



Greetings from President Mark

Well, we now have all the bookkeeping completed and I'm pleased to report that our recent History Guild "Memories" dinner bash grossed \$7,415 and netted us \$5,640. Again, I would like to express the Guild's appreciation to Marie Brizuela, Chair of the event, committee members Marilyn Olcese and Marian Mann, and to all of you who supported our fund raising dinner as raffle donors, volunteers, and attendees. Based on this take, the board was able to make the decision to purchase the remaining Plexiglas to finish off our new tabletop display units. This is no small expense as this material is costly. The display cases, built by volunteer Rob Keil, dramatically increase our display area and allow full use of the central portion of the museum's front room.

We continue to have many visitors to the museum. On April 3, docents Bunny Gillespie, Alex Gallegos and I welcomed Cub Scout Pack 347 of Our Lady of Mercy to the museum. The pack enjoyed viewing our exhibit on scouting memorabilia that celebrates the 100th Anniversary of Scouting and learning about the history of the area.



Scouts viewing memorabilia, including photos of OLM Pack 347 from the 1970s.

Robert Brizuela arrived with the sundial and new sand-stone base (see picture below). Kudos to Robert for being ever willing to provide transport for all manner of items from large signs to heavy sundials. Coincidentally, Guild docent Alex Gallegos, who also lent a hand, was employed as the

maintenance crew that first installed the sundial on the grounds of the Serramonte Library in 1975. Stone mason Mark Fontana has been a great friend to the Guild, donating both the granite plaques and signage at the museum opening in 2009 and the magnificent sandstone base for the sundial. Mark, you outdid yourself!

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HISTORY EVENING

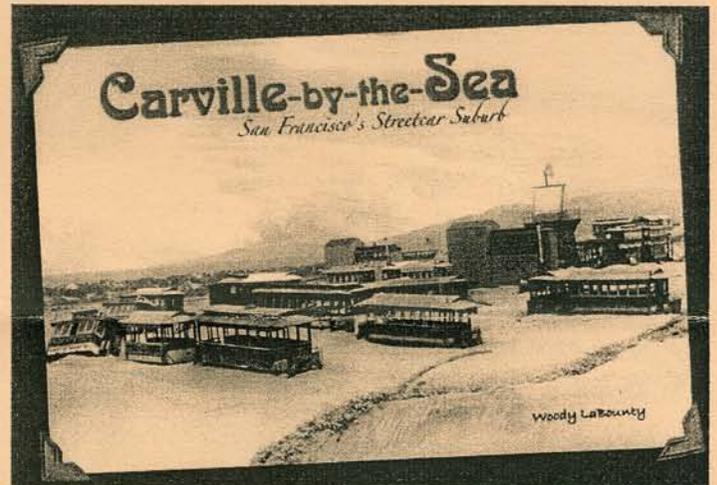
Wednesday, May 19 - 7:00 PM

Earlier time!

FREE

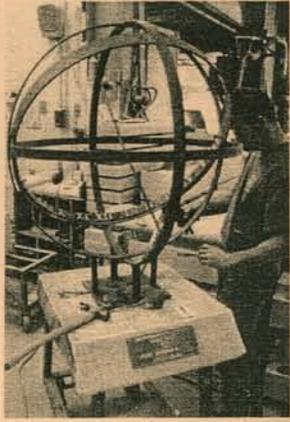
101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City
Doelger Center Café

**Woody LaBounty lecturing on
the colorful 1890's bohemian village**



Woody LaBounty, author of "*Carville-by-the-Sea, San Francisco's Streetcar Suburb*" will be the featured speaker at the Guild's "History Night" on Wednesday, May 19th. Mr. LaBounty is the founder of the Western Neighborhoods Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to the history of western San Francisco. He has also launched a popular history site (www.outsidelands.org) detailing the history of the western portion of San Francisco. He has written many articles on San Francisco history and will be telling us about the activities of his organization and his book which will be available for purchase on the night of the program.

