

September  
2016

# THE TATTLER

## JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY - COLMA

### GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK

The board hopes that everyone had a relaxing and fulfilling summer. If you haven't stopped by the museum lately, please do and come say "howdy!" We are working on some projects that we hope to have completed by year's end. Also, on permanent display is our centerpiece exhibit: the Great Daly City Timeline--*A Walk Through Time*, inspired, conceived, and curated by our own Dana Smith. You might remember that Dana undertook this as her Master's thesis project in museum studies at San Francisco State University. This exhibit traces prehistoric times to present-day Daly City--truly a unique travel in time.

We are concluding our series of golf courses/country clubs in the Daly City area with September's presentation on the San Francisco Golf Club. [We've had speakers from the Lake Merced Golf Club and the Olympic Club. I'd like to do a final one on the former Cypress Hills Golf Course in Colma but haven't been able to locate a speaker. Anyone out there?] Don't let the name fool you. This very exclusive course extends slightly into Daly City, and its legendary 7th hole is often referred to as the "Duel hole" [189 Yard Par 3] as it is adjacent to the Broderick-Terry Duel site. We will welcome noted golf course expert Philip Young, who wrote the official history of the San Francisco Golf Club. Phil will graciously speak to us while visiting from his home in Alpharetta, Georgia. He will explain how the club can trace its history back to 1905 when it was first located at the Presidio of San Francisco, later moving to the Ingleside, and finally to its present location. The course was designed by World Golf Hall of Fame inductee A.W. Tillinghast. You need not be a golf enthusiast to enjoy what will surely be a memorable presentation.

Remember that we recently expanded our web site to include a great many back issues of the *Tattler*--spanning more than 30 years. You'll definitely notice a great many differences in its evolution from the earliest editions to today and everything in between. Board Director Michael Rocchetta made this possible.

### EVENING HISTORY MEETING

Wednesday, September 21, 7 PM

101 Lake Merced Blvd. Daly City  
Doelger Center Café

*We are concluding our series of golf  
courses/country clubs  
in the Daly City area with*

THE SAN FRANCISCO GOLF CLUB



PRESENTED BY PHILIP YOUNG

GOLF HISTORIAN

EVERYONE WELCOME!

**REFRESHMENTS:** Will be provided by **Alice Brockman, Pat Hatfield, and Sue Hudson**. Thank you to refreshment donors and to our gracious Hospitality Chair, **Annette Hipona**, and her assistant **Grace Gonzalez**.

Your donations are appreciated for our fundraising raffle, organized by Rich Rocchetta.

If you haven't visited the web site in a while you'll definitely want to check it out. It really is a great resource for local history with lots of fantastic images.

On May 31st over 100 students from three different fourth grade classes at George Washington Elementary school visited the museum. Showing them around were History Guild Board members/docents Judith Christensen, Richard Rocchetta and Michael Rocchetta. They came in, one class at a time, and each docent had a specific area that he/she presented to the students.

Of particular interest was the photograph of the John Meussdorffer mansion and of Mr. Meussdorffer (inventor of the collapsible opera hat). It was pointed out to all the students that their school, George Washington, is located on the former Meussdorffer property. The life-size cardboard figure of Daly City's own John Madden was also a hit as was the Fire Department exhibit and the short video of Ken Gillespie's history of Daly City.

For our November program we are excited to have a speaker to address the history of the two horse stables at the intersection of Skyline and John Daly boulevards. I have wanted to cover this topic for a very long time but have never been able to arrange a speaker. You might remember from a previous *Tattler* that the operators of both businesses have been less than interested and even somewhat hostile to requests for sharing their venerated histories. We are very fortunate to have found a former 'stable hand' who worked there in the 1960s to share his memories of the Mar Vista and Palo Mar stables.

## **SHROUDED IN MYSTERY AND FOG: THE STORY OF CAMP DALY CITY**



by Jeff Christner  
([sixbyfire@gmail.com](mailto:sixbyfire@gmail.com))  
Sources available upon  
e-mail request

While Camp Daly City was never a secret, very little is known about it. Built on fog shrouded, rocky outcropping of San Bruno Mountain at nearly 800 feet above sea level, Camp Daly City overlooked the city of San Francisco

Historic Aerial Image of  
Camp Daly City from 1946

and the top of the hill area of Daly City. It was only accessible via a winding dirt road that snaked its way up to the camp from the intersection of Whittier Street and Scenic Way. Part of that road is now the Old Guadalupe Trail in San Bruno Mountain Park. It is not known when Camp Daly City was constructed, however, the 140th Signal Radio Intelligence Company, organized February 14th, 1942 under the Fourth Air Force, manned Camp Daly City during World War II. A history of that unit shows them at Camp Daly City starting in early 1943, however, Camp Daly City may have been operated before that time by another unit.

