
Finding Aid to the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks Collection 1983-2005(bulk 1983-1999)

Finding aid prepared by J. C. Baxter

San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

100 Larkin Street

San Francisco, CA, 94102

(415) 557-4567

info@sfpl.org

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Title: Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks Collection

Date (inclusive): 1983-2005

Date (bulk): 1983-1999

Collection Identifier: SFH 9

Creator: Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks.

Physical Description: 1 carton, 1 box(2.5 cubic feet)

Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

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Abstract: Research files, correspondence, photographs, and clippings documenting the activities of the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks (SFPASFRS), an organization founded by Jane Cryan to identify and preserve the remaining small dwellings that were mass-produced to house San Franciscans displaced by the 1906 earthquake and fire.

Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Access

The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours, with photographs available during Photo Desk hours. Collections that are stored offsite should be requested 48 hours in advance.

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Copyright retained by San Francisco Public Library except where retained by specific authors for published and unpublished manuscripts, or those retained by photographers.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.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks Collection (SFH 9), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance

Gift of Jane Cryan, founder of SPASFRS, in 1999.

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.

Materials Transferred

Photographs and slides have been transferred to the San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection. Books have been transferred to the San Francisco History Center Stacks and can be found in the library's catalog. Artifacts are housed in the San Francisco History Center's Realia Collection.

Conservation Note

During processing, the entire collection was re-folded and re-housed in acid-free folders and boxes. Some pages were removed from binders.

Biographical/Historical note

Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks was founded in 1983 by local activist Jane Cryan. Its purpose was to identify and advocate for San Francisco's surviving earthquake cottages that were built as part of the relief effort after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire.

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. SPASFRRS

The formation of The Society For the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco's 1906 Refugee Shacks (SPASFRRS) 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, SPASFRRS set upon saving the so-called "Goldie Shacks" in the Richmond District (named after a former resident). Here the SPASFRRS 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 SPASFRRS 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 SPASFRRS 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 singlefamily 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, SPASFRRS continued its grass-roots campaigns for preservation throughout the 1990s. In September of 1999, Jane Cryan gave the SPASFRRS archive to the people of the City of San Francisco.

Scope and Contents

Research files, correspondence, photographs, and clippings documenting the activities of the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of San Francisco Refugee Shacks (SFPASFRRS), an organization founded by Jane Cryan in 1983 to identify and preserve the remaining small dwellings that were mass-produced to house San Franciscans displaced by the 1906 earthquake and fire.

The collection includes correspondence to and from property owners, surveys, bibliographies, photographs and slides, lectures, published and unpublished material, press releases, and reference material related to the history of each shack, as well as a few artifacts. Each refugee shack for which SPASFRS advocated had a file created for it containing research and correspondence. Actions taken by the SPASFRS to preserve particular shacks are strongly represented, as are images of shacks that are no longer in existence.

Jane Cryan originally organized the shack files. 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

The material has been arranged into 5 series: Series 1: Jane Cryan's Research Files; Series 2: Shack Files and Correspondence; Series 3: Press and Speeches; Series 4: Writings by Jane Cryan; and Series 5: Shack-related Projects. The subseries of individual shack folders are arranged alphabetically by street address, then chronologically within. Other series are arranged by format, then chronologically.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Cryan, Jane

1906 Earthquake refugee shacks

Emergency housing--California--San Francisco

Series 1 Jane Cryan's Research Files

Physical Description: 3.0 folders

Scope and Contents

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.

Materials Transferred

See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series.

Arrangement

Arranged by subject.

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Shack Surveys, research and historical data

Bibliography of newspaper citations from *San Francisco Chronicle*

Bibliography of photographs and drawings from *San Francisco Chronicle*

Series 2 Shack Files and Correspondence**Physical Description:** 30.0 folders**Scope and Contents**

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 Photograph 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 two files about shacks funded outside of San Francisco, at the Salinas Duck Club and its environs, and those found in Santa Cruz.

