

THE TATTLE

JOURNAL OF DALY CITY HISTORY GUILD MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK

For our September general membership meeting we welcome local documentary filmmaker Tom Wyrsh from Petaluma to the fold. Tom is a producer of numerous documentaries, including "Sutro's: the Palace at Land's End"; "The Cliff House and Sutro Heights"; and "Remembering Playland at the Beach". This last film will be presented at our meeting. You will have an opportunity to purchase DVDs of each of the above films along with others before and after the film and lecture. His web site is www.garfieldlaneproductions.com. Many a Daly Cityite visited Playland at the Beach over the years. It was "the" recreation spot for families from all over the Bay Area, and our own Coney Island.

Once upon a time, San Mateo County was home to all sorts of recreational and entertainment venues: single screen movie theaters and drive-ins up and down the peninsula; Circle Star Theater; roller skating and ice skating rinks; bowling alleys; miniature golf courses; Bay Meadows and Tanforan race tracks; Marine World Africa USA [closed 1982 and relocated to Vallejo]; and by extension, Frontier Village in San Jose [closed 1980]; Santa's Village in Scotts Valley [closed 1979]; and Marin Town & Country Club in Fairfax [closed 1972, the same year as Playland]. The most recent casualty? Malibu Grand Prix in Redwood City in 2013. Most if not all of these venues are gone, which is a huge shame. While housing and business opportunities may be needed and land is always valuable, what of entertainment and recreation? Where can folks go today outside of a megaplex movie theater or one of the very few bowling alleys or public pools still left? With the exception of Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Great America, everything else is but a very distant memory, which really is too bad. The film will showcase the predecessor of Playland--that's right it started life under a different name--and take us all the way through its ignominious end, which came about abruptly in late 1972. You will learn why the land, once the park was demolished almost overnight, was forced to stand vacant for the next decade, with a decree from the City and County of San Francisco that no development of

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HISTORY EVENING

Wednesday, September 19th

At 7 pm

FILMMAKER TOM WYRSCH

PRESENTS

"REMEMBERING PLAYLAND AT THE BEACH"



101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City
Doelger Center Cafe

Free to the public – loads of free parking
light refreshments

any kind occur for the next ten years. If you have any memorabilia from Playland and are inspired to share it with us at the meeting, please do so. In addition, our museum and archive is in possession of beautifully mounted vintage black and white photographs of the amusement park taken during demolition which we will have on display. This evening is being promoted as a "Night of Nostalgia". Please join us as we share our collective memories.

Postscript: the Playland Not at the Beach museum in El Cerrito, which has the largest collection of Playland memorabilia anywhere, has lost its home and will close forever at the end of August. The entire contents will be sold in September by Michaan's Auctions. You can visit the museum online at www.playland-not-at-the-beach.org.

We want to let you know that after watching our November general membership meeting attendance drop significantly for the past several years, we have decided to eliminate it. Of all our meetings, this one has always yielded the smallest turnout, no doubt because it occurs so close to the Thanksgiving holiday. Rather than program for five meetings each year, we will now put all our efforts into providing quarterly lectures that will continue to stimulate and inform. Remaining meetings will continue in each of the following months: January, March, May, and September. Thank you for your understanding.

Due to the proximity of the Martin Luther King holiday, we have had to readjust our schedule since the Doelger Cafe will be closed the third Sunday in January 2019. Please note that we will have our annual birthday celebration on Sunday, January 27, 2pm - 5pm. The only difference is we will meet one week later than usual.

I would like to draw your attention to a name change unanimously approved by the board and membership at our May general meeting. We will now be known as "Daly City History Guild Museum and Archive."

Many organizations like the Guild, are struggling to reach out to the community for support and involvement. If we are to survive, we need new members to carry on. In this edition you will find my support letter for Daly City Public Library Associates, a fellow non-profit organization formed to provide support for public libraries in Daly City. We have many shared interests and values... we both support free education and culture for the public. Our public libraries are a part of city government, while the guild is a privately supported non-profit organization. The library Associates are reciprocating by sending a

support letter for the History Guild to their membership. May we both prosper!

