



JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY-COLMA

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK-

We are happy to welcome again our old friend Rob Keil back to the fold. He last joined us in March 2014 when he and friend Monique Lombardelli presented their then-recently completed documentary "Little Boxes: The Legacy of Henry Doelger." The film, and its companion book, are testimonials to the Henry Doelger development affectionately known as Westlake. Rob will again be showing his documentary, which runs about 43 minutes.

To quote Rob: "'Little Boxes: The Legacy of Henry Doelger' is a fascinating architectural and historical journey through the Westlake District of Daly City, California, one of America's first and most iconic postwar suburbs. Located just south of San Francisco, Westlake has long been the subject of adoration as well as ridicule. Perhaps Westlake's greatest claim to fame is that it inspired Malvina Reynolds' 1962 anti-suburban folk song, "Little Boxes." The neighborhood's quirky architecture has been featured in numerous books, newspapers, national magazines and commercials, but this is the first documentary film exclusively about Henry Doelger and his signature community. Little Boxes not only documents Doelger's place in history, but it uncovers Westlake's amazing development process and celebrates its classic mid-century style."

Rob will not be selling the DVD at the meeting, but notes that it is for sale at this time on Amazon.com. Also, he soon will be ordering another printing of his book--which sold out long ago. Unfortunately, it will not be ready by our meeting. He will, however, be collecting contact information from those at the meeting who would like to purchase the book when it again becomes available.

We continue to generate a lot of interest via our Facebook page--763 fans at this writing. I encourage anyone who has anything historic to share (a photograph, question, memory, etc. regarding Daly City) to utilize our Facebook page as we have many folks all around the country and indeed globe who check it out. The world truly is a vast and great resource for all things local!

Finally, I want to take a moment to remember the late Carolyn Livengood, a loyal and true friend of the Guild, as Ken Gillespie used to say. She was a *San Mateo*

Cont'd pg. 2

HISTORY EVENING

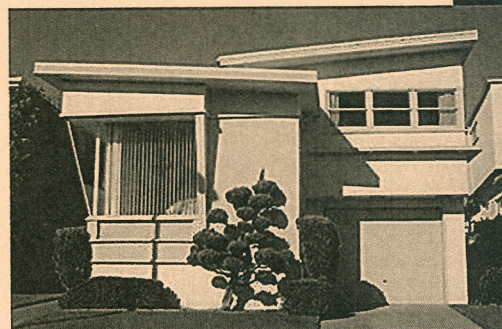
Wednesday, November 15th
at 7 pm

Local historian, author and
filmmaker Rob Keil

presents

LITTLE BOXES

The Architecture of a Classic Mid-century Suburb



Little Boxes: The Legacy of Henry Doelger

**101 Lake Merced Blvd, Daly City
Doelger Center Cafe**

Free to the public - Everyone welcome!

Refreshments will be provided by **Dana Smith, Judith Christensen and Erin O'Rourke-Meadors.** Thanks also to our hospitality volunteers, **Annette Hipona and Grace Gonzalez.**

County Times correspondent and local reporter who always gave us a mention--first in her printed column and later the digitized version--in order to promote the Guild and all that it offered the community. Carolyn would attend our meetings when she could and really enjoyed our programs. Rest well, kind lady; you will be missed.

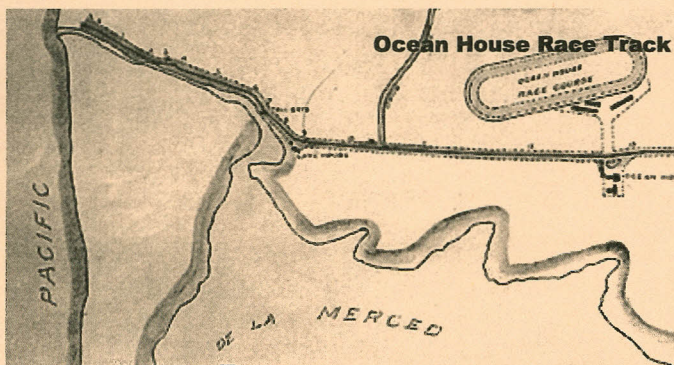
LAKE MERCED HISTORY

LAKEVILLE & OCEAN HOUSE RACETRACK

by Woody LaBounty (excerpts)