Arrangement

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

This series is divided into four subseries: Subseries A: Authenticated 1906 refugee shacks; Subseries B: Structures determined not to be authentic 1906 refugee shacks, including the Bill Bailey shack; Subseries C: General correspondence of the SPASFERS and Jane Cryan; and Subseries D: Awards.

Subseries A Authenticated 1906 refugee shacks**Materials Transferred**

See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series. See Appendix C for artifacts removed from this series.

Box 1, Folder 4	52 Allen St.
Box 1, Folder 5	164 Bocana St.
Box 1, Folder 6	43 Carver St.
Box 1, Folder 7	300 Cumberland St.
Box 1, Folder 8	"Goldie" Shack: pre-Army
Box 1, Folder 9	"Goldie" Shack: post-Army
Box 1, Folder 10	"Goldie" Shack: Army Museum--Presidio
Box 1, Folder 11	"James" Shack
Box 1, Folder 12	Kirkham Avenue
Box 1, Folder 13	54 Montana St.
Box 1, Folder 14	20 Newman St.
Box 1, Folder 15	Parker Ave.
Box 1, Folder 16	222 Prague St.
Box 1, Folder 17	Salinas Duck Club
Box 1, Folder 18	Santa Cruz Shacks
Box 1, Folder 19	1254 and 1258 25th Ave.
Box 1, Folder 20	1227-1227A 24th Ave. (Landmark No.171) (1 of 2)
Box 1, Folder 21	1227-1227A 24th Ave. (Landmark No.171) (2 of 2)
Box 1, Folder 22	1368 24th Ave ("La Casita")
Box 1, Folder 23	349 27th Ave. ("La Rosa")

Subseries B **Structures determined not to be authentic 1906 Refugee Shacks, including the Bill Bailey Shack**

Materials Transferred

See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series.

Box 1, Folder 24
Box 1, Folder 25

**Bill Bailey Imposter Shack
Other Structures**

Subseries C **General Correspondence of the SPASFRS and Jane Cryan**

Box 1, Folder 26
Box 1, Folder 27
Box 1, Folder 28
Box 1, Folder 29
Box 1, Folder 30

**Correspondence, 1983-1985
Correspondence, 1986-1987
Correspondence, 1988-1989
Correspondence, 1990-1993
Correspondence, 1994-2005**

Subseries D **Awards**

Materials Transferred

See Appendix C for artifacts removed from this series.

Box 1, Folder 31

Certificates and awards

Series 3 **Press and Speeches**

Physical Description: 4.0 folders

Scope and Contents

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 the San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection) from Jane Cryan's informative lectures on the shacks.

Materials Transferred

See Appendix A for photographs removed from this series.

Arrangement

Arranged by format, chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 32
Box 1, Folder 36
Box 1, Folder 33
Box 1, Folder 34
Box 1, Folder 35

Speeches and lectures

Videotape of Jane Cryan's earthquake shack slideshow program, Feb. 1, 1992

Press releases

Newspaper citations generated by SPASFRS (clippings)

Newspaper citations generated by SPASFRS (bound version)

Series 4 **Writings by Jane Cryan**

Physical Description: 6.0 folders

Scope and Contents

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 her manuscript of "From Tents to Shacks."

Arrangement

Arranged by title, chronologically.

Box 2, Folder 1
Box 2, Folder 2
Box 2, Folder 3

"Hope Chest": outline, notes

"Hope Chest": permissions to use photos, etc.

"Hope Chest": Mary Kelly research

- Box 2, Folder 4 **"Hope Chest" 1993**
 General note
 Earlier un-illustrated version, unpublished.
- Box 2, Folder 5 **"Hope Chest" 1998**
 General note
 Finished version, unpublished.
- Box 2, Folder 6 **"From Tents to Shacks" 1999**
 General note
 Manuscript version, unpublished.

Series 5 **Shack-Related Projects**

Physical Description: 3.0 folders

Scope and Contents

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 and press.

Materials Transferred

See Appendix C for artifacts removed from this series.