The mission of Camp Daly City was a strategic one, to intercept Japanese military radio transmissions. These radio transmissions were encrypted, often using teletype machines, so the actual meaning of the transmission could not be obtained simply by listening and writing down what was sent. Those staffing Camp Daly City would intercept the encrypted radio transmissions and forward them to Arlington Hill, an old girl's school outside Washington D.C., which had been taken over as a cryptography facility by the U.S. Military during World War II. Only there would the messages be decrypted and forwarded to the proper military intelligence officials.

The most accurate information on Camp Daly City actually came just after the end of World War II when it was cataloged in a War Department Inventory of Owned, Sponsored, and Leased Facilities. In the report, dated September 30th, 1945, Camp Daly City was said to be 32 acres in size with a total construction cost of \$53,177. It was staffed by 134 enlisted personnel and 18 officers who worked 24 hours a day seven days a week, utilizing four, six hour long shifts, to man five listening positions. Their antenna array consisted of numerous directional and bi-directional antennas, along with several long wire antennas. Due to gasoline shortages during and after the war, typically only two trips a day, for sending or retrieving mail, were made from Camp Daly City. Anyone wanting to leave the camp would have to walk the winding dirt road, often in the fog, or call a taxi. Camp Daly City was never meant to be a permanent military installation and it was noted in one article that the buildings were labeled with the letter "T", which meant temporary, although it was joked that the "T" actually stood for termites.

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The only known depiction of Camp Daly City on USGS topographical maps is from 1947 - seen here as a cluster of buildings on the far right side near the 775' contour line

Historic aerial imagery in 1946 shows a cluster of about 20 buildings. The exact number and type of buildings is not known, however, we do know there was an operations building, which was reportedly the most leak proof, along with a mess hall and several barracks buildings. For a short time after the war, the unit assigned to Camp Daly City was the Third Radio Security Section of the 136th Radio Security Detachment.

The last known reference to Camp Daly City was in the May 4th, 1951 edition of the San Mateo Times. Fire had destroyed one of the barracks buildings of Camp Daly City the day before. This fire was the third barracks destroyed by fire since the camp was abandoned by the military sometime after World War II. Fire Chief Elmer Kennedy, who was one of the first six paid Daly City Firefighters hired that same year, believed the fire was started by children. The article also reported the government was taking bids for the sale and removal of the remaining buildings.

Historic aerial imagery helps tell the rest of the story. By 1956 only a few foundations remain and the camp is mostly gone, and while one foundation is still visible in the 1980 aerial imagery, the area was seen to be crisscrossed by numerous dirt bike trails. By 1987 the Edward Boccaccio Jr. picnic and camping area was built over the southern end of the camp's location while the northern end appeared to be heavily overgrown.

Searching the area today you can still find some scattered infrastructure remaining from Camp Daly City, the stump of a cut down telephone pole likely used as an antenna support, barbed wire running along the ground, some concrete with rebar running through it, and even the collapsed remains of what might have been an equipment shack near one of the antennas. But the most substantial remains of

Camp Daly City is a lone telephone pole, partially hidden in the trees, most easily seen from the Saddle Loop Trail in San Bruno Mountain Park. At one time power lines, and most likely phone lines, ran down toward Cordova Street at Canyon Drive, before any of the intermediate streets and houses were built.



While Camp Daly City may have faded into obscurity, the fog remains...

Telephone pole stump - likely a support pole for one of the many Camp Daly City antennas

## MONARCH, THE GREAT BEAR

By Dana Smith

A few years back because of my personal interest in history and animals I researched the history of Monarch the Grizzly Bear and made a file for the museum archive. A recent lecture at the Colma Museum and a feature article in the Cypress Lawn *Heritage Newsletter* on Woodward's Gardens reminded me of this interesting and tragic story.