BACKGROUND ON FILMMAKER TOM WYRSCH (Provided by Mr. Wyrsh)

Born in San Francisco, CA, Tom Wyrsh grew up in nearby Sonoma County, developing an avid interest in film and filmmaking... when he watched George Lucas film "American Graffiti" in the summer of 1972 he developed a deep-rooted desire to make a feature-length motion picture. A close friendship with Bob Wilkins and John Stanley led to his first feature-length documentary in 2007: "Watch Horror Films, Keep America Strong!", a documentary on the TV show "Creature Features" and was the stepping stone to more projects.

Working with his friend Richard Tuck, helping Tuck design his Playland-Not-at-the-Beach museum in El Cerrito, CA, Wyrsh produced his second feature documentary in 2010, "Remembering Playland at the Beach." Both the film and the museum were dedicated to the fondly remembered San Francisco amusement park that closed operations in 1972. The success of these first two productions have led to nearly a decade of producing and directing documentary films and historical DVDs.



Note from Editor: Bob Wilkins was best known as the creator and host of a popular television show named Creature Features that ran on KTVU in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1971 to 1984. The

programming on Creature Features featured science fiction and horror film, everything from the classics, such as Bride of Frankenstein to total schlock. As host of the show, his droll humor and omnipresent cigar became his trademarks. I loved the show.

THE PHILOSOPHY STORE

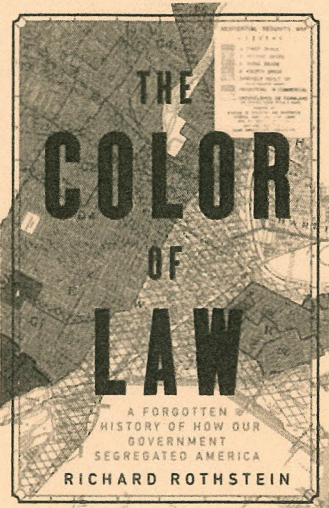
Research by Emily Chen (our new volunteer)

George Nick & Bro., Proprietors owned a fruit, vegetables, imported and domestic goods grocery store and deli at 3 Hillcrest Drive in Daly City (Top-of-the-Hill area) in the early 1900s. The Philosophy Store, as it was named, was a neighborhood institution where the men of the area would meet in the back room every day

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to socialize. Mr. Nick, the owner extended credit, rolling up each IOU, tying it with a string and tossing it in a big basket in the back room. When Mr. Nick died, the family found the barrel and more than \$100,000 in uncollected debts.

Note: Do any of our Tattler readers have memories of the old Philosophy Store to share? Please email Dana at director@dalycityhistorymuseum.org, or mail a note to the museum.



Editor's email to Richard Rothstein, author of The Color of Law, A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America:

We communicated for a few years off and on for research on your book The Color of Law, and you visited our museum for research and photos. We would really like a copy of the book for our museum.

I have to tell you a story... last week I was at Daly City Hall attending a Task Force meeting on short term rentals and rooming houses. At the end of the session, a lady from Peninsula Housing Coalition told the group that she wanted to recommend a book, and that all city managers should have a copy. It was your book and I thought "I know this person!"

Richard Rothstein replies:

My book, The Color of Law, published in 2015 and now available in paperback, demonstrates that the residential racial segregation of every metropolitan area is largely the result of explicit government policy designed to ensure that blacks and whites could not live near one another. The notion of "de facto" segregation, the result of private discrimination, personal choices, and economic differences, is a myth. The reality is that segregation was created purposely by government, in California and elsewhere, and is thus a civil rights violation that has never been remedied.

