

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND APPRECIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO
REFUGEE SHACKS (SPASFRS)

Collection number: SFH 9



San Francisco History Center

San Francisco Public Library

2002



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INTRODUCTION

Provenance

Jane Cryan, founder of SPASFRS

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

Copyright retained by San Francisco Public Library except where retained by specific authors for published and unpublished manuscripts, or those retained by photographers. Jane Cryan retains copyright for: *Hope Chest: The True Story of San Francisco's 1906 Earthquake Refugee Camps* (1998), "Hope Chest: A History of One of the Most Magnificent Charities of All Time"(1993), and "From Tents to Shacks: A guide to San Francisco's 1906 Earthquake Refugee Camps". Sergio Amunategui retains copyright for his thesis, *Shelter, Dwellings and Metamorphosis*. Jim Kanne retains copyright for all photographs marked as such.

Collection Number

SFH 9

Size

2.5 Cubic Feet

Processed by

J. C. Baxter

Date Completed

June 2002

Preferred Citation

[*Identification of item*], Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks Archive, SFH 9, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

Related Materials

Researchers are encouraged to view the San Francisco History Center's Subject Files and Photography Collection as well as the catalog holdings of the San Francisco Public Library for related materials. See also the 1906 Earthquake Refugee Shacks at the Presidio.

Conservation Note

During processing, the entire collection was re-folded and re-housed in acid-free folders and boxes. Photographs and slides were removed to the Historical Photograph Collection. Books were removed and placed into the catalog of SFPL. Some pages were removed from binders.

Appendix A

List of Photographs & Slides Removed From Files

Appendix B

List of Books Removed From Files

Appendix C

List of Realia Removed From Files

HISTORY

1. 1906 Quake Refugee Shacks

Though a necessity due to the quake, housing in the form of refugee shacks was commissioned as a result of peculiarities arising out of the San Francisco relief effort. Following the quake, with some 200,000 completely homeless and 100,000 temporarily displaced, a makeshift city of tents and shelters rose unofficially, including any available lean-to, voting booth or ruined mansion. San Francisco was mapped into seven districts to feed, clothe, and temporarily shelter refugees. At the end of April, 1906, as many as 200 relief stations were in operation, with soup kitchens available for workers and the needy. By June 18, official tent camps were designated to provide for the immediate needs of the citizens, namely food, shelter and clothing. In all, 18 sites were selected as official tent camps, including Golden Gate Park and the Presidio. In return for the charity and/or the cheap accommodations, the campers were expected to obey certain rules (no lewdness, vagrancy, drunkenness, etc.). By August, hard times had driven some in the camps—particularly at Jefferson Square—to suicide and despair. Wooden shacks were seen as a solution to the existing camp squalor, and were begun in the fall of 1906.

The course of figuring out how many wooden structures were needed and what to charge for them was a daunting prospect, since there was an ever-shifting population of both paupers and self-sustaining laborers who may or may not have submitted to the Finance or Relief committees' suggested retail prices. Where they would be built—shifting sand dunes in the Sunset and Richmond, or the burned-out grounds of the Mission—also had to be considered. The Lands and Buildings Committee eventually settled on a plan to build mass-produced cabins, which in the end totaled 5,610 (after an initial plan for 3000). In total, 31 official camps were housing earthquake refugees, 11 of which were shack cities. Of the shacks, three types are known, labeled Types “A,” “B,” and “C,” respectively by researchers and enthusiasts.

2. SPASFRS

The formation of The Society For the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco's 1906 Refugee Shacks (SPASFRS) was announced on October 1, 1983 by its founder, Jane Cryan, a local activist. Cryan's enthusiasm for the shacks grew out of her own interest in a cottage she had rented in 1982, later discovered to be an amalgamation of three “Type A” shacks and a free-standing “Type B” refugee shack (her Little Red Cottages). Appreciation quickly turned to anxious activism, when it was made known later in 1983 that her own red cottage-shack was for sale and would be demolished, as had many other refugee shacks since 1906. Cryan's passion for the shacks was not limited to preservation; she became intent on compiling a survey of extant shacks and their histories.