Carville was one of the quirkiest communities in San Francisco's rich history. In the mid-1890s, San Francisco transit companies started selling surplus horse cars and cable cars to the public. They were combined and even stacked to create artists' studios, homes, and businesses. A bohemian settlement erupted at the beach as people from all walks of life built a colorful new neighborhood called "Carville-by-the-Sea."



Sundial in Fontana factory being fitted for a new sandstone base. Donated to the city in 1975 by Home Savings & Loan, the sundial found a new home at the museum when demonstration stormwater management landscaping was installed last year on the grounds of the Serramonte Library.

We now have a new kitchenette/storage room! Many thanks to Michael Rocchetta and Richard

Rocchetta for taking an old storage room (originally a bathroom) that was in a very sad state of disrepair and transforming it into a brand spanking new space. We now have room to set up our small refrigerator, microwave oven, and coffee pot in addition to some badly needed weather-tight storage space. These men can always come out of retirement and open a contractor business--only kidding, Michael and Rich!

We now have a new sign that covers the original library wording above the main entrance. Thanks to Dana Smith for overseeing the sign project and to Jeff Fornesi and his city maintenance crew for providing the valuable service of installing the sign for us. Not only will this prevent confusion for library patrons, but it will provide permanent advertisement for the museum, visible to vehicles passing by on Mission Street.

Thank you to longtime Member Chair Betty Schultz for her loyal service and to Michael Rocchetta for assuming the position of Member Chair so that Betty can take a well-deserved break. Thank you to Judith Christensen, our Treasurer, for printing and donating member renewal cards/envelopes, and flyers advertising our museum and programs that were distributed to libraries and community centers.

Thank you to all of our friends who give of themselves time and again so that the museum might be all that it can be for you, our loyal membership and patronage.

I want to encourage you all to attend the next lecture in May, the last lecture before our summer break. Woody LaBounty will be our guest lecturer from Western Neighborhoods Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to the history of western San Francisco and our neighboring historical society to the North. Woody will speak on the topic of his new book. We anticipate a most interesting and lively program.

Please note that we are now starting our History Evenings one-half hour earlier at 7 PM.



THANK YOU FOR MUSEUM DONATIONS & VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Marilyn Olcese donated a large 1920's era print of the Costa/Gaggero Ranch hands by regional photographer Gino Sbrana; **Dan Newton** donated a large framed photo of the Westlake Shopping Center sign (late 1990s) showing the temperature at 96 degrees, in addition to several large photos of John Daly and his San Francisco mansion; **Colma Historical Association** donated a framed 1948 Frank Maffei print of the Eastmoor area and a menu from the Colonial Restaurant from the 1930-s-40's; **Rich Rocchetta** donated the 1978 edition of *The Ohlone Way* by Malcolm Margolin. Morgan Gussie donated a notice for the 1940 Jefferson School Dist. Commencement. Thank yous are also due to museum docents in 2010: **Alex Gallegos, Carole Hutchins, Bunny Gillespie, Russ Brabec, Dave Crimmen, Christina Hernandez** and the entire Guild Board of Directors.

MEMORY OF A GUILD FRIEND

Longtime Guild member **Albert Delfino** died March 1st at age 82, preceded in death by his loving wife Carol. You may have been fortunate to have spoken with Al at our recent Memories Dinner, which he attended. He grew up in an Italian farming family on a 30-acre farm on Sneath Lane, just across from what became the Golden Gate cemetery. His parents, Girolama and Rosa Delfino immigrated from Sciarborasca, Italy. After graduating from Jefferson High School in 1946 (he was student body president and quarterback on the football team) he served in the Army in Korea and later became a partner in Wm. Lagomarsino & Company. He is remembered as a dedicated family man, love of nature and gardening, and for his engaging personality, songs and stories.



THANKS TO REFRESHMENT DONORS, MAY MEETING:

Mark Weinberger, Judith Christensen, Dana Smith, and Annette Hipona will provide refreshments at our upcoming May meeting. **Elinor Charleston** is our gracious Hospitality Chair, assisted by **Marilyn Olcese**.