In 1864, land auctioneer and speculator John Middleton tried to sell 160- by-200 foot lots on the eastern side of the lake for a new suburb he called "Lakeville." The venture was a colossal failure, and Lakeville never became a reality beyond its persistent existence on maps for the next twenty years. A new Lake House was built on the Ocean Road and the old building was moved downtown to an empty lot on Mission Street near 2nd Street ...

The Ocean House had a racetrack built next to it in 1865, which opened with great promise when 8,000 people traveled out to see a race between a couple of Kentucky thoroughbreds. Mark Twain wrote about his attempt to see the contest: "...it became apparent to me that the forthcoming race between *Norfolk* and *Lodi* was awakening extraordinary attention all over the Pacific coast, and even far away in the Atlantic States. I saw that if I failed to see this race I might live a century, perhaps, without ever having an opportunity to see its equal." ... Attendance mostly dried up at the track in the years after that. The Ocean Course had a last hurrah in November 1873 with the "Great Race" between the California horse, *Thaddeus Stevens*, and a couple of Eastern thoroughbreds. The purse was \$20,000, and some \$150,000 in bets had been laid on the race around town. Tens of thousands of people made the journey out. "Old Thad" won, and the day was a boon to all the businesses between the lake and town. Horse racing would not return to the area until the Ingleside Racetrack was built in 1895 on the location of today's Ingleside Terraces neighborhood.



1872 map of Lake Merced showing the Ocean House Race Course on the old East-West road. Notice the flow of Lake Merced to the ocean. Map: Private Collection, made available in FoundSF.

SPRING VALLEY WATER COMPANY

Editor's Note: While searching for an image of the racetrack, I came across three very interesting articles on the history of the Spring Valley Water Company: a research paper by graduate students at SFSU, an article by Gary Kamiyas in his SF Chronicle column *Portals of the Past*, and an historical essay in FoundSF by Libby Ingalls. Enjoy these excerpts from their articles.

GOLD RUSH S.F.'S WATER SUPPLY

By Gary Kamiyas, S.F. Chronicle (excerpts)

San Francisco during the Gold Rush had a serious water shortage. There were several freshwater streams, but they were too far away from the settled area on the east side of town to be useful, and wells were scarce. Early San Franciscans bought their water from street vendors, who made the rounds with large wooden barrels mounted on mule-drawn carts. Some water came from nearby springs but most came from springs on the Sausalito ranch of William Richardson and was ferried by tank steamer across the bay by the Sausalito Water and Steam Tug Co.

[Water projects by the Bensley Co. pumped water from Mountain Lake and Lobos Creek along a 7 mile flume to reservoirs on Russian Hill and Lombard Street. Soon these enterprises of the Bensley Co. lost out to a new company owned by George Ensign] ...In 1856, a man named George Ensign purchased the springs at Washington and Mason, in a little depression called Spring Valley... Ensign sold some of his water to vendors, but he also shrewdly ran a 1,500-foot hose down to a municipal firefighting cistern at Broadway and Stockton and delivered the water free. In 1858 the grateful city awarded Ensign's Spring Valley Water Co. another franchise to provide water to the city... a group of men bought out Ensign in 1860. One of the partners was Von Schmidt, who had left the Bensley Co. when it refused to pay him for a water meter he had invented.

Von Schmidt developed Ensign's franchise... and had a far bigger water source in mind: Pilarcitos Creek in San Mateo County, which drained into the Pacific near Half Moon Bay. ... The Bensley Co.'s demise was assured in 1864, when mud from the landslide-prone cliffs of Lands End began leaching into its flume.

