born in North Carolina in 1830, had a colorful life both as a person and a statue.

McCarthy panned for gold, and was also a patriotic newspaper editor. This statue honors McCarthy for his mining exploits and also as a patriot. As editor of the San Francisco newspaper *The American Flag*, he decried slavery and supported women’s rights. More controversially, on Christmas Day of 1862, he shot a man named John A. Davis in cold blood. The unarmed Davis was dining in a restaurant in Sonora, California, when McCarthy entered and opened fire, the pair struggling before two more shots rang out.

Davis had a checkered background. He and McCarthy had a long-standing feud over the death of a friend of McCarthy’s, and a more recent dispute over Davis foreclosing on the office McCarthy owned. Davis had also accused McCarthy of desertion from the U.S. Army, and was apparently collecting evidence to support his case.



Daniel O'Connell McCarthy



J. Harvey McCarthy

After the Gold Rush, there were allegations of corruption around McCarthy’s mining and real estate interests in his new home of San Diego, though it seemed most of the trouble centered around his young son John Harvey. J. Harvey McCarthy would be the future developer of the Carthay Circle, an upscale Los Angeles neighborhood. Known as “Get-Rich-Quick Harvey,” he was mired in trouble of all kinds, yet he always seemed to get away more or less scot-free.

The older McCarthy himself lived to a ripe old age of 88 and was buried at the Hollywood Forever cemetery in 1919. J. Harvey passed in 1935 at age 65.

It was John and Ramona Parlor who helped develop the Carthay Circle neighborhood, which was the first to have underground telephone and electrical lines. Many of the streets in the area are named after other notable—but long-forgotten—people of the era, and John also built a church on the corner of Olympic Blvd and Carrillo Drive in honor of his mother Amanda, though this may have been a form of penance.



Today Amanda Chapel is the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour



In 2008, nearly 90 years after his death, Daniel McCarthy found himself in the news again. Two thieves stole the statue, and there were fears that it was going to be melted down for scrap. Luckily it was soon found, and though the thieves had cut it in half at the waist to make it easier to transport, after a few months of restoration Dan was returned to the island in early 2009. This time his feet were very firmly affixed to a heavy boulder inside the faux rock atop which he stands.



**The Pioneer – Celebrating the Gold Miners of 1849**