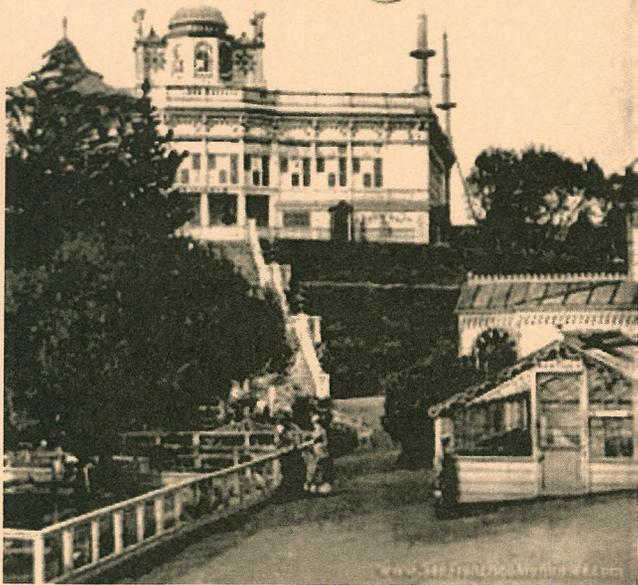
Ernest Thompson Seton's Sketch of Monarch

Grizzly bears once numbered an estimated 10,000 from Oregon south to the Mexican border but by 1889 they were so scarce that it took five months for Allen Kelly, a newspaper reporter for the San Francisco Examiner, to complete the most famous bear hunt in California history. Media magnate William Randolph Hearst had a heated discussion with reporter Allen Kelly over whether grizzlies still existed in California. The

argument ended with Hearst challenging Kelly to go out and find one and bring the animal back alive. Finally a bear was found in the mountains of Ventura County after being lured into a trap with honey and mutton by hired Mexican hunters.

In his book "Bears I Have Met," Kelly described the capture. After the great bear was chained by the legs, he fought furiously during the whole operation, and chewed the chains until he splintered his canine teeth to the stubs and splattered the floor of the trap with bloody froth. It was difficult to find a team of horses willing to pull a wagon with a captive Grizzly. Transported by wagon and then by rail, Monarch arrived to a waiting crowd of 20,000 people at Townsend Street station in San Francisco. He was named Monarch after the motto of the San Francisco Examiner newspaper, "Monarch of the Dailies." On the first day the great bear was exhibited at Woodward's Gardens (near today's intersection of Mission Street and Duboce Avenue) over 20,000 people visited.

## Woodward's Gardens



Woodward's Gardens popularity began to fade and in the 1880's when Golden Gate Park (San Francisco's newest public park) started pulling visitors away. Monarch didn't actually take up residence in the park until 1894, when he was exhibited at the Midwinter Fair. When the fair closed, a permanent iron cage was constructed, with bent bars over the top to prevent escape. The new bear pit in Golden Gate Park (located on the hill that was then known as Monarch Bear Hill, that now separates the National AIDS Memorial Grove and the handball courts) was designed by famous San Francisco architect Willis Polk. Monarch survived the 1906 earthquake and fire and became the symbol of the city's determination.



Monarch lived more than 20 years in captivity – he was already an adult when captured.

Veterinarians put the elderly and infirm Monarch down in May 1911. Taking a cue from the Sonoma revolt in 1846, the state decided to make the California Grizzly the focal point of the state flag. Only this time they wanted a bear that actually

looked like a bear. Illustrators used the recently deceased and stuffed Monarch as the model for the bear on our state flag. The dead bruin was put on display at the California Academy of Science where his somewhat motley remains are now kept in storage. For years he was openly on display with visitors petting his nose. Now he is missing a bit of hair.



CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC

People often complained the flag of the Bear Flag Republic looked more like a large rodent.

Following information taken from Internet sites:

"Companion bears were not an infrequent site in Gold Rush San Francisco. John Capen Adams, the mountaineer and hunter famously known as Grizzly Adams, captured a grizzly cub in Yosemite Valley in 1854. Raised by a greyhound coincidentally nursing her own puppies, the bear was named Ben Franklin. He became companions with Lady Washington, a grizzly sow Adams had captured the previous year, and later with Frémont, a male she later bore. They were part of the first zoo in San Francisco located in the basement of Adams' home near Clay and Leidesdorff Streets. Ben Franklin once saved Adams' life by fighting off a wounded grizzly. According to Caton in a story published in *The American Naturalist* in 1886, "... upon enquiring in San Francisco, I met several reliable persons, who had known [Adams] well, and had seen him passing through the streets of that city, followed by a troupe of these monstrous grizzly bears unrestrained, which paid not the least attention to the yelping dogs and



Original photograph of John Capen Adams

crowds of children which closely followed them, giving the most conclusive proof of the docility of the animals. Indeed, they were so well trained that they obeyed implicitly their master's every word or gesture in the midst of

a crowded city, ..." Ben's death in January 1858 merited an obituary in the San Francisco newspaper *The Evening Call*, entitled *Death of a Distinguished Native Californian*. Adams publicly proclaimed the grizzly bear as "the Monarch of American beasts."