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING & LECTURE WILL BE ON SEPTEMBER 15TH.

The next edition of the Tattler newsletter will be the September edition, mailed the last week of August.

YOUR COMMENTS ARE MOST WELCOME:

If you would like to add a comment on historical information presented in the *Tattler*, your remembrances and remarks are encouraged by the editor. Please mail to the museum or email to vikingsmith@earthlink.net

by language, by life-style, by traditions. The immigrant story is so often the same. The first generation crosses the border or the ocean, transplanting itself and sinking roots in their new country with sacrifice and hard work. The second generation sprouts new growth. The third generation harvests the fruit, grateful the initial voyage was made for them. This evolution was fast-forwarded when World War II broke out, with many of the young men leaving the tight little Italian community to serve this country. Some chose not to return. Those that returned chose to enlarge their circle. Many would engage in public service. The Gaggero-Olcese families continue to contribute with land and real-estate development. Marilyn Olcese, retired now, is active in the Colma and Daly City history museums.

A BUILDING OF THE PAST: COLLOPY HOUSE - Researched by Bunny Gillespie



Collopy House, one of a line of hostelrys built in the earliest days of Colma

Destroyed in 1970 on property at Mission and Market streets in Colma was the building, known as "The Collopy House." Parking spaces for a quick-food restaurant can currently be found where the building stood for almost 100 years as a familiar north-county landmark. The "Collopy House" had been constructed on the site of Sweeney's saloon, circa unknown. George M. Collopy, an 1870 pioneer to San Mateo County from Vermont, had purchased a small building and the property from Michael Fay Sr. Collopy started remodeling in 1872. He utilized the building for a saloon and within two years improvements to the building and grounds included the addition of a second story and landscaping. Originally, Collopy's upstairs Hall was used to host public

meetings, musical programs, and community dances. Soon after his arrival, Collopy had leased 38 acres of land near the hub of what was to become Colma. He later bought the acreage, sub-divided it, and dabbled in the real estate business, retaining a valuable block of land for his saloon business, hotel, and home. In the late 1800s, Collopy House provided temporary housing for railroad and streetcar construction workers. Collopy died in 1925. By the mid-1930s, the property was in disrepair and abandoned except for errant pigeons that took residence via broken windows. A partnership of Daly City businessmen contrived to restore and open the Collopy House in anticipation of tourist housing needs during the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island. For lack of funding, their plan failed. A descendent of G. M. Collopy was one of the earliest members of the History Guild.

NEARBY HAPPENINGS

The **Colma Historical Association** will have their **2nd quarterly meeting on Tuesday, April 27th** at the Colma Museum, 1500 Hillside Blvd., Colma at 7 pm. Election of Board Members will be held and a special half-hour program will feature highlights from the Ray Willie and Frank Maffei DVD on the Ocean View Railroad.

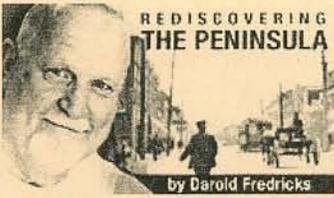


Lecture on the history of Hetch Hetchy Reservoir 4 pm, Monday, May 17th at the War Memorial Building, 6655 Mission St., Daly City, second floor meeting rooms. Paul Mazza, resident historian for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, will share historic images and unique stories from the pre-Gold Rush days to the 1906 earthquake and fire to the current challenge of upgrading the aging system before the next major earthquake. *Free*

Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation Walking Tours will host a docent led walking tour "An afternoon of Horticultural Delights" on **Saturday, April 24th** at 1:30 pm by Dennis Granahan, **Saturday May 15th** Terry Hamburg will lead the tour on "The Streets of San Francisco at Cypress Lawn," **Saturday, June 19th** "Cypress Lawn's Magnificent Angels," **Saturday, July 17th** "Who's Who in the West Gardens," **Saturday, August 7th** a "Heritage Walk of Cypress Lawn," and on **Saturday, August 21st** "Cypress Lawn's UC Berkeley Connection." All walking tours meet at 1370 El Camino Real, Colma at 1:30 pm and are free, with light refreshments served. Information: 650/550-8810. Cypress Lawn also hosts a **lecture series** which features a **May 16th** lecture by Tom Rogers on "The Historic Roth Family," and Michael Svanevik lectures on **June 20th** on the topic "Crocker Fathers and Sons: Tracing the Path of a Powerful California Dynasty." Lectures begin at 2 pm and are held at 1370 El Camino Real, Colma. Free, refreshments.

