

THE TATTLER



JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY-COLMA

PRESIDENT'S TRIBUTE TO TWO GUILD FOUNDERS:

I'm sorry to have to share that our dear friend and former President Ken Gillespie passed away on October 29. Ken had been in declining health for the last several years and died one day after celebrating his 87th birthday. He along with wife Bunny and a few others was a founder and charter member of the Guild back in 1982. Both were the official historians for Daly City, as conferred by the city council in 1987. Many tributes have been made, both while Ken was with us and since his passing, but I would like to briefly reflect on how I first met him and was introduced to the Guild.

While a broadcast journalism student at San Francisco State University more than 20 years ago, I had an assignment to conduct an interview about an issue of local importance. I had read that the old city hall on Wellington was soon to be demolished and wanted to learn more about its history and place in the community. Originally moving from San Francisco several years before, I was not very knowledgeable about the area's history. I soon made contact with Ken and Bunny, both of whom were gracious enough to let me interview them at the current city hall. With tape recorder in hand, Ken was a fount of knowledge on everything pertaining to the Wellington city hall and more; amongst many facts shared was the revelation that that was not the city's original city hall but in fact the second. I remember being most impressed not only with the wealth of information being recited, but by the great fascination Ken had with the subject matter he was sharing. [Not long afterward I would pursue a minor in History.] Needless to say, with an interview like Ken, I got an A on the project. It would be just a few years later that I would become actively involved in the Guild and mentored by both Ken and Bunny to join the board, and the rest as the saying goes, is history.

As the years went on, Ken would explain more about the community's rich and diverse history. During my early years with the Guild I would join him, Bunny, and other Guild stalwarts such as Al Teglia, Russ Brabec, and Marilyn Olcese along with the late Don Manning, Walter and Elaine Riney, Mary Hutchings, Betty and

JANUARY DAYTIME MEETING



CENTENNIAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Back by popular demand, costumed centennial music performers led by Vaughn Jones will return at our member party on Sunday, January 15th, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. with an all-new performance of popular music from the period around 1911. Join in a lively sing-along with lyrics projected on the wall.

**Sunday, January 15th
2:00 p.m.**

FREE - REFRESHMENTS
101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City
Doelger Center Café

Our annual party - join us for cake and champagne!



Walter Schultz, Roz and Ted Babow, and more at the original Victorian Days in San Mateo Central Park. Those were the days!



1984 photo of Bunny Gillespie, Ken Gillespie, Mark Weinbeger, Russ Brabec, and an unknown visitor (standing) at the Guild's outdoor Victorian Day exhibit. Ken is holding a spray bottle of "official" Daly City/Colma "Air" to cool visitors to the booth. Early Guild banner was hand made by Ken, an accomplished graphic artist who volunteered his talents to the Guild creating stationary, signs, and exhibits for the mini-museum and providing production services for the *Tattler* newsletter.

When I was asked if I would serve as vice president during a board restructuring I modestly agreed, knowing that the standard role of a vice president is to step in when the president is unable and not have to assume much more responsibility; that would be just fine with me. After all, Ken was our superlative president. How could I or anyone else ever hope or want to fill his unique shoes?



Ken in fine form at a St. Patrick's Day Guild Raffle. His sense of humor and goodwill charmed audiences at Guild History Evenings.

However, as the years went on and illness eventually took its toll on Ken, I was asked to take on the presidency--something I had never contemplated nor aspired to do. After all, there was and would ever be only one Ken Gillespie. The only way

I could do this would be with Bunny's reassurance and continued support. I am so glad that Ken was able to be with us when we opened the permanent museum in 2009 and dedicated the Ken & Bunny Gillespie Room. This was the culmination of a life's pursuit and dream at long last realized. While he is no longer with us, Ken's legacy

will live on through the museum and the Guild that he helped to create. I know that we all will miss and remember him fondly, being the richer and wiser for having had him in our lives. On behalf of us all I say "Thank you for everything, Ken. You were a good friend, gracious human being, and remarkable scholar."

We also recently lost another Guild veteran, Christiana "Chris" Graham. Some of you newer to the Guild might not be familiar with this name. Chris, like Ken and myself, was not originally from Daly City but spent a good deal of her later years there until finally moving to Fullerton, CA more than 15 years ago. She died on August 19, just a little more than a month shy of celebrating her 90th birthday. She was a school teacher by profession and had a penchant for all things historical.



Christiana Graham in the early days of the Guild.