SPRING VALLEY WATER COMPANY

Historical Essay by Libby Ingalls, posted in FoundSF

In 1860 George Ensign incorporated the Spring Valley Water Works (later changed to Company), soon to become the state's most powerful monopoly. For

Cont'd pg. 3

decades to come the power of eminent domain gave the elite owning the water company an opportunity to acquire empires in real estate.

... The California legislature had redrawn county lines in 1856, limiting SF County to the city limits, and giving the highest mountains, largest streams and expansive space to San Mateo County. Thus George Ensign had to look towards San Mateo for the water, and hired Col. Alexis Waldemar von Schmidt, a German military engineer, for the job. He redirected Pilarcitas Creek through tunnels and flumes, delivering the first water to San Francisco in 1862. Thus began an era of assured growth, land speculation, private fortunes and corruption.

Meanwhile Hermann Schussler, a Swiss engineer, was hired by Spring Valley to replace von Schmidt. He stayed with the Company for fifty years, while also consulting to leading capitalists and mining companies, an example of how deeply interconnected the water and land barons were. Armed with the right of eminent domain and backed by San Francisco leading financiers, Schussler drove his conduits, flumes, and tunnel bores deeper into San Mateo County, tapping every major watershed along the Peninsula divide. He acquired 100,000 acres of prime watersheds and rights of way, raised real estate values, and benefited himself handsomely along with the San Francisco plutocracy.

In the 1870's as cities were planning to take over the company as a public utility, Peninsula Banker William Ralston bought Spring Valley Water Company. In 1875 during a financial crash, Ralston's Bank of California Board of Directors demanded that Ralston sign his personal assets over to William Sharon... and that afternoon during his daily swim he either had a stroke or chose to take his life, leaving Sharon one of the wealthiest men in California...and a controlling interest in the Spring Valley Water Company.

... San Francisco had attempted to purchase the Spring Valley Water Company by putting bond measures on the ballot. Five times the measures failed as voters thought the price too high. Finally in 1930 the City purchased the Spring Valley Water Company for \$41 million.

THE HISTORY OF HUMAN USE AT LAKE MERCED

Excerpts from a paper by Sara Marcellino and Brandon Jebens, Dept of Geography SFSU

The water supply has been a contentious issue in both Lake Merced's and San Francisco's history. Several people knew water was going to be needed to meet the rapidly growing population of San Francisco. Lake

Merced was one of the first places developed to meet the cities growing demand for water... Spring Valley Water Company (SVWC) was incorporated in 1858 to meet those needs and quickly became a corporation of some of the Western United States foremost capitalists. They essentially formed a monopoly over the San Francisco city's water supply. They were only ousted after a long and bitter struggle by the city and people of San Francisco to institute local control.

SVWC began building infrastructure to supply water to San Francisco in the 1860's. In 1868, they bought the water rights to Lake Merced for \$150,000. That strengthened and sealed their monopoly on San Francisco's water. In 1877, SVWC began purchasing the watershed land around Lake Merced. This increased their monopoly over the city's water supply. Over time they purchased more land around the Bay Area to add to their holdings. Conflict between the city and SVWC began in 1867 when SVWC said San Francisco could no longer have free water except for fighting fires. The city refused to pay their bills, and a court case ensued. Litigation and conflict continued until 1880, when a new state constitution stated that cities had to pay for water.

SVWC and the city of San Francisco have had three major periods of litigation. Each centered on a significant aspect of water relations between the company and the city. After the conflict over free water, beginning in 1877, the two fought over how to fix the rates to be charged. The third fight starting in 1903 was over evaluating the land upon which SVWC based their rates. As SVWC tried to create and maintain its monopoly, the city grew more resistant.

