



JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY-COLMA

GREETINGS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM PRESIDENT MARK

We are delighted to welcome back Monika Trobits as our January speaker. Monika addressed our group a few years ago and spoke about the Broderick-Terry Duel, which is featured in her book *Antebellum and Civil War San Francisco*. She will be presenting a new talk this time entitled "From Vigilantes to Duelists." Monika is also finishing up her second book which "tells the story of a commodity in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1850 to the present." There is always more to learn about California's penultimate duel which saw a CA Supreme Court Justice Mortally wound a U.S. Senator; this was a duel fought in part over the issue of slavery and that led to the official ending of dueling in California. You'll definitely want to be on hand to hear Monika's exciting Part 2 to her original presentation.

Please mark your 2018 calendars with the dates of our upcoming daytime January meeting and the four **remaining meetings** in 2018, all on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm: March 21, May 16, September 19, and November 14 [Note: *second Wednesday in November due to the proximity of the Thanksgiving holiday*] We're sure that you won't want to miss a single one.

If you haven't checked out the Guild web page or Facebook page lately, I encourage you to do so. The latest addition to the Guild web site is many back editions of the *Tattler*. Certainly time to get in some holiday reading, discovering many issues for the first time or rediscovering after many years; what's old is definitely new again. Always great historical photographs and interesting memories being shared by our more than 760 Facebook fans. You'll definitely want to see which photos you recognize and memories that are similar to your own. You might even discover a long-ago friend or neighbor with whom to reconnect.

Finally, it is with deep sadness that I share two deaths very close to the Guild family. Bunny Gillespie, a co-founder along with her late husband Ken and a small group of core supporters, has died at age 91. She was one of the original pillars who helped transform the Guild from its humble beginnings as a Daly City commission into the independent and vibrant organization and museum that it is today. Please see Dana Smith's remembrance and tribute to her

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DAYTIME MEETING

AND ANNUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY –
36 YEARS AND COUNTING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21ST AT 2 PM

Guest Lecturer

Monika Trobits



ANTEBELLUM
AND
CIVIL WAR
SAN FRANCISCO

A Western Theater for
Northern & Southern Politics



Presents

"FROM VIGILANTES TO DUELISTS"

101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City
Doelger Center Café

Free – Everyone Welcome!

Refreshments will be provided by **Agis Ratnikas**, and **Judith Christensen** with special cake and bubbly provided by the Guild. Thanks also to our hospitality volunteers **Annette Hipona** and **Grace Gonzalez**.

Bring a friend!

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

If you have renewed your membership, thank you. We are grateful for your support. If not, you will find a return envelope and donation card in this mailing. You don't want to miss a single edition of the *Tattler*!

inside. Also, Elinor Charleston, a Guild charter member and former longtime Hospitality Hostess Emeritus Extraordinaire, recently passed away at the historic age of 101. In addition to helping with Guild events in earlier years, including joining us at the original Victorian Days in San Mateo Park, Elinor was very active in the Doelger Senior Center where she served as volunteer librarian. She was a remarkable lady who will be very much missed. We extend condolences to her two sons, four grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren. Good night, sweet princess.

MEMORIES OF THE GILLESPIES

By Russ Brabec

During my 38-year career with the City of Daly City, the City Engineer requested that I go to Redwood City to research the historic names of Mission Street and El Camino Real at the County Records Office. A copy of my report was filed at the Serramonte Library by the City Engineer.

Shortly after the formation of the History Guild of Daly City/Colma Bunny Gillespie came upon my report. Recognizing my interest in history and genealogy, she encouraged me to be a part of the History Guild. Soon my Tuesday afternoons were spent at the alcove on the lower floor of the Serramonte Library that had been reserved for the History Guild. I helped Ken and Bunny in any manner that I could. Soon I became a director of the History Guild. The three of us would be History Guild representatives at the annual Victorian Days at San Mateo City Park in August, and also attend and participate in the San Mateo County History events such as the 2009 Broderick-Terry Duel re-enactment's 150th Anniversary.

It was easy to adapt to their filing system and Bunny became my mentor. She was also a personal friend to my wife, Eunice and me as we were all members of Broadmoor Presbyterian Church. Eunice and I were encouraged to be the Chairs of the Church's 50th anniversary committee by Bunny. She and Ken had been Chairs of the 40th anniversary event.