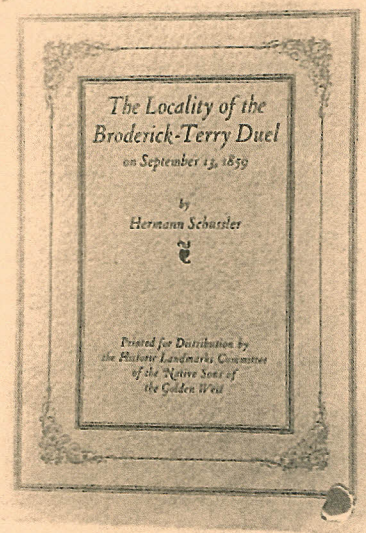
A very representative example of this unconstitutional government policy comes from Westlake in Daly City, and I am so very grateful for the assistance of Dana Smith and the Daly City Museum for helping me to describe it. My graduate student assistant at the time, Lul Tesfai, spent a good bit of time at the Museum, going through its collections under Dana's guidance and as a result, my book has two illustrations that come from the Daly City Museum archives. One shows the administrator of the federal government's Federal

Housing Administration driving a ceremonial spike to inaugurate construction of a shopping center in Westlake, demonstrating the FHA's support for the builder Henry Doelger's Westlake development. Another, a companion to the first, reproduces a contract required by the FHA in Westlake that assesses an exorbitant financial penalty against any homeowner who sells a home to an African American. Racial segregation of this kind was nationwide federal policy, in violation of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

Best wishes, Richard Rothstein

Richard Rothstein is a Senior Fellow, Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy University of California (Berkeley) School of Law

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT WE KNEW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE BRODERICK-TERRY DUEL...



Guilder Russ Brabec found this 1916 publication online and donated it to our museum archive.

In 1916 Herman Schussler, a Civil and Hydraulic Engineer for the Spring Valley Water Company, was asked by the Historic Landmarks Committee of the Native Sons of the Golden West to

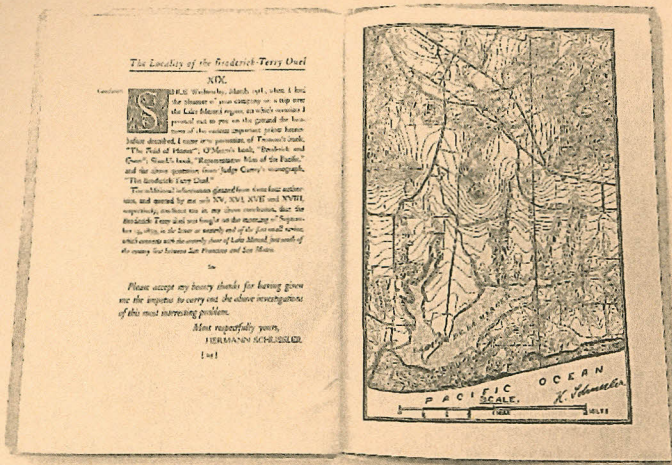
conduct an investigation to determine the exact location of the 1859 Broderick-Terry Duel in an area that is now a part of Daly City. Schussler relied on discussions with eye witness Peter Quinlin (who died in 1903 while he was working for the Spring Valley Water Works), George Green (whose father had owned the Lake House inn where Senator Broderick and company spent the night prior to the duel and had shown his son the site).

I found it interesting how many books were written on the topic of the duel and referenced in Mr. Schussler's publication:

Jeremiah Lynch's book "A Senator of the Fifties" (1911); Hittell's "History of California" (1885); Truman's "The Field of Honor" (1884); James O'Meara "Broderick and Gwin" (1881); Judge Curry monograph "The Broderick-Terry Duel"; and Oscar Shuck's "Representative Men of the Pacific" (1870).

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Schussler's map of duel site

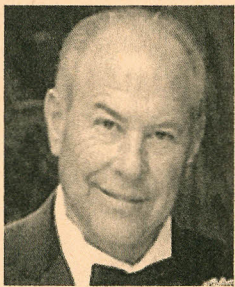


Mr. Schussler also enlisted the help of the following librarians: George Barron, Curator of the Golden Gate Park Museum, James Deering, Librarian of the San Francisco City Hall Law Library, and J.L. Gillis, State Librarian.