Power struggles for water were influenced by the fact that all the directors of SVWC were wealthy, prestigious and well-connected individuals. By the 1920's, SVWC was the largest privately owned company in the U.S. The ongoing struggle between SVWC and the city led to a popular movement for full city control of water supply. Trying to buy out SVWC proved to be difficult, so it was decided that the city should look for its own source of water. Because SVWC had control of most of the local lands, the city had to look further out for a source of water.

The city turned to Federal lands in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Hetch Hetchy Valley and the Tuolumne River were decided upon to give San Francisco its water supply. In 1908, the voters of San Francisco approved the construction of the Hetch Hetchy dam.

The SVWC foresaw its own eventual collapse and began selling pieces of property around Lake Merced to make golf courses from the 1890's to the 1920's. Developments that have taken place around Lake Merced since then include residential tract development

Cont'd pg. 4

since the 1920's, the Zoo and Stern Grove in the 1930's, and San Francisco State University which began offering classes here in 1954.

... Beginning in the 1890s, the United States Army brought a law suit against Spring Valley to acquire over forty acres due west of the North Lake for a coastal artillery battery, purchased for \$42,162 and subsequently named it Laguna Merced Military Reservation. Artillery was installed during World War II, including mortars and five-inch guns. These were named Battery Bruff and Battery Walter Howe. [These installations changed the geology of the lake which had previously opened to the ocean.]

MUSSEL ROCK IMPROVEMENTS

By Dana Smith

A little background history...

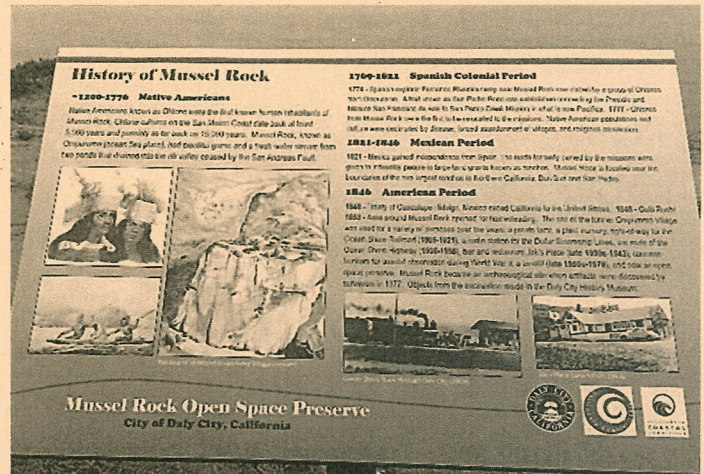
In 1956 Daly City bought the Mussel Rock site from John MacReady after plans for a city dump site in Linda Mar and South San Francisco failed. Despite a large earthquake in 1957 that closed the Coast Highway north of Mussel Rock with landslides, Daly City awarded a lease to the private Daly City Scavenger Company to operate a dump site on this geologically unstable land.

In the late 1960s Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) was rerouted and bulldozers exposed twelve human remains of Native Americans that were sent to the museum at UC Berkeley. No archaeological excavations were made. In 1977 Daly City and the Daly City Scavenger Co. began a joint project for a garbage transfer station at Mussel Rock. In June of 1977 the California Department of Transportation discovered indications of an Ohlone village while surveying the old Highway area at the top of the Mussel Rock site. Daly City Scavenger hired archeologists to do a voluntary excavation of the site that became known as SMA-72 for recovery of artifacts during a two month period before the building of the garbage transfer station. [This was prior to State Laws that now require preservation of archaeological sites.]

The 29 acre dump carved into a slope of sand and silt over the San Andreas earthquake fault suffered continual erosion and began seeping waste into the ocean. In 1978 the state Water Resources Control Board and the California Coastal Commission ordered the dump closed. The water board required Daly City to buy the dump site from Daly City Scavenger as a condition of the dump's closure and pay annually for monitoring and maintenance to comply with state standards. Millions of dollars have been spent and the public continues to bear the burden of this environmental disaster. It's no wonder that the Golden Gate National Recreation Area declined offers by Daly City on numerous occasions to include more than 131 acres in and around Mussel Rock in the national park

boundaries. In 1979 plans were envisioned but never realized to place an exhibit at the former site of the Native American village until a recent improvement project installed new interpretive signage.