After a successful appeal to the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Board to bestow recognition on her cottage as San Francisco landmark No.171, SPASFERS set upon saving the so-called “Goldie Shacks” in the Richmond District (named after a former resident). Here the SPASFERS gained allies in both Freda Eisenson, the neighbor of “Goldie” who contacted Cryan about its proposed demolition, and Gwenda Davies, another supporter. After much protest, “Goldie” was given an appeal from demolition, temporarily keeping it in existence; now debates arose as to whether it should be moved or remain as a ‘signpost’ for the Richmond District in which the shacks were originally placed. This second victory for SPASFERS was newsworthy and helped garner public interest, combined with Cryan’s informative and popular slide show presentations on the history of San Francisco refugee shacks. In the end, the U.S. Army took over the care of “Goldie”, moving them to the Presidio, thought to be an ideal addition to the Army Museum’s extensive 1906 Earthquake exhibit. The Army’s 11th hour rescue of the shack—and the press and hoopla surrounding it—certainly fueled public interest. The restoration of the shack and its opening on the 80th anniversary of the quake in 1986 took place in a large celebration, proclaimed “Earthquake and Fire Refugee Cottage Day in San Francisco” by Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

Despite setbacks, including volunteer fatigue after numerous battles with reluctant property owners and subsequent demolitions of shacks, as well as embarrassment of discovering so-called imposter shacks (as in the case of Labor Leader Bill Bailey’s shack formerly on Telegraph Hill), the SPASFERS persevered. In September 1989 Cryan met and collaborated with Sergio Amunategui, a graduate student at UC Berkeley, whose Masters Thesis in Architecture involved the evolution of a temporary building to a single-family dwelling. Amunategui had learned about the shacks through a Seismic Architecture class and called Cryan to be his imaginary client. This resulted not only in a scale model of such a dwelling—being a glorified version of Jane Cryan’s own little red cottages—but also an academic assessment of the shacks heretofore not theorized: the cottages are archetypal reminders of charity, as well as a reminder of the possibility of city-wide homelessness in an inevitable and unpredictable future quake.

The Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks lost its last battle to save a shack when the San Francisco Planning Commission overruled the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board’s decision to save the “La Rosa” shacks on April 9, 1992. Although less active, SPASFERS continued its grass-roots campaigns for preservation throughout the 1990s. In September of 1999, Jane Cryan gave the SPASFERS archive to the people of the City of San Francisco.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection documents the work of the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks from 1982 through the 1990s.

The archive comprises correspondence to and from property owners, research, surveys, bibliographies, photographs and slides, lectures, published and unpublished material, press releases, and reference material related to the history of each shack, and realia. For each refugee shack that the SPASFRRS advocated, a file containing research and correspondence was created. Strongly represented are the documented actions taken by the SPASFRRS to preserve particular shacks, as well as images of shacks no longer in existence.

Jane Cryan organized the shack files originally. Volunteers added to the files, most notably activists Freda Eisenson and Gwenda Davies. Sergio Amunategui's Master's Thesis and slide show is present, as is Cryan's unpublished "Hope Chest" in two manuscript forms, one of which has been illustrated.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The material has been arranged into 5 series: Research and Methodology, Shack Files, Lectures and Press, Writings, and Projects/Realia. The sub-series of individual shack folders are arranged by street address alphabetically, and chronologically within. Other series are arranged by format, then chronologically.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1: RESEARCH

3 folders

Arranged by subject.

This series comprises Jane Cryan's research on San Francisco earthquake refugee shacks and their history, including a bibliography of contemporary newspaper citations on refugee shacks, a bibliography of photographs of refugee shacks from contemporary newspapers, and survivor lists and shack lists. Included are Cryan's original surveys. The bibliography of newspaper articles regarding refugees has been arranged by Cryan into the following categories: Refugees, Relief, Refugee Shacks, Camps (General), Camps, (Specific), Flour Riots, Mary Kelly, Chinese Refugees.

Series 2: CORRESPONDENCE/ACTIVISM

30 Folders (Sub-series A-D)

Shack files arranged by Jane Cryan, in alphabetic order by address or by the name that the recognized shack was commonly known, then chronologically by item. Others chronologically ordered.

This series is divided into subseries A: authenticated 1906 Refugee Shacks and B: structures determined to not be authentic 1906 Refugee Shacks, including the Bill Bailey shack, C: general correspondence of the SPASFERS and Jane Cryan and D: awards.

Included here are files of correspondence to and from Jane Cryan and other SPASFERS members with property owners of shack sites, shack inhabitants, City Supervisors and other officials, members of the Landmarks Preservation Board, architects and others. Also included are architectural/historical surveys written by SPASFERS members of the shack site, including documentation through written notes and photographs (removed to Photo Archives), permit applications (in photoduplicate), letters of certification and related material. Notes and documentation (including some notes to clippings) that are germane to the individual shacks have been left in their respective folders, both dated and undated. General correspondence documents Cryan's contacts in research, outreach, activism and authorship.

In Jane Cryan's original foldering, photographs were kept in the file folder representing each shack. Due to archival necessity, these were removed to the San Francisco Historical Photo collection (see Appendix B). Highlights include slides and photos documenting the Goldie Shack's move and other shacks extant and destroyed.

Highlights include correspondence between Labor Leader Bill Bailey and Jane Cryan, correspondence surrounding the Goldie Shacks preservation and moving by aid of the U.S. Army, and the many missives fired on behalf of the La Rosa shacks.