Bunny was greatly disappointed with the City Council when it allowed the demolition of Robert and Sarah Thornton's 1860's home on Sullivan Avenue. It could have been a wonderful home for the History Guild. The History Guild was not allowed the opportunity to salvage anything from the fine old home. For a long while it appeared that her dream of a separate museum building would not happen, but when it finally did, it must have been among her happiest moments. We again shared time at the museum updating the files in their new home.

Bunny wrote a biography of Robert Thornton, that she, Ken and I read to the Westerners, a writers group. Later in 1998 she and Ken traveled with us to New England. One scheduled stop was to be North Situate Cemetery at Rhode Island where Robert and Sarah are interred, but in the evening light we were unable to locate it. Eunice and I were able to locate and visit the graves in 2012.

My association with her has been a very pleasant and rewarding experience. It encouraged me to research and document about 30 early North San Mateo County settlers.



Bunny in the Gillespie Room at the museum with portrait of John Daly and the Daly cow bell she used in school presentations.

One of Bunny's favorite stories was about working for the *San Francisco News* during World War II. One day she arrived at work to find her desktop a mess. She inquired, "Who did this?" A voice behind her replied "I did." It was Ernie Pyle.

[Ernie Pyle. (August 3, 1900 – April 18, 1945) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist. As a roving correspondent for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, he earned wide acclaim for his accounts of ordinary people in rural America, and later, of ordinary American soldiers during World War II. He was killed by enemy fire on Iejima during the Battle of Okinawa, the very last pitched battle of World War Two.]

Sam Chandler, Michael Rocchetta, Bunny and Ken at the ribbon cutting for the Gillespie Room, 2009.



TWO REMARKABLE WOMEN WITH FACINATING CONNECTIONS TO OUR PAST: ELINOR CHARLESTON AND BUNNY GILLESPIE

By Dana Smith

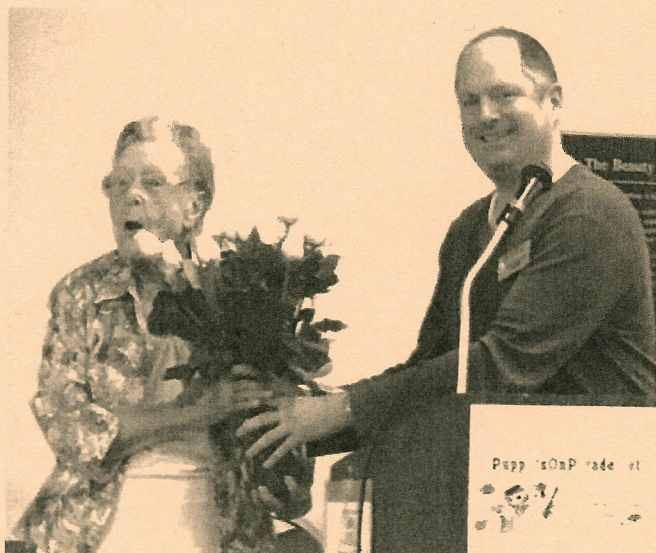
ELINOR CHARLESTON (1916-2017)



Elinor was born in Ely, Nevada and was the granddaughter of Mormon handcart pioneers who crossed the continent on foot in 1846. Her father

was from a mining family whose family home and mining site is now a part of the Great Basin National Park. She was active in the park's restoration of the home and mine and received the "Centennial Ranger" award from Nevada governor at the completion of the project.

Too poor to afford ox or horse drawn teams, between 1856 and 1860 nearly 3,000 Mormon pioneers made the trek west in ten handcart companies. The trek was disastrous for two of the companies, which started their journey dangerously late and were caught by heavy snow and severe temperatures in central Wyoming. Despite a dramatic rescue effort, more than 210 of the 980 pioneers in these two companies died along the way. John Chislett, a survivor, wrote, "Many a father pulled his cart, with his little children on it, until the day preceding his death."



Elinor and Mark celebrating her 100th Birthday at a Guild meeting, 2016.