On a recent hike at Mussel Rock I viewed the 3 new interpretive signs that include history, flora and fauna and geology. The geology sign includes the "unfortunate legacy" of the landfill and ongoing expensive maintenance paid by Daly City. The three versions of interpretive signage are displayed in the parking area near new picnic tables and benches and repeated along the trails with additional benches. There is a big sign announcing the area as "Mussel Rock Open Space", and signs for park regulations and warnings about coyotes in the area. The trails have been graded for ease in hiking and there is even a little hut for ocean viewing. I worked as a volunteer for the Guild providing photos and history, and as a volunteer consultant.



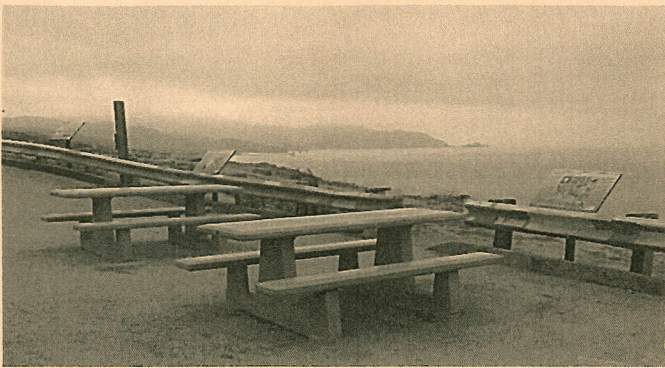
The museum is mentioned as the location for artifacts from the 1977 archeology dig at the Native American village site at Mussel Rock. On the day I visited there were nine cars in the parking area, a woman who had set up an easel and was busy painting the eroded hillside, and a young couple playing music in the little hut. It's worth a return visit!

Wave viewing hut at Mussel Rock, entrance





Couple enjoying the ocean viewing hut at Mussel Rock



New Picnic tables and interpretive signage at mussel Rock Parking Lot

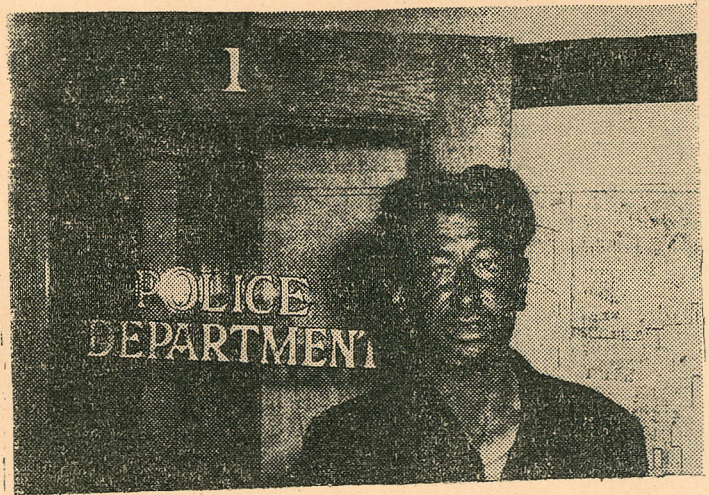
DOES ANYONE REMEMBER...

Frank Risso recently donated various items relating to Daly City businesses. Do you remember the **Westlake Pizza Shoppe** at 175 Southgate (with a Bavarian décor)? German beers sold for 60 cents and Norm's Special Combination large pizza sold for \$3.20. **R. & B. Walker Co.** at 245 Willits Street in Daly City sold all kinds of fishing gear for salmon, bass, crappie, striped bass and all game fish. Their specialty was known as the "Sand Eel," famously known as "the plastic worm that amazed European and East Coast fishermen in 1963!" How about the **Daly City Canning Company** that produced the "Original Vernors" soda "flavor aged in oak barrels"? Or their non-carbonated "Delaware Punch"?

