

# THE TATTLER

## JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY - COLMA

### GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK

As we always do, we had a fantastic time at our March meeting. Rob Keil and Monique Lombardelli's film "Little Boxes" was a sellout! This has to have been one of the best attended meetings in the history of the Guild. Hardly an empty seat in the place. We completely sold out of Rob's books of a similar title. Those of you who still want to obtain a copy, Rob suggests that you check Amazon.com, but a word of caution: that site is selling for very expensive prices, which tend to fluctuate a great deal. Having already printed a limited supply, Rob has no plans to undertake an additional printing at this time. The good news is that the film is now available for purchase exclusively at [littleboxesfilm.com](http://littleboxesfilm.com). This is also on Amazon.com, and the price is \$17.95. A great big thank you, Rob, for donating a copy to our archives!

The Guild recently received a treasure chest of sorts. Our most sincere thanks to Guilder Greg Kennedy, who recently discovered a stash of extremely rare and very old photographs in the attic of his Mission Street business and donated them to us. Most of these photos are from early in the last century, and some go back to pre-incorporation days. Many are of the Daly City Volunteer Fire Dept. and its official successor. [Greg is the grandson of the late former Daly City Fire Chief Elmer Kennedy.] We will attempt to scan as many as we can and post them on our Facebook page. Two already are up. The first is a view from Westmoor High School hill covered in cabbages, 1912, looking toward Colma. The other is a classic photograph of the 1905 Jimmy Britt and Battling Nelson lightweight fight, taking place at the corner of Mission and School streets. Some of the photos are duplicates of photos in our collection, with several being in better condition. Others are images that we have never seen before, such as a print of an Ocean Shore Railroad excursion car;

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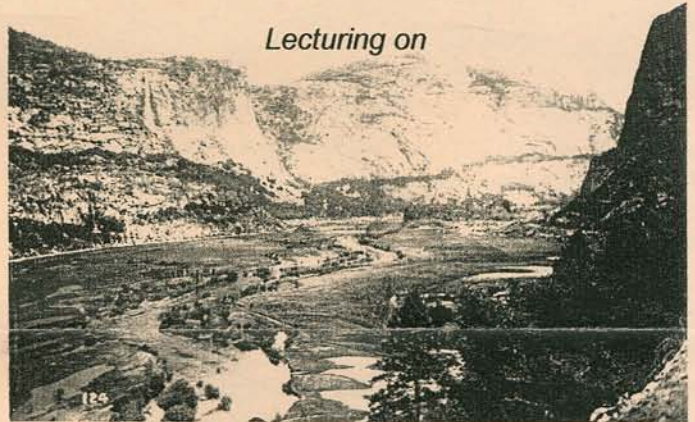
## HISTORY EVENING

WEDNESDAY, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 PM

Presents

## NEIL FAHY

Lecturing on



Early 1900s photograph before the O'Shaughnessy Dam was constructed, shows the Hetch Hetchy Valley and the Tuolumne River, looking east. The valley was renowned for its natural beauty, often compared to that of Yosemite.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF HETCH HETCHY DAM

101 Lake Merced Blvd. Daly City  
Doelger Center Café

REFRESHMENTS – FREE ADMITTANCE

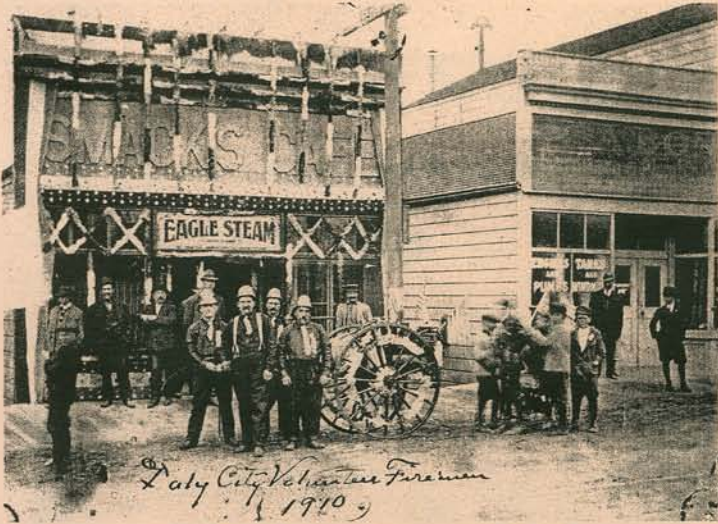
Longtime Guilder and former Board Member Neil Fahy will present his PowerPoint lecture on the history of the development of the Hetch Hetchy water system. We are in for a treat; Neil's is a professional lecturer and his past lively lectures have been Guild favorites.