Also included are 2 files about shacks fund outside of San Francisco, at the Salinas Duck Club and its environs, and those found in Santa Cruz.

Series 3: PRESS & SPEECHES
4 folders

Arranged by format, chronologically.

This series is organized into folders representing lectures, press releases, and news clippings.

Highlights include press releases and related hoopla regarding the saving and moving of the "Goldie Shacks," the bitter battle to save the "La Rosa" shacks, and 125 slides (removed to SFH Photograph Collection) from Jane Cryan's informative lectures on the shacks.

Series 4. WRITINGS
6 folders

Arranged by title, chronologically.

Here are outlines, the draft and the finished manuscript of, "Hope Chest: A History of One of the Most Magnificent Charities of All Time" by Jane Cryan; Also included is a manuscript of "From Tents to Shacks" by Jane Cryan.

Series 5: PROJECTS/REALIA
3 Folders

The two projects: 1. Serge Amunategui's Master's Thesis "Shelter, Dwellings, and Metamorphosis: Adaptations of the 1906 Earthquake Refugee Shelter in a Single Family Dwelling" along with relating correspondence and pieces of his study model for the "Cryan Residence" (which was destroyed in the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake) and 2. The Randall Museum Shack Replica and its related correspondence & press.

Appendix A: List of photographic materials removed from the collection to the photo room. These can be viewed when the photo desk is open (Tues & Thurs: 1-5, Sat: 10-12 & 1-5)

Shack Survey photographs
Historical camp photographs
Allen St. photographs
"Goldie" Shack: pre-Army
"Goldie" Shack: post-Army
Kirkham Ave. photographs
Montana St. photographs
Newman St. photographs
Parker Ave. photographs
Prague St. photographs
Salinas Duck Club photographs
Santa Cruz Shack photographs
25th Ave. photographs
24th Ave. photographs
"La Casita" photographs
"La Rosa" photographs
Bill Bailey Imposter Shack photographs
125 color and black & white slides used in Cryan's various lectures or speeches.
Amunategui photographs & slides
Randall Museum Project photographs

Appendix B: List of books & periodicals removed from the collection and catalogued.

The Argonaut: Journal of the San Francisco Historical Society. Vol. 9, no. 2. (Fall 1998). Ed. by Charles Fracchia. Illus. 107 pp.

Clarke, Thurston. *California Fault; searching for the spirit of a state along the San Andreas*. 417 pp.

Delehanty, Randolph. *In the Victorian Style*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1991. Illus. From photographs by Richard Sexton. 177 pp. (Inscribed to Cryan from the author and photographer).

Kostura, William. *Russian Hill: The Summit, 1853-1906. Volume I of a Neighborhood History*. San Francisco: Aerie Publications, 1997. Illus. 131 pp. Incl. index. (Inscribed to Cryan from the author).

Levine, Ellen. *...If You Lived at the Time of the Great San Francisco Earthquake*. Illus. By Richard Williams. New York: Scholastic Inc., [1987]. 64 pp. (Inscribed to Cryan by the author).

Maupin, Armistead. *Sure of You*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989. 262 pp. (Inscribed to Jane Cryan from the author).

1906 Remembered: *Firsthand Accounts of the San Francisco Disaster*. Ed. by Patricia Turner. San Francisco: Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, 1981. Illus. By Charlie Aquilina. 80 pp. incl. index.

Norris, Kathleen. *The Story of Julia Page*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1915. 421 pp.

The Refugees' Cook Book. Compiled by one of them. San Francisco: S.F. Archives, 1979. [20 pp.] + index.

San Francisco Relief Survey: the organization and methods of relief used after the earthquake and fire of April 18, 1906. Compiled from studies by Charles J. O'Connor et al. New York: Survey Associations, 1913. 449 pp. + photos, index.

Sexton, Richard. *The Cottage Book*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989. Intro. By Sally B. Woodbridge. Illus. 119 pp. (Inscribed to Cryan by the author).

Walker, Lester. *Tiny Tiny Houses*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1987. 220 pp. Illus.

Appendix C: Realia in the collection.

One (1) doorknob set from "The Goldie Shacks" removed from 485 34th Ave., SF, CA. by the U.S. Army and now sited in the U.S. Army Presidio of San Francisco.

Three (3) redwood boards painted McLaren's Parkbench Green which were removed from "La Casita" Refugee Shack, 1368 -- 24th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122, prior to demolition on February 13, 1991.

Award fabricated of glass presented to Jane Cryan by the San Francisco History Association, 1997, for her work to save San Francisco's 1906 Earthquake Refugee Shacks.

Seven (7) wood Refugee Shacks. Scaled to "Type A" Shack. Hewn by Sergio Amunategui for his thesis, "Shelter, Dwellings and Metamorphosis: Adaptations of the 1906 Earthquake Refugee Shelter in a Single Family Dwelling."