San Mateo County History Museum will feature a panel discussion on **April 24**, 1:00 pm of historians speaking on the **Progressive Political Movement in California** and San Mateo County in 1910. **May 16th**, noon - 5 pm the County Museum will host their annual **Immigrants Day Festival** with free admission day to the museum. 2200 Broadway Street, Redwood City, (650) 299-0104

Westmoor High School Reunions Class of 1960 & 1961 will celebrate their 50th and 49th graduation reunion dinner dance on Saturday, September 11 from 6-11 pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City. Details are at their website <http://whs6061.com> or call or email Julie (Fontana) Collins at (707) 542-7797, Julie@whs6061.com



Colma's farmers raised pork and beans

Reprinted with permission - April 05, 2010

In the April 14, 1894 edition of the "Colma News" newspaper, the editor and publisher, a Mr. C. F. Merrill, in an effort to encourage more people to move to Colma writes: "A prettier place could not have been found for a growing village. During the summer, it has none of the sweltering heat so often experienced by the interior towns of this state; being between the waters of the bay and ocean, the temperature is kept cool." If the Italian farmers in the area had had the time to read editorials, they might have questioned Mr. Merrill's truth in advertising and taken issue with the word "cool."

"It was cold in Colma in the summer, cold and wet and miserable. Often in the fields before dawn, dressed in layers and topped with rain-gear, they worked their fields of cold-weather crops such as lettuces, peas, beets, zucchini and artichokes. Cruciferous vegetables were especially suited to the fog-shrouded land: broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and especially cabbage. Cabbage was King, and so much was grown that in February of 1886, over 200,000 pounds of cabbage, grown on 2,000 acres, were shipped to market. Some years later, from 10,000 acres, 1,742, 825 pounds of cabbage were shipped. Not all the cabbage was marketed fresh. In 1914, a sauerkraut factory was established. The cabbages were cored, shredded and layered into huge vats. Salt was shoveled in between layers of cabbage and the mixture allowed to ferment for six to eight weeks. The brine was drained out, and the finished kraut was put into wooden barrels and sold to butcher shops and grocery stores.

The labor force in Colma was at first primarily single men, immigrants from Italy, and they lived a primitive life-style by today's standards. Gradually, as they could afford to, they returned to Italy to marry and bring their wives to California. It was hard, labor-intensive work to raise the crops. Everyone in the family helped, even the children. Often these cabbage-patch kids had to stay out of school and work in the fields. It was one thing to raise the crops, but their work was not done until the vegetables were cleaned and loaded into horse-drawn wagons for transport into San Francisco. The men responsible for delivery often left the farms by midnight, the horses struggling to pull the heavy loads. To make it up the steepest hills, the men often had to make arrangements for extra horse-power for that portion of the trip. On the way back to Colma, they filled their now-empty wagons with loads of manure from livery stables and used it for fertilizer in the fields. Being organic-farmers had nothing to do with being politically correct. It was economically correct.

By the 1890s, many of the Italian farmers decided to change from vegetables to hog ranching. They had noticed San Franciscans liked ham and bacon with their veggies. In 1891, Swift & Company opened the Western Meat Company in South San Francisco. By 1896, they were processing 3,000 pigs per week. In a few years, the number had grown to 250,000 a year. Pig-farmers established in Colma and surrounding areas, provided the porkers. Now their farm wagons collected and hauled "swill" to feed their voracious pigs. They would eat anything: left-overs from hotels and restaurants, well-aged bread and fruit, spoiled vegetables. In other words: garbage. But pigs are miracle-workers. Garbage in, bacon out. There was just one problem. They smelled...awful. You might be able to hide a hog in the fog, but nothing could camouflage the smell. Some of the hog ranches were so close to the roads, such as Skyline Blvd., that the stench was unbearable for travelers.