### THANK YOU MAY REFRESHMENT DONORS:

Amy Moore, Celeste DeMartini, Mark Caserta, Mel Margolis, Marcus and Grace Gonzalez and Hospitality Chair Elinor Charleston.

President's Message, cont'd

M. Scoortis & Co. grocery store; a 1910 photo of the volunteer Fire Department in front of Smacks Café; and many more. More historical treasures are hidden in other attics waiting to be discovered and hopefully donated to our museum for future generations to enjoy.



1910 photo of SMACKS CAFÉ, with Volunteer Fire Department displaying hand pulled cart with youngsters observing. Can anyone provide more information about SMACKS? Photo donated by Greg Kennedy.

Our longtime Hospitality Chair Elinor Charleston has notified me that our next May meeting will be her final meeting serving as our always efficient and gracious refreshment hostess. We can't thank her enough for her generosity (she had made her own contribution of food to each meeting) and her friendliness to one and all that has set a positive tone at all our meetings. As you enjoy the refreshments at our May meeting, thank Elinor for all her hard work for the Guild. We will continue your tradition of hospitality, Elinor, but all would agree your shoes will be hard to fill.

Finally, we're presently at 360 fans on Facebook, so be sure to become a fan if you haven't already. Simply type in 'Daly City History Museum' on Facebook and then click 'like.'



Rob Keil and Monique Lombardelli presenting their film "Little Boxes" to a full house at the March History Guild meeting. Refreshment table in foreground. Photo by Michael Rocchetta.

**A BELATED THANK YOU** - Thank you to food donors who brought this bounty to our March meeting: **Don Grant, Paul Grosshans, Judy Hnilo, Marcus and Grace Gonzalez, and Mark Weinberger.**



**RAFFLE DONATIONS** are welcomed at member meetings by Raffle Chair Rich Rocchetta. Your new or like-new white elephants become treasures for our raffle winners and raise funds for the Guild.

## HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

**Merced Library** presents a lecture on **May 14<sup>th</sup>** by historian Woody LaBounty on the 1894 San Francisco Midwinter Fair on its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Café Babar Jug Band, which includes History Guild board member Algis Ratnikas, will perform from 6-7 pm, followed by LaBounty's lecture from 7-8 pm. 155 Winston Drive, San Francisco.

**Colma Historical Association** – Mark your calendars for the **July 26<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting** and 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Celebration at 2 pm. Colma Historical Association, 1500 Hillside Blvd., Colma.

### Free Cypress Lawn Lectures and Walking Tours:

Information: 650.550-8810 or send an email to [lenipanopio@cypresslawn.com](mailto:lenipanopio@cypresslawn.com)

**Sunday Lectures:** 2nd Floor, Administration Building, 1370 El Camino Real, Colma, 2 PM - 4 PM. **May 18<sup>th</sup>** "Risky Business – The Perils of Being Royal" by Michael Svanevik. **Saturday Walking Tours**, starting at 1:30 PM: **May 17<sup>th</sup>** "The Streets of San Francisco at Cypress Lawn," **June 21<sup>st</sup>** "Cypress Lawn's Magnificent Angels," and **July 12<sup>th</sup>** "Women Who Made a Difference," all presented by Terry Hamburg.

**Pacifica Historical Society's fundraising Castle Tours** **May 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>**. For information and tickets call 650/359-5462 or visit <http://pacificahistory.org/events-2/castle-tour/>. The 90 minute tour requires advanced purchased tickets (adults \$25, children 12 and under \$10). Shuttle vans provided from the Oceana High School upper parking lot.

**San Mateo County History Museum**, 2200 Broadway Redwood City – Mark your calendars for the annual free **Victorian Day** on **Sunday, August 10** from 11 am to 3 pm. The History Guild will be sharing a booth in the Courthouse "History Lane" with our friends from the Colma Historical Association.

## THE GUILD REMEMBERS ELSIE LOUISE SCHENONE

Elsie Schenone, a sibling of John Olcese and Mary Beroldo, former Guild member and lifelong resident of Colma, died at the age of 91 in March. Our condolences go out to the Olcese family members, a pioneer family in the area and longtime supporters of the History Guild.

## DONATIONS AND GUILD NEWS

The Guild receives questions through our website and direct calls to the museum on a regular basis. If docents can't find the answers in our archives, we go the extra mile and contact our network of history experts. The question below is an example:

*Dear Daly City History Museum:  
You've probably heard this before: Whenever I visit Thornton State Beach, I wonder what those pilings down at the water's edge used to be. Do you have any information or pictures about them?  
- Neil Bachers, San Francisco*

Guild researcher Russ Brabec answered:  
*They are located at the northerly end of Thornton Beach and we assume that they marked the southerly end of Fort Funston during World War II and were meant as a deterrent to trespassers.*



*Photo provided by Neil Bachers*

Be sure to note Bunny Gillespie's ongoing history contributions to the city newsletter, *The Fogcutter*, now titled "Threads of Yesterday." The column recently featured the history of the Beatles at the Cow Palace.

