



HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of* MORRO BAY

May, 2019

President's Report

The Historical Society has been active in lots of ways lately, and some of the activity is very visible to the public.

In this issue you will find an update on the Hidden History project. As you may recall, the project is based on doing research on various topics that are important in Morro Bay's past which have been "covered up" by development or the passage of time. These lost stories are going to be summarized on large outdoor interpretive panels placed at appropriate locations around town, eventually creating a walking tour for residents and tourists alike. You can find the first of these panels about the wooden trestle bridge that linked the Embarcadero to the sand spit in the 1940's behind the Hof Brau Haus.

The news on Franklin Riley Park is that Gardens by Gabriel has started work on a design proposal. We will take that to meetings with the Morro Cover HOA, the City, and other interested citizens for input and feedback before final decisions are made.

We are looking for a permanent home! We have identified a half dozen places that might be a good fit for our Society, but every one of them has pros and cons. Not to mention that some are terribly expensive! If you know of a property, with or without a building, that might fill the bill, please get in touch with us.

I can't let the moment pass without thanking Jamie Irons and James Papp for a terrific program at our last quarterly members' meeting. They gave us great insight on the history and the architectural significance of the power plant. And the audience weighed in with their own questions and ideas. Should we keep it or replace it? Still an open question.

In our next member meeting on May 19, we will have Dave Thomas of the Shell Shop telling the amazing story of how he built his business into an enterprise with worldwide connections. Then on August 18, Tom Walters will talk about the making of the widely-praised Botso documentary. Please save the afternoon on both those dates for great programs

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MORRO BAY MISSION STATEMENT: THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MORRO BAY IS A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION WHOSE MISSION IS TO PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY OF ESTERO BAY BY COLLECTING, PRESERVING, EXHIBITING AND INTERPRETING THAT HISTORY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGION, AND NATION BEYOND, TO AUDIENCES OF ALL AGES AND INTERESTS.

Taken from a presentation made
by Joan Solu to the Morro Bay
City council:

by Joan Solu

5th and Main, circa 1900

All these buildings were built between 1870 and 1900. Note the tall eucalyptus in the background would have easily reached this height based on Riley planting in the 1860's.



5th and Main, circa 1920

Some buildings have changed since 1900, but the general merchandise store in the center is the same.

This view is looking north, with Main Street running south to north



Blue Gum Eucalyptus

Franklin Riley purchased Blue Gum Eucalyptus seeds to use to create windbreaks on the edge of the estuary. Early settlers complained that nothing could grow in the wind and shifting sand.

Why Blue Gum?

- It can grow 6-12 feet in one year.
- The tree is well adapted to local conditions.
- Eucalyptus withstands wind very well.
- Animals don't like to munch on it.

The champion tree at the foot of South and Main may be one of Riley's original: Blue Gum can reach over 200 years of age.



Franklin Riley Park

A few people are interested in recognizing Riley's role in building Morro Bay by naming a park after him.

This view is from an open area on a bluff above Tidelands Park that was part of Riley's original homestead.

Hidden History Program Gets a Boost

Two good things are happening in the Hidden History program.

First, thanks to Cathy Novak and Cliff Branch for subsidizing the costs, we have two new interpretive panels ready for installation. Both of these are on subjects that pertain to the area near the old Boatyard that was located on the Embarcadero between Beach and Pacific Streets. These panels document how the Embarcadero has evolved over time — in fact they show how quickly the changes can happen!

The second event is promising to help us make more and better panels in the future. Sean Green, a Morro Bay resident who teaches writing at Cal Poly, is asking his students to adopt Hidden History topics for their own projects. The students, working in teams, will do the background research on the topics and create the first important product: a story about the topic that we can publish on our website. With these stories



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QUITE A YEAR-1969

by Cathy Ryan

I went to the library and was looking through some old newspapers regarding Morro Bay 50 years ago in 1969. The most important thing to me was I graduated from Cuesta College, but for everyone else it was the contrasting Morro Bay, see if you recognize it or remember these things:

JANUARY

Discussions were started, by the City, to revitalize the Morro Bay downtown. Fred Donohoo and Joe Giannini announced their intentions to run for City Council. Outstanding Morro Bay Jr-Sr High athletes were announced, Larry Roberts and Bo Jones.

FEBRUARY

PG&E received the go-ahead for the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant in Avila. Morro Rock lost 5,000 lbs. of rock by natural causes and used in the creek beds at Cayucos and Cambria.

MARCH

Sex education was to be taught in the Los Osos schools, but it was challenged by residents. The City of Morro Bay has drawn up "block-by-block" plans for the downtown up-grade.

APRIL

Fred Donohoo and Joe Giannini were elected to the City Council. The Coast Guard Cutter, "Porpoise" got a new paint job. Joe Giannini was voted in as Mayor by the City Council.

MAY

Morro Rock became an official California Historical Monument. Drug abuse became a police problem in Cayucos, Cambria and Morro Bay schools. Morro Bay had a tidal wave alert, no event.