Elinor moved as a child with her family to Vallejo in 1920, eventually settling in San Francisco in 1923. Elinor graduated from San Francisco State Teachers College in 1937, the same year she married steam engineer William Charleston. The couple were early residents of Westlake, buying their home in 1954 where

they lived the rest of their lives raising two sons (David and John). William was the Chief of the Physical Plant at San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University).



Elinor receiving an orchid from Guild Treasurer (Councilwoman) Judith Christensen on the occasion of her retirement as our longtime Hospitality Chair.

Elinor was named Daly City's Unsung Hero Volunteer in 2012 for over 36 years of volunteer service. She was a volunteer at the Doelger Center until her death, running the library and hosting a book club. For many years she was a member of the Daly City History Guild, last serving as our Hospitality Chair, a position she gave up only a few years ago. Dana Smith comments, "Elinor was a very wise woman. I never heard her gossip or say an unkind thing about anyone. She took the good and bad that comes in life with a level head and positive, compassionate and generous spirit. I never felt that Elinor was old, she was just my peer and friend who happened to be over 100." Marcus Gonzalez comments, "I spoke with Elinor for the last time at one of our general meetings. There she was, just past 100 years old, and she offered to help in the kitchen. I thanked her profusely and said that we had it covered. That was Elinor, always ready to jump in and help out!"

BUNNY GILLESPIE (1926-2017)

Bunny was born at home with the help of a neighboring midwife on the Fourth of July, 1926 in the Crocker Tract at 216 Templeton Avenue. The midwife, Mrs. Reardon, was the mother of James Reardon, later twice Chief of DC Police Dept. Bunny commented, "I grew up thinking that celebrations on the Fourth of July were for ME." Bunny's Grandmother Henrietta Von Wetzel, an immigrant from Germany, was a Suffragette at the end of the 1800s. Grandma Henrietta was out stumping for the right of women to vote while her own mother raised daughter Lillian, mother to Bunny. Dana Smith comments, "I once asked where she got the name Bunny and she told me that her mother was pushing her in a baby pram when a lady came up and asked her name. Unhappy with Bunny's given name of Lillybell, she said 'she is as cute as a bunny?'" (and the name stuck!)

Bunny began her newspaper journalist career at age 15 during WWII working for newspapers in San Francisco as an assistant financial editor and then society editor and drama critic. Later, she was the women's editor for Marchbank
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Publications and other local newspapers. As a child, Bunny would stop by John Marchbank's front porch to receive the candy and free tickets he gave to neighborhood children to see silent movies at his Daly City Theatre on Mission Street. When daughter Perky was born, she worked for two advertising agencies, interviewing famous entertainers such as Sammy Davis, Jr., Danny Thomas, and Mike Douglas. Dana Smith comments, "I remember Bunny walking me through her hallway "hall of fame" with pictures of her daughter Perky with famous musicians.

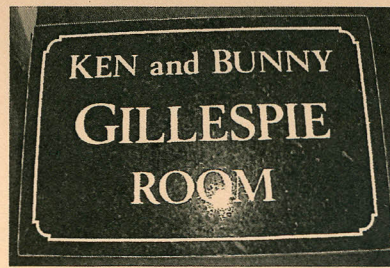
In 1949 Bunny married Scottish native and WWII Navy vet Ken Gillespie. Thus began a lifelong love story. Dana comments, "Anyone who knew Ken and Bunny was struck by their devotion and pride in and support of each other." Bunny became very involved in the PTA and during the Cold War she helped develop a civil defense plan to evacuate school children to the safer countryside. Bunny frequently asserted historical truth in letters to the editor, defending the contributions of Margaret Pauline Brown when it was said that her claim to fame was that she married a famous statesman. In more recent times she lobbied to preserve the name of Thornton Beach for Daly City's first pioneer.

Bunny and Ken were founding members of the History Guild, becoming Secretary and President and leading the organization for 18 years. Bunny served as editor of the *Tattler* newsletter for 20 years with Ken using his graphic talents to produce and illustrate the newsletter. In 1987 The City Council appointed Ken and Bunny Gillespie as the official co-historians of Daly City. The couple worked tirelessly giving presentations, hosting information tables with other guild leaders, and taking lectures to the local schools. Bunny would say to school children, "History is what we do every day. We are all living history. YOU are making history."