Our thanks also go to **Matt Otto** who donated black and white photos taken by his grandfather of the Top-of-the-Hill quarry.

BEARTRACKS REVISITED

Editor's Note: Some time back I featured a story about the hobo Beartracks that received a lot of comments from our readers. Rich Rocchetta found this interesting article from 1957 in our archives that I thought you would enjoy, not only for the story but also for the journalistic style.



STRANGER in paradise? No, just Henry "Beartracks" Mack Jr., Daly City's legendary hobo, checking out of his favorite hotel, the local clink. Beartracks was booked—the 110th time—for being fried here last recently. The judge gave him another 60 days in county jail.

Mack likes it there, especially the chow. The outdoorsman has been in and out of the county cooler since 1938—usually for emptying too many bottles and sleeping under the stars. And it always happens here.

TIMES photo

Daly City Diplomat

8-14-57

Beartracks Back In County Cooler

Like the fog, "Beartracks" continues to drift in and out of town with monotonous regularity.

A recent Wednesday morning while all but the men in blue slept, Henry Mack Jr., the man with the legendary reputation, looked for his usual place to flop—a used car lot.

Minutes later, he was en route to the Daly City clink for the 110th time since 1938. Old Beartracks must be shooting for a national record.

Really, the 39-year-old gent is harmless. His only weaknesses are alcohol and work. He loves the former, despises the latter.

Beartracks knows every brick in the county jail. He's been there so often they call him the chairman of the joint's board of trustees.

Hank "does his time" cheerfully, appreciating the three square meals and a comfortable bed. On the outside, he "exists" on a jug and little else. He's usually along the railroad tracks near Junipero Serra or light-footing it into a car lot for a trip to slumberland.

Beartracks' record at headquarters is as long as a piece of rope. Nothing more serious than being on a toot. The police never have any trouble bringing him in. He likes the "accommodations" at county jail.

Sympathetic officers and residents have tried to help him. Ditto Judge Thomas L. Bocci, who rarely gets through his busy agenda without encountering the Daly City traveler.

Hizzoner usually asks the scoop on county jail conditions from the Mack man. And Beartracks knows the place better than the men in charge.

The gent doesn't know the meaning of reform. The time in between trips to the cooler affords him sufficient variety. A job? Well, he isn't too interested. Work is one word missing from his calobozed vocabulary.

His police pals once got him a job, hoping Beartracks would settle down and live the right way. After two hours, Henry took off for the boondocks.

Beartracks will be back on the police blotter. Same old story. Same old trip. Same old return. And a few more chuckles for the men who watch him—like the prodigal son.

Henry likes Daly City. Must be the climate. Or the hospitality.



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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN...

It's member renewal time again. You will find a return card and envelope in this mailing. I hope you know just how important you are to our Guild family and to our ongoing all-volunteer efforts to run the Guild and our Daly City History Museum, provide five free history lectures a year on fascinating topics of local yore, maintain a great website and Facebook account, and publish five editions of our *Tattler* history journal. We receive no public funds, depending entirely on your private donations. 100% of your donation goes toward our work because we are 100% a volunteer effort.

We don't want to lose you and you don't want to miss one iconic edition of our *Tattler*. Your ongoing support inspires all our efforts! Thank you!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the upcoming fabulous Colma Historical Association Spring tea... Saturday, April 7th, 2018. More to follow...

GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Mark Weinberger, President 650/757-7177
president@dalycityhistorymuseum.org

Richard Rocchetta, Vice-President

Dana Smith, 2nd 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, Annette Hipona, 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 \$25 per year.**

Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith,
director@dalycityhistorymuseum.org

Donations of new items for our fundraising raffle are always appreciated!