

# HISTORY GUILD of DALY CITY/COLMA

Vol. 8 - No. 3 March 1990

## WOW, LOOK AT THAT BAY!

In November of 1769, while trying to find Monterey, a party of Spanish soldiers, a priest, mule packers and Indians explored along the coast of what is now San Mateo County.

Headed by Don Gaspar de Portola, newly appointed Governor of California, the expedition had missed their target, looking for an enclosed harbor, similar to San Diego's. On a hunting party, Sergeant Jose Francisco Ortéga climbed a mountain ridge, and discovered...ta-ra-ta-ra, **SAN FRANCISCO BAY!**

The dramatic story of Portola's expedition will be told by a real expert on the subject, Judge F. Jose de Larios, at our upcoming Doelger Center meeting, 7:30 p.m., March 21st.


Judge de Larios is a retired Judge of the Municipal Court, Northern Judicial District of San Mateo County, 1963-83. An enthusiastic historian, he is the current president of the San Mateo County Historical Association and the Historical Association of South San Francisco.

He is the standing president of the Portolá Expedition Foundation, a director of Los Californianos, and was a key figure in the establishment of the Portolá Expedition monument in Pacifica, a splendid figure of the explorer, facing towards the ridge where S.F. Bay was first sighted.


His credentials stretch from here to Sweeney Ridge, a Stanford grad in law, Field Artillery officer in WW II, lecturer, seminar leader, community figure. We extend a grand welcome to our Portolá Pro, Judge F. Jose de Larios.

THE HISTORY GUILD of DALY CITY/COLMA  
PROUDLY PRESENTS ANOTHER

# HISTORY EVENING!



WEDNESDAY, March 21st, at 7:30 pm



## THE PORTOLÁ EXPEDITION

Judge F. JOSE DeLARIOS  
President  
PORTOLÁ EXPEDITION FOUNDATION

Doelger Center Multi-Purpose Room  
101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City

**ADMISSION FREE!**

Donations Gratefully Accepted ♦ Phone 991-8025 for Information

## A MONUMENTAL JANUARY MEETING

One hundred and eighteen was the nose count at another standing-room only Birthday Party at Colma Town Hall. Celebrating the Guild's eighth official birthday, the members-only gathering was held on Sunday, January 21, 1990, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Speaker for the afternoon festivity was **Elio Fontana**, of V. Fontana & Co., who have been in the monument business in Colma since 1921. **Elio** represents the 5th generation of Fontanas in the stone craft. His son, **Mark**, now actively leads the company.

Backed by an impressive display of historical and current pictures of granite and marble works, **Elio** captivated his audience with a splendid depiction of how blocks of stone are translated into living memorials, the only truly lasting testaments to those whom the artistry recalls.

A number of guests were introduced, including host Mayor Ted Kirsch-

ner of Colma; Mayor pro-tem A. Regalia of Daly City, **Geno Fambrini**, representing E Clampus Vitus, the Gold Rush group which places markers of historical significance throughout the West; JUHSD Trustee **Betty Schultz**; members of the **Fontana** family.

Ms. Schultz presented the Guild with a can of Anheuser-Busch water, prepared by the beer company for emergency use following the Oct. 1989 earthquake.

Under the expert direction of Refreshment Committee chairperson **Mary Hutchings**, special birthday refreshments were served, finger foods, cookies, and two beautifully decorated birthday cakes. Assisted by **Marilyn Olcese**, **Bob and Enid Williams**, **Ed and Olive Smith**, **Jean and John Gallagher**, **Ann Ingersoll** and **Lanty Molloy**, the committee presented a very tasty table for the attendees.

Much appreciated was the loan of 50 chairs from the City of Daly City. Delivered on Friday, used on Sunday, and picked up on Monday, the chairs augmented Colma's supply. Mayor **Ted Kirschner's** assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Staffing the registration table was **Roz Babow**, membership chair, who received current membership dues, with the able assistance of **Yolana Hardiman**.

A beautiful floral arrangement from **Joyce Olcese** of Monterey was raffled off, the tickets expertly handled by **Leroy and Aida Larsen**.

## COLMA TOWN HALL PLAQUE

At the Colma Town Hall early in January there was a presentation made by members of the Yerba Buena Chapter #1, E Clampus Vitus. Each January a pilgrimage is made by members of the pioneer history and fun organization to the grave of their early friend, **Joshua Norton**, Emperor of the United States, etc.

The presentation was in the form of a commemorative marker, honoring the Township of Colma. Formerly known as Lawndale, and incorporated in 1921,

the name was changed to Colma to avoid conflict with another community in the state called Lawndale.

A large group of enthusiastic Clampers, with a magnificently strident jazz band, rattled the timbers of Colma Town Hall, as Colma Mayor **Ted Kirschner** accepted the handsome marble marker on behalf of the community.

Guild members **Geno Fambrini**, **Richard Hill** and **Ted Wurm** were present among the celebrants, marking the second local plaque recently donated by the Clampers. The other one is now gracing the Hillcrest Ave. wall of the Crocker Masonic Temple, depicting "WHERE DALY CITY STARTED", the site of **John Daly's Dairy Farm**, at the top of Daly's Hill.