Along with her good friend and Guild charter member, the late Belva Carroll, Chris took an active interest in the community's history. The Guild was born out of the now-defunct Daly City History, Arts & Science Commission; Chris took it upon herself to create a community-oriented organization dedicated to the preservation of the city's local lore. In those early days she held organizing meetings in her Warwick Street home; took notes; served refreshments; wrote the newsletter; chaired meetings; and gathered supporters; however, this is not when or how I met the "Chairman," and only later learned of her association with the Guild.

I first met Chris in the summer of 1992. I was a staffer on the Clinton-Gore Presidential Campaign coordinating north San Mateo County and she walked into our South San Francisco office eager to volunteer. She was very passionate about this endeavor, just as she was about the Guild and other causes she held dear. As I already mentioned, I did not know of her involvement with the Guild until well after the election. We remained friends long after the campaign had ended. In 1995 she decided to sell her Daly City house, and move to Fullerton to be closer to her daughter. I don't remember all the particulars, but she asked me if I would drive a U-Haul truck with some of her antique furniture 'down south' as she put it. I would be invited to stay for a few days at 'Casa Graham,' her late ex-husband's ranch home which she had inherited and would be taking up residence. I would then visit Universal Studios,

Disneyland, etc. during a brief vacation. She drove her father's 1972 Buick sedan, long past needing to go to the final garage in the sky, and I followed with the U-Haul the entire way. This was in the years just before the Internet or proliferation of cell phones, so if we had become separated during the drive, well, it was reassuring to her driving in view of the truck. It worked, for almost 500 miles. Once in Fullerton, she had another car at the house which I used to visit the surrounding area. A few days later I would fly home. I kept up with Chris over the last 15 years, and when she heard that we were on the verge of opening a full and permanent museum on Mission Street she was filled with pride. She knew she wasn't up to traveling despite an open invitation to visit. However, she wished us well and made a very generous contribution toward the museum's success. Unfortunately, during these last few years she had been stricken with dementia, which had taken its toll. While she no longer remembered me, she did identify with that move 'down south,' and 'some fellow' who had driven the truck. For those of you who had the good fortune to know her, Chris definitely was a pistol. She was an inspiration to the Guild and to me, and she too will be missed. Goodnight, sweet princess, and thank you.

CENTENNIAL MEMORIES

By Bunny Gillespie, Daly City Historian

“ANNEXATION NOT DESIRABLE HERE” headlined a front-page story in the Daly City Record on Jan. 12, 1912. The subject had again been discussed at a recent meeting of the Daly City Board of Trustees. “The topic of annexation is not a new one,” reported J. L. Brown, editor of the newspaper. “It has cropped up every few months for the last couple of years.” “A recent message from San Francisco Mayor James Rolph,” wrote the editor while Daly City was still in its infancy, “strongly advocated the ultimate annexation of the whole of San Mateo County to San Francisco.” Brown spared no journalistic punches as he opined, “It seems the millionaires of Hillsborough... have secretly formed a committee of 100 members to bring about this object, and several people who are in no danger of becoming millionaires have at different times advocated the same cause.”

The reason for the favoring of annexation by millionaires was not clear, but the move was even less clear to “working people living just outside the limits of San Francisco.” Noted as fearful possibilities was the “taxing to death” of outlying areas of Greater San Francisco that would be used for civic improvements along the waterfront or on Market Street. Also cited for non-annexation reasoning was the possibility of inadequate representation on the SF Board of Super-visors and “little voice in what

shall be done in our own district.” Casual neglect to the nearby Ocean View district by “downtown” supervisors was given as an example.

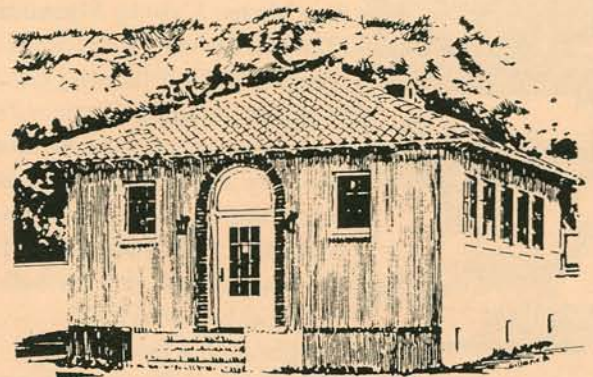
In his closing paragraph editor Brown noted that San Mateo County Supervisors had recently compared the spirit of Hillsborough millionaires with that of the people of Daly City. “While residents of the wealthier peninsula area had publicly guaranteed \$5000 for county road improvements,” Brown wrote, “They had declined to deliver the goods when the opportunity arose.” Meanwhile, the journalist noted, Daly City residents had donated their good will and assistance.