Len Ohlendorf, son of former Daly City Clerk Anna Ohlendorf, who now lives in Sacramento dropped by the museum on April 15<sup>th</sup>. He wanted to know if we had any pictures or articles on his mother and we were happy to provide him with a copy of a photograph of his mom and

dad together and some newspaper articles that were in our files. He was very impressed with the museum and purchased a copy of the Daly City centennial DVD.

A while back we noted in the *Tattler* a gift of a Jefferson letterman's sweater and wrestling team photo from the 60's donated by Tom Salvador. On April 22<sup>nd</sup> his sisters Emma and Antoinette stopped by the museum to bring another donation from Tom, a manikin to display the sweater.



*Photo by Dana Smith*

We were thrilled with the donation of a used double stacking flat file in excellent condition by Bruce Moore, Robert Wadell and Charles Kavanaugh of Burlingame. The museum previously purchased a flat file with partial funds donated by the Carl Gellert and Celia Berta Gellert Foundation. We immediately filled the first flat files with our collection of oversized photos and documents. This second set of files will be well utilized for future storage needs and is a very valuable donation. New large flat files can cost several thousand dollars.

We also thank Frank Rizzo for a recent donation of a Daly City Fire Department hat and Elinor Charleston for six photos of Daly City's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade. A special thank you to Mark Weinberger for taking on the additional task of designing and ordering our new museum sign. The sign is a wind-proof standing sign that serves double-duty as an outdoor sign announcing on the street that the museum is open, and when stored with the opposite side showing through the glass doors, gives all pertinent information including museum hours, contact information and internet site. We have struggled in the past to keep a sign from blowing over with the

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frequent high winds at the Top-of-the-Hill. Our new sign gives a professional look to the museum and has proven it can withstand the high winds on the hill.



controversies and differences of opinion which reveal the interesting story of how things came to be. The "truth" from the past is often somewhere between two extremes of opinion and involves weighing different facts and perspectives. Often we only hear the final chapter of the story, but lose the lessons that could be learned from history. One story in the early history of Daly City has all the elements of a lively drama.

Our tale begins in 1913 when the voters of Daly City approved a bond issue of \$100,000 for the first municipal project, a city-owned and operated water system. The bond funds would purchase the existing Crocker system and wells and build a pump house and a reservoir of a million gallon capacity. The area served would be bound by Citrus Ave. on the south, the Southern Pacific Railroad on the west, Hillside Blvd. on the east and the city limits on the north.



In 1915 the new water system was placed into service and tested in front of the new City Hall on Wellington Avenue.



New museum sign as seen through the glass door when museum is closed and below facing the street when the museum is open to the public inviting visitors to "Discover your local history!"

Photos by Judith Christensen.

In early January The Good Governance League was organized in Daly City, in competition with The Civic Betterment League, which was organized six years earlier before incorporation of Daly City. The new League with Charles Shoup as President, Raymond Jess Secretary, S. R. Emmons Treasurer and an Executive Committee consisting of E.N. Kingsland, Gus Sonderblom, L. W. Pettingwell, S.R. Emmons, Fred Oakes, E.J. Ford, H.F. Secor, Dennis Quillinan, Samuel Cerf and R. R. Castle caused a political uproar during the early months of 1915. The League distributed a circular house-to-house signed "The Vigilance Committee" charging incompetence of City Trustees in administrating the water works. The circular claimed that inferior water pipes had been substituted, pipe was laid before the street grades were established resulting in work having to be replaced, financial advantages had been given to the Crocker Estates Company, cost overruns occurred, and local unemployed residents were not employed for the project. Five men were accused of libel by the city Trustees: Samuel Cerf, Postmaster, Raymond Jess, telephone agent and brother of former Daly City Recorder Clara Jess, Fritz Hansen, granite worker, Charles Shoup, contractor, and L. B. Pettingell, printer.

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## TALES FROM THE TIMELINE

by Dana Smith

One of the most difficult and rewarding tasks in researching the content for my timeline exhibit at the museum was sifting through all the files in our History Guild archive. It was tedious, but there was gold to be found in those file cabinets in the form of previously unknown or unreported history. To me, one of the most interesting aspects of history is uncovering the

# BARS OF CELL BROKEN WITH BARE HANDS

Raymond Jess Damages Jail  
in Daly City While in  
Prison Under Arrest.