### Can you spare 3 hours a month to be a docent?

The Guild Board members have been shouldering the responsibility to keep our museum open to the public. Most have been working solo. You can work alongside a board member as you become familiar with the museum and our collection. Call, or email our Museum Director, Dana Smith, if you can help us out. 650-892-2166, or [director@dalycityhistorymuseum.org](mailto:director@dalycityhistorymuseum.org)

### OTHER HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

**Colma Historical Association**  
Annual Fall Dinner will be on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at the Colma Community Center. Info: 650/757-1676. Chef Dennis Fisicaro will provide hearty fare!

**Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation**  
**Lecture Series (FREE)** All lectures begin at 2 pm at the Cypress Lawn's Reception Center, 1370 El Camino Real, Colma, CA. *Light Refreshments Served*. Info: 650/755-0580

**Sept. 18** – Golden Gate Park: A Stage For Technological Advancements Lecturer: Christopher Pollock, author of *San Francisco's Gold Gate Park: A Thousand and Seventeen Acres of Stories*

**Oct. 30** – SPECIAL: Outdoor Photo Seminar Workshop, 3:30 – 5:45 pm, (Meet at Noble Chapel) Led by Doug Keister, author of numerous photography books, including *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism & Iconography*. Followed by a Lecture on Cemetery Symbolism, 6-6:30 pm, Noble Chapel. Lecturer: Doug Keister

**Tour Series (FREE)** All scheduled tours are held on Saturdays and start at 1:30 pm at the Noble Chapel (located on Cypress Lawn's East Gardens). *Light Refreshments*.

**Sept. 17** – SWELLS & NOBS — Shining Lights of San Francisco Peninsula Society. Lecturer: Michael Svanevik

**Oct. 22** – SPLENDOR IN THE GLASS — Stained Glass of the Cypress Lawn Catacombs (Meet at Reception Center).Lecturer: Terry Hamburg, Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation

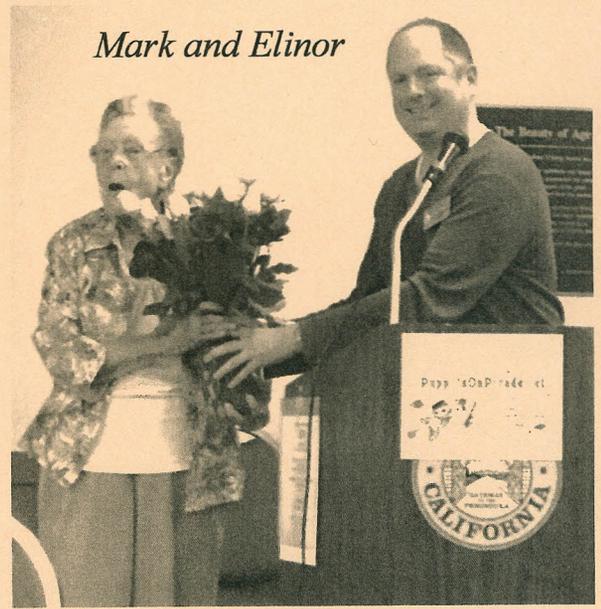
**Oct. 30** – SPECIAL: **Nighttime Halloween Cemetery Tour, 6:30 pm.** Docent: Doug Keistet

### THANKS TO DONORS AND VOLUNTEER

Thanks to Shirley Plank for her donation of a Susan B. Anthony school yearbook from 2015-2016. Diana Colvin donated extensive historical notes on her lecture "History of the Cow Palace." Jeff Christner donated a spectacular notebook archive on Daly City Plane Crashes. He also was our guest contributor to our last Tattler and this edition.



**FOREVER YOUNG....** In May Elinor Charleston celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the Guild celebrated with flowers, cake and champagne at our May meeting.





# 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](http://www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org)



### FIRST CLASS MAIL



The stuffed remains of Monarch at the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Within 75 years after the discovery of gold, the California grizzly had become extinct. After the sighting of one lone bear near Sequoia National Park in 1925, the California grizzly was never seen again.

Does anyone remember seeing this display at the Academy of Sciences?

### GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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**Richard Rocchetta, Vice-President**

**Dana Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 begin at \$25 per year.**

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Your comments and suggestions are always welcome!