“With the Hillsborough class of millionaires favoring annexation,” concluded Mr. Brown one hundred years ago, “The common citizen of Daly City may well view with suspicion all overtures to that end.” And with that suggestion open for consideration, Daly City approached its second year as an incorporated municipality.

PS: Attribution-change for the above “Centennial Memories” reflects the recent demise of Daly City Historian Ken Gillespie. His family deeply appreciates each of the heart-warming messages of condolence received from History Guild members in recent weeks. BG



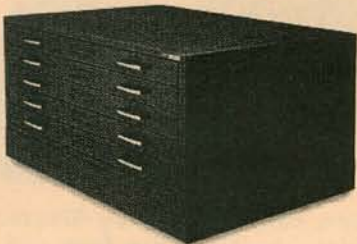
In former times... Ken Gillespie, Betty Shultz, Bunny Gillespie, and Walter Riney at the guild member table. Ken, Betty, and Walter are no longer with us and will always be fondly remembered.



Line drawing of original John Daly Library 1920, by Ken Gillespie from *The Great Daly City Historical Trivia Book*.

DONATIONS, VOLUNTEER SERVICE, & GUILD NEWS

Thanks to: **Robert Garrison** for a large, framed photo of the Jefferson High School Class of 1938; **Shirley Plank** for a Susan B. Anthony yearbook, event program, and news clippings; **Jessica Diaz** for a copy of her children's picture book *Once Upon a Time in Daly City*; **Mark Weinberger**, along with **Michael Rocchetta** and **Richard Rocchetta**, for reorganization of museum space; Mark Weinberger (again) for supervising repairs to the museum chimney necessitated by the installation of our new fireplace heating unit; **Annette Hipona** for a copy of John Madden's 1984 autobiography *Wait a Minute*; **Dana Smith** for writing the grant request and **The Carl Gellert and Celia Berta Gellert Foundation** for awarding a \$1,000 grant to pay for a new flat file to store oversized documents and photographs (see below); **Russ Brabec** for research on various areas of historical interest; **Roy Pulsiper** and **Steve Glodawski** for their generous \$500 "Curator" level membership; **Bunny Gillespie and family** for designating the Guild as recipient of memorial donations in the memory of Ken Gillespie; the *Pacifica Tribune* for a series of articles on the Daly City Centennial; and **KM2 Communications** for their fundraising efforts for our centennial video which have raised over \$33,000. **Father Joe Gordon** has finished a history of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Daly City and is working on histories of other parishes.



We will be purchasing a 5-drawer steel flat file with base, similar to that pictured for archival museum storage.

OTHER HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS



San Mateo County Museum (2200 Broadway, Redwood City) presents its Courthouse Docket Program featuring *Victory: Tales of a Tuskegee Airman* on **Saturday, January 21, 2012** at 1 p.m. in courtroom A. Free with museum admission: \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors/students, free for kids under 5. Local hero and 2007 Congressional Gold Medal

recipient **Les Williams**, an original Tuskegee Airman who lives in Belmont, will present his new book on African-American fighter pilots of World War II.

Colma Historical Association, 1500 Hillside Blvd., Colma. Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 12th at 2:00 p.m. Their Annual Fundraising



Tea to be held on Saturday, March 24th at the Colma Community Center, 1520 Hillside Blvd., Colma. For more details and reservations call 650.757.1676 (\$25 per person)

JOHN MADDEN, THEN & NOW



Bunny Gillespie, our cardboard Madden, and Betty Shultz in our former Mini-Museum in the basement of the Serramonte Library. Our two-dimensional "Madden" continues to greet visitors to our Mission Street museum.



Mark Weinberger, Kevin Mullen, John Madden, and Bryan Kingston on a recent visit to Madden's East Bay studio for a KM2 Communications' taped interview.

THE MYSTERY OF JOHN DALY'S FATHER



Michael John Daly

The museum recently received an Internet communication from an Irish author doing research on John Donald Daly. While we were not able to find the Irish hometown of John Daly's father, Michael John Daly, we found some interesting documents in the Daly file, some with conflicting information.

Michael John Daly was born in Ireland. He later came to Boston, Mass. where he married Isabelle Donald, who was born in Scotland. He was

“engaged in truck gardening and died at age 94.” The children of Michael and Isabella: John Donald Daly, Belle Daly, Deborah Daly, and Jane Daly. John is listed first and we might assume that he was the eldest born in (October) 1841 in Boston. The San Francisco 1880 Census says John Donald Daly's mother was born in England and lists John Daly as having been one of five children.