## GEORGE GAGGERO PASSES

Sadly absent from the birthday party was dear **George Gaggero**, faithful member and friend. **George** died the day before the meeting, and the news of his passing was not distributed, so as not to sadden the members.

**George Gaggero** was a delightful man, warm, good-humored, helpful and enthusiastic. His activities as a key worker on the Refreshment Committee were always a pleasure to observe. He would take trays of food to those who hadn't yet partaken, and was a font of information on old Colma and Daly City, having grown up locally. He was the uncle of **Marilyn Olcese**, a boyhood schoolmate of **Mary Garibaldi Hutchings**, and a friend to all who were privileged to know him.

We know he's watching, holding a tray of heavenly provender, and saying, "Come on, finish these up!"

We thank those generous friends of **George** who made contributions to the Guild in his memory.

## BLIMP CRASH FOR MAY MEETING

Our May 16th meeting at Doelger Center will feature a program on one of Daly City's "UNSOLVED MYSTERIES", the crash of a Navy patrol blimp on Bellevue Ave. in August 1942.

Extensive research has been done on the mystery flight by **Bunny and Ken Gillespie**, who will take members on a step-by-step description of the ill-fated flight, where the two crew members simply disappeared, with no sign of foul play or emergency.

Eye witnesses to the wandering airship's over-Daly City flight and and crash have been interviewed.

## GOODIE VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH

A reminder is offered to those generous members who volunteered goodies for the March 21st meeting:

**Winona Pepin  
Olga Tourkoff  
Irene Krueger**

**Mary Hutchings** will call you before the meeting, but here's an early notice...and thanks!

## "C" IS FOR CATALOGUING!

Continuing their work in cataloging pictures and documents at Serramonte Library are **Ed and Olive Smith, Walt and Elaine Riney, Yolanda Hardiman, Collins Orton** and **Ken and Bunny Gillespie**, and chairman **Neil Fahy**.

Replying to the box-check list on the membership renewal were:

**Milt and Doris Goldberg  
Don Manning  
Louis and Bianca Caserza**

The foregoing haven't yet been called to the project, since we're in a phase which doesn't yet have the volume to utilize properly the new volunteers. We're almost there, and will be calling you shortly. In the meantime, many thanks for volunteering. Helpers in all phases of your Guild's work are always welcomed.

## RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to the collection of documents and pictures include the following:

Beautiful color shots of the 1953 Seagrave fire engine which used to be Daly City's pride and joy, and which was donated by the engine's owner, **Al Schwoerer** of Redwood City.

Listing of the 1947-48 owners of property in Garden Village (unincorporated Colma), together with size of lots, assessed value and tax rates. This was donated by a recently moved friend, **Els Stolk**.

Pictures received to photograph and return include two shots of the Colma Bank of America, one showing the interior, the other the exterior with Colma branch staff and head office visitors. Other pix show 1916 school pictures of Colma School, and a group pic of the Colma volunteer fire department, approximately 1916. These were lent by **Judy Graziani Steele** of the San Bruno Library. Many thanks to all our kind contributors!

## GUILD MEMBERSHIP STATUS

As of this writing, the Guild has received 191 membership renewals, including the following Patron members (\$25 or more):

**M/M Louis Caserza  
Tillio and Joyce Olcese  
Col. and Mrs. William Wade  
Walter and Betty Schultz  
Excelsior Roofing Co. (Dale Blosser)  
Michael Michael and Pam Giusti  
E Clampus Vitus (Yerba Buena #1)**

Sincere appreciation is extended to those who sent in more money than their category listed.

When we tell other history organizations about our dues structure (\$2 to \$6 for the most part), they can hardly believe it! We are able to put on five meetings a year, publish and mail our newsletter, offer free refreshments each meeting, and pay our ongoing expenses from the dues, the raffle and the money jar. Hooray for the Guild and its members!

## LETTER FROM EARTHQUAKE LADY

An upbeat letter was recently received from **Jane Cryan**, the charming lady who was our November speaker, on the topic of **San Francisco Refugee Shacks**.

**Jane** made no bones about her reactions to the October 17th earthquake, her presentation to the Guild being one of her last official acts in

California. A few days later she was on her way to Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

As a sidebar to the Shacks talk, Bryant Gumbel, host of the "Today" show on NBC, did a segment from the two preserved shacks at the Army Museum in the San Francisco Presidio.

Our Guild received two mentions in the quarterly publication of the Conference of California Historical Societies, "California Historian", one noting our Earthquake Shacks meeting, the other our new member status in the organization.

### WOULD YOU LIKE A BADGE?

Membership badges of the Guild are available from Ken Gillespie, who purchased a button-making machine, and has been having lots of fun making individual buttons for particular projects.

Buttons are as represented below, with names lettered, are 2½" in diameter, and can be ordered at \$1.00 each, with 75¢ going to the Guild treasury.

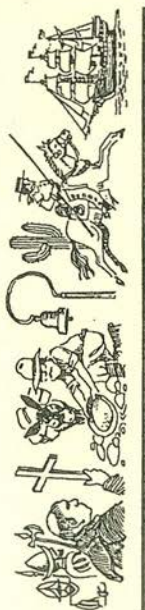


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#### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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**DATED MATERIAL**