Russ Brabec also donated a long article "Terry's Career" published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1889 at the time of David Terry's death, shot by a deputy marshal for threatening Justice Field of the US Circuit Court. These materials are in the museum archive and available to modern day researchers. The interest in this saga, now more than 159 years ago, continues.

Note: Russ Brabec played the role of David Broderick in the Guild's reenactment of the duel in 2009, sporting an impressive beard grown for the occasion. The Broderick-Terry duel was fought between United States Senator David C. Broderick, of California, and ex-Chief Justice David S. Terry, of the Supreme Court of California. Broderick was an abolitionist, whereas Terry was pro-slavery. Intense political and personal disagreements led to a challenge to duel and the fatal encounter in a ravine near Lake Merced.

THE GUILD REMEMBERS DON CIUCCI



Don died unexpectedly on July 21. A San Francisco native, Don was born in 1947 and grew up in the Mission Terrace neighborhood of San Francisco where he graduated from Lowell High School in 1965; attended the City College of San Francisco and Cal

Poly San Luis Obispo where he earned a BS in City and Regional Planning. In 1972, Don was hired by the Daly City Redevelopment Agency where he worked until 1979. It was then that Don decided to pursue a career with the Daly City Fire Department. He retired in 2005. Don was instrumental in saving Fire Department history

and arranging to house a large part of the collection in our Daly City Museum.

THE GUILD REMEMBERS URSULA DEUTSCH

An immigrant from Germany, Ursula Deutsch died at her Westlake Home in Daly City this month. She and her husband were among the first residents of Westlake. Mrs. Deutsch became at odds with the Westlake Subdivisions Improvement Association when she and others balked at the restrictions, fees and leins imposed, including barring nonwhites and allowing only Christians. She began a vocal and legal campaign to defend property rights and democratic values resulting in the disbanding of the Association in 1999. Dana Smith comments: "I think of Mrs. Deutsch as the 'warrior of Westlake.' I remember a meeting of the Guild (Ursula was a longtime member) when she was surprised to receive a round of applause from residents of Westlake in attendance that night. Her single-minded campaign, which at times seemed to be an obsession, will go down in postwar suburban history as one of the first uprisings against restrictive housing associations. Mrs. Deutsch donated her extensive records of what became known as "The Westlake War" to the Daly City Museum, along with her manual typewriter on which she composed a multitude of protest letters. She was a very smart woman with an amazingly strong will."



EMILY CHEN, OUR NEW VOLUNTEER AND MEMBER

Emily lives near the museum and will soon be studying at SFSU. In addition to other duties, she is working with our Museum Director to create a subject index for all the

Tattler newsletters on our website going back to 1985. Emily has shown a real aptitude for helping us with online research.

THANKS: Algis Ratnikas repaired a broken museum glass display case; Michael and Rich Rocchetta hosted two fourth grade classes from Woodrow Wilson Elementary School on field trips to the museum (One of the classes found their teacher's high school graduation photo in our yearbook collection!); we now have a self-led interpretive brochure with historical details on all the photographic wall murals thanks to Dana Smith and Judith Christensen, and former First National Bank of Northern California (now Tri-Counties Bank) for their donation of First National memorabilia and a display case.

FORTUITOUS "MISTAKE"

During production of the photo wall murals, the company producing the large format photos mistakenly printed nearly a dozen of the total of 21 photo murals at the wrong size. They reprinted according to our specifications at no charge and donated the miss-sized photos to the Guild to donate to good causes. What was a somewhat unnerving problem, then became good fortune for groups including Daly City Department of Library and Recreation Services, Bepler Fire Station, and the Colma Museum. These murals are up to 4 ft. x 8 ft. in size. The Guild is happy to be able to make these contributions to the community.

DEATH IN A POWDER EXPLOSION

California Fuse Works Totally Destroyed by Fire Last Evening. ONE KILLED, THIRTEEN INJURED. Mary Beck Buried in the Ruins and Burned to Ashes.