An original personal letter with signature from John Daly's son Irving R. Daly written in 1940 to Jean O'Rourke, Daly City Librarian, states that "he [John Daly] crossed the Isthmus of Panama with his mother, father and two sisters." An original account written by Librarian O'Rourke repeats that story and adds: "While crossing overland, his mother contracted yellow fever and died." A document labeled only "Notes from Mrs. George [Lillie Isabel Daly George], daughter of John D. Daly – undated, pre 1970s" recounts a story of only John and his mother setting out on the journey to San Francisco. "His mother died on the Isthmus of Panama and left him all alone." The notes further state "he [Father John D. Daly] brought his father and stepmother to California and established a home for them in Belmont." An account by daughter Lillie Daly George shortly before her 105th birthday in September of 1974 written in *The Post* by Frank LaPierre quotes Lillie as saying her father came from Boston with his mother and upon her death in route went on alone to the Pacific Coast.

Sam Chandler's 1973 book *Gateway to the Peninsula* refers to a 1965 interview with Lily when he recounts that John Daly's mother died on the Isthmus of Panama, leaving the young John Daly "to find his way to California where he had no relatives or friends to receive him." Chandler also writes that Daly brought his father and step-mother from Boston and established a home for them in Belmont, California after his first marriage. A page referenced as being from a 2002 Biographical File at the SF Public Library, History Department, states "After second marriage Daly [John D. Daly] brought his father and step-mother to Daly City from Boston."

We know very little about John Daly's father and siblings. Sometimes it has been assumed that John Daly was left an orphan on his way to California. Did the whole family set out together for San Francisco or did his father and sisters remain in Boston? Can any records be found of the father and sisters in San Mateo County? We are continuing to search for more information on John Daly's father and sibling. If you have information to share, please contact dana@vikingsmith.com



Gifts in memory or honor of a person are gratefully accepted; please include a name and address so that we can send notification of your gift. Please consider including the History Guild of Daly City/Colma in your will.



ROBERT THORNTON'S POTATO FORT

In 1859 the early settlers in what would later become Daly City were threatened with a land seizure by owners of the Laguna Merced Rancho who challenged the homesteads that had been granted by the Federal Government. After losing court cases in California, the settlers appointed Robert Thornton to appeal the settlers' case to the U.S. Supreme Court. After being displaced from their homes and farms for six years, a court decision in 1863 validated the earlier land surveys and returned the property to Thornton and the early pioneers of the Settlers Union. War nearly broke out before the settlers decided to pursue their cause all the way the highest court rather than settle the dispute in an armed conflict. Thornton wrote the excerpt below which was published in the Daly City Record in December of 1915.

“This necessitated the organization of the settlers in a club called the North San Mateo Settler's Union, for the purpose of defending their rights in the State Courts... The decision of the State Supreme Court was rendered against the settlers, and was a hard blow against us... we regarded this as a warning to prepare for war and we at once secured through a friend seventy-five Kentucky rifles, and a four-pounder brass cannon... On my 160 acres, in my barn, we fortified our rendezvous with 400 sacks of potatoes as our fort, with portholes cut in the side walls to fire out if we were assaulted by our enemies.”



Jessica Diaz recreates Thornton's potato fort for youngsters at a November history event at the John Daly Library.



THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY/COLMA

DALY CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014



Please visit us on Facebook/
Daly City History Museum

FIRST CLASS MAIL



**DALY CITY
HISTORY MUSEUM**
6351 Mission Street
Daly City, CA 94014

650/757-7177

Current Hours: Every Tuesday, Thursday, and
the first and third Saturdays of the month
from noon to 3 p.m.

JANUARY REFRESHMENTS

Thanks in advance to:

**Annette Hipona, Elsa & Max Ramos, Joan Lopiccole,
Sandra Bolds, Tony Zidich, and Dana Smith** will be
providing refreshments at our next January meeting.
Elinor Charleston is our gracious Hospitality Chair.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP:

If you find a member renewal response card and return
envelope in your *Tattler*, we have not yet received your
2012 membership payment. Your continued support is
what keeps us going and growing!

GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

| | |
|--|--------------|
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| Dave Crimmen, Director | 650/589-5852 |
| Marcus Gonzalez, Director | 650/757-9767 |

*Board meetings are held as necessary and are open to the
membership. Please call Mark for further information.*

Ken Gillespie (1924-2011), President-Emeritus
Bunny Gillespie, Secretary-Emerita 650/755-5123
Elinor Charleston, Hospitality Chair 650/755-8267
Michael Rocchetta, Member Chair

Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith

Contributors: Dana Smith, Bunny Gillespie, Mark Weinberger,
Rich Rocchetta.

The History Guild of Daly City/Colma is a
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