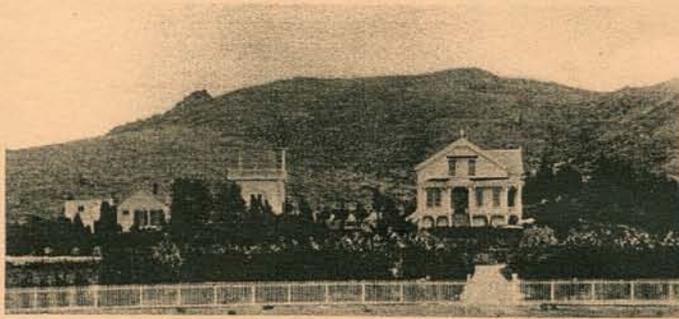
One ranch, 150 acres on the slopes of Westmoor Hill, begun by Giuseppe Gaggero and several other investors in the early 1900s, had grown vegetables. Gaggero and his wife raised their children here: Natalino, Anthony, George and Mary. To the west of the Gaggero ranch, and north of what is now Westmoor Avenue to 87th Street, was another large ranch called the Costa Ranch. The Olcese family, Francisco Olcese and his wife, Maria, raised five children here: Angelo, Dominic, John, Silvio and Atillio. The two ranches were joined socially when Gaggero's daughter Mary married the Olcese's son Atillio. From this new union, three children were born: Marilyn, Alan Frank, and "Tillio".

After World War II, Giuseppe Gaggero decided he too would forsake vegetables and turn to hog-raising on a large scale. The Olcese family made the transition as well, forming the Olcese Hog Company. Chicago may have been the hog-butcher of the world, but Colma was certainly the hog-raiser. In 1906, the family built a two-story house at 1697 Edgeworth Avenue. Marilyn remembers visiting the hog ranch and that it was thick with flies and populated with rats who ate well and reproduced exponentially. By 1968, the last little pig had gone to market.

They had left Italy for many reasons, looking for a new beginning, yet ironically the farmers found comfort in the old ways in the company of other Italians and formed a tight-knit community, closing themselves off from surrounding communities

CENTENNIAL MEMORIES

By Ken & Bunny Gillespie, Daly City Historians



Overall view of the Meussdorffer mansion and grounds in the area now occupied by George Washington Elementary School

Ghostly visitations, unearthly music, and spirit emanations were among the topics for locals of the 1950s, as they gossiped about the magnificent Crocker Tract mansion owned by John Charles Meussdorffer. None of those folk yarns were true, of course. In previous years, many had considered the residence the finest mansion ever. When the place was virtually abandoned and fell into disrepair, antiquity lent itself to eerie suppositions.

Predating Daly City by over thirty years, the ornate residence was built in the 1880s. When Daly City incorporated, it was by far the most spectacular home in the new community. The 22-room house graced acreage bounded by Whittier, Hanover, Bellevue, and Lowell streets. From 1863 to the late 1950s, the block-square property had belonged to J. C. Meussdorffer and his heirs. The San Francisco businessman had personally directed the construction of the house and landscaping of the surrounding grounds. A well was sunk that provided garden and household water. Hundreds of flowers gave color to manicured walkways. Trees were planted, providing protection from wind as well as privacy. Fountains splashed.

