

# HISTORY GUILD of DALY CITY/COLMA

Volume 7 - No. 2 Nov. 1988

## "THE MOVIES GO WEST" AT DOELGER CENTER NOV. 16TH

There was a large motion-picture making industry in the Bay Area in the second decade of our century. Its history will be delineated by noted film historian and producer **GEOFFREY BELL**, who will present one of his prize-winning documentaries, "The Movies Go West", at our upcoming meeting, **Wednesday, November 16th, 7:30 p.m.**, Doelger Center.

The film depicts the site of the Essanay studios in Niles, California, where film luminaries Ben Turpin, Wallace Beery, Marie Dressler, Chester Conklin, and Charlie Chaplin, and real cowboys lived and worked, turning out exciting films, using local scenery and lots of good weather filming opportunities.

Chaplin's famous signature walk was shot in Niles Canyon, and Broncho Billy Anderson (the AY of ESSANAY) produced hundreds of wild West locale movies.

**Geoffrey Bell** has produced 5 film histories, ranging in subjects from film-making to the lives of Jack London and, just finished, Bret Harte.

Motion picture making is a second career for **Mr. Bell**, first a career member of the U.S. Coast Guard.

"The Movies Go West" has won two major film awards, the **Wrangler Trophy** from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, and the **Columbus Film Festival Award**.


The history of Bay Area film-making has also been documented by **Geoffrey Bell** in his lavishly-illustrated book "The Golden Gate and the Silver Screen."

It tells the little-known and long-neglected story of pioneer movie-making in the S.F. Bay Area - a wide spectrum of cinematic activity that began with the world premiere of the projected motion picture in 1880.


One spring evening of that year, patrons of the Art Association in San Francisco were arrayed in chairs facing a curtain. At the rear of the hall was a magic lantern, which, after a summary by

THE HISTORY GUILD of DALY CITY/COLMA  
PROUDLY PRESENTS ANOTHER

# HISTORY EVENING



**WEDNESDAY, November 16 at 7:30 pm**





Silent Film Making  
in the Bay Area

## "The Movies Go West"

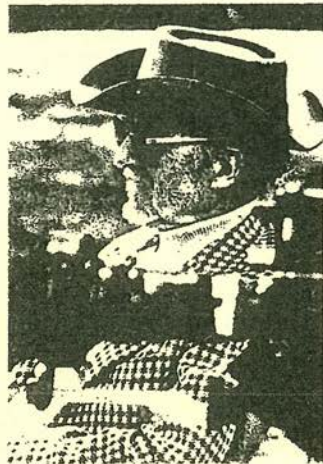
A Documentary Hosted by  
**Geoffrey Bell**  
Producer-Film Historian

Doelger Center Multi-Purpose Room  
101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City

 **ADMISSION FREE!** 

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Film historian **Geoffrey Bell**, producer of the documentary film "THE MOVIES GO WEST", our next Guild program.



the speaker, **Edward Muybridge**, began to project a series of static, life-size horses, which miraculously began to move, first a leg, then another, gathering momentum until the horse was running at full speed. The motion picture was born!



Broncho Billy Anderson, not really "bellying up to the bar", but you can get the idea...

## **"SHIPWRECKS" A BIG SUCCESS!**

Since the advent of radar and other navigational aids, the dangers of sailing near shorelines has been diminished. We were startled on September 21st last, our latest Guild meeting, to hear that there have been more than **400 shipping casualties** in and around the Golden Gate since the settling of the area in the late 1700's.

Such was the theme of a fascinating history of such problems by GGNRA's **Ranger-Historian John Martini**, who with slide and narration took us through many a ship disaster in our own Golden Gate.

The wreck of the Rio de Janeiro is now believed to have occurred on the northern side of the Golden Gate, not the Fort Point shelf. There is a clipper ship buried in the sands at the foot of Noriega in the sunset. Pictures of her timbers were a fascinating revelation to the rapt audience of about 130 members and friends.

Many attendees remember the wrecks of the Coos Bay, Frank Buck, Ohioan and the debris strewn beaches at Land's End. One of **Mr. Martini's** stressed points was

the strange anomaly of the public considering that a shipwreck is fair game for the observer. He who can pry loose can take, and there is little that the historians can do to protect the discovered hulks if exposed for public view.

**Captain Jack Elliot, Goldie Goldberg** and others who'd been deep-water sailors added well to the evening's lore of ships and shipwrecks. We certainly came away from the meeting well-versed in the early day hazards of Golden Gate navigation!

Because there was no July meeting, and therefore no official installation following the May meeting election of officers, President **Ken Gillespie** asked for a mutual assent installation by voice acclamation.