## TROUBLE OVER POLITICS

Criminal Libel and Peace Dis-  
turbance Charged Against  
Five Citizens.

On Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> *The San Francisco Call* reported that Raymond Jess, one of five accused of libel, was arrested and accused of assault and disturbing the peace. Jess charged he was lured to the jail under false pretenses and then beaten. When Trustee Landini visited the jail, an argument ensued and Jess tore apart a bar of his cell with his bare hands throwing it at Landini in response to "bad language." Landini claimed there was murderous intent. Jess reportedly mocked "This is a fine jail, isn't

it? Why don't you spend some of the city's money and build a decent one?" Jess admitted wrecking the jail and Landini admitted using language "not adaptable to parlors."

In February *The San Francisco Call* reported that the Daly City Clerk George N. Smith (brother of H.H. Smith of the Smith Lumber Company) had been mysteriously missing for two weeks. He was the chief witness in the criminal libel action as the City Clerk in charge of the financial books of the municipal water works. The *San Francisco Examiner* reported on February 20<sup>th</sup> "Village Beauties Flock to San Bruno courtroom... Twelve of Daly City's fairest maids and matrons motored to San Bruno to attend the court proceedings."

An unidentified news clipping reported that petitions for the recall of Mayor B. C. Ross and Trustees Charles Biebel and S. A. Landini were placed in circulation by The Good Government League. A public meeting was called to discuss recall at Bracken Hall.

Another unidentified news clipping carried the headline "Daly City Hopes to Bury Hatchet," reporting that prominent businessmen have formed a peace movement to reconcile factions that have recently "resulted in the disruption of the political and social life of the community" and that Daly City dropped the libel prosecutions. District Attorney Frank Swart requested John F. Davis, justice of the peace, to dismiss libel charges against the five citizens for criticizing the municipal water administration. A March 12<sup>th</sup> *Daly City Record* editorial by J. L. Brown calls the Good Government League a "hell inspired conspiracy." On March 22nd the League began publishing a newsletter *The Truth*, with the motto "Hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may." The first of 11 editions of the newsletter announced plans for a "Recall Ball" and a Grand Jury investigation if the recall should fail.

Additional research is required to determine if the Good Governance League charges against the City Trustees were warranted or "hell inspired," as characterized by the editor of the *Daly City Record*. Were the "Daly City Five" men of good character and courageous examples of democracy in action or troublemakers? Were the city Trustees guilty of abuse of power? Was there a recall election and if so, what transpired? Further research may uncover more facts, but one thing is certain, we have uncovered one hell of a good story!



## JESS TEARS BARS APART IN DALY CITY JAIL

Political Feud Culminates in  
Double Arrest of a  
Citizen.

The rakishly handsome Raymond Jess drew a bevy of Daly City women to view his libel proceedings.



## THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY/COLMA

### DALY CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014

650/757-7177

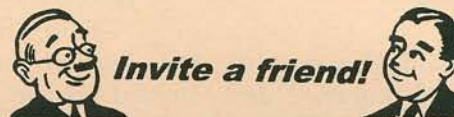
Current Hours: Tuesdays and Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m.



Please visit us on Facebook at "Daly City History Museum"

[www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org](http://www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org)

### FIRST CLASS MAIL



The Guild has a summer break in July and resumes with a September *Tattler* and Program.



Mark your calendars for our **September 17<sup>th</sup>** meeting when filmmaker Monique Lombardelli will show her documentary film *People in Glass Houses: The Legacy of Joseph Eichler*. Monique was a co-presenter with Rob Keil at our March meeting and she is our newest Guild member. This 45-minute documentary is the first film about the Eichler homes. The largest contiguous Eichler Homes development is in San Mateo, built between 1956 and 1964. Eichler, unlike most builders at the time, established a non-discrimination policy and offered homes for sale to anyone of any religion or race.

#### GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

**Mark Weinberger, President** 650/757-7177  
[president@dalycityhistorymuseum.org](mailto:president@dalycityhistorymuseum.org)

**Richard Rocchetta, Vice-President**  
**Dana Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President/Museum Director**  
**Judith Christensen, Treasurer**  
**Algis Ratnikas, Secretary**

**Directors: Michael Rocchetta, Marcus Gonzalez**

Ken Gillespie (1924-2011), President-Emeritus  
Bunny Gillespie, Secretary-Emerita  
Elinor Charleston, Hospitality Chair

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

**History Guild of Daly City/Colma is a  
501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization  
Memberships begin at \$25 per year.**

**Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith**