

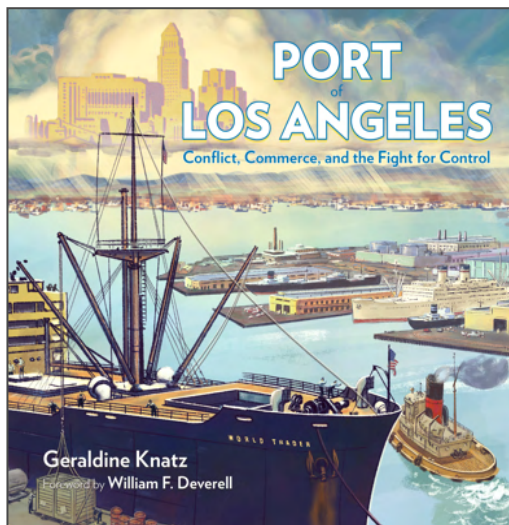
San Pedro Bay Historical Society Newsletter

WINTER 2021

JANUARY

Dr. Geraldine Knatz on Port History January 24

We're looking forward to another Zoom presentation, Sunday, January 24 at 1:30. Based on the research for her new book, *Port of Los Angeles: Conflict, Commerce, and the Fight for Control*, Dr. Geraldine Knatz will examine the complex forces that shaped port history. Hang on to your hats!



From the forward to the book, William F. Deverell writes, "Personalities, crimes, power moves disguised as bureaucratic banalities, jurisdictional feuds, and outright warfare—it's all here. So, too, is the way that the port has remained umbilical to Los Angeles: feeding it, for sure, but also tethering it to worlds an ocean away."

Geraldine Knatz is Professor of the Practice of Policy and Engineering at the University of Southern California. She served as the first female director of the Port of Los Angeles from 2006 to January 2014 and prior to that was managing director at the Port of Long Beach. In 2014, she was named a member of the National Academy of Engineering in recognition of her international leadership in the development of environmentally clean urban seaports. She is past president of the American Association of Port Authorities and past president of the International Association of Ports and Harbors. In addition to past and

present service on other state and national level boards, she is currently the vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees of Altasea, the thirty-acre ocean institute located in San Pedro.

To register for this talk, please send an email to mdalred@gmail.com by January 23. In the body of the email provide your full name, and in the subject line write "Port Talk." An invitation Zoom link will be sent soon thereafter.

Almost 100 Years Old, Downtown Landmark Still Stands

While so much of San Pedro's townscape is on the verge of major changes, old images of familiar spots are more than ever prized. Tucked away in the SPBHS Archives is this undated photo of the Cabrillo Hotel building at 7th and Centre Streets. Perhaps you, as did this writer, dined at La Conga when it occupied the corner spot (now Godmother's). At the time of the photo, the original Flentge Drug Company marquis still wrapped around the corner, though the premises had been taken over by the Cook Drug Company.

Built by Lazard Lippman, owner of the local Lazard's Department Store, the Cabrillo Hotel opened in 1923. Occupying half the frontage on the eastside of the block and three-stories high, it would have been one of the more prominent downtown structures. Every hotel room had a private bath, and upper floor rooms were finished in mahogany. Shortly before the opening, the *San Pedro Daily News* devoted a two-page spread to the hotel with display ads of the many businesses that had supplied labor or materials for construction. E. K. Wood took credit for furnishing the lumber, and the Central Labor Council affirmed that all work on the building was done by organized labor. *See next page.*





A highlight of the new hotel was the Cabrillo Cafe and Grill, which advertised, “Where dinners will be an event—not an incident”! Was that a reflection on the uncertainty of local dining options? Greek immigrant Max Demos was the proprietor, and San Pedrans were told to expect “an up-to-date cafe where European and American dishes would be served in metropolitan style.”

Back to the photo from the Archives: A vertical sign on the eastern side of the hotel reads “Kosher,” a clue dating the photo to probably no earlier than 1929, when the Hungarian-Kosher Cafe and Delicatessen opened there mid-year. Neither cafe had much of a run, and things generally seem to have been in flux, even before the stock market crash of 1929. Only a year from its opening, the hotel was under new management. The Cabrillo Cafe had closed, then reopened, and by the fall of 1927, Attilio Brandelli acquired it and offered Italian fare for a few years. The Cabrillo Cafe resurfaced briefly in the mid-1930s, but it was La Conga, at 22 years until its move up the street, and Godmother’s Saloon, now close to 40 years, that hold the record in the Cabrillo Hotel building.

Donations to the Archives

Thanks to James Shuttleworth for donating two copies of his recent illustrated monograph, *Early Banning & Wilmington Transportation Co. Vessels*. There’s an interesting description of the extant documentation for the vessels built and brief histories for each vessel given in chronological order. At the end, a table lists 22 different Banning vessels with associated data, including build date, horse power, dimensions and builder. Nine vessels are listed as being built by or under the direction of William Muller.

Thanks also go to Ron Gonzales for donating *Mexican American Baseball in the Santa Maria Valley*, to which he contributed a section on young ball players of the La Rambla area of San Pedro.

Writing, photos, and production: Mona Dallas Reddick
 Thanks to the mailing team: Mary Jo Walker and John Mattson

Progress at the Muller House Museum

While regular activities have remained on hold, we managed to have the exterior of the Muller House Museum completely repainted and replaced some of the deteriorated lattice fencing at the back of the house. The photo below, taken shortly after the painting, highlights the restored front porch area. It was thanks to the funding from the Point Vicente Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, that we were able to initiate the restoration. We would also like to acknowledge a generous donation from Sue Speth that completely paid for the repainting of the garage and attached workshop.

The new landscape committee held its first meeting in late fall to prioritize tasks for the present and consider what could be accomplished in the future if funding becomes available. Everyone agreed that a balance between a low-water landscape and plants appropriate for a garden of the early twentieth century is desirable, while estimating the maintenance requirements of each. Several took on homework assignments of researching perennials as well as small trees to add shade along the northwest portion of the property.

More Talks Are Planned

In the coming months, we hope to present more online talks. Topics being developed are Wilmington history and San Pedro’s Mexican American baseball stars.

Passings in 2020

Several SPBHS members and associates passed away last year. Fondly remembered by their society friends are:

- Angie Dalton**, retired administrative assistant at Crestwood and Bandini elementary schools
- George Hemmingsen**, retired fire fighter
- Joan Milke Flores**, former 15th District councilwoman
- Anthony (Tony) Rodich**, community supporter and accomplished sportsman
- Richard Suarez**, owner of Suarez Accountancy Corporation



Freshly painted and restored porch area of the Muller House