The Guild first opened the Mini-Museum in 1992 in the basement of the Serramonte Library. By 1994 the collection had outgrown the tiny space and the Guild, led by City Historians Bunny and Ken Gillespie, first requested a full-sized Daly City Museum and proposed the John Daly Library as a possible site. In 2009 the History Guild opened the Daly City History Museum in the vacant John Daly Library, dedicating the former children's room as the "Ken and Bunny Gillespie Room".



Longtime Board Member and Current Guild Vice President Rich Rocchetta with Bunny at the dedication of the Gillespie Room in 2009.



In 1987 the Gillespies published their first book, written by Bunny and illustrated by Ken. More history books would follow authored by Bunny and published by

Arcadia Publishing, including "Images of America, Daly City" in 2003 with a charming picture on pg. 50 of a children's Halloween party featuring a 3 year-old Bunny with dirty knees.

HENRY DOELGER AND THE USE OF SHEETROCK

By Dana Smith

I became intrigued with comments by Rob Keil during his November lecture to the Guild on The Legacy of Henry Doelger. One of Doelger's methods of streamlining building and reducing costs was his innovative, for the time, use of sheetrock. Rob comments in his book, "It has been said that Henry Doelger was the first West Coast builder to use sheetrock.

A little sheetrock history (excerpts from *How Things Work, The How Drywall Works* by Bambi Turner): The U.S. Gypsum Company invented drywall in 1916. The material was first sold in the form of small, fireproof tiles, but within a few years, it was sold in multi-layer gypsum and paper sheets and in less than a decade it took on the form we know, consisting of a single layer of compressed gypsum sandwiched between two sheets of heavy paper. While it only took a few years for this board to evolve into the material we know today, it took 25 years for builders to begin using drywall in any substantial quantity. At the time, drywall was thought of as a cheap fix, with none of the fine art associated with making plaster. People didn't want to live in homes that were shoddily constructed, so they stuck with the tradition and expense of plaster. The traditional old plaster walls used the technique of spreading layers of plaster over lathing material to create a very hard, smooth, durable wall. A wall covered with drywall sounds hollow, so some felt that the finish product was of lower quality.

U.S. Gypsum eventually changed the brand name of the material to "Sheetrock" in an attempt to improve drywall's reputation, but it wasn't until the United States became involved in World War II that builders came around to the benefits of using because the labor shortage was too intense for plastering to remain a viable building option, people began to use drywall instead. By the time the war ended in 1945, drywall had become the dominant building material in the United States. During the post-war building boom, contractors knew they could

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construct homes and workplaces in one-tenth the time if they abandoned plaster for drywall, leading to higher profits.

Rob Keil comments: "Doelger was reportedly the first west coast builder to use sheetrock. Other builders criticized him for it, but it signified that Doelger was willing to innovate. Other builders said he was building walls out of paper (one of the components in sheetrock). But within a few years Doelger's key competitors were using it."

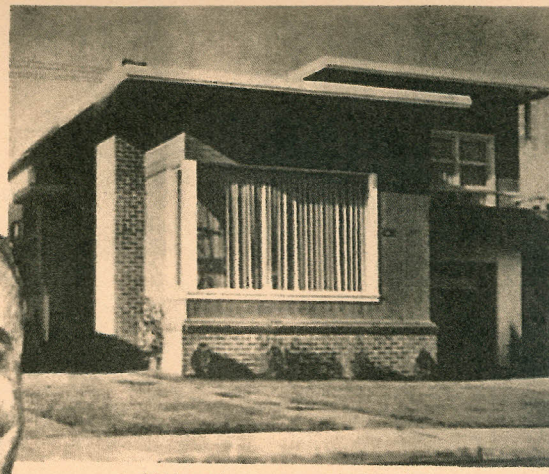
Rt. Ad by U.S. Gypsum, 1950

**THE CHANGING ROCK QUARRY,
TOP-OF-THE-HILL**

In 1905 John Daly operated a rock quarry near the Top-of-the-Hill which supplied broken rock for the lining of Market Street Railway rail beds. In 1920, the first library in Daly City was built in front of the quarry, and later moved back against the rock cliff when the 1938 addition was added, combing the two buildings. This building, the only library in Daly City for 40 years, is now our museum. Matt Otto recently donated a series of original photos of the rock grinding plant taken in 1924. Matt's grandfather Melville S. Jones was an engineer building highways in the Bay Area in the 20s. In the photo below, one you can see the original City Hall. The quarry operations were a prominent sight at the Top-of-the-Hill for many years.

You may have noticed large construction cranes working on the top of the quarry these last couple of months in 2017 on the Brunswick Mixed-Use Affordable Senior Housing Project. It will be a five story building with 206 studio apartments above 6,451 square feet of retail/office space on the street level. Completion of the project is expected in early 2020.

Henry Doelger,
for 25 years one of
America's leading
home builders, says:

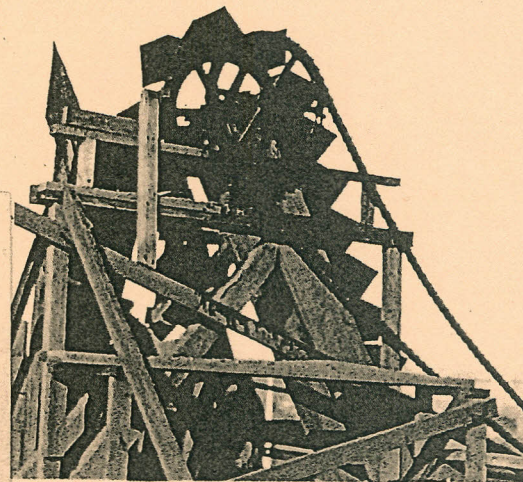


*"I use SHEETROCK and save
2 to 3 weeks time—it helps cut costs up to 30%—gives
home buyers high quality for almost 1/3 less!"*

The buy-word for Doelger homes is one word—VALUE! A big contributing factor is SHEETROCK wallboard. With it, expert high-speed craftsmen build the walls and ceilings of six new homes every day! Good solid walled homes—interiors beautifully smooth, ready for any decoration—crack resistant for a "housetime." They're Henry Doelger homes that sell at a rate of 90% every month!

Learn how SHEETROCK can perform for you. Ask your lumber and building material dealer handling SHEETROCK, or contact your USG representative. Investigate this great dry-wall system today!

There is only ONE
SHEETROCK
The Fireproof Gypsum Wallboard





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.

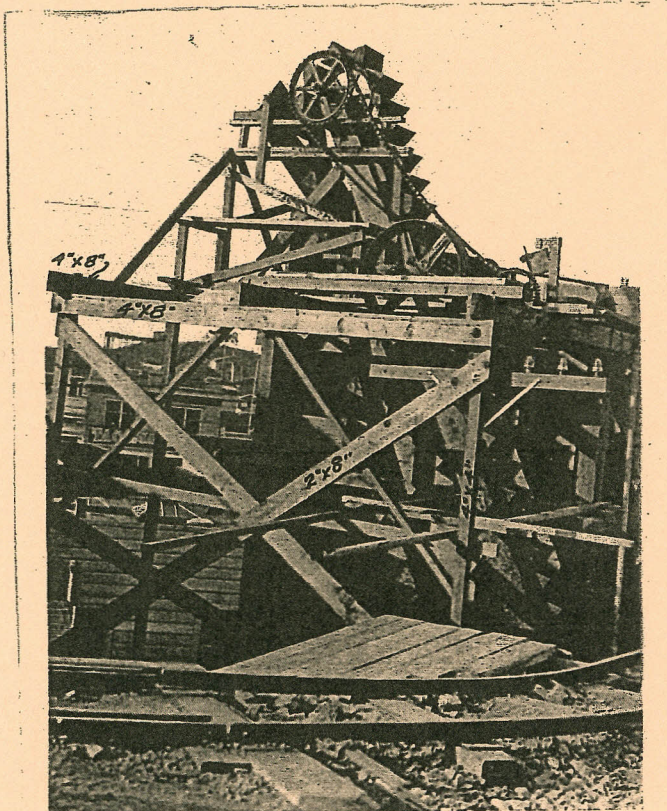


Please visit us on Facebook at "Daly City History Museum"

www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Rock grinding machinery at the Top-of-the-Hill Quarry operation circa 1924.



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 (1926-2017), 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 begin at \$25 per year.

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

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