One (1) paper Refugee Shack. Part of Amunategui Study Model for Cryan Residence. Model destroyed in 1989 Earthquake (this is all that remains).

Three (3) architectural drawings by Sergio Amunategui "The Cryan Residence," drawings are part of Amunategui's thesis.

CONTAINER LISTING

Series 1. Shack Research

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 1	1	Shack Surveys, Research & Historical Data
	2	Bibliography of newspaper citations from <i>SF Chronicle</i>
	3	Bibliography of photographs & drawings from <i>SF Chronicle</i>

* See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series

Series 2. Correspondence & Activism

Subseries A. Refugee Shack Files

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 1	4	52 Allen St.
	5	164 Bocana St.
	6	300 Cumberland St.
	7	"Goldie" Shack: pre-Army
	8	"Goldie" Shack: post-Army
	9	"Goldie" Shack: Army Museum--Presidio
	10	"James" Shack
	11	Kirkham Avenue
	12	54 Montana St
	13	20 Newman St.
	14	Parker Ave.
	15	222 Prague St
	16	Salinas Duck Club
	17	Santa Cruz Shacks
	18	1254 & 1258 25 th Ave.
	19	1227-1227A 24 th Ave. (Landmark No.171) (1 of 2)
	20	1227-1227A 24 th Ave. (Landmark No.171) (2 of 2)
	21	1368 24 th Ave ("La Casita")
	22	349 27 th Ave. ("La Rosa")

* See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series

* See Appendix C for artifacts removed from this series

Subseries B. Other Structures

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 1	23	Bill Bailey Imposter Shack
	24	Other Structures

* See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series

Subseries C. General Correspondence

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 1	25	Correspondence, 1983-85
	26	Correspondence, 1986-87
	27	Correspondence, 1988-89
	28	Correspondence, 1990-93
	29	Correspondence, 1994-99

Subseries D. Awards

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 1	30	Certificates and Awards

* See Appendix C for artifacts removed from this series

Series 3. Press and Speeches

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 1	31	Speeches & lectures
	32	Press releases
	33	Newspaper citations generated by SPASFRS (clippings)
	34	Newspaper citations generated by SPASFRS (bound version)

* See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series

Series 4. Writings

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 2	1	"Hope Chest": Outline, notes
	2	"Hope Chest": Permissions to use photos, etc.
	3	"Hope Chest": Mary Kelly research
	4	"Hope Chest" © 1993. Earlier unillustrated version (unpub.)
	5	"Hope Chest" © 1998. Finished version (unpub.)
	6	"From Tents to Shacks" © 1999. Ms. version (unpub.)

Series 5. Projects

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 2 Thesis	7	"Shelter, Dwellings & Metamorphosis": Amunategui's Master's Thesis
	8	Serge Amunategui: Related Correspondence
	9	Randall Museum Shack Replica Project

* See Appendix C for artifacts removed from this series

Appendix A

Photographs Separated from SPASFRS files

Housed in San Francisco Photograph Collection, SPASFRS Box 3

Series 1. Research Files

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 3	1	Schack Surveys
	2	Historical Data

Series 2. Correspondence & Activism

Subseries A. Refugee Shack Files

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 3	3	52 Allen St.
	4	164 Bocana St.
	5	"Goldie" pre-Army
	6	"Goldie" post-Army
	7	"Goldie" Museum--Presidio
	8	"James" Shack
	9	Kirkham Ave.
	10	54 Montana St.
	11	20 Newman St.
	12	Parker Ave.
	13	222 Prague St
	14	Salinas Duck Club
	15	Santa Cruz Shacks
	16	1254 & 1258 25 th Ave.
	17	1227-1227A 24 th Ave.
	18	1368 24 th Ave
	19	349 27 th Ave.

Subseries B. Other Structures

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 3	20	Bill Bailey Imposter Shack

Series 3. Press and Speeches

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 3	21	Slides for lectures, presentations

Series 5. Projects

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>
Box 3	22	Amunategui photographs & slides
	23	Randall Museum Project

Appendix B

Books Removed from Collection:

See SFPL catalog

Appendix C

Artifacts Separated from SPASFRS files

Housed in San Francisco Realia, SPASFRS Box 4

Series 2. Correspondence & Activism

Subseries A. Refugee Shack Files

Container

Box 4 Doorknob from "Goldie"

Subseries D. Awards

Container

Box 4 Award of Merit from S.F. History Association

Series 5. Projects

Container

Box 4 7 scale model wood Refugee Shacks hewn by Amunategui
1 paper shack remaining for Amunategui Study Model

Tube Architectural Drawings "Jane Cryan Residence" by Amunategui for thesis

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