- Box 2, Folder 7 **"Shelter, Dwellings and Metamorphosis": Amunategui's Master's Thesis**
Box 2, Folder 8 **Serge Amunategui: related correspondence**
Box 2, Folder 9 **Randall Museum Shack Replica Project**

Appendix A **Photographs separated from SPASFRS files**

- Box 3, Folder 1 **Historical Data**
Box 3, Folder 2 **Shack Surveys**
Box 3, Folder 3 **52 Allen St.**
Box 3, Folder 4 **164 Bocana St.**
Box 3, Folder 5 **"Goldie" pre-Army**
Box 3, Folder 6 **"Goldie" post-Army**
Box 3, Folder 7 **"Goldie" Museum--Presidio**
Box 3, Folder 8 **"James" Shack**
Box 3, Folder 9 **Kirkham Ave.**
Box 3, Folder 10 **254 Montana St.**
Box 3, Folder 11 **20 Newman St.**
Box 3, Folder 12 **165 Parker Ave.**
Box 3, Folder 13 **222 Prague St.**
Box 3, Folder 14 **Salinas Duck Club**
Box 3, Folder 15 **Santa Cruz Shacks**
Box 3, Folder 16 **1254 & 1258 25th Ave.**
Box 3, Folder 17 **1227-1227A 24th Ave.**
Box 3, Folder 18 **1368 24th Ave.**
Box 3, Folder 19 **349 27th Ave.**
Box 3, Folder 20 **Bill Bailey Imposter Shack**
Box 3, Folder 21 **Slides for lectures, presentations**
Box 3, Folder 22 **Amunategui photographs and slides**
Box 3, Folder 23 **Randall Museum Project**

Appendix B **Books and periodicals separated from the collection and cataloged**

The Argonaut: Journal of the San Francisco Historical Society, Fall 1998

General note

Vol. 9, no. 2. Ed. by Charles Fracchia. Illus. 107 pp.

California Fault: Searching for the Spirit of a State Along the San Andreas

General note

Clarke, Thurston. 417 pp.

In the Victorian Style, 1991

General note

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

Russian Hill: The Summit, 1853-1906. Volume I of a Neighborhood History, 1997

General note

Kostura, William. San Francisco: Aerie Publications. Illus. 131 pp. Incl. index. (Inscribed to Cryan from the author).

...If You Lived at the Time of the Great San Francisco Earthquake, [1987]

General note

Levine, Ellen. Illus. By Richard Williams. New York: Scholastic Inc. 64 pp. (Inscribed to Cryan by the author).

Sure of You, 1989

General note

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

1906 Remembered: Firsthand Accounts of the San Francisco Disaster, 1981

General note

Ed. by Patricia Turner. San Francisco: Friends of the San Francisco Public Library. Illus. By Charlie Aquilina. 80 pp. incl. index.

The Story of Julia Page, 1915

General note

Norris, Kathleen. New York: Grosset & Dunlap. 421 pp.

The Refugees' Cook Book, 1979

General note

Compiled by one of them. San Francisco: S.F. Archives. [20 pp.] + index.

San Francisco Relief Survey: The Organization and Methods of Relief Used After the Earthquake and Fire of April 18, 1906, 1913

General note

Compiled from studies by Charles J. O'Connor et al. New York: Survey Associations. 449 pp. + photos, index.

The Cottage Book, 1989

General note

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

Tiny Tiny Houses, 1987

General note

Walker, Lester. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press. 220 pp. Illus.

Appendix C Artifacts separated from the collection

- Box 4 **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**
- Box 4 **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**
- Box 4 **Award fabricated of glass presented to Jane Cryan by the San Francisco History Association for her work to save San Francisco's 1906 Earthquake Refugee Shacks, 1997**
- Box 4 **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"**
- Box 4 **One (1) paper Refugee Shack. Part of Amunategui Study Model for Cryan Residence. Model destroyed in 1989 Earthquake (this is all that remains)**
- Tube 1 **Three (3) architectural drawings by Sergio Amunategui "The Cryan Residence" (drawings are part of Amunategui's thesis)**