JUNE

Jacque Cousteau's Calypso visited Morro Bay while filming a documentary on the sea otters, "Mini-Subs". Scientists began probing Chumash graves and occupational build-up at PG&E's

Diablo Canyon. The contract for the dredging of the harbor went to Sheilmaker, Inc.

JULY

An ambulance service began in Morro Bay on a trial basis.

AUGUST

Harbor dredging began in the harbor. Harbor leasing policies came under scrutiny by the City Council.

SEPTEMBER- no comment

OCTOBER

The beach front tract began development.

NOVEMBER

Bids were accepted for the building of Morro Bay Junior High School.

DECEMBER

Santa Claus came to Morro Bay City Park! The Christmas Tree received its decorations. The town had its Home Decoration's contest. Shoppers filled the town and holiday events led us into the New Year.

From Telegram-Tribune

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in hand, the work to translate them into interpretive panels is up to our HSMB team and designer John O'Brien. And all that takes is \$2500 per panel, give or take.

We hope to put the students' work online within the next couple of months, and will let you know via this newsletter and our email updates. If you know someone who would like to get this kind of news every now and then, please ask them to get in touch with us via the website contact form.



Join Us

In our next member meeting on May 19, we will have Dave Thomas of the Shell Shop telling the amazing story of how he built his business into an enterprise with worldwide connections.

Sunday, May 19th

at 4:00 pm

Presbyterian Church
485 Piney Way
Morro Bay



A well known local landmark

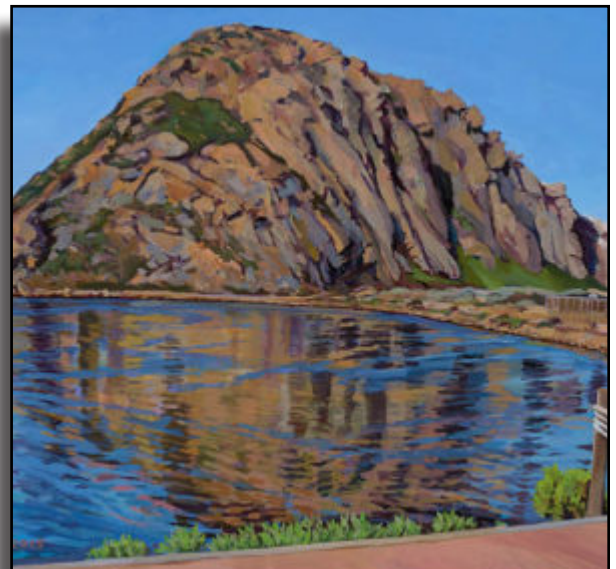
by Shelagh Considine

Almost as well known as the 'rock' on the Morro Bay waterfront is the "kitschy" boat-shaped building that once housed a fish market by the name of the "Finicky Fish". The same building housed the Thai Boat and the Thai Bounty as well as Tognazzini's 3 as its last tenant.

The Historical Society of Morro Bay had hoped to save the well-known fishing boat shape and use it in the construction of a future home for a museum and Visitor Center. All that hope died when engineers looked at the building and saw the extensive dry-rot that doomed any thought of relocating it.

The Society then commissioned Jeff Odell, a well-known artist to paint the boat in place and the Society also preserved planks, tiles, and ship-lap for future exhibit.

Jeff's other work, as well as the works of many other talented local artists, can be viewed and purchased at the Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero, Suite 10, Morro Bay, CA 93442. Open daily at 10am. (805) 772-1068





known for his local paintings



Please Share Some Photos with HSMB

Some good news for historical photo lovers: Garry Johnson has agreed to join our team! Most of you know Garry from his participation in so many civic activities. But you may have forgot that he served on our Board once before, and teamed up with Gary Ream and Roger Castle to create the Morro Bay: Then and Now photo book we still promote at events.

Garry's new project is a big one, and vital for the future of our organization. He aims to create a photo archive that will make digital copies of all your important photos and store them in a searchable database. This archive will serve our members, historical researchers, and the general public. We get an amazing number of requests from people to get photos of specific historical structure, places and events, and this database will help us serve them.

Our member Dick Miller, a retired historian with a lot of experience collecting and displaying historical photos, is supporting this project with his expertise. Dick has developed a process for acquiring and archiving photos in the best possible way to ensure they are preserved AND accessible.

We need to get some ducks in a row to make this archive happen, but with your help we will do it! And then, would you please share your photos? We do not want to own them or take physical possession of them, but we do want to make sure the history of Morro Bay is recorded in a safe way and is available to everyone. You keep your photos; we keep the digital image of them.

Please join us in preserving the history of this town . Members received discounts on books, free admission to presentations, and the pride of knowing we have contributed to this towns' heritage.

info@historicalmorrobay.org [please print]

Name(s) or Company _____

Date_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Email*_____ Phone_____

Memberships are due on March 1st of each year

Individual Membership (\$20.00)

[] Couples Membership (\$35.00)

[] Business Membership (\$30.00)

[] Student Membership (\$15.00)

[] Information Change/Correction Only

[] Email List only o New o or Renewal

[] Tax deductible donation also enclosed \$_____

Please provide an e-mail address if at all possible. It saves us postage costs and allows us to keep you up to date on new developments.

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