Thus, read the front page of *The San Francisco Call* newspaper on the morning of October 19, 1897. "The California Fuse Works, located on San Jose road, between Ocean View and Colma, in San Mateo County, blew up yesterday afternoon at 5:20 o'clock, killing one girl, Mary Beck, and seriously injuring thirteen other people. The buildings and contents, estimated to be worth \$100,000, were totally destroyed. The damage was caused by the dropping of a hot incandescent bulb on some loose powder. The plant of the California Fuse Works consisted of six buildings... One of the buildings was a powder magazine and held between four and five tons of black powder and was the only building of the entire plant that was saved. It was located about seventy-five yards to the rear, its distance adding to its safety. The spinning-room of the main building... was where the powder was placed in tape and rolled into a fuse. There was powder spilled on the floor and it was this powder igniting the rest that was the cause of the explosion. There were three rooms leading off from the spinning-room. One of these was what is called the tape room, the place where the tape was wound on the spools. At the time of the disaster there were six girls at work in the tape room... Next to the tape room was the room where the Chinese were at work. The buildings were all of wood and were completed last March, when the plant incandescent electric lights were put in the building for the short winter days, so factory hands could work until 6 o'clock. It was through the careless handling of one the bulbs that the disaster which killed Mary Beck and injured the others is due. A hot bulb slipped from the superintendent's hand and fell to the floor and the hot glass ignited the powder scattered there... Some of the girls in the tape room raised a cry of "Fire!" There was a

mad rush to the door outside of which were the stairs leading to the ground. Just as the foremost girls reached it there was an explosion followed by a rush of flame. The walls of the building flew outward and the whole structure collapsed...

After the first explosion there was a second. Nora Murphy was caught in some of the falling timbers as was also Mary Amsler. The second explosion released the latter and she hastened to the assistance of her friend. With a bravery that is remarkable she tugged at the half senseless girl while the flame poured out singeing her hair and burning her hands. She finally got Nora away from the wreck but her companion was so weak that she fell three times, and with a strength born of her love for her shop mate the heroic 18-year-old girl half-carried and half dragged her friend away from the danger... It is believed that Mary Beck was either blown down the elevator shaft or was rendered senseless by being struck by a piece of flying timber. Her cries were heard for a few minutes after the building collapsed, but it is supposed the life was crushed out of her by the heavy timbers, thus mercifully sparing her the agony of being burned alive.

The firemen from engine 33 at Ocean View were summoned, but they could do nothing, as the ruins were in flames and there was no water available... The noise of the explosion attracted a large crowd from Ocean View and Colma... Nora Murphy was lying in bed in her home at Ocean View, suffering severely from internal injuries received... "Had it not been for the help that my brave little friend Mary Amsler gave me I know I would have died there... The sick girl's eyes filled with tears as she told of the devotion of her brave friend..."

Lizzie Beck, a sister of the girl who was buried beneath the ruin, brought the sad news to her mother. Mrs. Beck hastened to the scene of the fire... and sobbed piteously when she seemed to realize the truth. The fuseworks was nothing but a smoldering ruin, beneath which lies the charred body of Mary Beck."



Our mural of women workers at rebuilt fuseworks, 1902. Thanks to Emily Chen for finding this article on the Internet. The factory once stood on Mission Street, approximately at the present day site of the Smart & Final store.



DALY CITY HISTORY MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

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

In 1900 *The Call* was still using wood engravings to illustrate the news rather than photographic images, which began being used in the late 1880s. This engraving was on the front page, accompanying the long article describing the explosion at the fuseworks.



RUINS OF THE CALIFORNIA FUSE WORKS.

Scene of the Explosion Which Killed One Woman, Seriously Wounded Thirteen People and Destroyed \$200,000 Worth of Property.

Colma Historical Society: Friday, September 28th Annual Autumn Dinner at the Colma Community Center. Call 650-757-1676 for more information. Tuesday, October 30th last quarterly meeting of 2018 at the Colma Museum.

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, Grace and Marcus Gonzales and Annette Hipona Hospitality Crew

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

Daly City History Guild Museum & Archive is a

501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization

Memberships begin at \$25 per year.

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