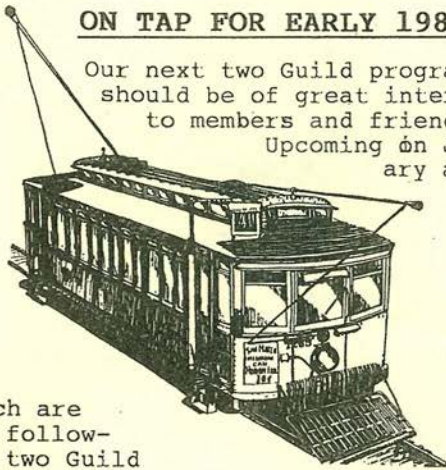
After reading the names of those who were elected in May, the members present were asked to say in unison, "**You're installed!**" They did and they were, hooray!

Dignitaries present were Mayor **Al Teglia** and Daly City Councilman **Tony Giammona**, High School Trustee **Betty Schultz**, continuing the unbroken record of attendance by city officials from our communities at Guild functions.

For the first time, a sign sheet for goodies was sent around, well-signed, so that the Refreshment Committee, under the able leadership of **Mary Hutchings**, could operate under a wider base. Those who signed for Nov. 16th, as a reminder, were: **Bunny Gillespie, Olga Tourkoff, Mary Redfearn, Eileen Ford, Al Teglia and Mae Bensen**. Each are asked to bring four dozen goodies of some kind. Many thanks in advance to these very nice people!

### ON TAP FOR EARLY 1989

Our next two Guild programs should be of great interest to members and friends.  
Upcoming on January and



March are the following two Guild activities:

#### January 22 - COLMA TOWN HALL

We will be celebrating the **SEVENTH BIRTHDAY** of our Guild, in our traditional Colma setting, for the members' gala!

We also will remember the demise of the famous **#40 STREETCAR**, which ceased operation in January of 1949. With slides and motion picture film, **Mr. Walter Vielbaum** will re-create the era of the "Big Subs", as they were known. And, of course, there will be special foods and refreshments for the party!

#### March 15 - DOELGER CENTER

**Mr. Frank Spadarella**, well-known photographer and restaurateur in the North County, will present a narrated slide program entitled:

#### "ITALIANS OF THE NORTH PENINSULA"

Considering the rich heritage of our early and current citizens of Italian extraction, **Mr. Spadarella's** program will most certainly be of great significance to us all.

### AF IL PHOTO TREASURE!

Thanks to the generosity of a long-time Daly City resident, the Guild has received a splendid collection of aerial photographs of the area which became Broadmoor and Westlake.

Dated 1946 through 1960, the Moulin Studios pix are startlingly clear, and, through magnifying glasses, give a wonderful record of the local tract builders as they filled out hills and gullies with new, attractively-priced homes.

Donated by **Ruby Weisner**, the widow of former Daly City Electrician **Hank Weisner**, the pictures are part of a yearly record commissioned, we believe, by the Doelger Corporation as part of their promotional activity.

Most fascinating is the 1946 pic, showing the area from near Mussel Rock all the way to San Francisco. Park Merced is shown, but no towers yet. Garden Village has streets laid out, but homes visible on Garden Lane, and just beginning on the west end of Village Lane.

The route of the Ocean Shore Railway is clearly visible, from its westerly exit at the Lake Merced Golf Club, bending northwest through the planted fields below Alemany Blvd. A large group of farm buildings are shown about where we figure is now Wildwood and Southgate.

Also noted is that Knowles Ave. did not reach through to Junipero Serra until perhaps 1950-51? Anybody remember?

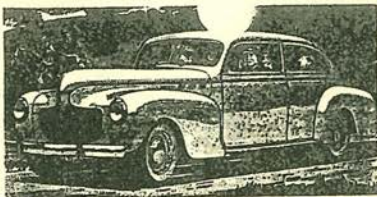
Our thanks are extended also to **Ron Darling**, one of our city's Planning Commissioners, who delivered the pictures from **Mrs. Weisner**.

### HISTORICAL NOTES

An intriguing package of newspapers has been donated to the Guild, mostly from 1940's, copies of the **Daly City Record**, and each having been saved because of reference to Daly City resident **Bill Gfroerer**, at that time an employee of the Record.

Received from **Bill and Trudy Gfroerer**, the papers give a delightful flavor of life in a small town (and Daly City surely was one) before World War II.

A front-page item described the delivery of a "shining new Harley-Davidson motorcycle...approximately \$350... to be used by Officer **Rico Benedetti** in pursuit of traffic offenders..."



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Advertisement from 1940 Daly City Record, bringing back memories of the "good old days"???

## James E. Donahue

6259 Mission Street

Phone RANDolph 9941

Local Draft Boards were sending out questionnaires to prospective inductees. The James Donahue DeSoto dealerships was advertising Deluxe Coupes for \$845. However, times really ain't changed. There is an asterisk after the price, with a footnote saying, "Delivered at Detroit, Mich. Federal taxes included, transportation, state & local taxes extra."

The July 3, 1940 edition features a photo of the Daly City Municipal Band, celebrating 10 years of organization.

A group photo shows the band with bear emblem on the bass drum. Listed as members are Bill Gfroerer, trombone, and Henry Sundermann, clarinet, Miss Bobbie Bruce, drum majorette, and conductor George Brenner. Does anybody know if a uniform is still in existence...hmmmm?

### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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