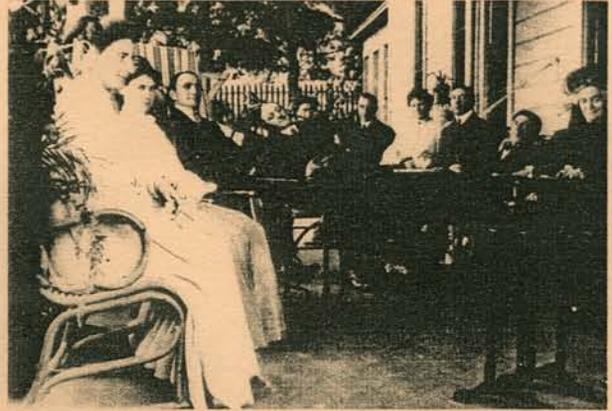


John Charles Meussdorffer wearing one of his famous hats

Born in Germany and trained in hat making in France, Meussdorffer had become a California pioneer in 1849. At age 26, he tried his luck briefly in the gold fields, made and sold hats for gold miners, and then returned to San Francisco to establish a hat

factory and a home. He is credited with inventing a collapsible opera "tiles" hat for California gentry. His expertise won him acclaim for manufacturing the finest hats in the state. Additionally, he bought and sold real estate. Before the 1906 earthquake and fire, he owned many parcels of land, including the property now occupied by the San Francisco City Hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Meussdorffer, their nine children, several servants, and frequent houseguests, occupied his "country house" at the San Mateo-San Francisco county line with style and elegance on a grand scale. Members of the



A gathering of family and friends, J.C. Meussdorffer 3rd from left.

San Francisco social set were welcome visitors, as were luminaries of the business, political, artistic and musical world of the 19th and 20th centuries. Concerts in the music room were frequent. Hospitality abounded. Invitees enjoyed splendid teas, sumptuous dinner parties, and gala receptions for visiting dignitaries.

A magnificent example of gingerbread trim and Victorian architecture, the mansion now remains only in memory. J. C. Meussdorffer died in 1894. His family continued to utilize his country home. In March of 1960, Miss Irene Meussdorffer, the last survivor of the family, vacated the sprawling building to live in a smaller home on Whittier Street. Two weeks later, a mysterious fire destroyed the mansion. The three-story gabled and garden home was reduced to ashes and charred remnants. Fire gawkers arrived by the thousands as flames danced and smoke rose from the conflagration. The cause of the fire was never determined.

The property on which the Meussdorffer estate was located is now the site of George Washington elementary school. In the recreation yard, the location of Meussdorffer's well may be seen. K/BG



NEW BOOK ON BROADMOOR HISTORY

Our new museum docent volunteer Dave Crimmen has written a book on the history of Broadmoor that will be released in the first week of August by Arcadia Publishing. Dave lived in Broadmoor Village for 30 years, where he graduated

from Garden Village and Ben Franklin schools. Dave is also a professional rock musician.



Note: New History Evening meeting time at 7 pm – a half-hour earlier!

FIRST CLASS MAIL

THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY/COLMA
6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014



DALY CITY HISTORY MUSEUM
6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014
650/757-7177

Current Hours: Every Tuesday and the first and third Saturdays of the month from noon to 3 p.m.



Costa/Gaggero Ranch 1919-1948 – Photo by Gino Sbrana, contributed to the Guild by Marilyn Olcese. Pictured top row l-r, Adolfo Gonella, Boccia, Guisepppe Gaggero (Marilyn Olcese's grandfather), Bartolomeo Palavincino, unknown, Amadeo Gonella (father of former San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Floyd Gonella), bottom row l-r: Jimmy Garibaldi

(cousin to Mary Garibaldi Hutchings), unknown, Charlie Nan, Angelo Nan, Bartolomeo Ratto (father of Bianca Caserza), Nicola Ratto, unknown, unknown with dog who looks curiously like Gianna Rose, Marilyn Olcese's current dog.

GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

- | | |
|--|--------------|
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Board meetings are held monthly and open to the membership.

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| Ken Gillespie, President Emeritus | 650/755-5123 |
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| Elinor Charleston, Hospitality Chair | 650/755-8267 |
| Michael Rocchetta, Member Chair | |

Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith

Contributors: Bunny & Ken Gillespie, Mark Weinberger, Darold Fredricks. Richard Rocchetta, Ric Mohler, and Michael Rocchetta mailed our last issue, Michael maintains our address list.

**The History Guild of Daly City/Colma is a
501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization**