

**Gateway City:
The Makings and Meanings of San Francisco's "Golden Gate," 1846-1906**

by

Laura E. Ferguson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History)
in The University of Michigan
2012

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Mary C. Kelley, Co-Chair
Associate Professor James W. Cook, Jr., Co-Chair
Professor June M. Howard
Associate Professor Martha J. Jones

© Laura E. Ferguson
2012

To my parents
Rick & Janet Ferguson

Acknowledgements

After the generosity and encouragement of so many, it is a great pleasure to say thank you to those who have offered their support.

Two of my biggest thank yous go to my advisers: Mary Kelley and Jay Cook. This project emerged from the cultural history seminars I took with each, and the ideas and books we discussed fill the pages of this dissertation. Even before I arrived at Michigan, Mary offered encouragement and bright enthusiasm. Ever since, she has been exceptionally generous with her time and guidance, offering suggestions and potential sources at each turn. Jay's ideal blend of encouragement, thought-provoking questions, and new insights, has pushed my project and my thinking in ways I could not have imagined. He is truly an exceptional teacher and scholar. My many conversations with Mary and Jay continue to resonate. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had two such remarkable scholars guiding and supporting me.

Martha Jones and June Howard both offered critical insights and shaped my project in key ways. Martha, over the course of my graduate studies, asked incisive and probing questions. Numerous conversations with June early on shaped my thinking on

mass markets and print culture. This, as well as her own rigorous scholarship, proved to be immensely helpful.

Gina Morantz-Sanchez has offered tremendous guidance and mentorship. In sharing her own passions, Gina has helped me to ask new questions. I am so grateful for the many conversations we've had about work and family, both scholarly and not. Matt Lassiter's devotion to University of Michigan graduate students is unparalleled. My project, in many ways, emerged from a desire to bridge what I learned from Matt about political economy and the twentieth-century city and cultural and gender history approaches to the nineteenth-century city. Before arriving in Michigan, I have Bess Beatty to thank for her early and continued encouragement, which began while I was an undergraduate at Oregon State University. Bess taught me the joys of archival research and guided me towards graduate school. I am so grateful. Thank you as well to the History Department staff, especially Kathleen King and Lorna Altstetter.

The warmth, vibrancy, and generosity of everyone in the University of Michigan History Department made it an incredible place to study and learn. I have many wonderful friends and colleagues to thank, especially Tamar Carroll, Rabia Belt, Aaron Cavin, Andrew Ross, Ray Patton, Sara Lampert, Clay Howard, Millington Bergeson-Lockwood, Elsbeth Martini, Cookie Woolner, and Alex Olson. Lily Giesmer and Dea Boster paved the way, offering guidance about what lay ahead as well as incredible friendship. Weekly dissertation talks with Suzi Linsley kept me writing and my spirits up. Throughout our friendship, Suzi has often said, "tell me a story." Trading stories from the archives and life has been one of the joys of working on this project. Lauren Hirshberg's

friendship and support throughout this journey has also been a tremendous gift. Her compassion, generosity, and insightfulness make her a wonderful scholar and one of the best friends.

Over the past several years spent in California, I have found more colleagues and friends. Thanks to Alejandra Dubcovsky and MacKenzie Moore. Anna Armentrout offered long talks, deep kindness and understanding, and San Francisco fun. Haley Pollack deserves a special thank you. In her generosity and convictions, she is a model scholar. As we've both been away from our midwestern intellectual homes, it has meant so much to be able to share book titles, ideas, and writing. And, even more than that, I'm thankful for the warmth and support of her friendship. Jen Clarke, Molly Moran, and Terry Hollowell have made exploring the Bay so enjoyable and offered much-appreciated cheerleading. Thanks as well to two of my oldest friends, Kelley Mays and Megan Hoelle, for their love and support.

For the financial support to research and write, I am thankful for the generosity of the Department of History and Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan and the Doris Quinn Foundation. For research assistance, thank you to the staffs at The Bancroft; the California Historical Society; the California State Archives; the California State Library; the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley; The Huntington Library; the San Francisco Maritime Museum; the San Francisco Performing Arts Library; and the Special Collections and University Archives at Stanford University. Thank you especially to the many archivists at the San Francisco

Public Library History Center; Susan Snyder and David Kessler at The Bancroft; and Patricia Keats at The Society of California Pioneers.

Lastly, I want to thank my family. I am so grateful to my grandparents, Dorothy and the late Eldon Green, for their loving encouragement and unflagging interest in my academic pursuits. Jayne and Bob Arnold offered much enthusiasm and encouragement. Thank you too to my extended family: Bette, Wayne, Don, Judy, Jerry, Pam, Kim, Joe, Emily, and Mary Ann. Most of all, thank you to my parents, Rick and Janet Ferguson. Together you modeled a curiosity and thoughtfulness about the world, which led to many wonderful conversations and adventures. Starting with my earliest writing, thank you both for reading and editing countless drafts, for helping me to find my meaning and my voice. Your love, support, encouragement, and confidence in me has meant more than I can say. Though my mother is not here to see this project, I see her on every page. And, to my dad, I couldn't have done it without you.

Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures.....	viii
Prologue	
A Cove, a City, a Harbor, and a Hub: The Many Lives of a Western Port.....	1
Part I. An Imperial Outpost: Claiming, Naming, and Making the Golden Gate	
Chapter One	
A Hamlet, A Mudflat, and A Promise.....	53
Chapter Two	
Competing Visions and Violent Assertions.....	109
Chapter Three	
The Barbary Coast: A Blemish and Boon.....	166
Part II. “American Metropolis of the Pacific”: From an American Town to the Pacific Gateway	
Chapter Four	
Cultural ties and Rail ties.....	225
Chapter Five	
Meeting at the Golden Gate.....	258
Part III. “Queen of the Pacific”: Imperial Ambition in a Rising and Falling City	
Chapter Six	
Guarding the Gate.....	295
Chapter Seven	
Golden Grain and Golden Fruits.....	341
Epilogue	
Echoes and Aftershocks: Remaking Old Tropes for New Futures.....	402
Bibliography.....	417

List of Figures

Figure 1. Henry Lange, <i>Bai San Francisco und Vereinigung des Sacramento mit dem San Joaquin</i> , 1854.	10
Figure 2. Britton & Rey, <i>Map of San Francisco</i> , 1852.	19
Figure 3. Francis Samuel Marryat, “High and Dry,” 1855.	33
Figure 4. <i>Long Wharf, San Francisco: Published by Charles P. Kimball, Noisy Carrier’s Publishing Hall</i>	56
Figure 5. Francis Samuel Marryat, “The Bar of a Gambling Saloon,” 1855.	58
Figure 6. William B. McMurtrie, <i>View of San Francisco Taken from Telegraph Hill, April 1850</i> , 1851.	85
Figure 7. City Hall, San Francisco, circa 1852.	95
Figure 8. Charles P. Kimball, Advertisement, “Noisy Carriers’ Publishing Hall.”	115
Figure 9. “What We Want in California: From New York Direct/Family and Fireside.” San Francisco: Britton & Rey.	140
Figure 10. Lotta Crabtree.	177
Figure 11. “Mary Drenke, a Barbary Coast dancehall worker and pickpocket,” 1874... 211	
Figure 12. Charles R. Parsons, “The city of San Francisco. Birds eye view from the bay looking south-west,” 1878.	270
Figure 13. Henry T. Williams, “America’s Greatest Wonder!”	276

Figure 14. <i>Ballet at the Bella Union</i> , 1870.	281
Figure 15. “Bancroft’s Official Guide Map of City and County of San Francisco,” 1873.	316
Figure 16. Henry G. Langley, “Guide Map Of The City Of San Francisco,” 1890.	317
Figure 17. <i>Sunset</i> , May 1900.	344
Figure 18. “California, Cornucopia of the World,” Broadside, 1883.	349
Figure 19. “The Old Oakland Ferry Building, 1890.”	361
Figure 20. “Ferry Building.”	366
Figure 21. Edward H. Mitchell, <i>The Ferry Building - San Francisco, Cal.</i> , Postcard.	382
Figure 22. Charles Weidner, <i>A Busy Day at the Docks</i> , Postcard, 1905.	383
Figure 23. Edward H. Mitchell, <i>A Carload - A Mammoth Pear from _____</i> , Postcard, 1910.	387
Figure 24. “San Francisco sits by the Golden Gate Receives the Tribute of the Orient.,” <i>The Wasp</i> , 1899.	391
Figure 25. “With the Might and the Faith of their Fathers.,” <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i> , 13 May 1906.	399
Figure 26. “ <i>World’s Trade Center</i> ,” Postcard, circa early 1950s.	403
Figure 27. “Pacific Pride,” Crate label.	405
Figure 28. “Garden Gate,” Crate label, circa 1950s.	406
Figure 29. “Sydney G. Walton Square,” <i>The Cultural Landscape Foundation</i>	408
Figure 30. The Embarcadero and Ferry Building, circa 1960.	411
Figure 31. “SF Underground Market,” 2010.	414

Prologue

A Cove, a City, a Harbor, and a Hub: The Many Lives of a Western Port

Boca del Puerto de San Francisco; Port of Sir Francis Drake; Chrysopylae... with each representative of empire came a new name, a new promise, and a new effort to claim, control, and retain. Before England's Francis Drake arrived in 1579 or Spain's Juan de Ayala entered the bay in 1775, the Miwok and Ohlone people lived along its shores. They too, undoubtedly, had names for the uniquely narrow mouth that led into an expansive bay. While Miwok and Ohlone place-names continue to dot the California landscape, their names for the strait that connects the Pacific ocean and the Bay have been erased by European explorers and settlers, who ignored existing borders and sovereign nations, seeking instead to claim and conquer. They did this, in part, by affixing their own names to the headlands and waterways. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo claimed the "Island of California" for Spain in 1542. Britain, after Francis Drake touched down in 1579, insisted on calling the region New Albion, a Latin word for England. The Miwok and Ohlone, meanwhile continued their lives along the bay. In a particularly aggressive 1768 map, a British cartographer labeled the harbor, the "Port of Sr. Francis

Drake not St. Francisco.”¹ Fearing that the cartographic seizure might become a physical takeover (and spurred by the southward progression of Russian settlers along the California coast), Spain began, in the 1770s, to settle their claim. For the many Europeans who would never see the “Island of California” or “New Albion” for themselves, this struggle over territory only existed in the realm of the discursive: in maps and place names.² With, however, the arrival and settlement of the Spanish, seeking to assert their claim to territories marked on a map, the Miwok and the Ohlone felt the on-the-ground shift. My project takes up this interplay—the reciprocal relationship between the cultural and material production of a landscape. I consider the ways in which the discursive realm, such as names on a map, was enforced, gained traction, became rooted in everyday surroundings, shaped lived experiences, and then, in turn, inflected cultural conceptions and future manifestations of the landscape.

In 1846, American imperialist and explorer, John C. Frémont added yet another name to the mile-long gap in the headlands, Chrysopylae. He drew the name from the harbor of Byzantium, called Chrysoceras or the Golden Horn. He intended for the name

² For a discussion on the deeply intertwined relationship between naming, cartography, empire, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 49-72; Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) and Mark Peterson, “Naming the Pacific.” *Common-place* 5, no. 2 (January 2005). Coll Thurst and Rebecca Solnit have each discussed the elision and appropriation that occurs through place names. They have explored the link between dispossession of Indian land and appropriation of Indian place-names, which has resulted in the erasure of the contemporary “pan-urban Indian community.” See Thurst, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 13 and Solnit, *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) 10-17.

to signify the commercial significance he predicted for the hamlet and trading outpost.³

Wondering if Frémont's allusion would be understood, cartographer Charles Preuss decided to include both the Greek nomenclature and its English translation. In his map of Frémont's exploits, Preuss labeled the strait that opened into the San Francisco and San Pablo bays, "Chrysopylae or Golden Gate." In later retellings, Frémont emboldened and animated his christening moment, recounting his declaration: "To this Gate I give the name *Chrysopylae*, or Golden Gate."⁴

With its bombastic and imperial tenor, the Golden Gate was a promising name from the start. Then, with the discovery of gold in the nearby Sierra mountains a few years later, it found lasting resonance. Over the next sixty years, San Franciscans envisioned different means of attaining the commercial prominence Frémont had prophesied, often drawing on the city's gateway identity to support their various visions and projects. My dissertation takes up the many lives of this western port, tracing the shifting makings and meanings of the Golden Gate—a promise and a place.⁵

It is the story of how San Franciscans fought over and transformed an international hamlet into an American town and then an imperial city. During the mid-nineteenth century, as historian David Igler has argued, "much of the *eastern Pacific*"

³ J.C. Frémont, *Map Of Oregon And Upper California From the Surveys of John Charles Frémont and other Authorities. Drawn By Charles Preuss Under the Order of the Senate of the United States, Washington City 1848*. [map]. 1:3,000,000. (Washington, D.C.: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, 1848) David Rumsey Historical Map Collection; and John C. Frémont, *California Guide Book: Comprising Colonel Fremont's Geographical Account of Upper California* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1849), 22. For secondary accounts, see John Noble Wilford, *The Mapmakers* (New York: Knopf, 1981), 237 and Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names: The Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*, 4th ed., ed. William Bright (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 147.

⁴ John C. Frémont, *Memoirs of My Life* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Company, 1887), 512.

⁵ I used Golden Gate in quotations in my title to signal that I am taking up the Golden Gate as both a physical place, and therefore proper name, and as an idea and set of meanings. For readability, I will simply capitalize the name throughout the text.

became “the American *West*.”⁶ For San Francisco, the process of becoming an American and imperial city was one of exclusion, violence, and grandiose claims. Debates over what type of city San Francisco should be often played out in and over the waterfront, as various groups sought access to and control over the entry and exit point of the city. It is for this reason that I take up the Golden Gate, as both a vision for the city that San Franciscans struggled over and a material manifestation of that vision, tracing changes in the idea and the place over time. San Francisco’s transformation, from an international outpost to imperial city, occurred in and through the promise and place of the Golden Gate.

The town of Yerba Buena began as a trading post during the 1830s and 1840s for ships traveling the hide and tallow circuit. First Spain and then Mexico claimed the cove, but it lay at the edge of Russia's, Britain's, and the United States' imperial reach and desires as well. Anglo settlers and land speculators, who had arrived during the days of Mexican rule or shortly after the United States’ military occupation, quickly renamed the town. They selected the name San Francisco to proclaim their settlement the most significant port on the bay. Yet, with a shoreline consisting of rocky cliffs and shallow mudflats, the community lacked a solid landing-place.

As the U.S. federal government wrested the land from Mexico, government officials at all levels made claims on the waterfront property. Comprised of eager land speculators, the town council sought a source of municipal revenue and insisted on their right to sell the land. One of the earliest large land-holders built the first, and

⁶ David Iglar, “Diseased Goods: Global Exchanges in the Eastern Pacific Basin, 1770-1850,” *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (June 2004), 695.

tremendously profitable, pier. Many hoped to copy his success. Property holders and hired hands began stripping the surrounding hillsides to fill in the mudflat and extend wharves into the bay. Then, with the discovery of gold in the Sierra foothills, miners and speculators flooded into the town, quickly overwhelming the emerging port.

Between a steady stream of miners and repeated citywide fires, which resulted from arson and the town's numerous flammable and flimsy structures, San Francisco's capitalists and construction crews could barely keep up. Ship-breakers disassembled vessels abandoned by sailors who had left for Gold Country. The breakers sold the reclaimed lumber and canvas to construction crews, desperate for building materials. At times, business-owners skipped the ship-breaking step altogether and simply took over a vessel where it lay, converting it into a hotel, saloon, or storage warehouse. A city, perched on piers, emerged.

Together, sailors, gold-seekers, entrepreneurs, and laborers created a commercial strip comprised of a variety of businesses but especially well supplied with saloons, bordellos, and gambling halls. The bars and brothels proved vital to the young town's economy. Many miners had hoped to make it rich in California, then return home with pockets full of gold. The city's pleasures and temptations kept the gold circulating through, rather than flowing out of, San Francisco. A few years later, however, changes in gold country began rippling through the region. By 1853, many of the surface deposits of gold, which were accessible to individual miners with a pick and pan, had been cleaned out. As the mines emptied, many returned home or left for newly-discovered diggings. Others, however, stayed, and San Francisco's population swelled with miners looking for

new types of work. With more out-of-work miners and less gold entering the city, merchants, followed by the construction industry, and finally the banks felt the market give way. The entire nation, in fact, plunged into an economic depression in early 1855. San Francisco, as a highly speculative enterprise built on credit, was especially vulnerable.

By the mid-1850s, with the city in crisis, two competing visions for a prosperous San Francisco emerged. One was that of an individualistic, masculine boom town, undergirded by a vibrant vice economy. The other vision promoted a domesticated, family town, sustained by stable economic growth, achieved through the determination of hard-working husbands and the respectability and social policing of wives. Both visions clung to the promise of San Francisco as an important maritime port—the promise of the Golden Gate. For those who embraced a boom town economy, it was a welcoming gate. As they saw it, any man, with money to wager, could take a seat at the card table, take a chance on getting rich, and return home a wealthy man. Though this meritocratic paradise never truly existed (and, in fact, required a profound forgetting of the racial hierarchies that had characterized the city from its earliest days as a U.S. territory), it nevertheless remained a powerful and persistent trope. Those who sought a family town, envisioned the gate as a sieve, hoping that they might take part in selecting and culling those who came to San Francisco and became Californians. They sought to create a community of dedicated and committed farmers and entrepreneurs, who would settle with wives, establish roots, cultivate a rich social fabric, and eventually build the city into an commercial hub. They insisted that their vision not only fulfilled Frémont’s promise but

also established San Francisco as an American town. These debates, ultimately, were not simply about what type of city San Francisco would be but rather about the place of the metropolis in national and international economic networks and cultural imaginings.

In 1856, the debate reached a flash-point. An extralegal committee, comprised of self-appointed arbiters of the law, seized a block along the waterfront from which to rule the city with an iron-fist. In the name of law and order—of domesticated respectability—they executed four men and banished others who did not hew to their vision. The Golden Gate proved to be a powerful idea, slippery and multivalent. Many different San Franciscans deployed the metaphor in an effort to shape the landscape and in service of their own goals. “Cities, like dreams,” writer Italo Calvino has posited, “are made of desires and fears.”⁷ In San Francisco, these competing fears and desires took shape in, through, and over the waterfront streets.

The Golden Gate

By tracing debates over the waterfront and port, submerged underwater during the 1840s, the center of commercial activity by the 1850s, a rough and worn neighborhood given over to vice by the 1860s, relocated in the 1870s, and the center of a showcase space in the 1890s, my project considers the shifting meanings and manifestations of the Golden Gate. I am taking as my subject the Golden Gate, exploring it as both an idea and place. It was, more specifically, a set of meanings, mapped onto rocks and mud and water. This physicality lent the idea a concrete, seemingly inevitable quality. As an

⁷ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 44.

interlocking place and promise, it gained wider reach and deeper purchase. Through the makings and meanings of the Golden Gate, San Franciscans sought to convey the significance of their city, within local, regional, and national networks.

The Golden Gate signified a commercially important meeting place. The city's boosters described it as the site where overland and over-seas networks converged, or as as one turn-of-the-century promoter waxed, where "the railroads of a continent and the fleets of two oceans clasp hands and complete the circuit of the globe."⁸ In the most technical terms, it referred to the Marin headlands, which formed a mile-long opening (or gateway), into the San Francisco and San Pablo bays. As a powerful trope and metaphor, however, its reach extended much further. At times, the gateway promise referred to San Francisco's harbor, regarded as the central commercial hub to which goods and people would flock and emanate. At other times, it referred to the city as a whole, suggesting the regional and national importance boosters hoped for the port city.⁹ In the most grandiose and bombastic iterations, it encapsulated the entire Pacific Slope. In this way, the metaphor operated on multiple registers of space, suggesting the pier, waterfront, city, Bay Area, or even the Far West as a whole.

It, in fact, often operated on these multiple registers simultaneously, in that San Francisco's political and business elite envisioned the city as the commercial center with regional, national, and transnational networks radiating from and converging in the city.

⁸ Charles A. Higgins, *To California and back* (Chicago: Passenger Department Santa Fé, 1899), 116.

⁹ In taking up an altogether different subject, that of the New Woman, June Howard has described how a construct becomes entangled and embedded in other ideas. As Howard has explained, "the New Woman should be understood not only as discrete entity but as a fluid notion constantly combined with other images. Explicit references are merely a bright thread running through the tangled braid of discourse, useful as beginning points for tracing how images of continuity and innovation are woven together." Howard, *Publishing the Family* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 159.

As boosters rendered it, each concentric circle reinforced the previous, such that regional dominance gave way to national importance and so on, heightening and strengthening San Francisco as the central node. Commercial and civic leaders, at other moments, emphasized San Francisco's importance as a link, valve, or portal through which goods moved and flowed. In their exuberance, boosters often drew on multiple metaphors, such as one declaration that "many great railroad lines center here, whose systems reach every market of importance on the American continent, and facilitate commercial intercourse between the East and West."¹⁰ As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the city's imperial bluster reached a crescendo. The Golden Gate became, in cultural, social, and economic terms, a hub, a harbor, a meeting-place, an entrepôt, a portal, a marketplace, and a central node.¹¹ This process, as my project demonstrates, was, despite boosters' insistence, never easy, never complete, and never all-encompassing.

¹⁰ *San Francisco, the Metropolis of Western America: Her Phenomenal Progress, Incomparable Industries and Remarkable Resources* (San Francisco: Mercantile Illustrating Co, 1899), 22.

¹¹ As William Cronon has argued, one of the defining features of gateway cities, such as Chicago and St. Louis, was their frontier location. With an eastern, tributary hinterland behind them, they often opened onto new territories. This was true of San Francisco as well. Boosters, nevertheless, declared San Francisco both centrally located and a gateway. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), chapter 6.



Figure 1. Henry Lange, *Bai San Francisco und Vereinigung des Sacramento mit dem San Joaquin*, 1854. Lange's map shows the Bay Area and identifies San Francisco and the Golden Gate. *Courtesy of the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.*

Place-making and the Port

In tracing the many iterations of the Golden Gate, my central question is about the making of a place. How, I ask, did San Franciscans construct their city as a gateway? What purpose did this gateway identity and infrastructure serve? How did various groups of San Franciscans draw on and deploy the city's gateway-standing in service of their own projects, goals, and aspirations? I argue that place-making happened in two key ways. First, the making of the Golden Gate was, always and at once, both a material and discursive project. I grapple with the physical and symbolic making of the city as a gateway, which began, in many ways, with Fremont's declaration but came to fruition

through the back-breaking work of land-fillers, the relentless proclamations of commercially-minded boosters, and the ongoing efforts of government officials to construct and maintain a waterfront worthy of the moniker. For the city, in other words, to become a global gateway, San Franciscans first had to conceptualize and construct it as such in local, small-scale ways. Starting with a single wharf, they built a port. Yet, these local efforts would have meant little apart from global shifts as well, namely expanding capitalist markets. Infused, during the middle of the nineteenth century, by gold from the Sierras, investment capital from eastern and European cities, and an onslaught of hopeful gold-seekers, San Francisco's population, haphazard infrastructure, and place in the national imagining grew rapidly, leading one San Francisco historian to declare it an "instant city."¹² This is my second proposition: place-making, I argue, occurred on multiple registers of scale. It, at once, emerged out of local, intimate, and small-scale interactions among individuals and from large-scale, global flows of goods, people, and capital. The waterfront, as a commercial nexus, devoted to the movement of people and goods, served as an important place of trade and commerce and of social mingling and regulation. In New York City, the market at Catherine Slip, as historian W. T. Lhamon Jr. has explored, functioned as "the membrane of the city [that] emphasized its border, but managed its permeability too." Lhamon, drawing on the work of Roger Abrahams, has highlighted the ways in which the market functioned as a contact zone, a space where a "creole language develops."¹³ Much like the market at Catherine Slip, the businesses that

¹² Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹³ W. T. Lhamon, Jr., *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 2-3

lined San Francisco's wharves also overflowed with goods (especially during the city's boom town years), creating an open-air market along the docks. One gold-rush arrival described the wharf as over-crowded with Chinese porters, stupefied visitors, drunken sailors, packing crates, and rotting food.¹⁴ Amidst this chaotic scene, shop-keepers hoped to capture the attention and business of new arrivals and maritime workers, from sailors briefly ashore to workaday draymen, while shippers and wholesalers oversaw large-scale imports and exports. The port, by its very nature a site of economic and symbolic importance constructed through the interplay of the local and global, offers an ideal window into the process of place-making on multiple registers of scale.¹⁵

¹⁴ Francis Samuel Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills, or Recollections of a Burnt Journal* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855), 180-181.

¹⁵ Port cities, as Carola Hein has noted, are "dynamic, multi-scaled, and interconnected." They are linked through both economic and social networks that include shipping and trade relationships as well as diaspora and migration networks. Hein, "Port Cityscapes: A Networked Analysis," in *Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks*, 5. See also John Kuo Wei Tchen's discussion of New York City as a port and "nexus for the exchange of commodities, ideas, and people." Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), xix. In recognizing these multiple scales, I seek to not only consider the San Francisco port as a complex urban site, as Lhamon does, but also to draw on the work of economic and environmental historians and geographers, who have traced the flows of goods and commodities. Some environmental and urban historians and geographers have, for example, taken up Walter Christaller's Central Place theory and Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems theory as a way of understanding the relationships among cities and the surrounding country side as well as other urban centers. Drawing on these conceptual frameworks, some scholars have focused on a particular site, tracing relationships of influence and dependency with surrounding areas, while others have followed the movement patterns of particular commodities or ecological phenomena. These models gave way, in part, to Atlantic Studies, transnational approaches, and Pacific Basin emphases. More recently the approach has been re-framed as studies of U.S. and the World. For examples of network-based studies, of both sites and commodities, see Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Sidney Wilfred Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); David Iglar, "Diseased Goods"; Thomas Bender, "History, Theory & the Metropolis" and *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, And Environmental Change in Honduras And the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*; Gary Y. Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Annette C. Palmer and Lawrence A. Peskin, "What in the World is 'America and the World'?" *Perspective on History* (November 2011). For examples of these trends in books intended for an audience beyond the academy, see Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998) and Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

San Francisco, as a port city, offers an ideal case-study. The port permeated the shape, development, identity, and workings of the city. San Francisco grew, during the mid-nineteenth century, seemingly overnight. Emerging at a moment of expanding capitalists markets, the port was central to the city's economic prosperity and cultural identity. Its own commercial growth required huge influxes of capital, workers, and goods, yet it lay at the far western edge of the continent. From the very start, the city's commercial and political elite remained acutely aware of the perils of the city's remote location. As, however, they worked to entice settlers and investors, they highlighted instead its gateway possibilities. Before the city even had a decent landing place, San Francisco's political and commercial leaders embraced and promoted Frémont's bold vision of gateway grandeur. The city's rapid, compressed, and abrupt growth, especially apparent when compared with older ports like New York City, alongside San Franciscans' ever-vigilant attention to space and place makes San Francisco an ideal subject.

Yet, the port has remained largely absent or incidental in most histories of the city. Many San Francisco historians have instead explored the city as a western and urban space, finding its boom-town beginnings ideal for studying the development of political culture and institutions.¹⁶ Subsequent San Francisco scholars broadened their definition

¹⁶ See, for example, Barth, *Instant Cities*; Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Terrence J. McDonald, *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860-1906* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). Others have studied the city's political history to consider the relationship between racial and class politics, turning to San Francisco because of the city's robust union activity and anti-immigration campaigns. including Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*; Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor*; Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

of the political realm to ask new questions about the city's political history and interrogate the city's social hierarchies. Philip Ethington has taken up the contours of the city's political public culture, while Mary Ryan and historical geographer Jessica Sewell have examined urbanites' use of public space to reveal the city's gendered geography.¹⁷ From the standpoint of cultural and urban history, Catherine Cocks, Barbara Berglund, and Raymond Rast have considered the ambiguities of the city's commercial spaces, exploring them as sites of meaning-making and identity formation. Berglund, for example, coined the term "cultural frontiers" to signal the uniquely urban and western qualities of San Francisco's commercial spaces and interrogate their complex and multivalent nature as well as their importance to nation-building.¹⁸ In taking up San Francisco, first and foremost, as a port city, I am drawing together Philip Ethington's

¹⁷ Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Ryan, *Women in Public*; Sewell, *Women and the Everyday City*. Also drawing on the insights of cultural history and geography, though asking different questions, scholars Nayan Shah and Susan Craddock examined the development of the city, its built environment and racial segregation, through the constitutive lens of public health, disease, and citizenship. See Susan Craddock, *City of Plagues: Disease, Poverty, and Deviance in San Francisco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) and Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides*. They, therefore, recognized the many realms in which discourses of race, class, gender, and sexuality took shape and informed social hierarchies. Also from the perspective of cultural geography, Gray Brechin has illuminated how the city's commercial, political, and intellectual elite claimed the surrounding countryside to further their own agendas--a relationship between the city and countryside that he seeks to capture with the Italian word *contado*, thereby signaling and highlighting the mutually dependent nature of their relationship in *Imperial San Francisco*.

¹⁸ Berglund identifies restaurants, hotels, boardinghouses, places of amusement and tourism, and fairs and expositions as cultural frontiers, explaining: "I use these places, which I call *cultural frontiers*, to illuminate how race, class, and gender relations were hammered out in the course of everyday life. In nineteenth-century San Francisco, establishing nationally dominant forms of race, class, and gender hierarchies was an essential part of making the recently acquired, heavily immigrant city into a recognizably American place, and cultural frontiers functioned as key arenas of this process." Catherine Cocks, *Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States, 1850-1915* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Barbara Berglund, *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), quote xii; Raymond W. Rast, "Tourist Town: Tourism and the Emergence of Modern San Francisco, 1869-1915," (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2006); Raymond W. Rast, "The Cultural Politics of Tourism in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1882-1917," *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (2007): 29-60.

emphasis on the city's political economy and Barbara Berglund's investigation of its commercial spaces and modes meaning-making.

With the port at the center of my study, I seek to build upon and interweave western and environmental historiographies, which have traced fights over land and natural resources, as well as urban, cultural, and economic history approaches, which have examined public and commercial spaces to illuminate the creation and contestation of social hierarchies.¹⁹ Drawing together these multiple modes of questioning, my study of San Francisco investigates small-scale interactions among San Franciscans and large-scale flows of people, goods, and capital. By focusing on San Francisco as the preeminent western port of the nineteenth century, I examine local, regional, national, and global processes in concert, taking up the port as both a marketplace and nexus within far-reaching markets. Ultimately, I seek to highlight the ways in which San Franciscans sought to navigate and negotiate the tensions and reciprocities between cultural meanings and political economy, individual choices and structural transformations.

Echoing a 1947 survey of the city, I argue that “the story of San Francisco is largely the story of its waterfront.”²⁰ A few other scholars have agreed. From the standpoint of maritime archeology, James Delgado has highlighted the port as an entrepôt, examining San Francisco's importance as the nation's Pacific outpost and a “participant in the global economy.”²¹ Architectural historian Michael Corbett has produced a beautiful pictorial

¹⁹ I will discuss each of these literatures in more depth shortly; here I am seeking to highlight the significance of taking up San Francisco, first and foremost, as a port city.

²⁰ Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration of Northern California, *San Francisco: The Bay and Its Cities* (New York: Hastings House, 1947), 260.

²¹ Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*, 5. Delgado has illuminated the reciprocity between the development of Pacific networks and the growth of the city, arguing that San Francisco was the product of a well-developed maritime system.

and written account of the city's waterfront. With an eye to engineering and design, Corbett has chronicled key moments in the history of the port, its construction, hey day, and redevelopment, positioning San Francisco in relation to other port cities as well.²² Finally, geographer Jasper Rubin has traced the development and redevelopment of the San Francisco waterfront since 1950, highlighting the ways in which local conditions, and especially urban planners, curtailed the larger economic and historical processes that shaped waterfront development.²³ Together, these studies make a case for the significance of the port to Pacific networks, to developments in the fields of architecture, engineering, and design, and to struggles between public and private entities. Together, they underscore the important and entangled relationship between the port and the city.

In my study of San Francisco as a port city, I take up the waterfront and port as contested space. Because of its symbolic, commercial, industrial, and maritime importance, many regarded it as prized real estate. During the city's early years, the town of San Francisco straddled the shoreline, existing partially on pilings in the bay and partially on land in the muddy cove. "The whole central part of the city swayed noticeably," one gold-rush arrival noted, "because it was built on piles the size of ships' masts driven into the mud."²⁴ Early town council members, seeking a source of municipal revenue, parceled out the waterfront, while land speculators, all too often members of the town council as well, were eager to claim a piece of the shoreline. Questions soon arose as to the legality of selling waterfront land, which had previously been designated public

²² Michael R. Corbett, *Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco, 1848–2010* (San Francisco: San Francisco Architectural Heritage, 2010).

²³ Rubin, *A Negotiated Landscape*.

²⁴ As quoted by Allen G. Pastron, "The Hoff Store Site: An Introduction," in *The Hoff Store Site and Gold Rush Merchandise from San Francisco, California*, eds. Allen G. Pastron and Eugene M. Hattori (1990), 2.

property. In order to regain control, the state of California filled in sections of the bay designated as government property. Those who purchased waterfront property in 1850, for example, soon found themselves several blocks inland. Thus, the particular businesses that grew up to support San Francisco's maritime economy, such as the saloons, hotels, and dance halls that catered to sailors ashore, permeated several blocks of the city. Rather than being a discrete section at the edge of town, the rolling nature of the waterfront meant that establishments at the heart of the city often bore lasting reminders their waterfront origins.

In addition to permeating the city, the waterfront remained largely present as an ongoing contested site. San Franciscans' debates about who would control the waterfront, its uses and infrastructure, remained long-lasting and often unresolved.²⁵ At the end of the nineteenth century, they sought to settle the district's many uses by segregating it into a grand transit hub, vice-ridden Barbary Coast, and wholesale produce district. Though the waterfront's many uses seemed to be separated into discrete, encapsulated sections, the on-the-ground reality was never so simple or neat. In sectioning off the red-light Barbary Coast, it in fact came to play an even larger symbolic role in defining San Francisco as a city of danger and delight. For the turn-of-the-century arrival, stepping into the Ferry terminal, the Barbary Coast remained only temporarily out of sight. As visitors made their way through the terminal's nave, with its displays of flowers and oranges and large tile mosaic of the state seal impressed into the floor, and out onto East Street, dilapidated

²⁵ Peter Brown and Jasper Rubin have both discussed debates and changes along the San Francisco waterfront during the second half of the twentieth century. Brown, *America's Waterfront Revival: Port Authorities and Urban Redevelopment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Rubin, *A Negotiated Landscape: The Transformation of San Francisco's Waterfront since 1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

saloons remained, reminding the visitor of the city's gold rush past and rumored wild reputation.²⁶ Standing at East Street (later renamed Embarcadero), which ran along the 1880s shoreline and separated the city and the piers, was, according to one observer, like standing on a dividing line between the forward progress of modernity and a relic of the past. Crossing the street and leaving behind the brightly painted streetcars and whistling steamboats of progress, "suddenly you find yourself in a quarter where the world seems to have gone to sleep, and which is as un-American as any old forgotten seaport in Europe. You are no longer in San Francisco, you are in Sailortown," the urbanite insisted.²⁷ The various facets of the waterfront, maritime economy, remained both interlocked and in tension, competing with and dependent on one another. San Francisco,

²⁶ In 1897, Willis Polk proposed an arched Beaux Arts-style enclosure to extend out from the Ferry Building and delay, at least momentarily, a visitor's encounter with the mixed-use waterfront of industrial shipping cranes and bawdy saloons. The enclosed courtyard was not built because it would have disrupted the transit networks at the Ferry Building. Polk, nevertheless, continued to make proposals for changes to the exterior of the Ferry Building, such as a raised walkway, in an effort to resolve the nature of the multi-use space. As both an industrial and transportation hub, pedestrians often found themselves in physical danger. See "Ferry Building - Peristyle & Arch at the foot of Market Street," Willis Polk Collection, (1934-1), Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California and Willis Polk, "Plan to Make Ferry Building Thing of Beauty," *San Francisco Evening Globe*, 29 February 1909.

²⁷ Though commentators often overdrew the distinctiveness of the Barbary Coast (or Sailortown), portraying the district as a bawdy curiosity and a Wild West remnant, the writer's depiction does suggest the ways in which waterfront's from the past continued to shape the city. "An Odd Corner of San Francisco," *San Francisco News Letter*, 7 May 1887, in The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist12/barbarycoast.html> (accessed 21 December 2011).

as a city manifested through contests and choices, cannot, I argue, be understood apart from its port, a prized, shifting, and multi-scaled site.²⁸

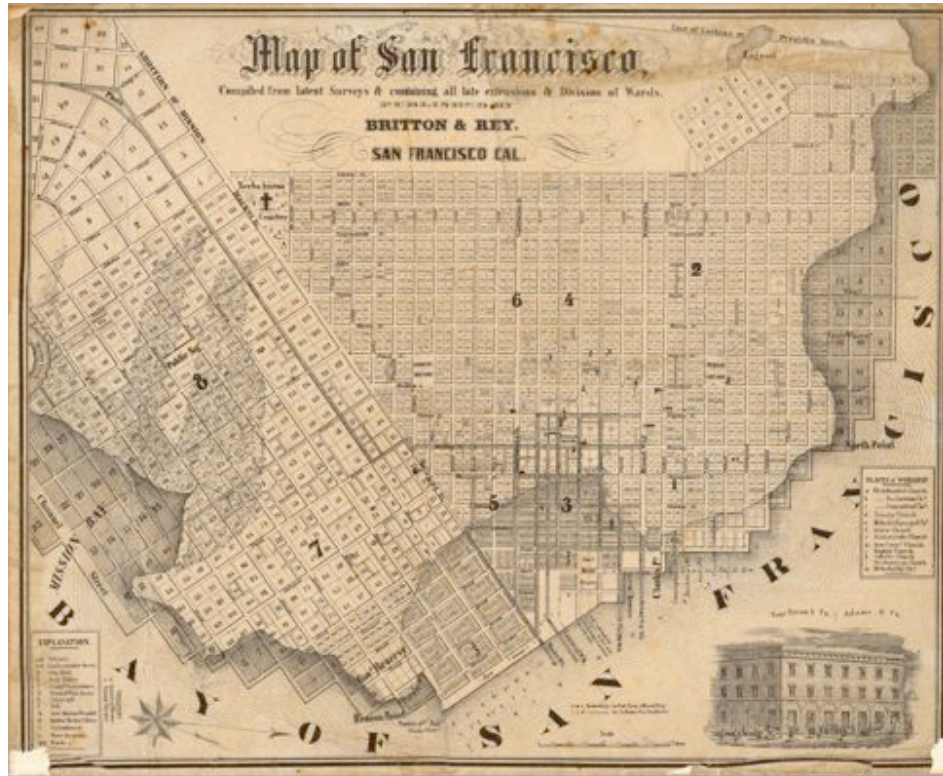


Figure 2. Britton & Rey, *Map of San Francisco*, 1852. The portions shaded in gray show land filled sections of the waterfront and proposed areas for new fill. My dissertation focuses especially on Yerba Buena Cove, the filled-in cove bisected by Market Street, and the surrounding streets, which comprised the earliest iteration of the city. *Courtesy of the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.*

²⁸ The literature on the relationship between cities and their ports is relatively small. The works in Frank Broeze's edited collection, *Brides of the Sea*, underscore the particularities of port cities, as compared to non-maritime urban centers, demonstrating the importance of considering the port in studies of maritime cities. *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989). Carola Hein has posited the term "port cityscapes" to highlight the many relationships and interconnections among port cities and the ways in which these networks shape the urban landscape in *Port Cities*. Labor historians have also focused on port cities to examine the heterogeneous nature of maritime laborers and, as a result of this heterogeneity, the unique role they have played in shaping a city or the nation. See, for example, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Craig Thomas Marin, "Coercion, Cooperation, and Conflict along the Charleston Waterfront, 1739-1785: Navigating the Social Waters of an Atlantic Port City" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2007); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

To trace the making of San Francisco as a gateway city, I am focusing on Yerba Buena Cove, the mudflat where Captain William Richardson, under the direction of the Mexican governor Jose Figueroa, first established a trading outpost. Around his ship-sail tent, which he eventually replaced with a permanent structure, a small community of traders settled. After the American seizure of Alta California and the San Francisco bay, this make-shift community remained the center of activity and became the earliest manifestation of Frémont’s Golden Gate moniker. The cove, “shaped by many hands, many minds,” to use historian David Stradling’s phrase, became the land-filled streets that undergird what remains, even today, the commercial center of the city.²⁹ The Financial District, built upon the cove, forms much of the contemporary skyline, including the iconic Transamerica pyramid and the Bank of America Center, present-day relics of the city’s beginnings as a repository for gold from the Sierras and silver from the Comstock lode. Recognizing, however, that as an idea, the Golden Gate extended well beyond the muddy cove, I consider the many sites where people crafted and shaped conceptions of the gateway. I travel to the Cliff House, a resort at the city’s western-most point, and inland, to Yosemite, both considered requisite parts of an 1870’s tour of the West and, as such, key sites of meaning making. I consult maps, letters, magazine articles, newspaper accounts, travel logs, municipal records, geologic surveys, and boosterism pamphlets—all evidence of the saloon owners, merchants’ association members, police officers, theater managers, boardinghouse keepers, municipal officials,

²⁹ David Stradling, *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 15

farmers, society wives, state legislators, and dance hall workers, who together participated in the material and discursive production of the Golden Gate.

City-building, Nation-building

Jane Jacobs characterized city life as an “intricate ballet” occurring among strangers in everyday spaces.³⁰ Lewis Mumford, seeking to address all the facets of a city, described it as “a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity.”³¹ Thomas Bender underscored the incomprehensibility of cities, while nevertheless suggesting ways that scholars could begin to extricate their many intricacies.³² Rebecca Solnit instead emphasized the infinite nature of cities, arguing that they are comprised of urbanites’ innumerable mental maps—geographies of work, pleasure, memory, and the mundane.³³ It is the very nature of cities’ density, complexity, and multivalence that has made them such intriguing objects of study.

In yet another explanation of cities, Robert Self has noted that “the cities we have are the cities our choices have produced.”³⁴ My dissertation acknowledges San Francisco’s incomprehensible and enumerable nature, but above all, it takes up San Franciscans’ choices. It tells the story of how San Franciscans sought to remake what began as an international hamlet into an American town and then re-cast it as an imperial

³⁰ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 29, 50.

³¹ Lewis Mumford, “What is a City?” *Architectural Record* LXXXII (November 1937), 58-62. Reprinted in *The City Reader*, ed. by Richard T. LeGates and Fredric Stout. 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 93.

³² Thomas Bender, “History, Theory & the Metropolis,” *CMS Working Paper Series*, No. 005-2006 (Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technical University Berlin, 2006).

³³ Solnit, *Infinite City*, 1-9.

³⁴ Robert Self, “City Lights: Urban History in the West,” in *A Companion to the American West*, ed. William Deverell and David Igler (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 414.

city. I consider how San Franciscans negotiated these municipal ambitions on multiple registers of space, using tools of inclusion and exclusion to position and re-position the city in local, regional, national, and global networks of commerce and cultural imagining. Yerba Buena cove lay at the edge of overlapping empires and along imperial trade routes. The city began as an international way station, attracting to Alta California's waters ships from Spain, England, Russia, Peru, Mexico, United States, France, Hawai'i, China, Ecuador, Chile, and Denmark, traveling the Pacific Basin trading networks.³⁵ By the 1840s, it was primarily an Anglo-European outpost though still a racially and ethnically diverse community of traders and land speculators.

With the gold rush, "men of all nations" flocked to California. Chilean, Australian, and Chinese miners boarded ships that traveled Pacific Basin circuits and were among the first gold-rush arrivals. As a result, the city gained a reputation as a cosmopolitan hub—a place where, at least according to oft-repeated descriptions, men of all nations gathered in its saloons and at its card tables. Yet, when delegates, drawn from the territory's elite Anglo and Californio settlers and land-holders, gathered to draw up a state constitution and seek statehood, they sought to create a utopia for white Americans.³⁶ With the Compromise of 1850, California entered the nation as a "free state," but it was according to the "free labor" ideology that entwined whiteness, independence, masculinity, and

³⁵ For a complete list, see Iglar, "Diseased Goods," 707.

³⁶ Californio, during the nineteenth century, signified Spanish, and therefore pure European, lineage. Those believed to be of Mexican heritage were thought to have mixed-race, and therefore inferior, ancestry. The lines of these constructed categories were, of course, never so neat. Phoebe Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 21; Douglas Monroy, "The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, ed. Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

wage-work.³⁷ The delegates sought to deter black migrants and exclude black settlers from political life. They later amended the anti-suffrage and anti-testimony laws to encompass Indian and Chinese Californians too. These exclusions, were embedded in the state constitution and mapped onto San Francisco's streets. Early black settlers arrived to find a nascent "American" town predicated on racial segregation. They, nevertheless, forged a sense of solidarity in black-owned and -frequented saloons and hotels, cultivating identities as citizens, and eventually organized campaigns for expanded rights.

By the 1870s and 1880s, as the "halcyon days of '49" became more myth and memory, the city's racially-diverse beginnings were recast as a meritocratic paradise,

³⁷ Though California entered the Union as a free state, it was not a freedom predicated on racial equality but rather an embrace of "free labor" ideology, defined against the slave society of the South and symbolized by the figure of the enslaved, black worker. Anglo settlers, in part through the state constitution, sought to create a haven for free (understood as white) laborers. For a discussion and explanation of the "free labor" ideology and the ways in which it shaped California's racial hierarchies, see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998); Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), chapter 6; Moon-Ho Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (September 2005), 677-701; Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). For a discussion of the measures intended to limit the rights of Black, Chinese, and Indian residents and render California a utopia for white workers, see William Loren Katz, *The Black West: A Documentary and Pictorial History of the African American role in the Westward Expansion of the United States* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2005); Barbara Y. Welke, "Rights of Passage: Gendered-rights Consciousness and the Quest for Freedom, San Francisco, California, 1850-1870," in *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000*, ed. Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press). Though the idea of California as a "free state" shaped the state's legal policies and racial hierarchies, Californians, nevertheless, relied on numerous forms of "unfree" labor. Enslaved and contractual laborers played an important role in the state's economic development, as discussed by Sucheng Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Richard Steven Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769-1913* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004); Stacey L. Smith, "Remaking Slavery in a Free State: Masters and Slaves in Gold Rush California," *Pacific Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (February 2011): 28-63.

when any man, despite humble beginnings, could strike it rich in California. This re-framing served to legitimize the exorbitant wealth some white San Franciscans had accumulated. If, in fact, “men of all nations” had come West on equal footing, with only a pick and pan, the widening wealth gap could be explained and defended as the reward for hard work. This myth of a meritocratic paradise, which ignored the racial and class hierarchies embedded in the state constitution, had purchase well beyond San Francisco. For many, California came to symbolize the wellspring of the American character, defined as white, “independent,” and upwardly mobile. As a cultural imagining, grounded in a mythic West, it explained and legitimized profound inequalities. Even as the myth of a meritocratic, utopian West grew, white San Franciscans pursued new means of exclusion, through racially-based laws and law enforcement.

Having declared their city the wellspring of the American character, San Francisco boosters next framed their city as an ideal launch point for a Pacific empire. “The West is wide awake; the East is looking westward ...action is in the air,” one of the city’s many relentless champions proclaimed.³⁸ In the months before the transcontinental railroad brought San Francisco more squarely into the national fold, one ambitious booster declared the city the “nucleus of a great empire on the Pacific.”³⁹ They posited a Pacific-centered worldview, with San Francisco at the center of radiating circles of influence. Or, as one *Overland Monthly* writer envisioned it, California was “the imperial State of the Pacific and San Francisco the dominant metropolis.”⁴⁰ Yet, after the transcontinental

³⁸ Charles Sedgwick Aiken, *California Today, San Francisco, Its Metropolis* (San Francisco: California Promotion Committee of San Francisco, 1903), 23.

³⁹ Titus Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California: Comprising Early History; Geography* (San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft & Company, 1868), v.

⁴⁰ N. P. Chipman, “Greater California and the Trade of the Orient,” *Overland Monthly*, September 1899, 199.

railroad arrived, San Franciscans discovered that their spheres of influence did not always reinforce one another so neatly. National networks, for example, at times threatened and undermined regional ones. San Francisco, as a the regional center of finance, temporarily regained its place of importance within the Pacific Slope. As it sought, however, to bolster the importance of the Far West region to the nation, it contributed to the growth of other regional centers, such as Los Angeles, which ultimately eclipsed San Francisco. The registers of scale, as San Franciscans discovered, often fit together in complicated and contradictory ways.

In taking up questions of city-building, nation-building, municipal boosterism, and regional identity, my dissertation joins that of other scholars of the American West.⁴¹ Through considerations of boosterism and regional identity, scholars of the West have grappled with the discursive and physical construction of a place, in this case, the “West.” In disrupting notions of an exceptional or frontier-based West, new Western scholars, such as Patricia Limerick, Richard White, and Donald Worster, sought instead to

⁴¹ For a few examples of studies on these topics and questions, see Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950); William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; John M. Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-century America* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan, 1992); Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000); and Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

highlight interactions among people in a multicultural west.⁴² With this new theoretical framing, scholars have approached the “West” as a contested space, forged through on-the-ground encounters among people, whose actions were informed by shifting cultural identities and conceptions of national belonging. At times, the new Western scholars’ place-based analysis, grounded in notions of regional similarities, reified the very

⁴² Rather than, as Frederick Jackson Turner had, seeing the West as a frontier, an Anglo-driven process of settlement and a foregone conclusion, they sought to highlight the contingency of place-making and nation-building. In order to do this, many endeavored to bring into conversation historical actors of many cultural and national origins, underscoring the ways in which many groups engaged in processes of marginalization, negotiation, and resistance. Patricia Limerick, for example, turned to place-based analysis, anchoring her study in spaces like California and Colorado, to highlight modes of conquest from the Gold Rush to Reagan’s ascent. A frontier-based approach, conversely, would have moved geographically across the North American continent over the course of the nineteenth-century, with its lens trained on the edge of Anglo settlement. This discussion, which began over thirty years ago, has, at this point, been evaluated and summarized in many places. For a few of the key works of new western scholarship and debates about the boundaries of the field, see Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge, 1991); Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner, Charles E. Rankin, ed., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: University of Press Kansas, 1991); William Cronon, George A. Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992); Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alan Brinkley, “The Western Historians: Don’t Fence Them In,” *New York Times*, 20 September 1992; Stephen Aron, “Lessons in Conquest: Towards a Greater Western History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (1994): 124-147; Kerwin Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Work, Or Being and Becoming Postwestern,” *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (1996): 179-215.; David M. Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner, ed., *Many Wests: Place, Culture & Regional Identity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997). For more recent discussions of the field, including the recent attention to the West and the World, see Patricia Nelson Limerick, “Going West and Ending up Global,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring, 2001): 5-23. The Autumn 2011 issue of the *Western Historical Quarterly* contains several articles assessing the state of the field. See Colleen O’Neill’s introduction to the special issue, “Commentaries of the past and Future of Western History: Multiple Strands of Inquiry in a (Still) Contested Region,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 287-288.

category they sought to dismantle.⁴³ Out of their work, however, many scholars came to recognize that the “West” was not rooted in a singular time or space. The study of the West became more of a methodology, a way of interrogating the contingent process of empire-building by centering place, highlighting multiple perspectives and aspirations, and revealing historical actors’ modes of marginalization, resistance, and containment.⁴⁴ My focus on place and place-making, is drawn in-part from the work of scholars of the U.S. West. I too have bound my project spatially, to investigate the intertwined processes of city-building and nation-building, considering, more specifically, how many different groups of people constructed the place and promise of the Golden Gate, by linking it to notions of economic prosperity, national belonging, and imperial influence.

⁴³ See especially Kerwin Klein’s review and critique of the new Western scholarship. In response to Turner’s frontier, new Western scholars eschewed process in favor of place. But, in so doing, as Klein has argued, they created an ahistorical region-based West, defined as land west of the Mississippi. While this category illuminates connections between boom towns, like San Francisco and Virginia City, it is, at times, a largely arbitrary category. It, for example, forces Boulder and Honolulu into the same frame. Scholars are now returning to Turner’s conception of “frontier” as a process, but seeing it as a contested and imperial process. It is from this standpoint that Juliana Barr has advocated for a “continental approach” or, in other words, a place-centered methodology. In terms of teaching U.S. History, she suggests that a continental approach would bring the Southwest and West into the story, thereby re-framing the story of American history as one of ongoing colonialism and imperialism (rather than moving from a colonial period centered in New England to a period of nation-building, which was very much still a colonial period in the West and Southwest). For geographers, this is likely a familiar call. In 1972, historical geographer D. W. Meinig, while exploring ways to approach the West, suggested, “if this is indeed a useful generic model for the study of colonization and nation-building, the entire scheme could well be applied to the entire nation,” as quoted by William Wyckoff. Meinig then went on to take up questions on the continental scale. Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word, Or Being and Becoming Postwestern”; Juliana Barr, “Beyond the ‘Atlantic World’: Early American History as Viewed from the West,” *OAH Magazine of History* 25, no. 1 (2011): 13-18; William Wyckoff, “Understanding Western Places: The Historical Geographer’s View,” in *Western Places, Western Myths: How We Think About the West*, ed. Gary J. Hausladen (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006) 28.

⁴⁴ See, for example, recent work in two western history subfields: borderlands and the urban west. James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Thrush, *Native Seattle*; Pekka Hämäläinen’s *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Brian Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

*“Space and Time Come Together in Place”*⁴⁵

In thinking deeply about the meanings and makings of a region and theorizing places in new ways, scholars of the “New West” began to approach their subject as a contested terrain. Stuart Hall, in 1981, posited “contested terrain” as a way of recognizing the dialectical nature of cultural forms, which, as he explained, always comprised elements of both containment and resistance. In selecting “contested terrain,” he offered a spatial metaphor by which to understand the process of cultural construction. In order to understand the underlying dynamics of power, he urged scholars to interrogate “the *process* by which these relations of dominance and subordination are articulated.”⁴⁶ He emphasized *process* to draw attention to the dynamism of the dialectic, its state of constant flux and renegotiation.⁴⁷ Even as scholars of the American West moved away from Turner’s formulation of process, which privileged seeing the West as a coherent and

⁴⁵ Edward Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time,” in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 36.

⁴⁶ Stuart Hall, “Notes on deconstructing ‘the popular,’” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1981), 236. Many cultural historians have taken up the question of “the popular,” or in other words, have contemplated the meaning of cultural objects in a capitalist society. Richard Butsch has summarized the central question: “Does leisure represent the interests and values of participants—that is, is it an arena of self-expression? Or have capitalists or reformers designed leisure to control the behavior of lower classes?” Butsch, “Introduction: Leisure and Hegemony in America,” in *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure Into Consumption*, ed. Richard Butsch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 4.

⁴⁷ Elaborating and drawing on Hall’s formulation, historian Gail Bederman placed the “process of articulation” at the center of her study, highlighting “the different, even contradictory, ways people invoked” discourses of masculinity and civilization at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. Rather than treating discourse as stable, singular, or coherent, Bederman recognized discourse as a site of cultural struggle, and therefore, as an ongoing process of negotiation and renegotiation. Frederick Cooper and Grace Elizabeth Hale have made similar arguments. Cooper encouraged scholars to abandon identity as an analytic because it implies a static sense of self, proposing that scholars think instead in terms of identification, which highlights the active role of individuals and the state in the ongoing processes by which people identify themselves and others. Hale, meanwhile, described her focus as on “racial making, not racial meaning.” She too sought to bring struggles over the construction of racial categories to the fore and avoid a static depiction of racial identity. Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 24; Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, “Identity,” in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 59-90; Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), xi.

singular site of past containment, they embraced place-based methodologies that highlighted the contested nature of place-making. They underscored the dialectical processes of containment and resistance. Susan Lee Johnson, for example, bounded her project spatially, focusing on the California gold mines, and then traced the change-over-time story of the “taming of [a global] Gold Rush” into “an essentially Anglo American event.”⁴⁸ She, furthermore, illuminated the ways in which this process occurred on the more elusive terrains of race, class, gender, and sexuality. By grappling with changes in both space and time together, Johnson explored the process of place-making, ultimately offering the mines as both the product of and a window into Hall’s “contested terrain” of cultural construction.

By focusing on a single moment, I seek to bring into conversation San Franciscans’ many different perspectives and lived experiences. These lived experiences did not, of course, exist in isolation, but rather, as historian Elsa Barkley Brown has argued, they were predicated on those of others. “White women and women of color not only live different lives,” Brown has recognized, “but white women live the lives they do in large part because women of color live the ones they do.”⁴⁹ As, for example, San Franciscans sought to solidify the boundaries of the vice district (often called the Barbary Coast), they entrenched the line between respectable women shopping or lunching in public and the “public” women of the saloons and beer halls. Even as both groups of women came into less direct contact with one another, each becoming more closely aligned with particular streets and businesses, both served to highlight the definitional bounds of the other.

⁴⁸ Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 333.

⁴⁹ Elsa Barkley Brown, ““What Has Happened Here”: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics,” *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 298.

When, for example, an 1876 law banned women from beer cellars from 6 in the evening to 6 in the morning, women working as prostitutes, who had sought paying customers in these joints, found their livelihoods at risk. San Franciscan socialites, meanwhile, with vice supposedly contained and the main corridors rendered more respectable, gained freer access to the streets. In the case of the San Francisco's famed French restaurants maître d's established separate floors for men dining with their wives and those with mistresses. With disreputable spaces more clearly marked and cordoned off, a society woman could enjoy a champagne-lunch or brandy-soaked dinner with less censure. A place-based focus underscores this relationality. It furthermore resists telling a tidy progressive or declension narrative, by highlighting instead the specificities of an event from multiple points of view.⁵⁰

My approach illuminates the many different power relations among various groups within the city. Rather than seeing culture as singularly resistant or complicit, historian Robert Allen has recognized the ordinative nature of power. As Allen has argued, power is rarely expressed in the direct, complete, and all-encompassing manner suggested by domination, but rather manifests itself through ordering and relational positioning.⁵¹

Including multiple perspectives brings into focus these many different power dynamics. For example, during the mid-1870s many Irish-born San Franciscans gathered to protest

⁵⁰ Rabia Belt encouraged the members of our graduate seminar to recognize the ways in which progressive or declension narratives, through their very construction, privileged particular points of view, by asking, for example, "better for who?" in Matthew Lassiter's course, "Urban Crisis/Suburban Nation," Fall 2007. Virginia Scharff explores this idea in "Else Surely We Shall All Hang Separately: The Politics of Western Women's History," *The Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 4 (November 1992): 543.

⁵¹ "'Resistant' practices," as Robert Clyde Allen has maintained, "might well be polyvalent, not only directed against those conceived of as 'above,' but constructing yet another object of subordination." Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 34.

their working conditions and the power of the Central Pacific Railroad company. Rather than taking a singular and sustained action against Central Pacific however, many redirected their anger towards Chinese immigrants, turning a class protest into an explosion of racial hatred and scapegoating. The 1870s riots and violence along the waterfront looked very different from the perspective of Irish rail-workers, Chinese launderers, and Central Pacific officials.

Lastly, a spatial focus highlights changes in the landscape over time, revealing the ongoing dialectic between creation and destruction, construction and elision, that occurs in the making of any landscape. It suggests the ways in which stories, place-names, and built environments become layered, one on top of the other. Some people hold on to a vision of the previous meanings and manifestations, such that for them the old place continues to exist, while for others the new place completely obliterates the earlier iterations. Take, for example, the corner of Clay and Battery; today, it is the site of a hotel and one of the city's sixty-plus Starbucks.⁵² Just over ten years ago, it was the home of the Yank Sing restaurant, one of the city's first Dim Sun restaurants to open outside of Chinatown, a story in itself of San Francisco's segregated cityscape.⁵³ As archeologist Allen Pastron hoped and suspected, during construction of the hotel, crews hit a section of weathered wood covered with copper. It proved to be the hull of the *General Harrison*, a gold-rush era ship that had once been anchored at the Clay Street wharf and converted into a floating warehouse. Since construction crews simply could not keep up with the

⁵² An estimate made by consulting Starbucks' "Store Locator," <http://www.starbucks.com/store-locator>, accessed 12 December 2011.

⁵³ The owners of Yank Sing opened their first restaurant in SOMA. It was so successful, they opened a second location at Battery and Clay. Louis Martin, "Yank Sing Has the Details Down," *Coast News*, http://www.coastnews.com/sf/yank_sing/yank_sing.htm, accessed 6 December 2011.

town's over-night growth, ships, abandoned by crews who took off for Gold Country, came to be among the city's more solid structures. Business owners, clamoring for space, resorted to the ships that crowded the shallow cove to house their establishments and store excess goods. Two Chilean-American commission merchants purchased the *General Harrison* to fill with the overflow wares for their own store as well as to rent storage space to other merchants, similarly bursting with goods. San Francisco existed as much on water as on land.⁵⁴

In many ways, it was a city-wide fire that preserved the *General Harrison*. On May 4, 1851, the boom town burned yet again, the fifth fire in just a year and a half. The fire ravaged the waterfront businesses, burning the *General Harrison* to the waterline, where the bay waters hit its hull. Property owners along the cove were attempting to define and bolster the shoreline in an effort to create both dry land and a deep-water harbor. The charred hull and remnants of the wares held in the stowage, including wines, cigars, fabrics, furniture, and food, were soon covered in sand and became part of the land-fill project. A few years later, an English entrepreneur, Charles Hare, and his crew of Chinese "ship breakers" unearthed the *General Harrison*, by that point fully hemmed in, to salvage as much of the iron, copper, and wood as possible. Once they had picked over the hull, they left the ship's remains wedged into the mud. Land-fillers once again covered the *General Harrison* with sand, leaving it to sit undisturbed for nearly a hundred and fifty years. As historians and archeologists, quite literally, peel back the layers, the process of making and remaking, always a constant dialectic of creation and destruction,

⁵⁴ Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

becomes apparent. The corner of Battery and Clay serves as a geologic core sample of the city's history, containing evidence of the bursting-nature of the boom town, the many Chilean immigrants who pursued gold as merchants rather than miners, and the repeated efforts to marginalize Chinese San Franciscans as perpetual outsiders and foreigners.⁵⁵

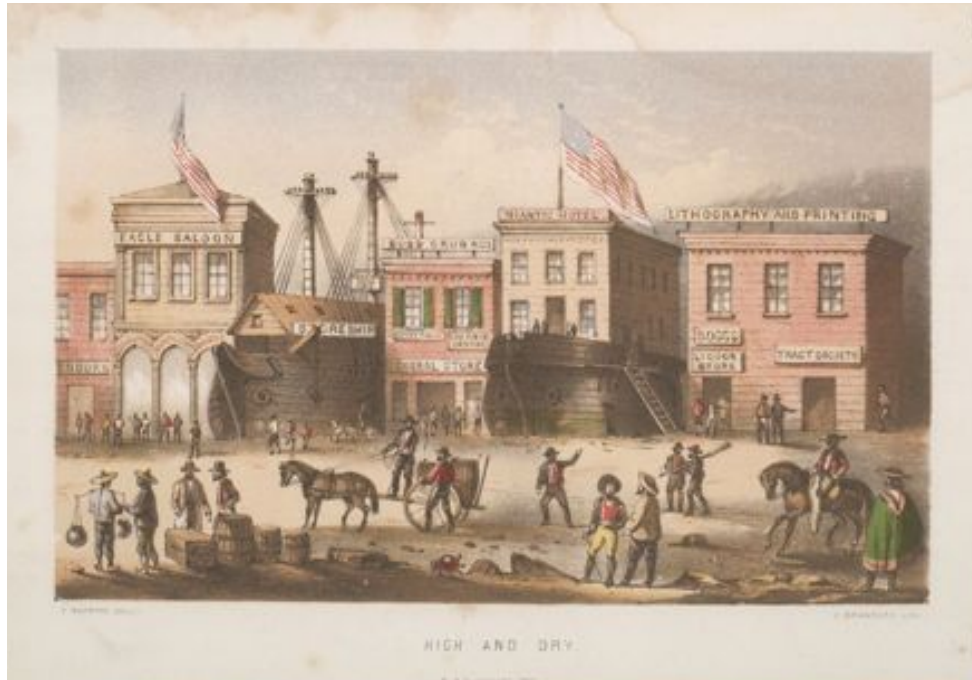


Figure 3. Francis Samuel Marryat, “High and Dry,” 1855. Marryat’s illustration shows two hemmed in ships, one converted to a storeship, while the *Niantic* served as a hotel and saloon. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

By attending to both space and time, my project seeks to illuminate the multiple layers of meaning and physical manifestation that simultaneously existed in and

⁵⁵ The story of the *General Harrison* and its unearthing is drawn from Tanya Schevitz, “Up from the Depths: 150 years after it was buried, Gold Rush ship unearthed in S.F. Financial District,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 September 2001; “Digging San Francisco: Allen Pastron reflects on a quarter-century of work,” *Archeology*, 17 April 2007; James P. Delgado, *Gold Rush Port: The Maritime Archaeology of San Francisco’s Waterfront* (University of California Press, 2009), 75-95; Allen Pastron, “Maritime and Gold Rush: Archeology in Downtown San Francisco,” *San Francisco Museum and Historical Society Lecture*, July 11, 2011. For additional information about gold-rush shipstores and ship breaking, see Allen G. Pastron and Eugene M. Hattori, eds., *The Hoff Store Site and Gold Rush Merchandise from San Francisco, California* (1990)

comprised the landscape.⁵⁶ Though at times I use the terms space, place, and landscape interchangeably, for the most part, I am focusing on places and, more specifically, place-making. By taking up place-making, rather than simply place, I hope to emphasize the social and political struggles over the production of space, while bringing attention to the *process*. Peeling back the layers of a landscape offers a glimpse into the processes of city-building, revealing the actions and aspirations of the San Franciscans who made the place, both through planned and concerted efforts and through everyday uses.

Urban and Environmental History

In taking the Golden Gate as my subject, and examining its making as a place and promise, I am drawing on the work of urban and environmental, many of whom also identify as western, historians and cultural geographers. I came to my project first through an interest in urban history. I was curious about the ambiguous spaces of social mixing, the cities of “eros” and “dreadful delight” brought to life by urban historians such as Timothy Gilfoyle and Judith Walkowitz.⁵⁷ At the center of these richly textured social and cultural histories were questions of inclusion and exclusion. Scholars illuminated the

⁵⁶ In a book of essays on and maps of San Francisco, Rebecca Solnit has offered a particularly powerful illustration of the layered aspects of the urban landscape across time and space. In a map titled “Death and Beauty,” she marked the locations of murders and Monterey Cypress trees, inviting the reader to make and see connections, to recognize that “violent death has a geography.” While there may not be a direct link between violence and trees, as she has demonstrated, it is illuminative to consider the geography of death and beauty alongside one another, to note the absence of green spaces in the places where violent deaths cluster, to ask questions about parks, neighborhoods, public funds, revitalization, and displacement. In a map of the Fillmore District, Solnit has recorded decades of change on a single map, noting the neighborhood’s history as a Japanese community, an African American community, a site marked as “blighted” and set for redevelopment, followed by “bunker-like housing projects,” and later by “boutiques and bistros.” See Solnit, *Infinite City*, 66-73. The mostly white section, of “boutiques and bistros,” now re-packages its blues heyday as a street festival each July.

⁵⁷ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992); Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

mechanisms by which urban elites sought to segregate and rationalize metropolitan spaces and the ways in which subaltern groups, nevertheless, carved out their own corners within the urban landscape. They interrogated “the dialectic of repression and resistance” and the contested terrain of the cityscape.⁵⁸

Many urban historians, notably Mary Ryan and Michael Sorkin, took up these questions by tracing the commercialization of public space, positing a declension narrative that moved from “shoulder-to-shoulder encounters” among a “kaleidoscope” of people to a greatly diminished and circumscribed sociability that existed in spaces “prefabricated for the masses and available only at a cost.”⁵⁹ Bryant Simon, in his study of Atlantic City, has offered an important critique, reminding readers that the social mixing along its boardwalk was always about exclusion; the dreams of social mobility it fueled were predicated on this exclusion. Lest any nostalgia linger, Simon has insisted that the “public in America has always been segregated and walled off.”⁶⁰ Adding yet another layer of depth and complexity to the urban landscape, Tera Hunter and George Chauncey have explored the interstices, illuminating places where two subaltern groups forged a shared culture and crafted an identity. In Atlanta’s “jook joints” and New York’s

⁵⁸ Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 238.

⁵⁹ Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 14, 18, and 202. Michael Sorkin, likewise, “pleads for a return to a more authentic urbanity, a city based on physical proximity and free movement and a sense that the city is our best expression of a desire for collectivity.” He concludes by declaring that “the effort to reclaim the city is the struggle of democracy itself,” in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

⁶⁰ Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 17.

eateries, Hunter and Chauncey found seedbeds for oppositional politics, thereby complicating both Ryan's and Simon's rendering of commercial spaces.⁶¹

While many historians of nineteenth-century urban spaces have and continue to explore the intricacies of public and commercial spaces, because of the post-World War II exodus from cities and into suburbs, scholars of the twentieth-century city have often turned instead to the segregation of metropolitan spaces to understand inclusion and exclusion. A foundational work in the field, Thomas Sugrue attributed white flight and the urban crisis to structural inequalities and political choices.⁶² To this detailed accounting of the ways in which government policies, real estate markets, and bank loan practices created racially segregated residential patterns and perpetuated the urban crisis, David Freund and Eric Avila have brought the insights of cultural history. Whereas Sugrue exposed the racial underpinnings of structural explanations, Freund and Avila have considered the racial constructions and cultural frameworks that justified and perpetuated racially discriminatory land-use laws, neighborhood covenants, and freeway designs. Together these studies have illuminated a "racial geography."⁶³

⁶¹ Ultimately, both scholars tell a story of loss, despite the shared identities black working women forged in Atlanta or the "gay world" working- and middle-class men created in New York. Hunter, *To 'joy My Freedom*; George Chauncey, *Gay New: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994). Nan Alamilla Boyd takes the argument one step further, arguing that in twentieth-century San Francisco, the "culture of queer bars and taverns was not simply important as a stepping-stone" for political activism, but rather the communities forged within these spaces functioned in important political ways. Boyd, *Wide-open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 14. See also Timothy J. Gilfoyle's review of the field of urban history, in which he has noted other examples of scholars exploring the ways that particular groups have used public spaces for their own purposes, in "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneylands: Recent Paradigms in Urban History," *Reviews in American History* 26 (March 1998).

⁶² Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁶³ David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 4.

Through careful attention to detailed facets of urban life and metropolitan landscapes, from the social dynamics of public culture to the platting of a cul de sac, urban historians have exposed and denaturalized processes of inclusion and exclusion. They have revealed urban places to be profoundly complicated and always contingent. In metropolitan spaces, these scholars have taken up large-scale questions, about public space, citizenship, and capitalism, in particular, specific, and concrete ways. In Nayan Shah's study of San Francisco's Chinatown, for example, even the light-posts lining Dupont Street served as a telling artifact, exemplifying the joint effort between Chinese American business owners and white property owners to remake Chinatown in the style of an "Oriental" dreamworld, attractive and appealing to white tourists with money to spend.⁶⁴ In contemplating my own project, I found myself drawn not only to the questions urban historians asked and the rich worlds they recreated but also to the concreteness and specificity of a street lamp that could reveal so much.

This interest in places, as an on-the-ground way of contemplating historical processes, led me also to environmental history. At the center of many environmental historians' work has been a question about the relationship between the city and countryside. In yet another example of his far-reaching frontier paradigm, Frederick Jackson Turner placed the two in direct opposition, insisting that as cities moved west,

⁶⁴ Shah, *Contagious Divides*; Mae M. Ngai, "How Chinatown rose from the ashes," *The New York Times*, 17 April 2006.

the countryside diminished.⁶⁵ Drawing on this conceptualization, many environmental historians have traced the effects of capitalism on the landscape (much like urban historians have examined the commercialization of public space). They told their own story of decline.⁶⁶ Richard Wade, in a pathbreaking work on western cities, challenged Turner's formation, positing cities as a central component of westward expansion.⁶⁷ Historians have subsequently examined the complexities of the relationship between cities and the countryside, yet Turner's dichotomy has lingered. Historian William Cronon and geographer Gray Brechin, for example, have employed network-based approaches to demonstrate the ways in which urban centers, Chicago and San Francisco respectively, controlled, consumed, and commodified the surrounding agricultural and rural landscapes.⁶⁸ Historian Ari Kelman has challenged this characterization, positing

⁶⁵ For a discussion of some of the central questions within urban environmental history scholarship, as well as Turner's foundational role, see Martin V. Melosi, "Humans, Cities, and Nature: How do Cities Fit in the Material World," *Journal of Urban History* 36, no. 1 (2010), 3-21 and Andrew C. Isenberg, "Introduction: New Directions in Urban Environmental History," *The Nature of Cities*, ed. Andrew C. Isenberg (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006). Scholars in many disciplines have challenged Turner's formulation, including J.B. Jackson, credited by many as the founder of landscapes studies. Jackson described the "dichotomy between Man and Nature" as a uniquely nineteenth century conceptualization, as quoted by Donald W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 228. Writer, architect, and scholar Anne Whiston Spin, likewise, sought to challenge readers' resistance to seeing cities as part of the natural world. Spin, *The Language of Landscape*, 3. For a reification of Turner's dichotomy, see geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, "The City: Its Distance from Nature," *Geographical Review* 68, no. 1 (January 1987): 1-12.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) and William Cronon's analysis in "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1347-1376.

⁶⁷ Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Barth, *Instant Cities*; Findlay, *Magic Lands*; Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993) and *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008). For two recent reviews of the scholarship on the urban west, see Self, "City Lights," and María E. Montoya, "From Homogeneity to Complexity: Understanding the Urban West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 344-348.

⁶⁸ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Gray A. Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

instead a reciprocal relationship between built and natural environments, insisting that “the attempt to draw a line between the two is almost always futile.”⁶⁹

Embedded within this line of inquiry about the city and country, about the relationship between natural and social processes and the ways they have shaped the past, are questions about nature as an engine of change.⁷⁰ In positing a reciprocal relationship between the city and country, Kelman has underscored the centrality of the Mississippi River to New Orleans’s history, writing, “the river has been the most important mental and physical landmark in the city, shaping not only ideas about the city, but also molding it spatially.”⁷¹ While I agree with Kelman, recognizing that the Bay has played a similar role in San Francisco’s history, I am starting at a slightly different point. Rather than focusing on the ways in which the “winds, tides, and pathogens” shaped the city’s history, I am most interested in the ways in which San Franciscans’ interpreted these phenomena. While I certainly do not deny the materiality of the Marin headlands—they are an impressive formation of sedimentary rock—I have instead decided to start my inquiry from the point at which people struggled over the names and meanings of this geological outcropping.⁷² Urban historians too have grappled with questions of agency, with some crediting material causes, such as political or economic policies and structures, while

⁶⁹ Ari Kelman, *A River and its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 11. Exploring the relationship between the human and non-human world has been a central question in environmental history, though several scholars now emphasize the importance of recognizing their entanglement. See Matthew Klinge, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 3; Melosi, “Humans, Cities, and Nature;” Mark Fiege, “The Nature of the West and the World,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 305–312.

⁷⁰ Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998); Linda Nash, “The Agency of Nature or the Nature of Agency?,” *Environmental History* 10 (January 2005): 67–69.

⁷¹ Kelman, *A River and its City*, 8.

⁷² U.S. Geological Survey, “San Francisco Bay Region Geology and Geologic Hazards,” http://geomaps.wr.usgs.gov/sfgeo/geologic/stories/marin_sedimentary.html, accessed 1 December 2011.

others have looked to the cultural realm, to ideas about race, class, gender, and sexuality. Again, I am drawing on the insights of cultural history to see laws and policies as evidence of larger cultural frameworks.⁷³

Though asking different questions, both urban and environmental scholars have read the landscape as a window into past power dynamics. They have demonstrated, for example, the ways in which federal policy makers underwrote the economic divestment from racially-mixed urban neighborhoods in favor of white suburban enclaves. They have shown how corporate capitalists came to dominate and drain the surrounding mineral and water resources. Through cultural approaches to urban and environmental history, the landscape has become a cultural text, an artifact, a piece of historical evidence. It is, in part, such an illuminative remnant because, as historical geographer David Scobey has explained, landscapes exist “not only as a *setting* for social and power relations but also as the *product* of those relations and a mediating *cause* in reshaping them.”⁷⁴ To think more about these interlocking facets of a landscape, I next turned to space and place theorists.

⁷³ This is among the key insights of cultural history. Grouping himself with an emerging cohort of social historians, William Sewell has noted, “We thought of social structures as essentially autonomous from political or intellectual history.” Cultural historians responded, by offering scholars a methodological and theoretical approach by which to identify and explain the ways in which political, social, and economic debates occur on the contested terrain of culture. Kathleen Brown, for example, has demonstrated the ways in which both legal and economic structures contributed to and later grew out of a system of racially-based enslavement. Mae Ngai has taken a similar approach to twentieth-century immigrant policies. See William Hamilton Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2005, 28; Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern American* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁷⁴ David M. Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 6.

Turns and Intersections

The 1960s, as so many historians have noted, gave rise to the “new social history,” a paradigm shift with new questions and approaches. Scholars such as E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm led this “turn,” foregrounding the importance of Marxist analysis, with its commitment to materialism and “history from below.” As Geoff Eley has reflected, “New social historians stressed material life, class, and society,” with the goal of writing “the history of society as a whole.”⁷⁵ To interrogate and illuminate the workings of society, believed to be the composite of “social structures, institutions, and life experiences of millions of ordinary people,” scholars sought new types of evidence.⁷⁶ They considered, for example, tax registries, building permits, marriage licenses, and census records, with many embracing quantitative methodologies to analyze these new sources. Rather than quantitative methodologies, Thompson favored richly textured portrayals of the working class experience.⁷⁷ As two sides of the same coin, the history of “social structures” and “history from below” both offered new perspectives on the workings of society.

This turn—“consonant,” as William Sewell has noted, “with the populist tendencies of the 1960s political activism”—occurred not only within history departments but across the humanities.⁷⁸ Beginning in the 1950s, John Brinckerhoff Jackson directed his attention to ordinary landscapes, giving rise to the multi-disciplinary pursuit he called

⁷⁵ Eley, *A Crooked Line*, 10-11.

⁷⁶ Sewell, *Logics of History*, 27.

⁷⁷ Eley, *Crooked Line*, 12; Sewell, *Logics of History*, 31.

⁷⁸ Sewell, *Logics of History*, 27.

landscape studies.⁷⁹ Even twenty-five years into his career, Jackson noted the elusiveness of the term landscape.⁸⁰ When he described it, he underscored its rootedness in and reflectiveness of everyday society.⁸¹ Rather than seeking to understand society through the lens of time, Jackson, joined by geographers, took up similar questions from the perspective of space. Cultural landscape studies, as Paul Groth has defined it, focused on “the history of how people have used *everyday* space—buildings, rooms, streets, fields, or yards—to establish their identity, articulate their social relations, and derive cultural meaning.”⁸² Much in the way that social historians interrogated social structures, ranging from large-scale institutions to individuals’ lived experiences, geographers too approached these questions on multiple registers. Some took an ariel view, while others focused on small, intimate spaces, emphasizing above all the importance of the everyday.

As a part of reading ordinary landscapes, geographers sought to determine how people understood landscapes, how they derived a “sense of place.” Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan maintained that through experience people developed a “sense of place.” “Place, at all scales from the armchair to the nation,” he has maintained, “is a construct of

⁷⁹ For a discussion of Jackson and his contributions to and lasting influence on cultural landscape studies, see Meinig, *Ordinary Landscapes*; Paul Erling Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study” *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Erling Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); and Chris Wilson and Paul Erling Groth, “The Polyphony of Cultural Landscape Study: An Introduction,” in *Everyday America Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson*, ed. Chris Wilson and Paul Erling Groth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 12.

⁸⁰ Meinig, *Ordinary Landscapes*, 2.

⁸¹ Meinig offers six principles around which Jackson conceived of landscapes in *Ordinary Landscapes*, 228-229.

⁸² Mary Ryan similarly links everyday space to social relations, but whereas Groth emphasizes experience, the point at which a historical actors used a space to form their identity and construct cultural meanings, Ryan highlights the moment of construction, the point at which designers and builders constructed the environment as a tool of social control. “Social space,” as Ryan explains, “especially the everyday uses of city streets, serves as a scaffolding upon which both gender distinctions and female identity are constructed. Paul Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study,” in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, eds. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 1 and Mary Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 59.

experience; it is sustained not only by timber, concrete, and highways, but also by the quality of human awareness.”⁸³ Tuan challenged a material determinist outlook by underscoring the importance of people’s perceptions in the creation of a landscape, an idea he later expressed as “mental maps.”⁸⁴ Expanding on Tuan’s theorization of “sense of place,” William Kittridge underscored the importance of stories to people’s understanding of places. “When we reach for a ‘sense of place,’” he argued, “we posit an intimate relationship to a set of stories connected to a particular location.”⁸⁵ Landscape scholars had much to say about the ways in which ordinary people shaped, created, imagined, understood, experienced, and remembered everyday places—ultimately, the ways in which people used place to create a sense of home and belonging.⁸⁶ They were, however, as Dolores Hayden has argued, often ill-equipped to address the social and

⁸³ Yi-Fu Tuan, “Place: An Experiential Perspective,” *Geographical Review*, 65, No. 2 (April 1975), 152. Recognizing the importance of the experiential aspect of place, I have sought throughout my project to include detailed descriptions of people’s perceptions of places. Many chapters, for example, open with a person’s experience of arriving in San Francisco and taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of the city for the first time.

⁸⁴ Yi-Fu Tuan credits psychologist E.C. Tolman with the idea of “mental maps”; an idea Tolman posited to explain the ability of lab animals to respond to environmental fields. Geographers have since employed this term to suggest people’s perception of places. Tuan further extricates the meanings of mental maps in “Images and Mental Maps,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65, no. 2 (1975): 205-206. William Cronon uses “mental maps” in his story of Chicago, to explore the process by which places are socially constructed and historically specific in William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*. See also Rebecca Solnit’s meditation on mental maps. Though she does not use the term, she employs the concept, enumerating the “inexhaustible” maps of San Francisco held by its citizens: “areas of knowledge, rumors, fears, friendship, remembers histories and facts, alternate visions, desires, the map of everyday activity versus the map of occasional discovery...” in *Infinite City*, 3.

⁸⁵ William Kittredge, *The Nature of Generosity* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 8.

⁸⁶ One strand of “sense of place” research draws on psychology to explain the ways that people develop an attachment to their surroundings. Yi-Fu Tuan, a foundational theorist of “sense of place,” has done significant work in this area. In his study of Seattle, Coll Thursh, has, therefore, not only explored the importance of stories in the creation of a place but has also recognized the kinds of violence that occur when Indian stories are appropriated and erased, leaving contemporary Native Americans without a sense of home or belonging, with a feeling of placelessness. See Tuan, “Images and Mental Maps” and “Place: An Experiential Perspective” and Thursh, *Native Seattle*, 9-16.

economic forces that shaped landscapes.⁸⁷ These questions were the preoccupations of another set of geographers.

Henri Lefebvre, also influenced by Marxist thought and interested in the everyday, took up questions about society by exploring the “social character of space.”⁸⁸ He considered the multiple, interlocking dimensions of spatial practice.⁸⁹ One of Lefebvre’s major insights was the recognition of space as both socially constructed and constitutive (while many credit Lefebvre alone, geographer David Harvey is quick to point out that others shared this insight).⁹⁰ Space, Lefebvre maintained, is “supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations.”⁹¹ Harvey has further explained how space functioned as a cause, noting that “spaces and times of representation that envelop and surround us as we go about our daily lives likewise affect both our direct experiences and the way we interpret and understand representations.”⁹² Scholars had previously focused primarily on the material (or “real”) and representational (or “imagined”) elements of space, overlooking Lefebvre’s third aspect of lived space. It was, however, in this third element, which Edward Soja has described as the “*real-and-imagined*” realm or “thirdspace,” thereby highlighting it as an extension and recombination of the initial two realms, where the productive power of space resides.⁹³

Both Soja and Harvey have underscored the importance of holding all three aspects—the

⁸⁷ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 17.

⁸⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell, 1991), 27.

⁸⁹ Lefebvre identified the interwoven elements of space as perceived, conceived, and lived in *The Production of Space*.

⁹⁰ David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (New York: Verso, 2006), 130.

⁹¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 286.

⁹² Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, 131-132.

⁹³ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 1st ed. (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 6.

material, the conceived, and the lived—in dialectical tension, emphasizing that each can only be understood in relation to the others. Taking up the interplay of these three realms, termed the built, imagined, and experienced, geographer Jessica Sewell, sought to illuminate their entanglement and explore the gendered geography of a city. Her study has epitomized the fruitfulness of this nexus, or as she has concluded, “The built and imagined landscapes of the downtown interacted with each other, often harmonizing and at other times conflicting, creating gaps that women negotiated in their everyday use of the downtown.”⁹⁴

Historians and geographers, each with their own epistemological conventions and institutional locations, seemed to be grappling with many of the same questions. Michel Foucault, more theorist than historian, also contemplated questions of power and society. He primarily sought to historicize, or locate in the past, the process of constructing and consolidating power. Though he often framed his work as a historical accounting, he also attended to spaces of power, perhaps most memorably in his discussion of the panopticon.⁹⁵ Though many previously had regarded space and time as separate pursuits—two different ways of critically engaging with the world, towards the end of his life, Foucault discussed their entanglement. “Time,” he suggested, “probably appears to us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space.”⁹⁶ He concluded by arguing that scholars needed to attend to space as well as time. Taking up this insight, scholars have continued to explore and posit

⁹⁴ Jessica Ellen Sewell, *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 169.

⁹⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977). “Space,” Foucault later noted, “is fundamental in any exercise of power,” as quoted by Soja, *Postmodern Geographies, The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989), 19.

⁹⁶ Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 19.

the intertwined relationship between the two. “It is impossible to disentangle space from time,” David Harvey has concluded, while George Kubler has described the historians’ task as illuminating the “shape of time.”⁹⁷ Layering in Lefebvre’s insights, Soja has insisted that space, time, and social relations exist in a deeply entwined, dialectical relationship. This “ontological nexus of space-time-being,” he has concluded “is the generative source of all social theory.”⁹⁸ Thus, increasingly, time and space appeared not simply to be two different ways to approach a particular question but rather deeply intertwined phenomena.

In fusing historians’ and geographers’ questions about time and space, Soja has advocated for a spatial turn across disciplines. This turn suggests the promise of interdisciplinary exchange among historical geographers and urban and environmental historians. Perhaps, even more promising however, a turn to space may offer a resolution to ongoing theoretical debates that have cut across both fields. Since the 1960’s turn to society, another cross-disciplinary turn occurred in the academy, often called the linguistic or cultural turn. The “new cultural history,” as James Cook and Lawrence Glickman have discussed, includes projects that define culture and the cultural in numerous ways.⁹⁹ The “turn” short-hand, as historian James Cook has argued, has oversimplified and flattened a multifaceted set of questions and modes of inquiry. The singularity of the “turn-talk” has implied a “supersession” of materialist modes in favor

⁹⁷ Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, 121-123; George Kubler as quoted by Hayden, *Power of Place*, 13.

⁹⁸ Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 25.

⁹⁹ James W. Cook and Lawrence B. Glickman have traced cultural history’s longer origins in “Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural History,” *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O’Malley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 5-10.

of culturalists ones, though what has actually occurred is a much richer blending and cross-pollination.¹⁰⁰

Place-based analysis, in drawing together the insights of social and cultural history, is a part of this blending.¹⁰¹ It offers a way of thinking about social structures, lived experiences, and meaning-making together and in concert. Writer and landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn has recognized this, noting, “in landscape, ideas are tangible and values have consequences.”¹⁰² For both scholars steeped in the realm of meaning-making and those concerned with material outcomes, landscapes suggest a way of exploring and mining the intersections; discourse takes a material form while simultaneously material manifestations can only be understood through discourse.

By putting place at the center of my project, I am seeking to weave together a “sense of place” with the “politics of space.”¹⁰³ My project highlights both the production and productive aspects of a landscape. I am peeling back the layers: a highrise of condos and offices, built atop a produce market, covering a gold-rush ship, anchored to the bedrock of a muddy cove. And, I am recovering the many meanings these layers held for different San Franciscans, thereby illuminating their many perspectives and the

¹⁰⁰ James W. Cook, “The Kids Are All Right: On the Logics of Cultural Turn-Talk,” *American Historical Review*, forthcoming.

¹⁰¹ As Dolores Hayden has noted in landscapes, “cultural identity, social history, and urban design are here intertwined,” in *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 15.

¹⁰² Spirn, *The Language of Landscape*, 192.

¹⁰³ Three recent histories that have employed a spatial approach include Pheobe Kropp’s *California Vieja*, Matthew Klinge’s *Emerald City*, and David Stradling’s *Making Mountains*. In their respective studies, Kropp, Klinge, and Stradling explain the historically specific ways in which people in the past understood the places they inhabited, how these conceptions shaped their interactions with their contemporaries, and how these ideas and interactions intersected to create new manifestations of the place. They suggest ways of richly layering cultural and social history analysis, engaging with abstract ideas and processes in concrete and on-the-ground ways, and exploring everyday interactions and experiences. Together they offer a complex and multi-dimensional portrait of the workings of a landscape, at once a construct of time, space, and being. Kropp, *California Vieja*; Klinge, *Emerald City*; David Stradling, *Making Mountains*, 2007.

relationality of their daily lives. In this way, I hope to make visible the multi-layered, multifaceted, so complex as to be characterized as “invisible” city. “The city,” Italo Calvino wrote, “does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.”¹⁰⁴ In these “scratches, indentations, and scrolls” we can see glimpses of the aspirations, fears, struggles, and the daily experiences of San Franciscans, who together comprised the city.

An Overview

My project charts the many makings, meanings, and lasting resonances of the Golden Gate—at once a place and promise—underscoring the ways in which San Francisco’s waterfront landscape served as both a “battleground” and the “spoils.” My chapters are organized chronologically and thematically, generally moving across time but often revisiting earlier periods to trace thematic threads. They also move among the registers of the Golden Gate, exploring the waterfront-streets as well as the wider, symbolic reaches of the gateway promises.

¹⁰⁴ I am highlighting “scratches, indentations, and scrolls,” in addition to the more coherent and lasting remnants of the built environments, as a way of highlighting the many San Franciscans who took part in shaping the landscape. As Patricia Limerick has recognized, “The complete story of the investment of human consciousness in the American landscape requires attention to the whole set of participants—indigenous people as well as invaders, eastward-moving Asian American people as well as westward-moving Euro-American people. With anything less, the meaning of the landscape is fragmented and truncated.” By accounting for the “scratches,” we can see the many San Franciscans who lent a hand. David Stradling, likewise, has called for attention to the many historical actors who have taken part in making a landscape. He has challenged the imperial perspective, which places all of the power in the hands of the urban elite, arguing instead that the relationship between the country and the city is one that has “had its conflicts, imbalances, and even injustices, but it is this collaboration that has made the mountains.” Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 11; Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 192; Stradling, *Making Mountains*, 16.

Part 1 traces the early construction of the city, highlighting the intertwined relationship between the physical and discursive production of the port and city of San Francisco. I begin, in Chapter 1, with John Frémont's proclamation of the entrance to the bay as the Golden Gate as a way of signaling the predestined commercial future for the harbor city. I seek to denaturalize Frémont's declaration, by considering the muddy cove at Yerba Buena that lacked even a decent landing-place and San Franciscan's early efforts to establish a port. Chapter 1 also takes up the promises early San Franciscans identified with the new city, tracing especially settlers' hopes for a new life of economic and social possibilities, contrasted against early efforts by Anglo leaders to make San Francisco, recently wrested from Mexico, into a an American city and utopia for white settlers. Chapter 2 traces the emergence of competing visions of the Golden Gate and the future direction of the city. As a gold-rush, frontier town, the popularity and profitability of saloons, gambling halls, hotels, and dance-halls ensured that they dominated the early cityscape. According to critics, "temples of chance" and chance discoveries of gold in the Sierras seemed, more than anything, to anchor the city. As a result, some San Franciscans began to argue that the city needed a more reputable, reliable economy and populace. Chapter 2 chronicles this fight over what type of city San Francisco would be, considering the many fronts of the battle, from cultural imaginings to violent outbreaks in the streets, which culminated in two public, waterfront hangings. Chapter 3 turns to the oldest section of the city, which began as the location of Yerba Buena's first tent structure and became a district given over to gambling, prostitution, as well as violent and petty crimes. The Barbary Coast held a central place in debates over the fate of the city because

it served as part of a working waterfront; in providing amusement for sailors and maritime workers, it made San Francisco a favorite port. Even as it contributed to the maritime economy, reinforcing San Francisco's municipal identity as the west coast's primary port, it also threatened boosters' depictions of the city as an economically stable and morally-upright town, an identity intended to bolster investors' confidence in the city's future and willingness to invest. The chapter explores the makings and meanings of the Barbary Coast and its complicated relationship to the city as a whole.

Part 2 interrogates San Franciscans' hubris, as they sought to re-orient the city as the center of regional and national networks. Rather than seeing regionalism and nationalism as competing identities, California and especially San Francisco, so the argument went, exemplified the American character, through its mixture of strenuous masculinity, commercial dominance, and imperial importance. Through these bold claims, the Californian spirit became not only an example, but also a wellspring, of a much-celebrated national identity. No longer clamoring to be reluctantly accepted as an American town, San Franciscans insisted their city was now *the* American town—a commercial hub and cultural center. In this way, the state's political and commercial elite sought to ground the nation's imperial future in the California landscape. They revealed the multi-layered nature of the Golden Gate metaphor, which could encapsulate and celebrate both regional and national exceptionalism, thereby animating imperial ambitions. Chapter 4 considers the expansion of intertwined cultural and technological circuits, both of which were anchored in the waterfront blocks. It first highlights the shared culture forged by traveling entertainers such as Adah Menken and cultural

imaginings created by widely circulating images and stories, including Albert Bierstadt overwrought paintings of a Yosemite morning or Bret Harte's tales of life in a mining camp. It concludes with the strengthening of national physical ties, through the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Chapter 5 explores the city's tourism industry, as the place where ideas about a mythic West intersected with San Francisco's streets. It takes up the perspectives of insiders looking out and outsiders looking in, examining portrayals of San Francisco, California, and the West in guidebooks, photographs, magazines, and boosterism pamphlets. It highlights the Barbary Coast as one of the "sights," exploring the many meanings it held for different San Franciscans. For some it was the bedrock of the city's vice-economy and a place to scrape by, others regarded it as a nostalgia trip, a risque glimpse at an intriguing gold-rush past, while others still held it to be an embarrassment and threat to the city's future prosperity. It, at once, seemed to both undergird and undermine San Francisco's gateway aspirations.

The final section of my project, Part 3, asks what constitutes a working waterfront. In this section, I consider the many uses of the waterfront, from a space of showcase, to one of commerce and industry, to a place of transit and transportation. I again challenge the idea that San Francisco exemplified the easy meeting of rail lines and waterways, exploring instead the contentious and competing agendas of the many groups who sought space along and control over the waterfront. In Chapter 6, I take up efforts to rebuild the waterfront infrastructure to match the bold proclamations of the city's golden destiny. With the surface deposits of gold drying up, I trace the remaking of the state's golden aspirations, reframed as agricultural abundance rather than as mineral deposits. Chapter 7

focuses on efforts to build a new Ferry Building, as a concrete expression of the city's imperial aspirations. Farmers, meanwhile, struggling under the weight of the economic downturn in the 1890s, sought to cultivate local markets by selling their produce along the docks. They waged a multi-year, though unsuccessful, campaign for a produce market. Together, these final two chapters highlight the many ways that San Franciscans sought to remake and deploy the Golden Gate trope as a part of ongoing contests over the shape and use of the waterfront district. Ultimately, they demonstrate the ways in which the construction of the Golden Gate, as a place and promise, became linked and intertwined with the construction of social hierarchies, along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Thus, as many San Franciscans participated in the remaking and reclaiming of a Wild West, miner past, based on celebrations of rugged, individualistic, white masculinity, they fought for Chinese exclusion and embraced, or at least accepted, the growing wealth gap. In crafting the Golden Gate promise, through processes of marginalization, resistance, and negotiation, San Franciscans also sought to determine who would reap its rewards. My project traces the contours and contested terrain of the Golden Gate.

It is to the muddy shoals of the Yerba Buena cove that we now turn.

Part I.

An Imperial Outpost: Claiming, Naming, and Making the Golden Gate

Chapter One

A Hamlet, A Mudflat, and A Promise

Mifflin Gibbs, a Philadelphia-born black man, arrived in San Francisco in September, 1850. Soon after came news of California's admission into the Union as the 31st state and, because of the Compromise of 1850, a free state at that.¹ Gibbs quickly discovered, however, that for African Americans in San Francisco, it was a highly qualified freedom. When delegates, including Anglo Americans and Californios, gathered from throughout the territory to draw up a state constitution in 1849, they spent a considerable amount of time discussing which laws they might include to discourage black migrants from settling. They agreed, finally, to deny black suffrage, and, in the process, stipulated male suffrage as well. Other laws, intended to curtail the rights of

¹ News of California's statehood reached the state on October 18, 1850, just a few weeks after Gibbs's arrival. James M. Parker, *1852-53 City Directory* (San Francisco: James M. Parker, 1852), 17.

African American, Chinese, and Indian residents' soon followed.² Gibbs, nevertheless, remained hopeful.

While touring through upstate New York, accompanying Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists on a lecture tour, “dazzling accounts of immense deposits of gold in the new Eldorado” captured Gibbs’s imagination.³ Reports too of social fluidity in the West prompted some African Americans to migrate.⁴ So, in the summer of 1850, at the age of 27, he left the lecture circuit to head West. He traveled as a steerage passenger on the U.S. Mail Steamship Company's *SS Isthmus*, with an overland crossing through Panama.⁵ A competing line, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, also offered service between New York and San Francisco, a route they had started in 1848. A few years later, the two steamer companies merged under Pacific’s masthead, yet service remained infrequent enough that steamship arrivals became celebration days in San Francisco.⁶

After a several-month journey, Gibbs was eager to reach land and begin his new life. He later told of trying to make himself “somewhat presentable” just before landing, behaving, perhaps, as he might have when traveling along the eastern seaboard.⁷ Greeted by the filth, stench, and disarray of the Long Wharf, the scene along San Francisco's

³ Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, *Shadow and Light: An Autobiography with Reminiscences of the Last and Present Century*, ed. Booker T. Washington (Washington, D.C.: M.W. Gibbs, 1902), 37.

⁴ Jana Noel notes that the *Liberator*, *North Star*, *New Bedford Mercury* all ran articles encouraging African Americans to settle in California, in “Jeremiah B. Sanderson: Educator and Organizer for the Rights of ‘Colored Citizens’ in Early California,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 74, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 151–152.

⁵ Louis J. Rasmussen, *San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists*. Vol. II. (Colma, California, 1966), 35.

⁶ The two companies merged in 1851. Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), 108; Amelia Ransome Neville, *The Fantastic City: Memoirs of the Social and Romantic Life of Old San Francisco*, ed. Virginia Brastow (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), 37.

⁷ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 40.

waterfront was undoubtedly very different. Gibbs left no description of the Long Wharf, but, as another described, it was “narrow and crowded, and full of loaded drays, drunken sailors, empty packing-cases, run-away horses, rotten cabbages, excited steam-boat runners, stinking fish, Chinese porters, gaping strangers, and large holes in the planks, through which you may perceive the water.”⁸ With more people and goods entering San Francisco than the young city could hold, crowds and crates spilled into the walkways. Taking in the chaotic scene for the first time, Bayard Taylor, a northeastern newspaperman and travel writer, insisted “every new comer in San Francisco is overtaken with a sense of complete bewilderment.”⁹ Likely also overwhelmed by the scene and filled with nervous anticipation, Gibbs set out to get his bearings and secure lodging for the night.

⁸ Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 180-181.

⁹ Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado, or, Adventures in the Path of Empire* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Co.), 57.



Figure 4. - *Long Wharf, San Francisco: Published by Charles P. Kimball, Noisy Carrier's Publishing Hall. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Making his way up the Long Wharf, the wooden slats gave way to a muddy but still impressive Commercial street. The sights, sounds, and smells shifted too—from rotting produce and the clank of workers stacking shipping crates to the “music of the band, tinkle of the dealers' bells, calling the waiters for drinks and cigars,” and the “clink of coin,” which emanated from the saloons and filled the street.¹⁰ “Crowds of men of many nations floating in and out” of a large wooden gambling hall, formerly the offices of the Hudson Bay Company, likely caught Gibbs’s eye.¹¹ It signaled to new-arrivals both the city's national allegiance, with the American flag waving overhead, and its international tenor, with “Mexican and Chilenos, in their native costumes” smoking on

¹⁰ Theodore Augustus Barry and Benjamin Adam Patten, *Men and Memories of San Francisco: In the “Spring of ‘50’.”* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Company, 1873), 20.

¹¹ Barry and Patten, *Men and Memories of San Francisco*, 20.

the porch. Had Gibbs peeked inside, he might have seen, as so many observers noted, “men of all nations, all complexions, and all professions” gathered together.¹² And, had he not spent his last pennies getting to San Francisco, he might have even joined in.

Though gambling houses boasted that they welcomed any man, regardless of race or class, willing to put his money on the line, many of the town’s establishments were, in fact, less fluid and harmonious mixing was harder to come by. Gibbs, for example, knowingly sought out an “unprepossessing hotel kept by a colored man on Kearny street,” most likely Sully Cox and Aaron White's boarding house and saloon, which was patronized exclusively by black San Franciscans and travelers.¹³ He may have also visited the nearby Howard saloon, “kept by a mulatto” owner, who the local paper referred to only by race and not by name, which most likely catered to a primarily black clientele as well.¹⁴

¹² A Californian, *Mysteries and Miseries of San Francisco* (New York: Garrett & Co., Publishers), 20.

¹³ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 40; Rudolph M. Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 97; “A Fourth Terrible Conflagration,” *Daily Alta California*, 18 September 1850.

¹⁴ “A Fourth Terrible Conflagration.”



Figure 5. Francis Samuel Marryat, “The Bar of a Gambling Saloon,” 1855. Marryat’s illustration exemplifies the “men of all nations” trope. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Without money to cover even his first night of lodging, Gibbs began looking for work immediately. As property and business owners tried to keep pace with the rapidly-increasing population, construction work was among the most plentiful. Gibbs, however, had a difficult time securing employment. He finally persuaded a contractor to hire him by agreeing to work for nine dollars a day instead of the ten dollars a day earned by the white men who made up the rest of the crew.¹⁵ After only a few days of work, however, the white workers threatened to strike if Gibbs remained on the job. The foreman made him an offer: “if you can get six or eight equally good workmen, I will let these fellows go. Not that I have any special liking for your people. I am giving these men all the wages they demand, and I am not willing to submit to the tyranny of their direction if I

¹⁵ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 42.

can help it.”¹⁶ Gibbs, not surprisingly, had no way of organizing a new crew and testing the sincerity of his employer's offer. As historian Seth Rockman has observed of Baltimore in the years following the Revolution, employers often cultivated and capitalized on a diverse group of laborers (free and enslaved, day and wage, skilled and unskilled) to maximize their own flexibility and profitability as well as thwart any sense of solidarity among workers.¹⁷ For Gibbs's foreman, including a black man among the crew offered a means of asserting his power over the rest, even if it was little more than an idle threat.

In need of work once again, Gibbs turned to boot blacking and shined shoes outside of the Union Hotel.¹⁸ In taking up more menial work, Gibbs may have increased his daily pay, since boot blacks could make as much as ten to fifteen dollars a day.¹⁹ But, he also took a loss in status, which mattered. Gibbs's new position was indicative of San Francisco's developing social hierarchies, which placed black men in servile positions. As Gibbs's own story would come to demonstrate, however, a degree of mobility did exist. A handful of black men, like Sully Cox and Mifflin Gibbs, seized opportunities to improve their economic and class standing. They, for example, became business owners, thereby attaining market success. Simultaneously, however, they discovered the ways in which the black codes, enacted to discourage black migrants from settling in California, left them vulnerable. Gibbs's story, along with many others who came to San Francisco seeking gold and a freer life, reveals the complexities of the gold-rush, maritime town.

¹⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹⁷ Rockman, *Scraping By*.

¹⁸ Katz, *The Black West*, 134. According to Charles Kimball's city directory, in 1850 the Union Hotel was on Pacific Street, between Montgomery and Sansome. Kimball, *The San Francisco City Directory* (San Francisco: Journal of Commerce Press), 110.

¹⁹ Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 97.

Like so many others, Gibbs had traveled several months to reach California's gold-country but instead made his home in San Francisco. Perhaps he found the gold he sought as a bootblack, or maybe he was reluctant to leave the camaraderie he found among San Francisco's small, but growing, black community. San Francisco, as he would soon discover, was a town in constant flux, being made and remade, by municipal boosters and bricklayers both.

As it stood, John C. Frémont's Golden Gate was hardly the natural or predestined harbor he depicted. Yerba Buena, soon to be renamed San Francisco, lacked a definite waterfront and even a decent landing place. Soon after Gibbs arrived, the landfill project—the material construction of the very ground upon which the city would stand—got underway. As Gibbs came together with migrants from Mexico, the United States, Chile, Peru, Hawaii, China, Germany, Australia, France, and Ireland, to become San Franciscans, they created the city's waterfront landscape. This chapter traces the material construction of the waterfront, the process of filling in Yerba Buena Cove and building a city atop the newly reclaimed land. The new arrivals established hotels, boarding houses, restaurants, and general stores to cater to the many migrants making their way to Gold Country through the gateway of San Francisco. Above all, saloons, which were especially popular with sailors and gold-seekers, lined the ill-defined, mudflat at Yerba Buena cove. Accordingly, saloons and gambling halls came to define the early cityscape.

Alongside the physical making of the city, this chapter takes up the simultaneous, always intertwined, process of discursively constructing a city as well. Here, Frémont's Golden Gate moniker played an important role. It gained traction, especially after the discovery of gold, not only because it described the harbor, but, more importantly, because it marked California as a land of opportunity, a place with all of the commercial prospects and possibilities of a bustling Constantinople. While Frémont, in 1846, sought to evoke greatness for the hamlet and someday-city along the harbor, many also saw personal opportunities in the Golden Gate appellation. Gibbs, for one, envisioned California as a "new Eldorado." This chapter examines the promises early San Franciscans constructed and relayed about the new city, tracing settlers' hopes for a new life of economic and social possibilities alongside their on-the-ground experiences in the burgeoning waterfront city.

At the heart of this dual physical and representational construction of the city was an effort to remake San Francisco, which began as an international trading outpost, into an American town and port. Next to the number of saloons, visitors to the gold-rush city commented on its diversity, the "men of all nations" and "all professions," who gathered in the waterfront establishments. Men and women (though much fewer in numbers) "rubbed shoulders"—as observers were so fond of saying—across lines of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. This diversity, in fact, became part of the city's municipal identity.²⁰ The picture on the ground was much more complicated, of course. The city's supposed fluidity offered opportunities for some, but it was, in fact, profoundly limited

²⁰ A Californian, *Mysteries and Miseries*, 20.

too, as many San Franciscans soon discovered. During the city's early years, immediately following the U.S.-Mexican War and the United States' territorial and then cultural take-over, San Franciscans with political, social, economic, and cultural power often employed violence, legal mandates, and relentless boosterism to transform San Francisco into an Anglo-American city. This chapter takes up the early makings of the Golden Gate, as a muddy cove and an evocative, multi-layered metaphor, and explores its early contours as a gateway that was wide-open for some and nearly-foreclosed against others.

Claiming and Naming

Yerba Buena was an international trading outpost from the start or, as historian Nan Alamilla Boyd has described it, “a frontier town on the edge of overlapping empires.”²¹ During the seventeenth-century, Spanish explorers traveled along the Pacific Coast and claimed Alta California for Spain. Because of the distance and expense, the Spanish did not, however, make a concerted effort to establish a physical presence in California. Hoping that a few settlements might be enough to secure their claim, the Spanish government sought to entice migrants to Alta California with promises of open land and regular supply ships, which later proved to be infrequent at best. In 1776, Juan Bautista de Anza arrived in what would later become San Francisco, with a group of seventy-five Spanish soldiers and settlers. There they established a presidio and mission, from which they sought to Christianize and colonize the Ohlone, Coast Miwok, and Bay

²¹ Boyd, *Wide-open Town*, 2.

Miwok people living around the bay.²² The mission network and converted subjects would, they hoped, help assert Spain's presence and hold in Alta California.²³ But, soon after the arrival of the Spanish, the number of Ohlone and Miwok people began to plummet rapidly. In addition to the new diseases brought by the Spanish, against which the Indians had little defense, the Spanish's efforts reorganize and disrupt Indian societies had a profound affect on the Native Californian population.²⁴ It was this much larger context of profound social, political, spiritual, cultural, and ecological change—changes in which disease, malnutrition, and falling birth rates became both causes and effects—that decimated the Indians who surrounded the bay. By 1830, not a single Indian community remained on the peninsula.²⁵

In addition to efforts to control the already-present Indians, the Spanish crown also sought to solidify and safeguard their territorial claims by discouraging the arrival of non-Spanish nationals in Alta California. They passed restrictive trade laws and stringent land ownership requirements. Russian explorers, nevertheless, began to move south along the Pacific rim, establishing communities and forging trade relationships (building, for

²² Philip J. Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature: Environment and the Making of San Francisco* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 22. Rebecca Solnit has offered a detailed map, locating individual Indian communities and larger language groups (such as Ohlone and Miwok) in the Bay Area in *Infinite City*, 10-17.

²³ As several scholars have noted, historians have long been divided on the California mission system, with some writing as apologists and others as harsh critics. More recently, scholars have examined the strategies of accommodation, negotiation, dominance, and resistance employed by Hispanic missionaries and Native Californians, revealing the complicated relationships and dynamic society they forged. Despite the coercive and destructive nature of the missions, Bay Area Indians maintained their culture. See, for example, Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, eds. *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Quincy D. Newell, *Constructing Lives at Mission San Francisco: Native Californians and Hispanic Colonists, 1776-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009).

²⁴ For a discussion of ecological disease networks, see Iglar, "Diseased Goods."

²⁵ Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature*, 23.

example, Fort Ross less than one hundred miles north of San Francisco). Spain, weakened by France during the Napoleonic Wars, could do little to discourage Russian encroachment on Spanish territories. Their hold on Alta California was, at best, tenuous.²⁶

Despite Spain's desire to retain Yerba Buena as a protected and isolated outpost, Alta California's harbor communities were part of an emerging commercial network that extended throughout the Pacific. By the early nineteenth century, international traders, seeking in particular pelts and furs, regarded Alta California as an important trading post along their route. Among the ships who stopped at California's harbors, most originated from Atlantic ports and continued on to other destinations along the Pacific rim. When Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, international trade expanded even further. Mexican officials abandoned Spain's laws forbidding trade, opening up California's ports. They did, however, impose tariffs, and as a result, much of the commercial activity along the Alta California coastline remained covert, as it had been under Spanish rule.²⁷ "Under pretense of entering for needed supplies vessels would take the opportunity to land a few goods," one early historian explained. Further thwarting Spanish and Mexican authorities, some of these trading ships also increased "the census of California by losing a few of their sailors."²⁸ William A. Richardson was one such sailor.

²⁶ David Igler, "Alta California, the Pacific, and International Commerce before the Gold Rush," in *A Companion to California history*, ed. William Francis Devereell and David Igler (Malden: John Wiley and Sons, 2008), 117; Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., "Alta California's Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, ed. Ramon A. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 303.

²⁷ Igler, "Alta California," 119-124.

²⁸ Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco: From the Expedition of Anza, 1774, to the City Charter of April 15, 1850* (San Francisco: Z.S. Eldredge, 1912), 248.

Richardson arrived in Alta California on the English whaling ship *Orion* in 1822, one year after Mexican independence.²⁹ He sought permission to remain in the Mexican state and eventually married a Mexican woman and became a naturalized citizen. After several years in southern California, he traveled to northern California to establish a trading post in 1835.³⁰ Richardson selected for his post the inlet created by two points that extended into the bay and formed an enclosed mud flat, known by locals as Yerba Buena cove. Jose Figueroa, the Mexican governor of California, approved the site, hoping that the cove might offer a safer landing place than the rough waters off the Presidio.³¹ The northerly point of the cove, called Punta del Embarcadero by the Spanish, and then Clark's Point by Anglo settlers, offered the best landing place.³² Rincon Point, to the south, enclosed it.

At Yerba Buena, Richardson was well positioned to facilitate trade between international vessels, which would lay anchored just beyond the shallow waters of the cove, and the Spanish missionaries and settlers and Native Californians dispersed throughout the bay area. Using a small boat, Richardson, along with an Indian crew he employed, functioned as a go-between, carrying goods to and from the vessels in the

²⁹ William F. Swasey, *The Early Days and Men of California* (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1891), 268; Frank Soulé, John H. Gihon, and James Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco: Containing a Summary of the History of the First Discovery, Settlement, Progress, and Present Condition of California, and a Complete History of all the Important Events Connected with its Great City; to which are added, Biographical Memoirs of Some Prominent Citizens* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855), 166. For a biographical account of Captain Richardson, see R.R. Miller, *Captain Richardson: Mariner, Ranchero, and Founder of San Francisco* (Berkeley: La Loma Press, 1995); Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 96.

³⁰ Charles A. Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street: San Francisco During the Gold Rush* (Virginia: The Donning Company Publishers, 2009), 22.

³¹ Gerald Robert Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change" (M.A. thesis, California State University, San Francisco, 1973), 33; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 504.

³² Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 158; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 495.

harbor and the San Francisco and Santa Clara Missions.³³ With the growth of manufacturing throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the desire throughout the Atlantic world for raw materials grew too. A hide-and-tallow trade network, fueled by a commercially-minded ranchero class of Californios, emerged to supply New England shoe manufacturers with California hides.³⁴ Richard Dana, a sailor on a ship seeking hides that stopped in Yerba Buena during December 1835, scoffed at the “ruinous presidio” and “almost deserted” Mission San Francisco de Asis with just a “few Indians attached to it.” He gave all credit for the trading post’s success to the “enterprising Yankee,” who oversaw trade among the hide ships, Indians, and Missions.³⁵ Richardson, according to Dana’s chauvinistic account, was not simply employing his maritime skills to navigate the shoals of San Francisco bay but rather had strategically positioned himself as an indispensable middle-man at the center of bay area trade networks.

For several months Richardson's ship-sail tent was the only structure marking the community of Yerba Buena. Eventually, he built a one-story adobe house and designated

³³ Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 7; Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 163; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 504; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 96. As Patricia Limerick has noted, “Areas of recent white settlement were often areas of heavy labor demand, and Indian people were, far more often than we have usually recognized, incorporated into developing economies: as laborers in the fur trade, in mining, in roadbuilding, in railroad construction, in livestock herding, in the building of irrigation systems, in farm work, in domestic service, in laundry and cutting wood to building and heat homes in new settlements” in “Going West and Ending Up Global,” 12. See also Steven Hackel’s discussion of Indians as both free and unfree labor in “Land, Labor, and Production: The Colonial Economy of Spanish and Mexican California,” in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, edited by Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

³⁴ Richard A. Walker, “At the Crossroads: Defining California Through the Global Economy,” in *A Companion to California History*, ed. William Devereil and David Iglar (Malden: John Wiley and Sons, 2008), 77; Isenberg, *Mining California: An Ecological History*, 112.

³⁵ Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast, and Twenty-four Years After: A Personal Narrative* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1869), 378. Dana's assessment of the Mission and Richardson, as Doyce Nunis has argued, is in keeping with the rest of his journal, in which he often celebrated the supposed enterprising nature and dedicated work ethic of the Yankee while criticizing Californios. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., “Alta California’s Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration,” in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, ed. Ramon A. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 307-308.

a public square.³⁶ Britain's Hudson Bay Company took an interest in Alta California and briefly set up an office in Yerba Buena. During the early 1840s, the small village grew to about a dozen structures and fifty inhabitants. It became the center for commercial activity in northern California.³⁷

Eyeing the international ports and natural resources along the Pacific Slope, President Polk, appointed engineer and explorer John C. Frémont to survey the overland route to Oregon and report on his findings.³⁸ Venturing west for a third fact-finding expedition, Frémont arrived in Mexican California, after a six month journey, as 1845 drew to a close.³⁹ The British Vice Consul stationed in California greeted Frémont with skepticism, describing him and his men as “de facto United States soldiers.”⁴⁰ Though Frémont presented his crew as a neutral party, simply on a fact-finding mission, Mexican officials came, rightly, to regard Frémont as a threat. In March 1846, they ordered him to retreat to Oregon territory.⁴¹ On May 13th the United States Congress declared war on Mexico. Official word of the war reached California two months later, with the July 7th arrival of a United States Navy ship at Monterey bay, about 90 miles south of Yerba Buena. When John Montgomery, the captain of a navy ship anchored just outside of the cove, received the news, he marched seventy soldiers and sailors to Yerba Buena's central

³⁶ Richardson's house was actually the city's second structure. Jacob Primer Leese built the first permanent structure, which Richardson followed with his “Casa Grande.” See Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 205; Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 157, 163; Dana, *Two Years Before*, 232; Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 23.

³⁷ Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*, 163; Bruno Fritzsche, “San Francisco 1846-1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator,” *California Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 17.

³⁸ Though “Pathfinder” became a favorite honorific for Frémont, as Patricia Limerick has explained, he mostly led men along trails that others had already explored, doing very little of his own pathfinding. Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 113.

³⁹ David Miller, “‘Heroes’ of American Empire: John C. Frémont, Kit Carson, and the Culture of Imperialism, 1842-1898” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2007), 81-82.

⁴⁰ Letter, 28 January 1846, from Vice Consul James Alexander Forbes to Agustin Lovera, Secretario del Gobierno Departmental, as quoted by Miller, “‘Heroes’ of American Empire,” 84.

⁴¹ Miller, “‘Heroes’ of American Empire,” 87-91.

plaza, planted a United States flag, and read a statement in Spanish and English that proclaimed the cove as U.S. territory.⁴² Though one imagines Montgomery's sense of triumph in taking the town, he, in fact, “conquered” an Anglo community of about two hundred merchants and traders, organized around the European and American hide and tallow trade.⁴³ Montgomery did leave his mark, however; the Plaza, first set aside by Richardson, took on the name Portsmouth Square after the company's ship and a beach-front street became known as Montgomery.

At the time of Montgomery's take-over, the Plaza had already become a central meeting place, where residents and visitors solidified business relationships and sought entertainment and camaraderie. William Leidesdorf, the son of a black West Indian mother and a white Dutch father, had recently opened one of the city's first public gathering places. Already a powerful political leader and large land-holder in the young town, Leidesdorf's City Hotel, located along the Plaza, became a favorite a locale for the town's wealthier residents to gather for political banter, strong drinks, and billiards.⁴⁴ Jean Jacques Vioget followed suit, opening a tavern nearby where the town's working classes could gather.⁴⁵

Just a few weeks later, Yerba Buena's population doubled (at least temporarily), with the arrival of the *Brooklyn*, a ship chartered by Sam Brannan carrying 200 Mormon

⁴² Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 186.

⁴³ Fritsch, “San Francisco 1846-1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator,” 17; Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 24. The war, meanwhile, was highly contested in other theaters. See DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*.

⁴⁴ Leidesdorff's City Hotel even hosted the town's first public minstrel performance. In March 1847, a New York military regiment organized a minstrel band and gave several performances, as noted in Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, ed. Lawrence Estavan, vol. 15, San Francisco Theatre Research (San Francisco: Works Projects Administration, 1940), viii.

⁴⁵ Fritsch, “San Francisco 1846-1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator,” 27; James R. Smith, *San Francisco's Lost Landmarks* (Sanger: Word Dancer Press, 2005), 204.

passengers. In response to the wide-spread religious persecution experienced by Mormons, Brannan “conceived of the idea of leading a band of American pioneers to the shores of the Pacific, to settle and grow into greatness among the Mexicans of California.”⁴⁶ This is one reading of the Mormons' intentions—they hoped to claim and occupy a section of land in which they could establish their own settler colony. By the time they arrived, however, an American flag flew over Yerba Buena, or “that damned flag” as Brannan reportedly cursed when he caught sight of the Stars and Stripes as the *Brooklyn* neared land.⁴⁷ After briefly establishing camp along the cove's northern hillside (later known as Telegraph Hill), tensions divided and dispersed the group and quashed Brannan's dream (or, at least his dream for a Mormon community along the Pacific Slope. He found other aspirations and became a wealthy businessman and landowner).⁴⁸

With so many new immigrants now seeking to make their own way, those in need of laborers, such as tavern-keeper John Henry Brown, capitalized on this expanded, cheap labor pool. Brown himself had moved up the labor and social ladder, seizing the social mobility made possible by the desperate need for workers during Yerba Buena's early days. He arrived as a sailor, then pursued hunting and fur trading, before eventually settling in Yerba Buena, where he worked as a bar keeper.⁴⁹ He later ran a saloon in the Portsmouth House, renting the space from Leidesdorf. But, when Leidesdorf raised the rent, Brown decided to erect his own building for his saloon, the Parker House. Eager to

⁴⁶ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 749.

⁴⁷ Ralph Herbert Cross, *The Early Inns of California, 1844-1869* (San Francisco: Cross & Brandt, 1954), 47.

⁴⁸ Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature*, 58. Sam Brannan was an especially colorful character, whom Richard White has described as a “buffoon, but a calculating and shrewd one.” White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 36.

⁴⁹ John Dale Whitmer, “Contesting the Golden Dream: The Shaping of San Francisco’s Labor Landscape, 1847-1907” (Ph.D. diss., University of Idaho, 2002), 93-94.

secure more help for his operation from among the Mormon migrants, he hired “one lady as house-keeper, a widow with one young son, her name was Meramore; also a waitress, named Lucy Nutting, and a good cook, named Sarah Kittleman.”⁵⁰ With the additional help, he expanded to include a hotel. When a Methodist preacher came ashore in June 1847 and requested to hold a service at the hotel, Brown reflected amusedly, “I do not suppose another instance could be cited, where under the same roof there was preaching, drinking, card-playing and billiards all going on at the same time and hour.”⁵¹ An unexpected mixing of people and purposes had, in fact, become a hallmark of many of San Francisco's commercial spaces (and, likewise, an oft-repeated trope in pioneer memoirs).

As San Francisco grew, a few of the town's wealthier settlers sought to establish their own communities around the Bay. Land speculator Thomas Larkin, who owned a considerable amount of property in Yerba Buena, hedged his bets by seeking to establish a competing commercial center with two friends and business partners, fellow American Robert Semple and Californio General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, a military commander, politician, and rancher. A large-landowner as well, Vallejo deeded five square miles along the Carquinez Strait to the new town, selecting the site because of its advantageous position at the juncture between the Pacific ocean and inland waterways that reached the Central Valley. In recognition of Vallejo's gift of land, the three founders named the town Francisca in honor of Vallejo's wife.⁵²

⁵⁰ John Henry Brown, *Reminiscences and Incidents of Early Days of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1933), 37.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵² Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 36; Fritzsche, “San Francisco 1846-1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator,” 31-32; Whitmer, “Contesting the Golden Dream,” 88-89.

Many in Yerba Buena regarded the new town of Francisca as a potential threat and rival.⁵³ Francisca's founders were not the only ones to recognize the north-eastern edge of the bay as a possibly superior place for a settlement. A few years later, General Smith agreed. He contemplated the best location along the bay to establish a headquarter for American troops. He concluded that Yerba Buena was “in no way fitted for either military or commercial purposes,” noting its poor water supply, lack of provisions, and cool, damp climate. Yerba Buena, furthermore, lacked a sufficient harbor or even a decent landing place. Lastly, General Smith underscored the site's strategic vulnerability, since an enemy could easily sever the community from the rest of the region by landing along the ocean beach and marching across the peninsula.

Undeterred, the merchants of Yerba Buena requested that the U.S.-appointed alcalde (or mayor), Washington Barlett, rename their community San Francisco. They believed that the name Yerba Buena suggested only the land directly surrounding the cove, so garnered only limited importance. San Francisco, however, which they drew from the Spanish Mission and Presidio, could encompass the entire peninsula. By discursively laying claim to more territory, the town's very name, they hoped, would ensure greater possibilities and future success. With the new name—San Francisco—they hoped to strengthen and secure their hold over the region.⁵⁴ It also obliged Francisca's founders to rename their community to differentiate themselves; they took their namesake's second name, Benicia, instead.⁵⁵ Thus, roughly 450 inhabitants of San

⁵³ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 193.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 179. Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet explained that as the United States military claimed towns and districts throughout Mexican California, they appointed alcaldes, thereby maintaining the structure of the local government, while placing U.S. officials in positions of power.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

Francisco, hailing from the United States, California, Mexico, Canada, Chili, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Denmark, Malta, New Holland, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Russia, Sandwich Islands, Sweden, and the West Indies sought to protect and assert their place as an international port.⁵⁶ By 1848, the hamlet “had developed a far-flung set of commercial ties with the Atlantic Coast, Europe, Mexico, Latin America, Hawaii, and the Far East”—aspirations encompassed and asserted in the new name of San Francisco.⁵⁷ Just a few years later, boosters and chroniclers of the city pronounced it “the greatest and most magnificent, wealthy and powerful maritime city in the Pacific.”⁵⁸ In this way, the city's name change was part of a larger and ongoing effort among San Franciscans to solidify and bolster their place within global trading networks.

As San Franciscans attended to and promoted their role and identity as an international trading port, United States military officials sought to bring California under American rule. The leading military commander in California, Commodore Robert Stockton, began by appointing the swashbuckling Frémont as the governor of California. The higher-ranked General Stephen Kearny balked; rather than submitting, he secured new orders granting himself the governorship. He then sent Frémont back to Washington to face an awaiting court-martial.⁵⁹ Amidst all this controversy, Frémont prepared and presented a report to Congress containing his findings from his third expedition to California. The 1848 report offered an overview of the geological and ecological

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵⁷ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 45.

⁵⁸ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 22.

⁵⁹ David Miller, “‘Heroes’ of American Empire: John C. Fremont, Kit Carson, and the Culture of Imperialism, 1842-1898,” 113-120. Frederick Samuel Dellenbaugh, *Frémont and '49: The Story of a Remarkable Career and Its Relation to the Exploration and Development of Our Western Territory, Especially of California* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), 383-385.

landscape, as well as outlining the region's economic promise. It also included a map which identified, for the first time, the mile-long gap in the headlands as the “Golden Gate.” In selecting the name, Frémont intended to signal the region’s economic opportunities; he could not, however, have anticipated the long-lasting resonance the name was about to find.

Making an International Rush American

In late January, 1848, James Marshall noticed the glint of gold in the American River, at Colma where it quieted to a stream. He shared the news with his partner, John Sutter, and together they agreed to secure their own fortunes before sharing their find.⁶⁰ But, the news seeped out.⁶¹ As it spread, settlers along the Pacific Slope rushed toward the mines, those in the Oregon territory made their way south and Mexican migrants traveled north. By February 1849, the Chileans and Peruvians arrived, traveling via colonial Spanish trade routes. While both groups headed to the mines, a large number of Chilean immigrants remained in San Francisco, pursuing commercial opportunities in the

⁶⁰ After their fateful discovery, James Marshall and John Sutter usually fade from the story--their own lives did not bare out the gold-rush dreams their discovery spawned. Sutter lost his land to squatters, and even though the Supreme Court confirmed his land titles, by the time they did so he was too bankrupt to assert his claim to the land. Meanwhile, Marshall, who had already proven himself to be difficult and unstable, fell deeper into drink and depression. Recognized as a public figure, he collected a pension for a time but lost it due to public drunkenness. For more on Sutter, Marshall, and this often-omitted underside of the California dream, Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 130-131 and Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 126-140.

⁶¹ For accounts of the California Gold Rush, see John Walton Caughey, *The California Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Kevin Starr and Richard J. Orsi, eds., *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People, Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). See especially Susan Lee Johnson’s account in *Roaring Camp*. In *Roaring Camp*, Johnson traces the story of how Anglo Americans made an international gold rush into an American event.

city.⁶² New Zealanders and Australians arrived next. Then, in his December 1848 “State of the Union” address, President Polk ignited a feverish rush for California with his descriptions of the territory’s “abundance of gold.”⁶³ By celebrating opportunities in California, Polk sought to encourage American migration, thereby reinforcing California's ties to the nation.⁶⁴ Many Americans (almost exclusively men) set out, joined by migrants from France, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England, and China.⁶⁵

Having already traveled thousands of miles west as volunteers for the U.S.-Mexico War, a disbanded regiment from New York was among the first group of Anglo-Americans to arrive. Ship captains and merchants turned to the volunteer-army men, who declared themselves the “Regulators,” to capture sailors attempting to escape to the mines. Abusing the authority accorded to them, the “Regulators” parlayed their power into a position targeting and terrorizing Mexican, Chilean, and Peruvian immigrants. While they violently harassed and attacked the population as a whole, they especially directed their vitriol towards Latino immigrants, resenting their competition in the mines. Because of their aggressive attacks and hounding, they soon earned the name “Hounds.”⁶⁶ As one early history of the city, *The Annals of San Francisco*, explained, the

⁶² Rohrbough, *Days of Gold*, 224; Sucheng Chan, “A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush,” in *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People, Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California*, ed. Kevin Starr and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 51-52. In addition to opening businesses in San Francisco, as Edward Dallam Melillo has discussed, Chileans had a profound affect on the California landscape and economy, as farmers and entrepreneurs. See, “Strangers on Familiar Soil: Chile and the Making of California, 1848-1930” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006).

⁶³ President James Polk, “State of the Union,” 5 December 1848.

⁶⁴ Mary Floyd Williams discussed Polk's deep-seated fears that a separate government might take hold in California, such that the natural resources and harbors of the Pacific Slope might be lost to the United States. See *History of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851: a study of social control on the California frontier in the days of the gold rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1921), 92.

⁶⁵ Sucheng Chan has traced when news of the gold rush reached individual countries and when migrants from each country arrived in California, linking this to the place different ethnic and racial groups held within California's developing social hierarchies in “A People of Exceptional Character.”

⁶⁶ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 555; Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 191.

Hounds exploited Anglo San Franciscans' wide-spread antipathy towards the Mexican, Chilean, and Peruvian immigrants, and for several months their abusive and violent attacks went unchecked. The *Annals* authors, nevertheless, epitomized these same anti-Latino sentiments with their own description of the Latino encampment as “dens of infamy, where drunkenness and whoredom, gambling, swindling, cursing and brawling, were constantly going on.”⁶⁷ After a particularly violent attack on the Chilean quarter, perched on the side of Telegraph Hill, San Franciscans formed a volunteer police force. Under the leadership of Sam Brannan, they rounded up and tried the Hounds. Brannan’s “law and order” vigilantes banished from the city the Hounds, who, in an interesting twist, regarded themselves as vigilantes, enforcing efforts to reserve the Sierra’s gold for Anglo miners. Lacking even a proper prison, Brannan’s men had little means of enforcing their sentences.⁶⁸

The state legislators, meanwhile, pursued their own means of intimidation. On April 13, 1850, the state legislature passed the Foreign Miners' Tax, which mandated that foreign nationals pay a twenty-dollar tax for the privilege to mine. Since the United States had just wrested this land from Mexico, so the legislators’ reasoning went, U.S. nationals should be the ones to benefit.⁶⁹ French, Mexican, German, and Chilean miners protested. Anglo merchants, recognizing the monetary value of their non-American born customers, joined them. The tax was first reduced, and then dropped altogether.⁷⁰ In

⁶⁷ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 555; Brown, *Reminiscences and Incidents*, 102-103. For a discussion of some of the early histories of San Francisco, after the United States take over, see Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 110-141, 157-158.

⁶⁸ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 191; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 100-101.

⁶⁹ Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature*, 54.

⁷⁰ Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 210-218. Johnson, furthermore, discusses the ways in which the Foreign Miner’s Tax participated in making the global Gold Rush into an American, nation-building event.

1852, the state legislature considered proposals to re-instate the Foreign Miner's Tax, this time with the intent of discouraging the newly-arriving Chinese miners.⁷¹ Chinese leaders hired white attorneys, and together they appealed to the state. They challenged the tax on the basis that they received little in return, citing widespread attacks on Chinese men in the mines, made even more unjust by the inadmissibility of their testimony against white assailants in court.⁷² The law, nevertheless stood until 1870, only to be later replaced by even more targeted anti-immigration legislation.⁷³

Though Frémont bestowed the name Golden Gate upon the headlands of the San Francisco harbor before the discovery of gold, projecting a future in which San Francisco would become a busy and welcoming harbor, with the discovery of gold, his name found lasting resonance. Billed as a place of opportunity and abundance, in fact, the gateway was uneven and inconsistent from the start. Within just two years of the discovery of gold, Anglo and Californio settlers met to negotiate the state constitution, building racial hierarchies into the fabric of the new state's political and social fabric. Then, with the 1852 Foreign Miner's Tax, the California state government made a concerted effort to reserve the state's metallic wealth for Anglo miners. In so doing, they took steps that became a hallmark of the state's history, rendering the gateway wide-open for some and barely ajar for others.

⁷¹ As Judy Yung, Gordon H. Chang, and Him Mark Lai have quoted, the governor, John Bigler, called upon the state legislature to "check the tide of Asiatic immigration" in *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 9.

⁷² Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 247; Chan, "A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush," 76.

⁷³ The tax resulted in \$5 million dollars of revenue for the state, which was between 25 and 50 percent of the entire state budget. Yung, Chang, and Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 2.

Turning Water into Real Estate

Even before the gold rush, Yerba Buenans had high hopes for their community and sought to transform the trading outpost into a settler colony. Many laid claim to plots of land within the cove, hoping to ensure that they would have a place in the town's future success. Although the United States claimed Yerba Buena with Montgomery's 1846 flag planting, the cove remained nominally under Mexican rule until the end of the war in 1848. U.S. officials took control while maintaining the outlines of Mexican law and governing bodies, which at the municipal level included an *alcalde* (mayor) and an *ayuntamiento* (town council).⁷⁴ The Mexican system for land distribution reserved land grants for citizens, by birth or naturalization (a process that required applicants to declare their loyalty to the Mexican government and Roman Catholic Church). They set the price of each lot at \$12.50 and dictated that each person could only purchase one lot.⁷⁵ In the years before the 1846 American take-over, American and European immigrants determined to acquire property either became naturalized citizens or enlisted impoverished Mexicans, with no hope of acquiring plots for themselves, to apply for a grant on their behalf (a practice that continued well into the 1850s).⁷⁶ After 1846, the American-appointed *alcalde* oversaw land distribution. Meanwhile, the council members, who were among the most eager land speculators, reinterpreted the grant system in their

⁷⁴ During the city's early years, the exact structure of the city government changed several times. In 1856, with the Consolidation Act, the city and county government bodies merged. This act replaced the previously separate city and county legislative bodies with a single twelve person council, the board of supervisors. New laws, as Lotchin has explained, often began as petitions to the board, who, if needed, assigned the issue to a committee to investigate. The board then came to a conclusion, which next went before the mayor. Power struggles between the mayor and board of supervisors often slowed legislation. Lotchin, *San Francisco*, 139-140, 157.

⁷⁵ Fritsch, "San Francisco 1846-1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator," 18.

⁷⁶ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 145.

favor. They dismissed the “one person, one lot” rule while upholding the nominal fee, thereby igniting market for land speculation in California.

The council also sought new land—land beyond the reach of Mexican law, which could therefore be sold to the highest bidder and provide a source of municipal income.⁷⁷ In an 1835 survey of the pueblo, Mexican officials had established the land-grant plots, while reserving the shoreline for public use. The town council petitioned the military-appointed governor of California, General Stephen Kearny, for the right to sell this public, beach-front property. With Kearny's blessing, the council appointed Jasper O'Farrell to survey the town. He turned the remaining land into real estate and even extended the grid pattern out into the bay. In July 1847 the new beach and water lots (some of which were, in fact, completely submerged) went up for sale at the auction block; many more, along with several inland properties, were sold at a second auction in September. By auctioning the plots and filling the town coffers, the town council members also secured considerable property holdings for themselves.⁷⁸

In the subsequent years, considerable controversy and numerous court cases surrounded both the water-lots and inland properties. At the center of the debate were questions about the designation of and jurisdiction over the land—the legitimacy of the sales. In terms of the tideland lots, some argued that because the shoreline had been in the public domain under Mexican law, it never should have entered private hands. They questioned the legitimacy of Governor Kearny's edict turning the land over to the town council. The state constitution-makers, two years after the first water-lot auction, had

⁷⁷ Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 25; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 180-181.

⁷⁸ Whitmer, “Contesting the Golden Dream,” 84.

affirmed that all harbors would remain public lands. Even after the Constitution Convention, Alcade John Geary sold the largest portion of tideland lots in January 1850. This left some insisting that the sales were illegitimate and that the properties still belonged to state government. With the sales done, however, the California state government next asserted their right to the profits from the sale of the land. As the debate grew more intractable, the state legislature removed itself from the contest in March 1851, ceding their right to the waterfront to the city for ninety-nine years. This, in turn, validated the municipal sale of the water-lots. The State, meanwhile, retained their claim to the Bay. In an 1851 map, surveyor William Eddy marked the outer boundary of the water-lots in red, and his Red Line became the official dividing line between city and state holdings. Overtime, private landowners sought to fill their tideland lots, and, in some places, Eddy's Red Line waterfront boundary became the new shoreline as well. In other places, the waterfront line remained aspirational and well-submerged beneath the bay.⁷⁹

City and State governments both, however, continued to look to the waterfront property as a source of revenue for a near-bankrupt city and state. It seemed an especially attractive solution since those best positioned to buy newly for-sale real estate sat on both governing bodies. In 1852, the city sold several more of its waterfront holdings. The next year, the governor of California proposed extending the Red Line to create more possible real estate. New speculators cheered the proposal, but original investors vehemently

⁷⁹ Corbett, *Port City*, 178; Lamberta Margarete Voget, "The Waterfront of San Francisco: 1863-1930: A History of Its Administration by the State of California" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1943), 5; Gerald D. Nash, *State Government and Economic Development* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 107-108; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 19-20.

opposed it. Determined not to lose their coveted bay-side plots, they successfully quashed the governor's plans to extend the Red Line.⁸⁰

Controversy surrounded the inland holdings as well. First the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the Mexican-U.S. War, and then the California State Constitution stipulated that Mexican land titles would be upheld. Accordingly, many insisted that these properties still belonged to the Californios, the original recipients of the rancho grants.⁸¹ As the law was written, however, the burden of proof lay with the Californios, who had to appear before a federal land commission, tasked with reviewing and adjudicating Mexican land-grant claims.⁸² Many making this argument were, in fact, Anglo squatters. They hoped to uphold the Californios' claims to assert, in turn, their own rights as squatters. They planned to make the claim that they had settled on and improved land abandoned (or more likely, not formally validated) by Californios. Those who had purchased the land upon which the squatters perched saw things differently. They argued that the Mexican land-grant system had designated the waterfront as city property; with the United States' take-over it, therefore, the town council had the authority to sell it. As the purchasers, they were the new rightful owners. The controversy over property rights continued, nevertheless, both in the courts and the press, as squatters and title-holders made their cases. The tension turned violent in 1853 and '54, when some large landowners sought to assert their ownership claims by forcibly clearing squatters. The

⁸⁰ Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 108–109; Corbett, *Port City*, 178.

⁸¹ Californio land-holders had first wrested the land from the Indian people already living there, as discussed by Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), chapter 2.

⁸² Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 135.

U.S. Supreme Court finally ended the matter in the mid-1860s, ruling in favor of the city and American settlers who had purchased the land.⁸³

For the 1847 survey, O'Farrell drew heavily on an earlier, 1839 survey completed by Jean Jacques Vioget, a former Swiss sea captain who had settled in Yerba Buena. O'Farrell corrected and extended the grid-system first implemented by Vioget. He also forever changed and dramatically shaped the city's layout, by implementing an angled thoroughfare, Market Street. In so doing, he connected the burgeoning waterfront with the Mission, while avoiding crossing Mission Creek, and thereby laid the groundwork for what would become the city's main commercial thoroughfare.⁸⁴ He laid out the land south of Market Street according to a grid pattern as well—a grid that paralleled Market Street and contained lots and blocks twice the size of those to the north.⁸⁵ In employing a grid pattern, Vioget and O'Farrell followed leading urban planning trends.⁸⁶ San Franciscans, nevertheless, quickly complained about the ugliness and impracticality of the unyielding grid, noting in particular its failure to account for the city's hilly terrain. As early chroniclers noted, “The eye is wearied, and the imagination quite stupefied, in looking over the numberless square—all *square*—building blocks, and mathematically straight

⁸³ Several scholars have explored the contestations surrounding the land grants, as a window into the struggles for power, land, and resources among governmental bodies, Californio estate holders, Anglo American land speculators, Anglo American settlers and squatters. Andrew Isenberg has, likewise, noted the importance of the environment, citing a major drought in Southern California in tipping the balance of power, and undermining the feasibility of the Californio rancheros' way of life. See, for example, Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 143-149; Paul Gates, *Land and Law in California: Essays on Land Policies* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991); Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*; Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California*; Maria E. Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict Over Land in the American West, 1840-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); Andrew C. Isenberg, *Mining California: An Ecological History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005), 107-108; Tamara Venit Shelton, “‘A More Loyal, Union Loving People can Nowhere be Found’: Squatters' Rights, Secession Anxiety, and the 1861 'Setters' War' in San Jose,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 473-494.

⁸⁴ Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature*, 42.

⁸⁵ Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 23-27.

⁸⁶ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 164.

lines of streets, miles long, and every one crossing a host of others at right angles, stretching over sandy hill, chasm and plain, without the least regard to the natural inequalities of the ground.”⁸⁷ The rigid grid pattern, though resented by citizens desiring public spaces and a break in the monotony, turned every square foot into valuable and build-able real estate in accordance with the speculators' demands (with the exception of the triangular lots created by the angled Market Street).⁸⁸

Eager to see returns from his new waterfront-property, the already wealthy real estate speculator William S. Clark embarked on a new venture: improving the landing site at Punta del Embarcadero with a pier. Once completed, his pier offered a deep-water dock where ships could more easily and inexpensively unload their goods—a much coveted amenity, since the city imported nearly all the goods and foods its residents consumed. The pier also added much-desired real estate along the cove's limited waterfront. As a reflection of the success and popularity of the wharf, the surrounding district came to be known as Clark's Point. Though an expensive proposition, the wharf proved to be a good financial investment, and many other water-lot owners sought to follow his example.⁸⁹

Having acquired some funds for municipal infrastructure through the beach and water lot auctions, the town council embarked on two waterfront improvement projects. First, they began the process of filling in a small, salt lagoon that obstructed Montgomery Street and impeded the flow of traffic between the primary landing site (Clark's Point)

⁸⁷ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 161. J.G. Player-Frowd likewise issues a long critique in *Six months in California* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1872), 22.

⁸⁸ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 160; Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 165.

⁸⁹ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 572-573; Whitmer, “Contesting the Golden Dream,” 148-149; Chan, “A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush,” 51; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 263.

and the center of town (Portsmouth Square or the Plaza).⁹⁰ The town council also set aside funds for the construction of two wharfs, designating four thousand dollars for a wharf at the foot of Broadway and eleven thousand dollars for a wharf at Clay street. Constructing wharves was a considerable undertaking. At Broadway, workers had to contend with the hilly, rocky landscape. They removed several large boulders and excavated the hills, turning the hillside into landfill for the mudflats. They ultimately sought to clarify and stabilize the ill-defined shoreline.⁹¹ Both projects were considerably under-funded. After just a few months of work, the funds were exhausted and the work came to a halt. With the American take-over of Yerba Buena, the town had become an even busier port—a port in desperate need of a better dock. Then, with the 1848 discovery of gold, the need for a deep-water port became more immediate. One observer described the situation, writing that “once inside the 'golden gate,' ships made their way toward the cluttered Yerba Buena cove. A definitive shoreline could not be found, however, as water disappeared into mud-flats that became muddy streets. Further obscuring the water's edge, ships filled the harbor.”⁹² Yerba Buena, and then San Francisco, had already established its place in the international trading network. Yet, the city desperately needed the infrastructure to confirm and maintain its position. Though Frémont had marked the Golden Gate on the map, full of hope and promise for the town's bright commercial future, it remained little more than a name. San Francisco was a gateway without a port.

⁹⁰ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 165; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 572.

⁹¹ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 358.

⁹² Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 573-574.

With ships filling the harbor at a dizzying rate and the town's coffers empty, San Francisco's town council turned the project of wharf-building over to private hands. They approved the formation of joint stock companies, thereby enabling several individuals to come together to finance the project. The agreement stipulated that the joint stock company could collect a percentage of the wharfage for a set number of years, at which point the dock would revert to municipal property once more.⁹³ In the spring of 1849, several of the town's leading merchants formed the Central Wharf Joint Stock Company, putting up the one hundred and eighty thousand dollars necessary to build the wharf. With so much wharf-building underway, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company established, for the first time, regular steamboat service to San Francisco, creating a more formal and consistent link between San Francisco and east coast cities. By October 1850, the Central or Long wharf extended far enough into the bay and reached the necessary depth for Pacific Mail steamers to dock alongside.⁹⁴

⁹³ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 173; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 575.

⁹⁴ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 573-574.

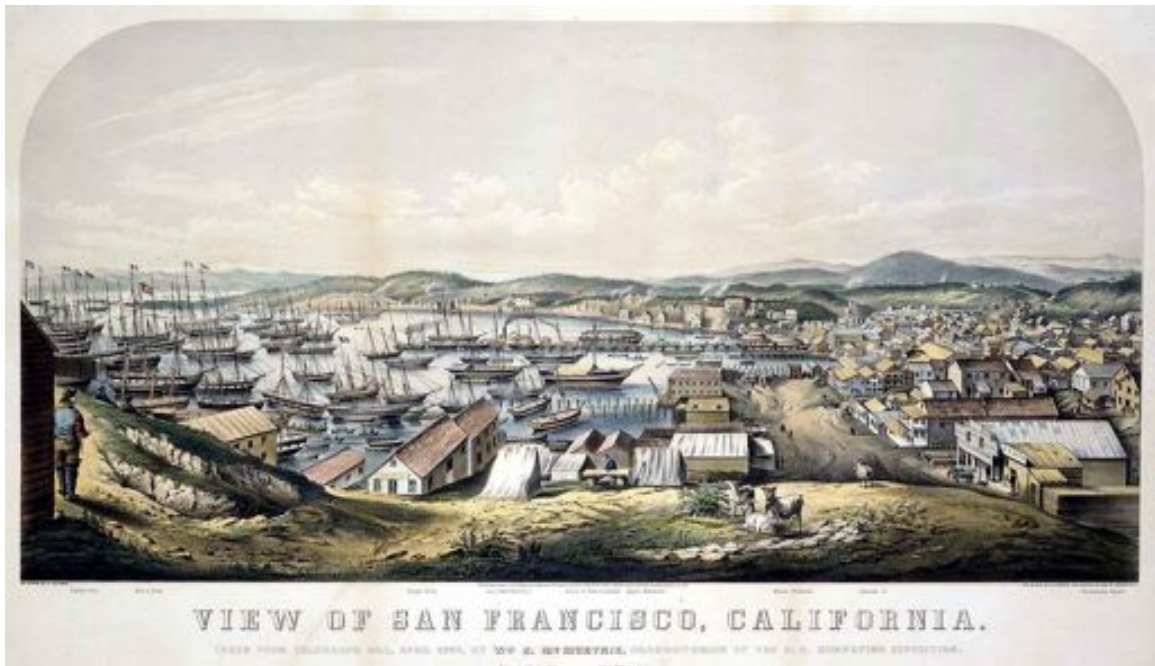


Figure 6. William B. McMurtrie, *View of San Francisco Taken from Telegraph Hill, April 1850*, 1851. McMurtrie's illustration depicts the single Long Wharf, extending into the Bay. It also highlights the crowded harbor and the hills that restricted much of the city's early growth to the mudflat. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Long overdue, the Long Wharf, immediately became the center of the shipping activity; it also became “the favorite promenade.”⁹⁵ Montgomery Street, along the water's edge, had already filled with vendors selling sweets to “tempt the appetite of sailors just arrived in port or miners coming down from the mountains.”⁹⁶ Hemmed in by the hills surrounding the cove, business owners scrambled to secure a space along the wharf. Buildings perched on pilings along the wharf housed all sorts of businesses, from general stores and produce markets to saloons and gambling houses.⁹⁷ Because space was so limited, merchants often let their wares spill onto the dock, creating, according to one

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 574.

⁹⁶ Taylor, *Eldorado*, 113.

⁹⁷ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 575.

observer, a scene of mayhem and disarray.⁹⁸ Desperately seeking space and building materials, business owners turned to the many abandoned ships that littered the cove. According to one account, “fully 500 abandoned vessels lay rocking in front of the city” during the summer of 1850.⁹⁹ As gold fever struck, many sailors deserted their ships and struck out for the mines, leaving captains without the crew they needed to sail away. Ship-breakers disassembled abandoned ships, disregarded by crews who headed to Gold Country. The breakers sold the reclaimed lumber and canvas to construction crews, desperate for building materials.¹⁰⁰ At times, business-owners simply took over a vessel where it lay, converting it into a hotel, saloon, or storage warehouse.¹⁰¹ Grounded just below the Long Wharf, business-owners repurposed the ship Apollo, using the hull as a warehouse and the upper deck as a saloon.¹⁰² Proprietors converted the Niantic into a hotel.¹⁰³ While the landlocked ships became waterfront businesses, the canvas sails proved to be an ideal material for making tents. Eventually, sail-tents covered the hillsides surrounding the cove.¹⁰⁴ Though still surprising to new-arrivals, for San Franciscans these ships became established businesses and “part of the cityscape.”¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 180-181.

⁹⁹ Bancroft as quoted by Edward Dallam Melillo, “Strangers on Familiar Soil: Chile and the Making of California, 1848-1930” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006), 156.

¹⁰⁰ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 573-574.

¹⁰¹ As Edward Dallam Melillo has noted, citing early California historian Herbert Howe Bancroft, other ships became floating warehouses, remaining in the harbor full of cargo. Since goods arrived all at once, they often flooded the market, leaving merchants in need of places to store excess goods. Melillo, “Strangers on Familiar Soil,” 156. For more on ship-breaking and storeships, see Pastron and Hattori, *The Hoff Store Site* and Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*.

¹⁰² Kimball, *The San Francisco City Directory*, 7, 13, 117; Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 579.

¹⁰³ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 579; Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*, 63.

¹⁰⁴ Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 41.

¹⁰⁵ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 573-574. Delgado estimates that 75 ships remain beneath the present-day city, in *Gold Rush Port*, 121.

Land-locking ships was only one part of the much larger project of filling in the bay and claiming more of the cove for San Francisco.¹⁰⁶ Those who had purchased water-lots sought to make good on their investment, by turning their real estate into dry land. They employed workers to convert the hills into landfill. Workers, predominately Irish, first relied on horse-drawn carts to slowly shift the landscape. Then, with David Hewes's invention of the steam shovel, the scope of their work changed markedly and earned him the title the "Maker of San Francisco." The steam shovel enabled crews to move 2,500 tons of sand a day and as the star-member of the Irish crew, the mechanized digger came to be known as the "Steam Paddy." Temporary rail lines then transported the sand and gravel to wet, low-lying areas.¹⁰⁷ Through an ongoing process of "digging out and filling up, piling, capping and planking, grading and regrading the streets, and shifting, and rebuilding," landholders sought to remake the rugged terrain into build-able land.¹⁰⁸ This process had the dual effect of both expanding the waterfront and converting the steep hillsides into a profitable commodity—real estate.¹⁰⁹ In their eagerness to draw on whatever land-fill materials were available, without thought to the stability of the various sand, soil, and rock fillers, the made-land began to sink, slope, and crack, further compounded by the cove's muddy bottom. But, since the city, which ostensibly retained control over the waterfront, had turned its development over to private corporations, each pursuing their own individual project, no single entity oversaw harbor development and maintenance. As newly made-land slipped back in the Bay, joint stock companies each

¹⁰⁶ According to Wollenberg, the bay is now about 25 percent smaller than it was in 1850, when bay waters covered about 800 square miles at high tide. See *Golden Gate Metropolis*, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature*, 42-43; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 45.

¹⁰⁸ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 161.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 301.

sought their own make-shift solutions. Together they created an unstable foundation for a burgeoning city.¹¹⁰

As landowners converted more and more of the bay into dry (or at least relatively dry) land, wharf owners extended their reach further into the harbor, thereby creating more commercial space along the wharfs and reaching greater depths for merchant ships looking to dock in San Francisco. With so much of the building activity along the water's edge, some estimated that in 1850 at least a thousand San Franciscans lived over the water, in buildings atop piles or in the hulks of abandoned ships. The immediate success of the Long Wharf prompted San Francisco's town council to make plans for a wharf at the end of each east-west running thoroughfare. Once again, lacking the funds for such an undertaking, they turned to joint stock companies, and even a few individuals, to build the wharves. By October 1850, the California street wharf, with the financial backing of William Dennis, extended four hundred feet into the bay.¹¹¹ A joint stock company completed the Broadway wharf, at Clark's Point, at the cost of \$175,000 (and considerably more than the four thousand originally set aside by the city). Once the Pacific wharf was completed in 1851, it became the primary passenger wharf, offering daily steamer trips up the river to Sacramento and Marysville.¹¹² In this way, San Francisco became not only an important ocean port, as it had been since its Yerba Buena days but also an important river port, connecting the Pacific Ocean with the interior of the

¹¹⁰ Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change," 48; Voget, "The Waterfront of San Francisco," 10.

¹¹¹ Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, 575; *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory for the year 1854* (San Francisco: Herald Office, 1854), 178.

¹¹² *LeCount & Strong's City Directory*, 177-178.

state and eventually the eastern seaboard. The outlines of the gateway, linking regional and international transit networks, began to take shape.

Over the next two years, joint stock companies, along with some individual investors, built wharves at the end of every street; maritime traffic kept pace, making the wharves a profitable enterprise for their owners and the city's merchants. Not everyone benefited though. The wharves restructured the maritime economy, which, since Richardson's founding of Yerba Buena had been based on skilled boatmen, who navigated the bay and ferried goods between seafaring vessels and traders on shore. While the wharf-building fury created construction jobs for both skilled and unskilled workers, it left boatmen, many of whom were Australian immigrants, seeking new employment.¹¹³ Additionally, the city's coffers benefited much less than they might have, and in fact, the municipal budget hovered near bankrupt. By repeatedly turning to water-lot and dock sales as a source of revenue, town council members traded longer-term revenue streams for immediate pay outs. In 1853, the council, again under duress, sought sources of immediate cash and awarded control over some of the city's most lucrative wharves to private companies.¹¹⁴

As the piers reached out further into the bay, construction crews claimed more of the cove as dry land. Wharves, once surrounded by water, became streets instead. By 1852, according to one observer, "the sand hills of Happy Valley were literally almost leveled and cast into the sea, and the rocky hills at Clark's Point rent to pieces and

¹¹³ Kevin J. Mullen, *Dangerous Strangers: Minority Newcomers and Criminal Violence in the Urban West, 1850-2000* (New York: Macmillan, 2005), 23.

¹¹⁴ Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 108.

subjected to the same fate.”¹¹⁵ As this material construction of the harbor took place, San Francisco boosters got to work as well, celebrating the ingenuity and determination of the San Franciscans who built the waterfront, or at least the capitalist funders, championed by the *Alta* as the “Americanized Saxon.” Less praise went to the Irish land-fillers. In a counter rhetorical move, the *Alta* boosters, who had just championed the capitalists, next insisted, “Men cannot make a seaport,” thereby claiming commercial greatness as the city's divine destiny—an inevitable, unstoppable, and preordained path.¹¹⁶ In just a few short years, town council representatives, landowners, merchants, laborers, newspaper men, and the members of joint stock companies had constructed the infrastructure and identity that turned Yerba Buena cove into the San Francisco harbor. As they would soon discover, however, the path to greatness was neither certain nor linear.

Firestorms in Sydney-Town

Over the course of 1849, the city grew markedly, leaving one visitor to marvel at all occurred during a short, six-week absence from the city. In a matter of weeks, “tents and canvas houses had given place to large and handsome edifices, blanks had been filled up, new hotels opened, market houses in operation and all the characteristics of a great commercial city fairly established.” He declared it, “little short of magic.”¹¹⁷ Though the speed at which San Francisco grew was truly remarkable—leading historian Gunther Barth to declare it an “instant city”—six devastating fires, between December 1849 and

¹¹⁵ Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 20.

¹¹⁶ *Alta California*, 14 March 1851, as quoted by Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White-collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 41.

¹¹⁷ Taylor, *Eldorado*, 204.

June 1851, leveled large sections of town.¹¹⁸ In a city so quickly and compactly built, such as San Francisco, fires could spread quickly, consuming businesses, homes, personal property, and the many storage warehouses along the waterfront. Because of the city's rapid growth, building supplies were already at a premium and the repeated fires only compounded the shortage. Construction crews, who constantly ran short of materials, turned to shipbreakers and repurposed ships' masts into support beams. Even though building materials were in short supply, the fires did not simply stymie the city's growth but rather spurred it as well. Above all, they shaped its construction and constitution, leaving saloons and gilded gambling houses to dominate the cityscape.

Shortly after one blaze, an observer declared, in just "a few weeks the burnt district had given place to a new city."¹¹⁹ Repeated fires did, in fact, continually make San Francisco a new city. When mining-hopeful D.D. Demarest arrived, he described the saloons, even those most celebrated by the locals, as "nothing but a collection of tents."¹²⁰ Arriving six months later, Frank Marryat, conversely, was impressed by what he saw. He offered a detailed description: "On entering one of these saloons the eye is dazzled almost by the brilliancy of chandeliers and mirrors. The roof, rich with gilt-work, is supported by pillars of glass; and the walls are hung with French paintings of great merit, but of which female nudity forms alone the subject."¹²¹ Undoubtedly, each man's

¹¹⁸ Barth, *Instant Cities*. Delgado has challenged the characterization of San Francisco as an "instant city" because it privileges its mining history, and, he argues, obscures its importance as a maritime port in *Gold Rush Port*, chap. 8. I would argue, however, that both models help us understand San Francisco. It was both part of larger trade routes at the beginning of the nineteenth century and grew rapidly during the gold rush years. The influx of capital from the mines did finance San Francisco's rapid growth, but as Delgado has noted, maritime networks played an important role too, supplying the "nails, tin plates, bricks, beans, and barley" that made up the "instant city."

¹¹⁹ Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 16.

¹²⁰ as quoted by Phelps, "All hands have gone downtown," 113.

¹²¹ Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 33.

expectations and past experiences colored their reaction, but the pace of building and rebuilding also meant that, in fact, each did encounter a different city. Between the two men's arrival dates, for example, recent-arrival Thomas Maguire opened a saloon and converted the second floor of the Parker House into a theater. When fire after fire destroyed his establishments, he continued to rebuild. In June 1850, the *Daily Alta* praised his saloon as "one of the most magnificent" in the country. The writer continued with effusive praise, declaring it "decorated in the most superb manner. The walls and ceiling are painted in fresco, and in a most artistic style. The *coup d'oil* when the saloon is lighted at night is truly magnificent."¹²²

Just a few days after Maguire opened the doors of his impressive new public house, yet another fire swept through the city, leveling several blocks and stopping only when it reached the water.¹²³ Maguire was one of many who lost homes and businesses, yet Marrayat insisted that the locals took it in stride and got to the work of rebuilding with "good humor" and alacrity. "Plans and lumber are already being carted in all directions," he wrote, then continued, "so soon as the embers cool, the work of rebuilding will commence."¹²⁴ As with each previous fire, hastily-built, wooden structures went up around the city. Again and again, San Franciscans seemed to be proving that theirs was not simply an "instant city" but rather an "instant city" many times over.

Maguire, for one, continued to rebuild his theater after each conflagration, opening the Jenny Lind I, II, and III.¹²⁵ Though the particular building changed, the Jenny Lind

¹²² *Daily Alta California*, 10 June 1850; Edmond M. Gagey, *The San Francisco Stage: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 24.

¹²³ *Daily Alta California*, 15 June 1850.

¹²⁴ Marrayat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 22.

¹²⁵ Michael Foster and Barbara Foster, *A Dangerous Woman: The Life, Loves, and Scandals of Adah Isaacs Menken, 1835-1868* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2011), 146.

theater, nevertheless, became a familiar and consistent feature in the city. While Maguire rebuilt Jenny Lind I and II with wood, he finally resorted to sandstone, imported from Australia, for his third theater. “Smoking ruins,” one commentator concluded, “soon gave way to new improvements.”¹²⁶ The owners of gambling houses, theaters, and saloons, because they were among the most profitable businesses in the city, were the best positioned to rebuild sturdy, brick buildings—buildings that owners’ hoped would attract the attention of passers-by and withstand the next conflagration. In this way, the gambling saloons, often called “temples of chance” and premised on luck and uncertainty, became the solid, stable, and lasting structures that made up the city. They were the consistent buildings around which other businesses grew and took hold. Church congregations also sought to make their mark on the cityscape, with brick buildings and ornate steeples, though it often took congregations longer to collect the necessary donations. After saving for over two years, the First Presbyterian Church moved from a tent to a new building, which stood for less than a year before being consumed by fire.¹²⁷

After the popular saloon El Dorado burned down twice, part-owner James McCabe, along with Irene McCready who managed an adjoining brothel, put some of their profits toward a more permanent and impressive structure. Business partners and a couple, McCabe and McCready arrived in San Francisco during the spring of 1849. McCabe purchased an ownership share of the El Dorado and financed McCready's brothel. Though the El Dorado began as an oversized tent, McCabe and McCready eventually constructed a four-story brick building and adorned it with large gold letters proclaiming

¹²⁶ Samuel Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856* (San Francisco: Commercial Steam Presses, Monson, Valentine & Co., 1856), xx.

¹²⁷ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 687-692.

“El Dorado” and filling the interior with rococo furnishings, elegant paintings, and a music stage.¹²⁸ The El Dorado, “the most famous of gambling-halls,” as a wealthy San Franciscan woman later recalled, “fascinated me.” Though she likely never saw the inside for herself, she knew of the “rooms occupied by miners and gamblers and women of the halls” and the “gilded splendor of the gambling-palace.”¹²⁹ It held a central place in the young city, as one of the businesses that lined the Plaza. Next door, in fact, was Tom Maguire’s third Jenny Lind theater. When Maguire could not sell enough tickets to pay for his impressive new sandstone structure, he sold the building to the city. McCabe’s saloon and McCready’s brothel, thereafter, shared a wall with City Hall instead.¹³⁰ The El Dorado, born of gold from the Sierras and threats of city-leveling fires, had become a fixture and landmark in the burgeoning city.

¹²⁸ Neville, *The Fantastic City*; Smith, *San Francisco’s Lost Landmarks*, 73-74.

¹²⁹ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 41.

¹³⁰ Ethington, *The Public City*, 59-60.



Figure 7. City Hall, San Francisco, circa 1852. This engraving shows the El Dorado and the elegant Jenny Lind theater, turned City Hall, side by side. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Many of the fires, in fact, began in saloons, starting with the first major blaze on Christmas Eve, 1849.¹³¹ Often, the fires began in the middle of the night and, many believed, at the hands of arsonists. Despite the widespread suspicion, police officers rarely caught the culprits.¹³² According to early chroniclers of San Francisco, the city's police force was ineffectual. Unable to keep pace with the population explosion, many streets went un-patrolled, and then when officers did apprehend criminals, they quickly released them because of overcrowding in the jails.¹³³ As the city's criminal population went largely unchecked, fires continued as well, sometimes within just weeks of one another.

¹³¹ Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 13.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³³ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 310.

Those who started the blazes sought to create mayhem, during which they (along with opportunists who acted quickly and seized the moment) could rampage vacant homes and businesses. Some simply raised fire alarms, without actually starting a blaze, and exploited the confusion.

The town council responded to the many conflagrations by banning cloth, the most highly flammable, structures from the city center.¹³⁴ Cloth served as a quick, cheap building material in a city that could not keep pace with the stream of new arrivals. A steamer, in fact, delivered a boat-load of eager passengers to the still-smoldering city the day after the May, 1850 blaze. Mary Ball, a widowed English woman who migrated first to Brooklyn and then ventured to San Francisco in search of work and new opportunities, was among the newcomers. Ball hoped her stay in San Francisco would be short—just long enough to store up some money for herself and her family, a daughter and son-in-law she had left behind in New York.¹³⁵ On her first night in the city, Ball reflected on the fire, noting that the partitions between rooms the boarding house in which she stayed were nothing more than “muslin covered with paper.” In addition to offering little privacy, they could easily become fuel for the next fire, she speculated.¹³⁶ When the council banned cloth from the city center, many builders erected flimsy, wooden buildings, nearly as flammable, instead.

As the city council issued building-materials codes and sought zoning solutions, with limited success, town residents pursued their own solution. They organized

¹³⁴ Phelps, “‘All hands have gone downtown’,” 135.

¹³⁵ Mary Faulkner Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball: a California gold rush woman,” trans. Norma B. Morris, 1993, 1-5.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

volunteer fire companies, hoping that in the face of an ineffectual police force they would be able to mount their own speedy and orderly response. Several fire companies formed in response to the June 1850 fire, including the Francis Hook & Ladder Co., Howard Engine Co., and Sansome Hook & Ladder Co. Often, many of the members of a particular crew originated from the same city and already shared bonds of family, friendship, and culture. New York men made up the Knickerbocker Five, while Bostonians forged the Howard Engine Company.¹³⁷ Some national groups formed their own fire companies as well, such as the French immigrants who came together as the Lafayette Hook and Ladder Company and adopted French-styled uniform.¹³⁸ Firehouses became social clubs and fraternal organizations, with billiards, drinks, cards. These diversions took on greater significance, as members reinforced their bonds of culture and heritage through business relationships, political deals, and offers of general support.¹³⁹ “Men climbed into society, into politics, into business by way of the Fire Department,” one early commentator proclaimed.¹⁴⁰ With such deep ties and allegiances, firehouses became a source of identity and pride. Not surprisingly, fights and rivalries broke out among the crews, sometimes to the detriment of the task at hand.¹⁴¹ For the most part, however, the fire crews offered critical protection to the material make-up of the city while also becoming an important space for the development of its social structures and

¹³⁷ Pauline Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, ed. Harold A. Small (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), 66.

¹³⁸ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 461-463.

¹³⁹ Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 75-76.

¹⁴⁰ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 68.

¹⁴¹ This became especially apparent as sectional tensions intensified throughout the country as a whole. The rivalry between the Knickerbocker Five, Unionists from New York, and the Monumental Six, Secessionists from Baltimore, heightened, for example. Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 66, 92-106. Goldman has likewise discussed similar firehouse rivalries in Virginia City. Marion S. Goldman, *Gold Diggers & Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981), 32.

civic underpinnings. Ultimately, in both the saloons and the firehouses—two institutions seemingly at odds but also shaped by and emerging out of the instability and impermanence of the early city—nascent social and political networks developed and took hold. Out of these two channels, two distinct cultures within the city emerged as well, one predicated on transience and risk-taking, while the other championed the orderly protection of businesses and private property.

In September, 1850, with the newly-organized volunteer firehouses at the ready, yet another major fire swept through the city and once again destroyed several blocks at the center of town. Like so many of the others, this fire also originated at a saloon, and many suspected arson.¹⁴² After the blaze, “the police took in custody about forty persons, yesterday, caught in the act of stealing from premises which were on fire.”¹⁴³ As rumors of arson spread, so too did the belief that Australian immigrants, many of whom originally hailed from Ireland, were to blame for the fires and looting. Favored explanations attributed a general escalation in violence to the arrival of gold-seeking immigrants from Australia. As one of Britain's penal colonies, many assumed the Australian immigrants to be former convicts and the source of the city's burgeoning criminal element.¹⁴⁴ Often referred to as “Sydney Ducks,” they came in such great numbers that the blocks surrounding Clark's Point—the blocks once home to the Chileno

¹⁴² Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 17.

¹⁴³ “A Fourth Terrible Conflagration.”

¹⁴⁴ The disdain and distrust of Australian immigrants really took hold, according to Kevin Mullen, after the 1849 Christmas eve fire, when it was publicized that over half of those arrested for looting hailed from Australia. Sherman L. Ricards, George M. Blackburn, and Paul Erickson have discussed the anti-Irish origins of the anti-Australian sentiment, since many of those immigrating from Australia had been born in Ireland. Mullen, *Dangerous Strangers*, 17; Sherman L. Ricards and George M. Blackburn, “The Sydney Ducks: A Demographic Analysis,” *Pacific Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (February 1, 1973): 21-22, 30; Paul Joseph Erickson, “Welcome to Sodom: The Cultural Work of City-mysteries Fiction in Antebellum America,” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 554.

tent community and terrorized by the Hounds—came to be known as “Sydney-Town.” The tents that had once housed a Chilean community of miners and women working as prostitutes, replaced by “flimsy wooden and brick buildings” operated by newly-arriving Sydney Ducks.¹⁴⁵ Sydney Town gained a reputation as a lewd and violent section of the city, one paper described its businesses as “hot beds of drunkenness” that attracted “thieves, gamblers, low women, drunken sailors, and similar characters.”¹⁴⁶ “Pioneer prostitutes” followed the Ducks, gathering near Clark's Point in the “shabby dives on Telegraph Hill and along the waterfront.”¹⁴⁷ Negative perceptions of Sydney Ducks and Sydney Town converged and reinforced one another. Many complained that the unchecked debauchery was spilling into the rest of the city.

Amid daily reports of violence and frequent fires, San Franciscan's anger grew. Many blamed a corrupt and ineffectual police force and justice system. Not simply a matter of lacking sufficient personnel to keep up with a rapidly growing population, many believed the law enforcement officials to be corrupt. They were “connected with the thieves so that no justice can be had,” according to Mary Ball. “The people are out of all patience,” she continued, “and feel disposed to take the law into their own hands.”¹⁴⁸ Talk of vigilante justice began swirling among San Francisco's prominent and propertied

¹⁴⁵ Herbert Asbury, *The Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933), 49-51.

¹⁴⁶ *San Francisco Herald*, as quoted by Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 51.

¹⁴⁷ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 33-34.

¹⁴⁸ Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball,” 160–161. Marion Goldman discusses police corruption in Virginia City, positing that the power vacuum in frontier towns contributed to blurred lines between the law enforcers and law breakers. Goldman, *Gold Diggers & Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981), 33.

men.¹⁴⁹ Some harkened back to the episode with the Hounds nearly two years earlier, in which a group of citizens had stopped the Regulators, who had gone rogue and attacked the Chilean community.

Then, with the brutal assault and robbery of a well-known and much-liked merchant, C. J. Jansen, fellow business-owners' anger turned into action. Within days, the police apprehended two suspects. As word spread that the police had arrested suspects, an angry mob gathered outside City Hall to demand justice. To appease the riotous crowd, the mayor proposed an immediate trial, with a legal counsel and jury assembled from those gathered.¹⁵⁰ The plan backfired, however, when the jury could not agree on a verdict. As news leaked out, the mob stormed City Hall. William Coleman, who had served as the on-the-spot prosecutor, appealed to the crowd to disperse and allow for a re-trial. Sam Brannan, who had become one of the early city's most prominent citizens, was among those would not back down and called for the men's immediate execution. Coleman, finally, succeeded and the crowd dissipated. During the second trial, both men were tried, convicted, and sentenced to jail time (not the death-sentence called for by the crowd). When, a few months later, James Stuart, was brought in for robbery and, in the process, linked to the Jansen case, prosecutors discovered the innocence of one of their original suspects. Had the mob that gathered in the days following Jansen's assault gotten

¹⁴⁹ Leonard Richards has examined different types of mob action in Jacksonian America. One type, which describes the situation in San Francisco, was spearheaded by "leading citizens whose primary goal was to preserve the status quo and their own supremacy." With a community's elite at the helm, they often gained the "acquiesce not only of the community but also of law-enforcement officials." In San Francisco, a weak police force, left room for vigilantes to seize power; though, as I'll discuss in the next section, the vigilantes eventually seized, and sought to assert, official avenues of power. Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing: Anti-abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 84.

¹⁵⁰ Ethington, *The Public City*, 107.

its way, an innocent man, bearing an unfortunate resemblance to Stuart, would have met his fate at the gallows.¹⁵¹

During the spring of 1851, two more fires ravaged the city and further fueled San Franciscan's anger and frustration. On the evening of May 3, a fire began along the south side of the plaza. It quickly raged out of control, forming what one observer described as a “vast sheet of flame that extended half a mile in length.”¹⁵² The water had, in the past, provided a natural fire-break, but with so much of the city resting on piers above the bay, the fire licked along the wharves. The entire cove seemed to be ablaze. As the fire burned, a group of San Franciscans unleashed their anger on two suspected arsonists, beating them to death in the street.¹⁵³ While citizens sought to impose instantaneous and extralegal justice, the police sought to address the widespread looting. They were quickly overwhelmed. Without proper jails to house the criminals, officers began simply to release those they caught stealing, once they recovered the goods. “The horror of the night,” as Mary Ball recounted, “was increased by a man shooting a poor Mexican woman named Carmilita without any cause.”¹⁵⁴ The hapless police, the looters, and the residents claiming the cloak of “law-and-order,” coalesced into a violent and unruly mob. The fire, in many ways, wreaked just as much havoc on the social as the physical composition of the city.

¹⁵¹ John Shertzer Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1878), 172–173; Williams, *History of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851*, 170–176; Fracchia, *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street*, 59; Ethington, *The Public City*, 105–106.

¹⁵² Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 188.

¹⁵³ Ethington, *The Public City*, 108.

¹⁵⁴ Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball,” 184.

San Franciscans began referring to it as the great fire, a meaningful designation even in a city that had already burned four times. “The very heart of the city, the centre of trade and business, was eaten out,” an onlooker later reflected, “leaving little else than the sparsely built out-skirts.” He declared San Francisco, “a City in ruins.”¹⁵⁵ Even buildings promised to be fire-proof had not withstood the high temperatures and had crumbled beneath the heat.¹⁵⁶ Once again, property owners weighed the benefits of rebuilding quickly with wood versus erecting more substantial and costly brick buildings.¹⁵⁷ Rebuilding, according to Mary Ball, seemed to get under way more slowly—a dispiritedness seemed, at least temporarily, to settle over the city. For her own part, Ball spent many sleepless nights worrying that a fire might destroy the Oriental Hotel, the boardinghouse at which she worked, and her chances of recovering the weeks of back-pay owed her.¹⁵⁸

Law and Order

In June 1851, the talk of vigilante justice coalesced into formal action. Sam Brannan and William Coleman again stepped forward. Under the leadership of the city’s economic elite, including Brannan and Coleman, two hundred San Franciscan men declared themselves the arbiters of justice. They signed a pledge, promising “to unite themselves into an association for the maintenance of the peace and good order of society, and the preservation of the lives and property of the citizens of San Francisco,

¹⁵⁵ *San Francisco, 1852-53 City Directory*, 18.

¹⁵⁶ Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 18; Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 188–192; Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball,” 184.

¹⁵⁷ Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco*, 171.

¹⁵⁸ Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball,” 190, 192.

and do bind themselves, each until the other, to do and perform every lawful act for the maintenance of law and order.”¹⁵⁹ Eventually, over seven hundred citizens added their names to the rolls.¹⁶⁰ Merchants, as many accounts have underscored, comprised a large portion of the leadership and membership of the group (since they were among those who bore the largest financial losses from the robberies and fires and so were eager to enforce “law and order”). Yet, as historian Philip Ethington has demonstrated, though disproportionately of the merchant class and a wholly white organization, the vigilantes were a politically, economically, and socially diverse group.¹⁶¹

The committee focused their attention on Australian (and therefore Irish) immigrants, since, by this point, the widely accepted explanation for the increased violence in San Francisco began with the “Sydney Ducks.” In the year before the formation of the vigilance committee, the rates of violence did increase slightly in the city. But, as historian Kevin Mullen has argued, even more important was the widespread perception among San Franciscans that their city was growing evermore violent.¹⁶² Over the course of the summer, the vigilance committee defied the law, meting out their own form of justice. Impatient and eager to take action at any cost, they suspended *habeas corpus* for a time. They set up their own offices, in which to deliberate cases and punish those they deemed criminal. In response to the city's institutions of criminal justice, which they believed to be slow and ineffectual, they took quick and decisive action, and

¹⁵⁹ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 65; John Shertzer Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1878), 174.

¹⁶⁰ Ethington, *The Public City*, 88.

¹⁶¹ Williams offered an early account and emphasized the important role played by merchants, in *History of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851*, 188-189. Lotchin echoed this in *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 193. Ethington has reconsidered the occupations of the Vigilantes in *The Public City*, 92-93.

¹⁶² Kevin J. Mullen, *Let Justice Be Done: Crime and Politics in Early San Francisco* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989).

in just a few short months, the vigilantes executed four men, jailed many others, and banished several others from town.¹⁶³

As the vigilantes sought to gain control of the city, or at least its legal-proceedings, yet another blaze broke out and spread. Though the June, 1851 fire was much smaller than the great fire a month before, the damage in a wooden-town, such as San Francisco, was still extensive. And, in the new context of extralegal justice, vigilantes immediately shot the man who they believed started the blaze. Later that same night, they planned to hang another man for stealing. Ball described the scene with horror and disgust, writing, “men seem as merry and fun as liquor can make them, they huzza and laugh, sing and dance, while not a block from them a fellow creature is trembling for death at their hand.” Having terrified their prisoner—“the bell had tolled his death and his agony had lasted for hours,” as Ball noted—the vigilantes released him, after realizing that he was innocent and had simply been trying to save his own property from the fire.¹⁶⁴ Though Ball lay awake at night, fearing that the work of an arson might destroy her chance of being repaid and returning to her children, she detested the violent tactics of the “law and order” vigilantes. In a moment of desperation, she wrote a prayer to her Redeemer. “Take me safely out of this lawless country, grant that I may get my money from Hyatt, and once more with my children, praise Thee for thy preserving mercy,” she pleaded.¹⁶⁵ For the most part, she reserved her criticisms of the vigilantes for the pages of her journal, not wanting to attract attention to herself and become an object of their wrath. Yet, in standing idly by, she began to question her own virtuousness, wondering if

¹⁶³ Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco*, 174–175.

¹⁶⁴ Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball.”

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

she would be able to escape a lawless land like San Francisco before its moral stains overtook her. “Take me guiltless of all mortal sin back to my peaceful home,” she implored.¹⁶⁶

Many did not share Ball's views. While she lay awake at night, fearful of the vigilantes' actions, others found solace in their patrol. Among them was Richard Dana, described by one historian as “the very model of Bostonian conservatism.”¹⁶⁷ Dana praised the Committee as “the most grave and responsible citizens.” They were, he insisted, the last resort against the vice and fraud that threatened to overtake the City.¹⁶⁸ The Ladies of Trinity Church proclaimed their support and gratitude as well. They presented the Vigilance Committee with a flag, declaring “Do Right and fear not.”¹⁶⁹ Louisa Amelia Knapp Smith Clapp also expressed her approval for the vigilantes, writing from Gold Country to her sister in Massachusetts.¹⁷⁰ As she saw it, “The Vigilance Committee had become absolutely necessary for the protection of society. It was composed of the best and wisest men in the city.” She proclaimed her unquestioning faith in their actions, insisting that “in *no* case have they hung a man, who had not proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, to have committed at least *one* robbery in which life had been endangered, if not absolutely taken.”¹⁷¹ Perhaps from the distance of the mines, the vigilantes' self-righteous rhetoric was easier to swallow.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 234.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Buckley, “Culture, Class, and Place in Antebellum New York,” in *Power, Culture, and Place: Essays on New York City*, ed. John H. Mollenkopf (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988), 28

¹⁶⁸ Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 454.

¹⁶⁹ “Grand Parade and Review of the Vigilance Committee!,” *Daily Alta California*, 19 August 1856.

¹⁷⁰ Ida Rae Egli, *No Rooms of their Own: Women Writers of Early California, 1849-1869* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1997), 59-61.

¹⁷¹ Egli, *No Rooms of their Own*, 78.

Though Mary Ball abhorred the ways in which the vigilantes took the law into their own hands, in her own small way, she also sought to usurp the law in pursuit of justice. In the spring of 1851, the Aspinwall family and a girl they enslaved, Kitty, arrived at the Oriental Hotel. Ball recorded Mrs. Aspinwall's extremely abusive treatment of Kitty. Though California was a free state, the law stipulated that non-residents could maintain ownership of enslaved people while passing through. Mary Ball, however, recorded Kitty's escape with excitement and remained a trusted confidant as Kitty, aided by a white couple, the Jones, their black cook, Frank, and an unnamed black woman, thwarted the Aspinwalls' search efforts.¹⁷² She offered updates on Kitty's whereabouts over the course of the summer, noting that "Mrs. Jones has dressed Kitty in boys' clothes, having heard that Aspinwall was determined to find her."¹⁷³ Kitty's experience reveals both the possibilities and limitations for black men and women in an ostensibly free state, such as California, and more specifically in gold-rush San Francisco. The crowded, transient, and fluid nature of the city created a space in which Kitty could escape, and start a new life as an employed, rather than enslaved, domestic. In this way, while Mary Ball loathed San Francisco's lawlessness, she also embraced the interstices it created.

In August, the vigilance committee gathered for, what proved to be, their final two executions. Guided by the testimony of Jansen's assailant, James Stuart, the committee drew up a list of those believed to be a part of the gang of criminals bent on terrorizing the city. Sydney Ducks, Samuel Whittaker, and Robert McKenzie were at the top of the

¹⁷² Ball, "The journal of Mary Ball," 175.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 230.

list.¹⁷⁴ The vigilantes captured both men and made plans to execute them, but San Francisco's municipal law enforcers intervened. The sheriff and governor sought to protect the men from punishment at the hands of the vigilantes, by rescuing them from the Committee headquarters and returning them to the county jail. The vigilantes, however, remained defiant and broke into the county jail to recapture Whittaker and McKenzie. They acted quickly to get the execution of the two men underway before the municipal officials could once again intervene. Mary Ball watched in horror from her window as the toll of a death bell summoned thousands of eager spectators. They flooded onto the streets, running toward the Committees' offices crying “for *blood* and in a few moments two wretched men were thrust out of a high window with ropes round their necks.”¹⁷⁵ This struggle over the two prisoners suggests the tension between San Francisco's two structures of law enforcement: the vigilantes and the municipal officials. Though unable to disband the vigilantes, municipal leaders did seek to challenge their power and uphold the due course of law. But, because of the municipal government's weakness and the committee's popularity, the vigilantes continued to meet and, quite literally, got away with murder.

By 1851, a few different and competing visions for San Francisco were emerging and taking hold. For many, it was a city ripe for speculation, with some banking on a joint stock company and profits from a private pier, others hoping that the properties they purchased for a nominal, flat fee would soon appreciate. Others still took their chances at the gaming table or, further afield, at the mining camps. Though luck, uncertainty, and

¹⁷⁴ Williams, *History of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851*, 275; “City Intelligence,” *Daily Alta California*, 12 August 1851.

¹⁷⁵ Ball, “The journal of Mary Ball,” 234.

risk-taking undergirded each of these ventures, an Anglo elite was emerging and taking hold. They began drawing lines, erecting and then enforcing social and spatial divisions and hierarchies. And, they were just getting started. But, in August, the same toll that had marked the six devastating fires rang across the city, signaling the execution of Whittaker and McKenzie and, many hoped, an end to the mayhem and violence.¹⁷⁶ As the summer of 1851 came to an end, both the fire bugs and vigilance committee went dormant, at least for a time.

¹⁷⁶ Catherine Coffin Phillips, *Portsmouth Plaza: The Cradle of San Francisco* (San Francisco: J.H. Nash, 1932), 246.

Chapter Two

Competing Visions and Violent Assertions

Despite the tenuousness of the young city, gold-rush arrival Charles Kimball undertook the ambitious project of creating San Francisco's first city directory. Because of the chaotic and unstable nature of the early city, Kimball's directory, published in September 1850, became all the more important. Likely heeding President Polk's call at the end of 1848 to head west, Kimball left his New England home in January 1849, arriving in San Francisco in July. Even though he had been traveling for months, upon arriving in San Francisco, he offered a measured assessment of the city. It is "a beautiful Place for a City," he acknowledged, though perhaps not truly "the Great Place of the Coast," as so many insisted.¹ Despite his initial reservations, he went on to play a large role in promoting the city and its businesses.

¹ 6 July 1849, "Charles P. Kimball Papers," vol. 5, Alice Phelan Sullivan Library, California Society of Pioneers. When quoting from Kimball's journal entries, I have added punctuation for clarity. Though his sentence breaks are fairly clear in his original entries, he often did not punctuate or capitalize his sentences. Dolores Bryant has suggested that Kimball's experience of growing up during the depression of 1837 likely left him (along with many in his generation) cautious and pessimistic. Dolores Waldorf Bryant, "Charles P. Kimball San Francisco's 'Noisy Carrier'," *California Historical Society Quarterly* XVIII, no. 4 (December 1939): 2.

He tried his hand at mining early on, but after finding only disappointment, he returned to San Francisco, first selling sandwiches and snacks and then newspapers on the street.² He purchased the papers each morning, then delivered them to subscribers and sold them to passers-by over the course of the day. On a damp day in March, he reported selling 125 papers and collecting \$42, five dollars of which were profit.³ Alongside selling papers, he also took up work as a “public crier” for hire. A trader in urban information, he provided audible advertisements for those willing to pay. With Kimball daily traversing the streets of San Francisco, calling out the news and deals of the day, it is perhaps fitting that Washington Bartlett enlisted him to prepare the city's first directory. Bartlett, born in the south, arrived in San Francisco in November, 1849 and, soon after, co-founded the *Journal of Commerce*.⁴ A city directory, he believed, was just what San Francisco needed to promote its businesses and development. Kimball's directory included a list of the city's residents (listing their occupation and address), followed by a section of advertisements organized by the type of business, including Nelson & Baker's blacksmith shop, the midwife Mrs. Shannon, and the provision dealers Belknap, White, & Company.

Throughout the summer of 1850, Kimball prepared the directory. He methodically covered the city, gathering names street-by-street. It was “slow work” he noted. “Still on my Directory. it grows longer as I go on. got over but very little Ground to Day,” he noted at the end of a tiring day in July.⁵ In addition to his directory work, he continued,

² “Charles P. Kimball Papers”; Bryant, “Charles P. Kimball San Francisco's ‘Noisy Carrier’.”

³ 23 March 1850, “Charles P. Kimball Papers,” vol. 5.

⁴ Walter C. Allen, “San Francisco's First City Directory and Its Two Reprints,” *Publication of the Society of California Pioneers* (1943): 48.

⁵ Friday, 28 June and Tuesday, 16 July 1850, as reprinted in Allen, “San Francisco's First City Directory and Its Two Reprints,” 41.

most days, to spend at least some of the day working as a paper carrier and public crier. In early August, after a little over a month of dogged preparation, he submitted the directory to Bartlett for publication. When Bartlett suggested that it would likely take a month to print the directory, Kimball grew discouraged. “By that time it will not be Worth Printing,” he bemoaned.⁶ Given his belief that even a month delay would render the entire project useless, it is surprising that he ever agreed to undertake it in the first place.

The very premise of the directory was to capture, record, and bestow sense of permanence, legibility, and order (though fleeting) on the city. Yet, even as Kimball took on the project, he never lost sight of its futility. Even in its preface, he reminded readers:

It is not to be expected, in a City like this, where Streets are built up in a week and whole Squares swept away in an hour—where the floating population numbers thousands and a large portion of the fixed inhabitants live in tents and places which cannot be described with any accuracy, that a Directory can be got up with the correctness that they are in older and more established cities. We scarcely have a house numbered, and what there are will puzzle quite as much as assist.⁷

Reserving his harshest assessment for his private journal, “My Directory is very Incorrect in many particulars,” he concluded.⁸ Undoubtedly, he was right. Within weeks of publication, the city burned yet again, leveling many of the businesses Kimball had so carefully recorded. Fire was not the only challenge, however.

Kimball concluded his index with recommendations for standardization measures, which he believed would address the greatest obstacles to preparing a guide and, more importantly, to the city’s growth and development. He called for, above all, a coherent, fixed numbering system. More specifically, he advocated for linking addresses to lots

⁶ Friday, 2 August 1850, as reprinted in Allen, “San Francisco's First City Directory and Its Two Reprints,” 41.

⁷ Kimball, *The San Francisco City Directory*, 3.

⁸ Friday, 4 October 1850, as reprinted in Allen, “San Francisco's First City Directory and Its Two Reprints,” 43.

rather than buildings, since, as he argued, structures would come and go while the land itself would remain unchanging (though, with landfill projects and property owners' attempts to turn their water-lots into dry land underway, that was not entirely the case in San Francisco).⁹ In his conclusion, Kimball offered a glimpse into his reasons for taking on a project in which he had such little faith: he wanted to bring San Francisco inline with "the Atlantic cities."¹⁰ Accuracy aside, the very existence of a city directory would, he hoped, imbue San Francisco with a degree of legitimacy, contributing to the city's transformation from an international trading outpost into a full-fledged, American city.

Kimball was just one of many trying to define what type of city San Francisco would be. By the mid-1850s two competing visions of a prosperous San Francisco had emerged. One conception, on display in places like the El Dorado, was that of an individualistic, masculine boom town, fueled by a vibrant, if volatile, vice economy. The other vision promoted a stable, domestic, family town, sustained through hard and honest work and republican virtue. Both visions embraced the promise of San Francisco as the Golden Gate, but they envisioned different means of attaining its economic promises. Those at the El Dorado embraced San Francisco as a "wide-open" town, predicated on risk taking, money-making, and minimal regulation.¹¹ For those determined to realize San Francisco as a family town, they envisioned a more selective gateway, which might

⁹ Though Kimball found the house numbers maddeningly inconsistent, in the context of antebellum New York City, as David Henkin has explored, house numbers proved to be a much more consistent rubric than other city signage, such as street signs. Henkin discussed the reticence in antebellum cities to assert public authority in visible ways, such as posted street names. House numbers, conversely, applied by individual owners to their own private property, were much more consistent and common. See, David M. Henkin, *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 46.

¹⁰ Kimball, *The San Francisco City Directory*, 130.

¹¹ Neville explained "wide-open" as a term popular among miners to refer to the fun and revelry of the city's "dives and dance-halls" in *The Fantastic City*, 210.

encourage Anglo immigrants to settle down and invest in the community, while barring and banishing those who did not hew to these ideals. With two opposing visions for the city, fights that began about the moral character of individuals or tenor of particular places became citywide debates about the city's shape and future. In 1856, the debate reached a flashpoint and thousands of white San Franciscans embraced terror, violence, and public executions in the name of an orderly, republican society. Two years later, also seeking to effect change in their society, few hundred black San Franciscans left the city for a "new El Dorado," hopeful that by emigrating they might attain the promises and possibilities they once associated with California.

Defining and Describing the City

Like everyone in San Francisco, Charles Kimball too was on the move. During the spring of 1850, while working the streets as a paper carrier and public crier, Kimball sought out a permeant spot from which to sell books, stationary, magazines, and newspapers. He opened a small shop on Washington street, near the end of Long Wharf. Then, in the fall of 1851, he relocated his store to a new building on the recently reconstructed Long Wharf, which had been destroyed by the May fire, then rebuilt over the summer. He began by renting a small section of the one-story building, number 77 according to the recently-implemented numbering system. The street itself was in flux too, becoming Commercial Street as the beach and water lot owners filled in the cove, turning the pier into a planked street. As his business grew, he expanded his shop and eventually purchased the entire building.

Kimball, who had ventured to California to try his luck in Gold Country, instead built up a business and settled in San Francisco. Soon after purchasing the Long Wharf building, he proposed marriage to Isabelle Dunn, a blacksmith's daughter. During the 1850s, city's population was overwhelmingly male, making marriage an impossibility for most single men in San Francisco.¹² In anticipation of the union, he commissioned a construction crew to build a second-story living space above the store. In the years that followed, as both his business and family grew, he continued to deliver newspapers. Perhaps he saw it as a means of bolstering his stationary business or maybe he wanted to hold onto his place as San Francisco's self-proclaimed "noisy carrier."¹³

¹² Men made up 92 percent of the population in 1850. The number of women did grow overtime, reaching 40 percent of the population in the mid-1860s. Lynn Maria Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 32; Barbara Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 5. While many may have regarded Charles Kimball as lucky to have found a woman to marry despite the odds, he instead approached the marriage with the same pessimism, or maybe pragmatism, as everything else. On the night of their engagement, he recorded in his journal, "I do not look forward to any great degree of Happiness. But I think she will make me a good & saving Wife. She is quite plain. for that reason as time rolls on she will not change so much as though she were a beauty." Sunday, 15 August 1851, "Charles P. Kimball Papers," vol. 5.

¹³ Bryant, "No. 77 Long Wharf: From Publishing Hall to Temple of Mirth," 75.

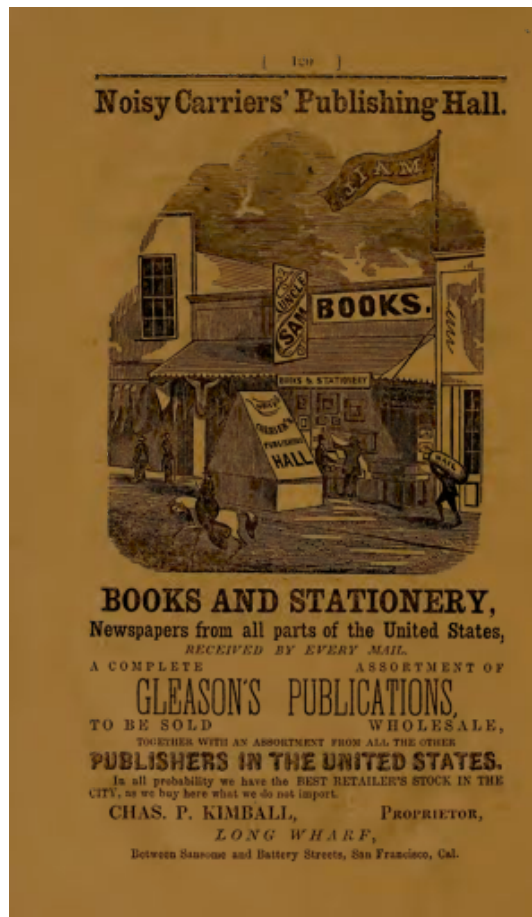


Figure 8. Charles P. Kimball, Advertisement, “Noisy Carriers’ Publishing Hall.” In *A. W. Morgan & Co.’s San Francisco City Directory* (San Francisco: F. A. Bonnard, at the Dispatch Printing Office, 1852).

In 1850, Kimball was not the only one pounding the streets, seeking to get an account of the transient city. He was joined by federal census-takers, who, as a part of the 1850 national census, also sought to enumerate San Francisco’s population. Since the United States’ occupation of Yerba Buena, the town’s population had grown steadily, from two to three hundred in 1846 to over four hundred and fifty in 1847.¹⁴ Then, with Sutter’s 1848 discovery of gold, and the migration rush was on. By all accounts, the growth of the

¹⁴ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 102.

city was astonishing, but the 1850 federal census records and the exact numbers for San Francisco, as well as a two other California counties were lost. An 1852 state-mandated census did survive and tallied the population at 34,000 residents.¹⁵ The *Annals* authors, meanwhile, insisted that this number was too low, suggesting instead that the population had reached 42,000 people.¹⁶ In this way, census-takers, like directory compilers, had to navigate a population in flux, and the line between permanent resident and passer-through was not always clear. Once again, a tension emerged between efforts to claim permanence and legitimacy for the city, through public projects such as census-taking or private ventures like directory-making, and the futility of these endeavors amidst the city's rapid growth and constant changes.

In 1852, two other San Franciscans, A. W. Morgan and James M. Parker prepared new directories. The city, just as Kimball had noted two years before, was still very much in flux. Accordingly, Parker, like Kimball, began by explaining to readers, “the canvas was as thorough as could be made, under the circumstances, and we have endeavored to keep pace with, and record, all removals and business changes.”¹⁷ This was a difficult task according to Morgan, since, as he claimed, even the “thoroughfares of trade in the City” shifted almost daily.¹⁸ One major stabilizing change, however, had occurred—a standardized street numbering system had been established, which began with Market street and, as Kimball had suggested, assigned numbers according to lots.¹⁹ The system was still new and uneven, and, as a result, the two 1852 city directories did not always

¹⁵ *California State Census, 1852*. (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010) [database on-line].

¹⁶ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 366, fn 7.

¹⁷ Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 1.

¹⁸ A. W. Mogan, *A. W. Morgan & Co.'s San Francisco City Directory* (San Francisco: F. A. Bonnard, at the Dispatch Printing Office, 1852).

¹⁹ Mogan, *City Directory*, 20.

agree. Business owners still resorted to cross-streets and landmarks to direct potential customers to their establishments. With so many changes underway, as Parker and Morgan attested, producing a city directory remained an enormous undertaking. Through their efforts to make the city coherent and comprehensible, at least on paper, the directory authors played an important role in realizing and reinforcing the new systems of standardization and, ultimately, bringing San Francisco slightly closer inline with exceptions for an east-coast city. In this way, Kimball, Morgan, and Parker joined real estate owners, wharf-building joint stock companies, and business owners in creating the city. They, however, were just some of the San Franciscans who took part in making the waterfront district.

Saloons continued to dominate the early city, as both the most popular gathering places and the most substantial structures. New arrivals, in fact, seemed to notice little else. “Composed entirely of saloons,” according to one visitor, the waterfront “is a blaze of light, and resounds with music from one end to the other.”²⁰ Even as saloons dominated the cityscape, the 1852 directories suggested a much more richly varied city. They offered a picture of an amalgamated commercial district, in which boot-makers, breweries, and bakers shared the same block. Visitors to Charles Kimball's book store, then making their way up Long Wharf, encountered numerous types of shops and businesses. Passers-by, especially white men, might have stopped into the Minerva Exchange Saloon for a drink and conversation. They might have also visited Albert Walker's shop for a watch repair or C. Gillespie's office for legal advice. Depending on

²⁰ Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 32.

which city directory our miner, sailor, tourist, or wanderer consulted, he could have stopped into see B. Tighman, a “colored” baker for a sandwich or maybe a barber offering a shave. A druggist, a second bookseller, and jeweler, and Owen Hog's Oyster saloon also lined the dock. By 1852, three years into the gold rush, San Franciscans could find almost any good or service among the many businesses that crowded the cove’s burgeoning commercial thoroughfares.

Saloons and gambling halls, despite being tucked amidst stationary stores and pharmacies, did take center-stage, vying for San Franciscan’s business and attention. On a given Long Wharf stretch, a sailor or miner had his pick of least five different establishments in which to quench his thirst—Mrs. H. B. Whitney's saloon among them. A white, New York native, Whitney was one of several women who owned saloons in gold-rush San Francisco. Though recorded as a Mrs., it is unclear whether her husband, H. B., was still around. Even if he was, Mrs. Whitney may have still been the sole owner of the saloon, since an 1852 state law stipulated that married women could “transact business in their own name, as sole traders.”²¹ Another saloon owner, Mrs. Johnson, may have also seized on this law to become the proprietor of an establishment on Pacific street. As of the 1850 directory, Johnson was working as a dressmaker, but by 1852, she owned a saloon. Perhaps business as a dress-maker lagged since women made up only a fraction of the population, or maybe bar-tending simply seemed like a more profitable

²¹ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 308. For more on California laws and the ways that they shaped white women’s status and opportunities in California, see Robert L. Griswold, “Apart but Not Adrift: Wives, Divorce, and Independence in California, 1850-1890,” *Pacific Historical Review* 49, no. 2 (May 1980): 265–283; Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco, 1850-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

enterprise, even in a seemingly over-saturated market like San Francisco.²² Her story points to the economic possibilities available to white women of some means in gold rush San Francisco to own and run their own businesses as well as the constant changes that ensured the need for new city directories.²³

Hospitality businesses, such as boardinghouses, saloons, and restaurants were among the most common female-owned businesses in early San Francisco.²⁴ Though only a few women stood behind the bar, as tavern-owners, more worked on the floor, serving drinks or dealing cards. Women, nevertheless, continued to be scarce in the gold-rush city. Gambling men even resorted to paying women an ounce of gold for their company at the table.²⁵ According to journalist and crime writer Herbert Asbury, it all began one fateful evening in early 1850, when “Mme Simone Jules, a strikingly beautiful French-woman, with enormous black eyes and ebon hair, made her appearance at a roulette table in the Bella Union.” She quickly became “the center of masculine interest” and compelled the other gambling halls to procure their own beauties.²⁶ For a brief time, Arabella “Belle” Ryan, the “beautifully seductive” “Irish mistress” of the notorious gambler Charles Cora, had her own table at the El Dorado. Perhaps as a reflection of the profitability of her own table and the opportunities it afforded her, she encouraged

²² Kimball, *The San Francisco City Directory*; Parker, *The San Francisco Directory*; Mogan, A. W. Morgan & Co.'s *San Francisco City Directory*; *California State Census, 1852*. (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010) [database on-line].

²³ Through a case-study of a tremendously successful black, female entrepreneur, Mary Ellen Pleasant, Lynn Maria Hudson has argued San Francisco's economy allowed for “a certain flexibility of racial and gender boundaries.” Many women, of course, did not find financial success in San Francisco, but many female business owners suggests that some flexibility did exist. Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant,”* 57.

²⁴ Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco, 1850-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 24.

²⁵ David T. Courtwright, *Violent Land: Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 70-71.

²⁶ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 25.

George Dennis, the enslaved son of one of the El Dorado's founders, to request a table for himself. Dennis instead choose to collect the small change from the tables, which the El Dorado proprietors disregarded. This enabled him to purchase his own and his mother's freedom.²⁷ When they could not procure their own tables, women “of prepossessing appearance” and “elegantly dressed” sometimes assisted dealers, distributing winnings and collecting losses.²⁸ Not every house could secure a beautiful Simone Jules or Arabella Ryan, however, leaving less fortunate saloons to employ a “course-looking female” to “preside over a roulette-table” instead.²⁹ While a few took ownership roles, taking advantage of San Francisco’s unique property-ownership laws, many more worked as “pretty waitress girls,” or, in other words, spectacles for men’s enjoyment, solidifying the masculine nature of gold rush San Francisco.

The Bella Union was among the most popular saloons and gambling halls. As one of the first to open along the plaza, it became a cornerstone of the neighborhood, making Madame Jules’s appearance all the more trend-setting. Two early San Franciscans remembered it always “thronged with men,” a “cosmopolitan crowd,” in fact, “playing against the various games from about eleven o'clock in the morning until daylight the next morning.”³⁰ Like the other “temples of chance” around the Plaza, including the El Dorado, it was elegantly furnished with a long bar, with numerous mirrors and paintings

²⁷ Robert Phelps, ““All hands have gone downtown”: Urban Places in Gold Rush California,” *California History* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 133; Jolly, “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco,” 553; Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 110; Interview with Charlotte Dennis Downs, “Helen Holdredge Collection, SFH 36,” Box 2, Folder 26, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

²⁸ John Shertzer Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1878), 236.

²⁹ Eliza Farnham, *California In-Doors and Out; or How We Farm, Mine and Live Generally in the Golden State*, 1856, as quoted by Jacqueline Baker Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail: Prostitution in San Francisco, 1849-1900* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), 52-53.

³⁰ Barry and Patten, *Men and Memories*, 45, 21.

adorning the walls. Occasionally, the Bella Union held shows, including the city's first professional minstrel show, a performance by the Philadelphia Minstrels.³¹ The appearance of the Philadelphia Minstrels ignited San Franciscans enthusiasm for blackface, which, as in the rest of the country, remained popular through the early-twentieth century.³² A few months later, another minstrel trope came to town and the Bella Union. Their run, however, was cut short. In an attempt to quiet a drunken and disruptive audience member, one of the performers brandished his loaded revolver. As he swung his gun, he accidentally shot and killed his fellow actor and close friend.³³ Such incidents, and their re-telling, contributed to the Bella Union's storied reputation. On a more typical night, bartenders Samuel Carpenter, William McCoy, and John Sullivan made drinks, customers played cards and clinked coins, while a costumed Mexican quintette filled the hall with music.³⁴

As gambling houses crowded around the plaza, Theodore Barry and Benjamin Patten selected a site further south on Montgomery, next to the Wells Fargo Offices, in which to open their own style of tavern, a “gentleman's saloon.” The New England pair,

³¹ Gagey, *The San Francisco Stage*, 31; Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 126-127.

³² For more additional readings on minstrelsy, its significance for white, working class audiences and the lived experiences of some black performers, see Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-century America* (New York: Verso, 1990); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); Eric Lott, *Love and theft: blackface minstrelsy and the American working class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); W. T. Lhamon, *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); James W. Cook, “Master Juba, The King of All Dancers!,” *Discourses in Dance* 3, no. 2 (2006): 6–20; Karen Sotiropoulos, *Staging Race: Black Performers in Turn of the Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

³³ Pauline Jacobson, “Melodeons of the Fifties,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 8 August 1917.

³⁴ Barry and Patten, *Men and Memories*, 46; Frances Elizabeth Willard and Mary Ashton Rice Livermore, *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Moulton, 1893), 683.

almost always called gentlemen by others, sought to create a place in which those of their class might pass the evening. To set their establishment apart and create an atmosphere of respectability, they barred gambling, offering billiards instead to pass the time. They also supplied New York and Boston papers, which, having made the trip around the Horn, were at least three months out of date but still provided much-desired news of home. In this way, Barry and Patten's harkened back to Yerba Buena's first drinking establishment, the City Hotel, where the town's elite had often gathered.³⁵

Hoping to emulate Barry and Patten's success, George Parker, a wealthy New Yorker, decided to open his own gentleman's saloon. Just off the Plaza and a few blocks up from Barry and Patten's, Parker selected the grand, new Montgomery Block building for his club. With the water still reaching Montgomery Street and lapping at the foundation, many critics charged that the sandy, marshy shore would never hold the four-story, brick building.³⁶ Architect and builder G. P. Cumming forged ahead, anchoring his structure to pilings and completing the project in December of 1853. Its 150 office spaces slowly filled with the city's leading attorneys, bankers, engineers, and real estate brokers, and Washington and Montgomery became the center of the “life and activity of the city.”³⁷

With its Doric columns, beautiful frieze, and bronzed doors, the Montgomery Block was an ideal setting for the Bank Exchange.³⁸ Despite the city's susceptibility to burn, Parker banked on Cumming's promises of fire-proofing and procured elaborate

³⁵ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁸ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 190-192.

interior furnishings.³⁹ With marble slabs carried around the Horn, a walnut bar, Wedgewood-handled beer pumps, smoky mirrors, crystal glassware, he sought to recreate a little piece of the eastern seaboard in the heart of gold-rush San Francisco.⁴⁰ He adorned the walls oil paintings, including Paul Emil Jacobs's "Samson and Delilah," an eight by ten feet depiction of a barely-covered Delilah and defiant Sansom.⁴¹ As a final marker of class and social standing, the Exchange never charged less than two bits for a drink. Through decor and decorum, Parker sought to entice the city's wealthiest away from the El Dorado, which was just a block away. Despite its recent renovations, the El Dorado had retained its unsavory beginnings, creating an opening for Parker's new, upper-class respite.⁴² Parker succeeded, with "leading bankers and merchants, the chief of the Fire Department, the leading members of the bench and bar, the sea captains, and the army and navy officers..." gathering nightly for billiards and "Bell of Moscow" champagne.⁴³ In this way, for Parker, as well as Barry and Patten, their gentleman's saloons signified a space set apart by social standing, class, and gender.⁴⁴ With Wedgewood and oil paintings abounding, the Bank Exchange was undoubtedly the center of culture and sophistication

³⁹ Their trust was well-placed, and the Montgomery Block building survived even the 1906 earthquake and fire. It could not, however, withstand calls for progress. Just over a hundred years after its construction, San Francisco's tallest 1853 building was torn down in 1959 to make way for the city's new, tallest structure: the Transamerica building. Larry D. Hatfield, "Transamerica Pyramid a Controversial Building," *San Francisco Examiner*, 18 February 1999.

⁴⁰ San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, *San Francisco, the Financial, Commercial and Industrial Metropolis of the Pacific Coast: Official records, Statistics and Encyclopedia* (San Francisco: H.S. Crocker Co., 1915), 114.

⁴¹ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 7; Birgitta Hjalmarsen, *Artful Players: Artistic Life in early San Francisco* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1999), 22.

⁴² Smith, *San Francisco's Lost Landmarks*, 75.

⁴³ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 6-7.

⁴⁴ While George Parker clearly intended the Bank Exchange as a male space, by the 1870s, upper class women socialized there too. During the winter of 1872, San Francisco socialite Lillie Coit typically dined at least once a week at the Bank Exchange. See "Coit, Lillie Hitchcock," San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA. See also David M. Scobey's discussion of the public culture elite men and women forged in New York City's opulent saloons, challenging historians' previous beliefs about the sex-segregated nature of elite public spaces, in, "Nymphs and Satyrs: Sex and the Bourgeois Public Sphere in Victorian New York," *Winterthur Portfolio* 37 (Spring 2002): 43-66.

in San Francisco. As Parker sought to set his establishment apart, the Portsmouth Plaza halls, the El Dorado and Bella Union, continued to welcome an economically diverse crowd, hoping to appeal to and profit from both the city's men of money and day laborers. Collectively, the city's saloons became spaces of social mixing and places to mark and maintain social standing.

Not everyone, however, accepted this mixing and mingling so easily—Sarah Royce among them. Regarding herself as a good Christian woman, seemingly a bit severe, Royce migrated from New York to Missouri and then to California with her husband and small daughter. After a few unsuccessful months spent in the mines, the family settled in Sacramento, just in time for the Great Flood of 1850, which submerged the entire city underwater and sent many Sacramentans fleeing to San Francisco.⁴⁵ Upon arriving in San Francisco, Royce immediately got to work ingratiating herself to its “most respectable and companionable people,” those she deemed to be “true to their convictions, earnest in their religious life, and faithful and lively in the domestic circle.”⁴⁶ Accordingly, she eagerly anticipated a benevolent society ball, planned and organized by women from four of the city's churches. For Royce, it was the social event of the season. But, when the big night finally arrived, for Royce, it was nearly ruined.

As evidence of the fluidity of the young city, James McCabe, a “man, prominent for wealth and business-power” and part-owner of the El Dorado attended the benefit as an invited guest.⁴⁷ His companion, business and romantic partner both, Irene McCready was

⁴⁵ Egli, *No Rooms of their Own*, 2-4. For more on Sarah Royce, see also Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 143-145.

⁴⁶ Sarah Royce, *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), 108, 110.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 114.

not invited. So, even as the social fluidity in gold-rush San Francisco placed McCabe, a wealthy if dubious business owner, among the highest social strata, a woman, such as McCready, who similarly took part in the vice economy was not likewise welcomed. McCabe, nonetheless, brought her to the ball as his guest. Outraged by McCready's presence, the women entreated their husbands to expel her. Reflecting on the evening years later, Royce concluded that “while Christian women would forego ease and endure much labor, in order to benefit any who suffered, they would not welcome into friendly association any who trampled upon institutions which lie at the foundation of morality and civilization.”⁴⁸ In both her overland journey west and the diggings outside of Sacramento, Royce, it seems, had endured too much, having perhaps even her own respectability questioned, to accept McCready’s presence at the benevolent event. In the gold-rush town, marked by mingling and fluidity, Royce felt it was her duty to create and assert a line of respectability, a mandate she regarded to be of the highest order, no less than protecting and safeguarding the institutions that undergirded “morality and civilization.” For Royce, then, it was a direct affront when McCready, who already entertained the city’s elite men in her brothel behind closed doors, sought also to join them and their wives at the benevolent society event—a space that Royce sought to cultivate and reserve for respectability. McCabe, nevertheless, as a white man and prominent business owner moved effortlessly from behind his bar to a church benefit, a transition that proved to be much more fraught for McCready.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

A few years later, bookstore owners and publishers Josiah LeCount and Charles Strong published an 1854 directory in which they sought to challenge San Francisco's reputation as a city ruled by McCabes and McCreedys, by saloon owners and madams. They hired Frank Rivers to canvas the streets and compile the data.⁴⁹ And through their directory, they sought to present an altogether different view of the city. “The rapid increase of the population, and the arrival by every steamer of families, who intend to make this their future home, give an air of stability and permanency to the city,” they insisted.⁵⁰ LeCount and Strong thereby reversed the claims of impermanency that had been so central to Kimball, Morgan, and Parker's accounts of the city. For LeCount and Strong, this reversal was significant.

Many, including LeCount and Strong, had come to believe that the city's transient population was the root of the state's political weakness, economic instability, and moral corruption. The *Alta* hoped that new immigrants might arrive with a willingness to “cultivate an attachment to the soil.”⁵¹ Eliza Farnham, a northeastern woman who traveled to California after her husband died, offered her own solution. In order to develop a stable, orderly, rooted community, she insisted that California needed, above all, the stabilizing influence that only women migrants could bring. Women, she argued, would inspire “the best manifestation of his nature,” bringing out the best traits in the otherwise seemingly unrooted, individualistic miners. “There is no country in the world,” she continued, “where the highest attributes of the female character are more indispensable to the social

⁴⁹ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 114; Margaret Miller Rocq and California Library Association, *California Local History: A Bibliography and Union List of Library Holdings* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1970), 236.

⁵⁰ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 11.

⁵¹ *Alta*, 9 August 1856, as quoted by Ethington, *The Public City*, 164.

weal than to California.”⁵² LeCount and Strong sought, likewise, to encourage and sustain family life in the city. They included a guide to goods “for home consumption,” thereby remaking and reclaiming the city as a domesticated, family space, rather than a masculine, gold-rush world.⁵³

The demographic make-up of the city was, in fact, changing. One observer of the changes underway later identified 1853 as the year that families, who had previously remained east while a husband or father explored the opportunities a life in California might offer, began arriving.⁵⁴ Furthermore, by ’53, the number of surface deposits was diminishing, leaving many miners ready to move on, either to return home or seek out new diggings. LeCount and Strong considered their directory as a part of this change. They saw themselves as offering useful aid to the newly arriving wives, eager to become acquainted with the city and procure the domestic goods that made a home, while also bestowing a sense of permanence in a city previously known for its transience. Ultimately, in becoming a stable, domestic city, they argued, San Francisco would attract more investors and traders, enabling, finally, the city to make the most of its “matchless harbor and its tributary bays and rivers” and realize its potential as the Golden Gate.⁵⁵ In constructing San Francisco as family town, they sought not only to promote morality and respectability but also the economic security and prosperity that they believed would

⁵² Eliza Wood Farnham, *California, in-doors and out: or, How we farm, mine, and live generally in the Golden State* (New York: Dix, Edwards, & Co., 1856), 295. For more on Farnham, her vision for California and for women’s rights, see Ellen Carol DuBois, “Seneca Falls in Santa Cruz: Eliza W. Farnham and the varieties of women’s emancipation in nineteenth-century California,” *Common-place* 9, no. 2 (January 2009).

⁵³ *LeCount & Strong’s San Francisco City Directory*, 11.

⁵⁴ Colville, *Colville’s San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 31.

⁵⁵ *LeCount & Strong’s San Francisco City Directory*, 5.

follow—like Frémont, they evoked the Golden Gate in the hope of realizing its economic promises.

City directory authors and publishers, starting with Kimball, did not seek simply to reflect the city as it stood, but rather, hoped to shape its current form and its future trajectory. They did this, in part, by selecting which businesses and residents to include and exclude from their supposedly comprehensive accounts of the city. In so doing, many whitewashed the city, often intentionally omitting black San Franciscans and black-owned businesses from their pages. Morgan and LeCount and Strong were so relentless in their exclusion of black San Franciscans that only a subscriber to James Parker's directory might know, for example, to seek out the “(col'd)” barber William Jones for a trim or shave.⁵⁶

While they included gambling halls and saloons, they also typically left brothels out of their registries. This was likely in part due to the ambiguity of the businesses themselves. The Bella Union, for example, might be more of a theater one night and gambling hall the next. Or, as was the case with the El Dorado, Irene McCready ran her brothel in the upper floors of the saloon, thus it was among the offerings more than a separate business. But, because no brothels appear in the pages of Kimball's, Parker's, or LeCount & Strong's registries, it is likely too that though they tacitly accepted saloons as a part of the urban landscape, they choose not to index the most illicit businesses. A directory offered an author's view of the city, while an afternoon spent walking the city streets provided yet another. Through their omissions, Morgan, LeCount, and Strong

⁵⁶ Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 68.

depicted San Francisco as a white, domestic town, ready to move into a new, golden era as a hub and harbor.

*“Shoulder to Shoulder”*⁵⁷

Even as city directories described an overwhelmingly white city, first-hand accounts underscored “the large admixture of foreign races” present in early San Francisco.⁵⁸ Observers, like Bayard Taylor dwelled on the racial make-up of those who filled San Francisco's streets: “Yankees of every possible variety, native Californians in *sarapes* and *sombreros*, Chileans, Sonorians, Kanakas from Hawaii, Chinese with long tails, Malays armed with their everlasting creeses.”⁵⁹ Discussions of ethnically diverse urban landscape became a frequent trope in mid-nineteenth century narratives of city life, as scholar Paul Erickson has explained. Authors sought to convey diversity to readers through ethnic and racial stereotypes, dialect-filled dialogue, and character names and behaviors, thereby ordering and categorizing city dwellers into distinctive racial and ethnic groups.⁶⁰ The *Annals* authors, furthermore, captured the ways in which this diversity was manifest and shaped the San Francisco cityscape, in the form of “American *dining-rooms*, the English *lunch-houses*, the French *cabarets*, the Chinese *chow-chows*,” presided over by cooks “from every country; American English, French, German, Dutch, Chinese, Chileno, Kanaka, Italian, Peruvian, Mexican, Negro, and what not.”⁶¹ The 1852 census supported their claims of diversity. Over half of those living in San Francisco, in

⁵⁷ Taylor, *Eldorado*, 118.

⁵⁸ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 368.

⁵⁹ Taylor, *Eldorado*, 55.

⁶⁰ Erickson, “Welcome to Sodom,” 566.

⁶¹ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 640.

1852, were born outside of the United States.⁶² Between the popularity of “urban types” narrative style and the city's diverse ethnic and racial make-up, nearly every commentator noted either the proverbial or actual card table, around which a group of “Mexicans, Miners, Niggers, and Irish bricklayers” supposedly sat.⁶³

Despite these descriptions of supposedly democratic, “shoulder to shoulder” scenes, authors also discussed the social hierarchies that governed the gold-rush city, specifying each group's place. They characterized Anglo-Americans as enterprising miners, while describing other racial and ethnic groups as laborers in the construction or service industries. The *Annals* authors explained San Francisco's social hierarchies in more definitively racial terms. They outlined each group's contribution to the city, explaining that while the “light-hearted, theater French, the musical Germans, and the laughter-loving, idle, dancing Hispano-Americans tended to give a pleasant, gay aspect to the city,” the “celestials,” “black fellows,” and “greasers” “preformed washing and woman's business, and such menial offices as American white males would scorn to do for any remuneration.”⁶⁴ According to their accounting, ethnically-diverse (but still white) immigrants gave the city an interesting, international flare, while the men of color provided an unskilled labor force. Spanish and Mexican Californios, for example, held a complicated place within San Francisco's social hierarchies. Divisions ran along the lines of race and class, with those believed to be of Spanish descent marked as white and elite, while those considered to be of mixed or indigenous heritage were labeled as “greasers”

⁶² Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 4.

⁶³ Marryat, *Mountains and Molehills*, 33.

⁶⁴ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 368-369.

and laborers.⁶⁵ Black, Chinese, and Mexican San Franciscans were often relegated to menial tasks, disdainfully scorned as “women’s” work. One San Franciscan, for example, promised to help employers seeking Chinese cooks and laborers.⁶⁶ Many of the city’s black, Chinese, and Mexican residents held service jobs, as laundrymen or laundresses, boot-blacks, cooks, and porters; many others, however, worked in more esteemed positions as well, as retailers, miners, blacksmiths, and mechanics. In describing the governing racial hierarchies, however, the *Annals* authors sought less to convey the many types of jobs men and women of color actually held than to explain the widely-held perceptions among white San Franciscans about people of color’s rightful place. In the masculine world of gold-rush San Francisco, the language of gender served as an important means of describing and defining men of color’s place on within racial and ethnic orders.⁶⁷

Many white observers, nevertheless, dwelled on the experience of “rubbing shoulders” with people across lines of race, ethnicity, religion, and class. People of color, however, quickly discovered the limits of this social mixing. From his earliest days in San Francisco, Mifflin Gibbs, for example, experienced and then challenged California’s Black Laws—laws enacted by the state legislature to circumscribe the rights of black people in California in the hope of discouraging black migrants from settling in the state. Gibbs, whom we last encountered boot-blackening in front of a hotel after the all-white construction crew refused to work alongside him, became, in 1851, the part-owner of a

⁶⁵ As Tomás Almaguer has argued, “Mexicans successfully asserted their claims to whiteness and were essentially granted an honorary white status,” while simultaneously, “their status was precarious and the privileges of ‘whiteness’ were not always meaningfully extended” in *Racial Fault Lines*, x.

⁶⁶ Colville, *Colville’s San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 38.

⁶⁷ Susan Lee Johnson explores the ways in which notions of race and gender inflected one another in *Roaring Camp*.

retail business. Gibbs, along with Peter Lester, a black man who left Philadelphia with his family and arrived in 1850, opened a boot and shoe store, named the “Emporium for fine boots and shoes, imported from Philadelphia, London and Paris” and later referred to as the “Pioneer Boot and Shoe Emporium.”⁶⁸ As evidenced by their store, the fluidity of the rapidly developing, gold-rush city created a space in which African American men could pursue greater financial opportunities as business owners and defy their place on the social and economic ladder.

The Emporium, according to the Gibbs, was profitable and well-patronized, with a robust local business as well as buyers in Oregon and southern California.⁶⁹ In this way, the diversity that so many noted on the streets extended—at least in limited ways—to commercial spaces, in which men of all creeds patronized a black-owned business. Not everyone, however, welcomed the presence of black-owned businesses. For example, LeCount and Strong's 1854 directory excluded Gibbs and Lester's Emporium from the list of boot retailers (they were aware, however, of the store's existence, since they briefly mentioned Gibbs and Lester as tenants in the Post Office building).⁷⁰ While omissions such as this undoubtedly infuriated Gibbs and Lester, they came to experience the blunt force of the Black Laws in much more direct ways.

⁶⁸ Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 137; Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 176.

⁶⁹ While Gibbs emphasizes his success in California, his recollections must be read within their turn-of-the-century context as well (he published his memoir in 1902). With Booker T. Washington as his editor and the author of the foreword, Gibbs seemed eager to disseminate Washington's brand of racial uplift. Just to be sure, in fact, that readers did not miss the Horatio Alger structure of Gibbs's tale, the title page of his memoir included a quick summary of Gibbs' life, starting with his beginnings as a “fatherless boy” and concluding with his accomplishments as “United States Consul.” Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 45.

⁷⁰ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 195.

One day, as Gibbs later recounted, two white men came into the shop to look at boots. One of the two lingered over a particular pair. Shortly after, the other returned to get the boots that his friend had been admiring, and then walked out of the store without paying for them. Next, though Gibbs's account does not mention it, Lester may have, it seems, sought to capture the thief or report the theft, because the two men returned "with vile epithets, using a heavy cane, again and again assaulted my partner, who was compelled tamely to submit, for had he raised his hand he would have been shot, and no redress."⁷¹ Gibbs and Lester had no redress against the theft or assault because, according to an 1852 law passed by the California legislature, black men and women could not testify in criminal or civil suits involving white men or women.⁷² Gibbs recognized and felt the full, intended effect of the California Black Laws, which, as he explained left black men "ostracized, assaulted without redress, disenfranchised and denied their oath in a court of justice."⁷³ Financial opportunities, nevertheless, did exist for black men in California, as attested to by Gibbs and Lester's store and furthermore internalized by Gibbs. Recounting his time in California at the beginning of the twentieth century, he espoused a Booker T. Washington brand of racial uplift, hewing to platitudes such as, "With thrift and a wise circumspection financially their opportunities were good."⁷⁴ These opportunities came, however, as also evidenced by Gibbs and Lester's store, with severe limitations.

⁷¹ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 46.

⁷² Katz, *The Black West*, 135; Welke, "Rights of Passage," 75.

⁷³ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 46.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

In response to the assault and robbery, Mifflin Gibbs and Peter Lester turned to a community of politically involved and organized black men and women for support—a community in which they had already taken an active part and held leadership roles. Though few in numbers, black San Franciscans came together as early as December, 1849 to form a “Mutual Benefit and Relief Society.”⁷⁵ Gibbs arrived in 1850 fresh off of the abolitionist lecture circuit and sought out like-minded San Franciscans; he quite possibly began making these connections during his first night in the city, at the black-owned and -patronized boarding house in which he stayed. Also arriving in 1850, Lester encountered enslaved people for the first time in San Francisco; horrified by what he saw, he began inviting black people to his home to talk about their rights. When the state legislature passed the law banning black testimony, San Francisco's black leaders (Lester among them) mobilized and formed a Franchise League, in 1852, to fight for black rights.⁷⁶

In 1853, a group of black San Franciscans opened the San Francisco Athenaeum Institute, which served as a saloon, library, and gathering place—a “kind of club for Negro men,” as George Dennis, who had purchased his freedom from his El Dorado-owning father, described it.⁷⁷ Located at 917 Washington Street (between Stockton and Powell), it became an anchor in the community, prompting several black residents and business owners to settle on the same block.⁷⁸ Though the culture of the Athenaeum was undoubtedly masculine, at least one black woman, Mary Ellen Pleasant, took an active

⁷⁵ Katz, *The Black West*, 127.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 129, 136; Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 137.

⁷⁷ His daughter, Charlotte Dennis Downs, relayed her father's recollections of the Athenaeum, as quoted by Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant"*, 36.

⁷⁸ “Descent on a Negro Gambling House,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 9 February 1857; Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant"*, 59.

part. She contributed financially to the Athenaeum, although two black men, James Ricker and Monroe Taylor, put up most of the money.⁷⁹ Pleasant worked as a domestic, madam, and boarding-house keeper, and eventually owned a considerable amount of San Francisco real estate; against her wishes, many harkened back to her days as a domestic by referring to her as “Mammy” Pleasant. Though she resented the title “mammy,” historian and biographer Lynn Hudson has argued that Pleasant also traded on this image throughout her life, portraying herself as a lowly domestic to garner sympathy or detract from the massive wealth she was accumulating as a savvy businesswoman and large property holder. During the 1850s, Pleasant became part of San Francisco's African American elite, and accordingly, she took part in organizing and financing the churches, schools, meeting spaces, and political movements that created and supported a black public culture in San Francisco.⁸⁰

Out of these social networks, political networks formed. Black men from around the state, led primarily by San Franciscans, sought to secure their suffrage and testimony rights through a Convention Movement, which they conceived of as a political body paralleling the white state legislature. Forty-seven delegates attended the First Colored Convention in 1855, which was then followed by meetings in 1856 and 1857.⁸¹ They met to organize, strategize, and mobilize. Among the projects to come out of the Convention was the state's first black newspaper, the *Mirror of the Times*, conceived as a voice for

⁷⁹ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 81; Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant"*, 36.

⁸⁰ Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant"*, 4, 49, 53 and 61.

⁸¹ Welke, “Rights of Passage,” 75; Katz, *The Black West*, 136.

California's black community, with the hope of reaching both African American and white readers.⁸²

While the African American Convention attendees took up a wide range of issues facing California's black community, historian Barbara Welke has highlighted the "distinctly masculine" character of the rhetoric and culture of the convention movement. Convention goers, for example, challenged the ban on black testimony by appealing to conceptions of manhood—the "right of a man to safeguard his home, his family, his business, his life."⁸³ Even as Gibbs, Lester, and many other of the convention-movement men made arguments based on the rights of manhood, Pleasant continued to work alongside them. She too sought to overturn discriminatory laws and expand the possibilities for black men and women in San Francisco.⁸⁴ In the coming years, Pleasant would make her own gendered claims against San Francisco's Jim Crow laws. When San Francisco streetcar drivers refused to pick up black riders, three women, Charlotte Brown, Emma Jane Turner, and Pleasant brought law suits against two of the companies. They insisted on their right *as ladies* to ride any and all of the city's streetcars, and through their own gendered assertion, they secured the rights of all black San Franciscans to board streetcars. Their claim to the public space of the streetcar, as an effort to

⁸² J. William Snorgrass, "The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900," *California History* 60 (1982 1981): 306.

⁸³ Welke, "Rights of Passage," 75. See also Martha S. Jones's discussion of the Convention movement more broadly, and specifically the ways in which women's influence and participation forced a "rethinking of the gendered character of fraternal orders, churches, and political organizations." Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), chapter 2, quote 60.

⁸⁴ Jeremiah Sanderson, who arrived in California just as the first Convention got underway, also sought to address broader issues facing black San Franciscans. He emphasized the importance of education, seeking funding and support for a public school for African American children. Jana Noel, "Jeremiah B. Sanderson," 153.

destabilize the racial and gender hierarchies governing the city, had the potential for even larger reverberations.⁸⁵

Family and Fireside

LeCount and Strong were not the only ones who sought to create and claim San Francisco as a domesticated town. Many proprietors remade their businesses too, boasting of all they had to offer families. The Franklin House, a boardinghouse for short- and long-term guests, for example, promoted their recent addition of several rooms “to be appropriated to the use of families.”⁸⁶ Likewise, C.D. Cushing's Tea Warehouse assured potential customers: “Extra English Breakfast Tea, a superior article for Families, always on hand.”⁸⁷ Hillman's Temperance House secured space near the passenger docks, moving into a waterfront previously dominated by saloons and gambling houses to offer private rooms to individual and families.⁸⁸ Just blocks from the waterfront, the proprietor of the International Hotel, David Hunt, also participated in creating a white, domestic space in the heart of the city. His eclectic group of boarders included a steamer captain, two unmarried women, a comedian at the American Theater, a book-keeper, and the dock master at the Port. Hunt advertised family suites and was among a few boardinghouses that hired a black man as the steward to serve his guests, possibly employing race as a means of reinforcing the line between the server and the served.⁸⁹ In this way, through

⁸⁵ Hudson offers a detailed discussion of the cases and legal strategies in *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant,"* 49-55; Welke, “Rights of Passage,” 80-86.

⁸⁶ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 76-77.

⁸⁷ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 52.

⁸⁸ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 76.

⁸⁹ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 113.

their physical as well as advertising presence, businesses appealing to white families sought to carve out a place within San Francisco's urban landscape.

In addition to the new, family-focused tenor of some waterfront businesses, establishments further inland underwent changes too, rooted, in fact, in the shifts in gold country that were rippling throughout the region. From the very start, the city and the mines had operated in such a symbiotic manner that an over-abundance of workers in the city tended to drive more men to the mines, while seasonal changes, either too much or too little rain, prompted men to abandon the diggings and try their luck in San Francisco. By 1853, many of the surface deposits of gold, and therefore those that individual placer miners could reach with only a pick and pan, had been cleaned out.⁹⁰ As the mines slowly emptied, many returned home or headed to newly-discovered diggings. Others, however, stayed, and San Francisco's population swelled with miners looking for new types of work. As more out-of-work miners, less gold, and a flood of consumer goods from the eastern seaboard entered the city, first merchants, and then the construction industry, and finally banks felt the market collapse.⁹¹

The entire nation, in fact, plunged into an economic depression in February, 1855, and as a speculator town, built on credit, San Francisco was especially vulnerable. When news reached San Francisco that New York City banks were faltering—the primary financiers of growth in San Francisco—a run on San Francisco banks ensued and several

⁹⁰ Samuel Bowles described the “frightful” techniques employed by large-scale mining operations in later years, highlighting the resulting “ruin and waste.” They left the “rivers choked up with the sands and stones sent down by these washings; and broad valleys of alluvial are made by a desert by the overspreading tide of hills they set afloat.” Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad--Open: How to Go: what to See* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co, 1869), 85-87; Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis*, 77.

⁹¹ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 52.

collapsed.⁹² The failure reached all sectors, with merchants declaring bankruptcy and brick-layers sitting idle. In September 1856, the *Daily Alta* estimated that three thousand of the city's fifty thousand residents were out of work.⁹³ The palpable anxiety and widespread joblessness left one commentator longing for the halcyon days of '49, when “there was enough to do, wages were high, gold was plenty” and lamenting that San Francisco's “golden age” was already behind her.⁹⁴ Even so, another insisted that San Francisco was still the best place to be, boasting, “our bad times are always better to laboring men than good times in any other land in the world.” Echoing, in some ways, LeCount and Strong's hope for San Francisco, he went on to challenge the gold-rush, get-rich-quick mentality, encouraging readers instead to make their home in California (thereby keeping the state's wealth within its borders) and peruse a modest income through steady and diligent work as a miner or farmer.⁹⁵

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁹⁴ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, xvii.

⁹⁵ Those who settled in San Francisco were most likely to be involved in commercial or agricultural industries, followed by manufacturing. Most often, however, the vision of San Francisco as a stable, domesticated city was linked to mid-nineteenth century celebrations of the yeoman farmer, leaving boosters to celebrate the farmer over the factory-hand. For a discussion of San Francisco industries, and especially the manufacturing sector, which grew during and after the Civil War, see Richard A. Walker, “Industry Builds out the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940,” in *The Manufactured Metropolis*, ed. Robert Lewis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 92–123.

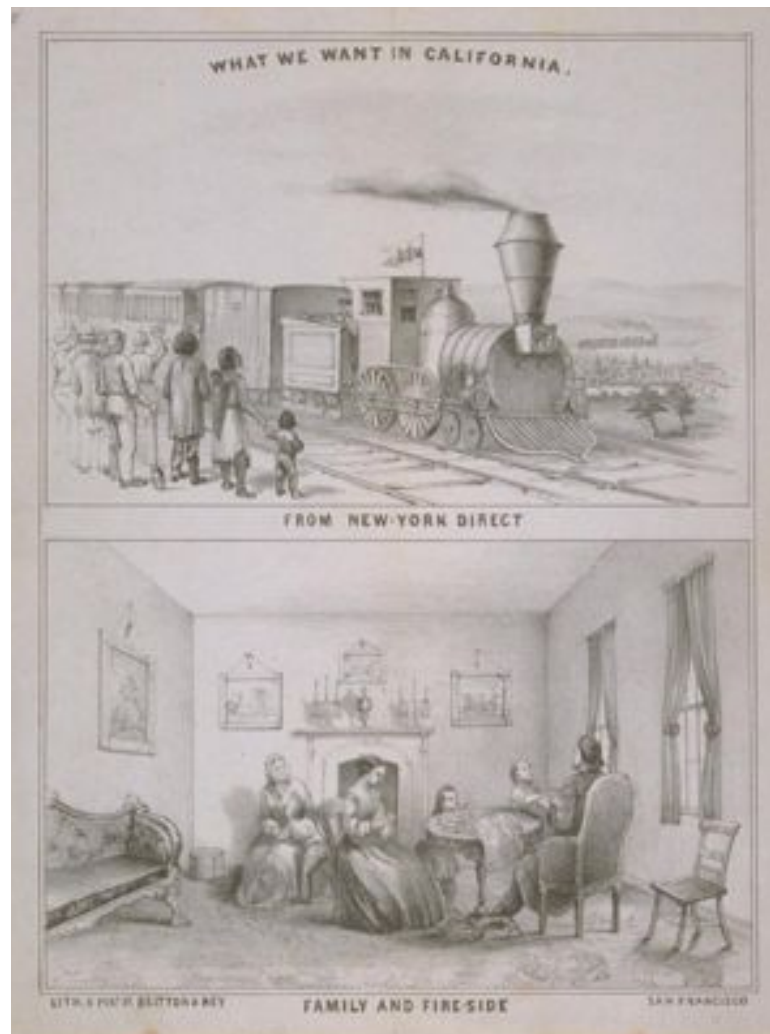


Figure 9. "What We Want in California: From New York Direct/Family and Fireside." San Francisco: Britton & Rey. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

As more commentators championed a stable domesticity as the answer to the state and city's economic woes, calls to address political corruption and violence on the streets grew more urgent as well. Many expressed their concerns through the city newspapers, which, in turn, became both a source of and forum for debate. James King of William, founder of the *Daily Evening Bulletin*, in particular, sought to cultivate a readership by

inviting readers to send their concerns to the paper for publication.⁹⁶ King, before he became a newspaper man, had been a banker, but when the banks failed, he turned to the paper as a new source of income and a mouth-piece from which to publicize and attack “the immoralities and misdemeanors of all sorts of people,” including bankers, gamblers, and thieves.⁹⁷ As King asserted, “Oh! the heart sickens at the crime and corruption among prominent and wealth (but *not* respectable) men in this city! When will the people rise in the majesty of their strength, and shake off the yoke that now oppresses them? When? We answer when a fearless and independent press, by boldly stating the truth, shall expose these things by enlightening the people.”⁹⁸ He framed the world, and the problems facing the city, in terms of absolutes. As historian Michelle Jolly has explained, according to King, “all the corrupt elements of San Francisco society came to be represented by prostitutes and gamblers—the epitome of all that was unwomanly and unmanly” on one side, and “true women and men—virtuous, respectable, and bound to one another in marriage—represented the forces of order.”⁹⁹ With the gambler and the prostitute as his archetypal villains, his notion of respectable masculinity was rooted in men’s business choices; he scorned both bankers and gamblers as corrupt risk takers. His conception of respectable femininity was predicated on his ideas about sexual morality. Readers, or at least as represented by the letters King choose to reprint, often responded enthusiastically, embracing his harsh character assessments. As one such reader wrote and King published, “Editor Bulletin:--I congratulate you upon being the first public journalist in California

⁹⁶ King added the "of William" to the end of his name in reference to his birthplace, William County, Maryland, as a way of distinguishing himself from the other James Kings. Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 55.

⁹⁷ General W. T. Sherman, “The Vigilance Committee of 1856,” *Overland Monthly*, February 1874, 107.

⁹⁸ *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 13 October 1855.

⁹⁹ Michelle E. Jolly, “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 4 (November 2004): 551.

who has had the manly independence to attack and expose fraud, wherever and in whomever you may find it. In doing which, the effect will be to elevate the standard for honesty and morality in this depraved community.”¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, through hyperbolic language and a reformer's convictions, King drew on and exasperated the many fears that circulated throughout the city—anxieties about idle, jobless men, loose women, lax law enforcement, corrupt politicians, and the prevalence of saloons—in the hope of garnering a larger audience and mobilizing it to action.¹⁰¹ For many San Franciscans, gender, and more specifically conceptions of respectable masculinity and femininity, became the language through which to articulate, debate, and understand the problems facing their city.¹⁰²

With the press abuzz (and most likely the public houses too), an episode in November 1855, with echos of the Royce-McCready standoff of a few years before, highlighted the struggle between vice and virtue—true man and womanhood—in the city. William Richardson, whose tent first marked Yerba Buena and who eventually became the U.S. Marshal for Northern California, and his wife attended a performance at the American Theater. The theater was, in fact, just a few blocks southeast of Richardson's first abode, now Portsmouth Square. Built atop newly made-land, it was one block south of Commercial street and not far from the city's other theaters, which clustered together

¹⁰⁰ *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 1 November 1855.

¹⁰¹ Josiah Royce, *California, from the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco: A Study in American Character* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886) 340-342; Jolly, “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco,” 549-550.

¹⁰² For more on King and the ways in which he anchored the debate about the future of the city to notions of respectable manhood and womanhood, see Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, chapter 9; Ryan, *Women in Public*, 95-109; Ethington, *The Public City*, 150-155; Michelle E. Jolly, “Sex, Vigilantism, and San Francisco in 1856,” *Common-place* 3, no. 4 (July 2003) and “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco.”

in the blocks between the Long Wharf and Portsmouth Square.¹⁰³ Cora, a well-known gambler, also attended, accompanied by his mistress, Belle Ryan, the madam of a Pike Street brothel.¹⁰⁴ The once-virtuous Ryan fell from good graces, it seems, just as so many others: as a girl of seventeen she fell in love with a handsome man, who betrayed her. Her father too abandoned her. When he threw her out of the house, she left for New Orleans to have her baby, who died shortly after birth. The owner of one of New Orleans's most glamorous brothels, a "gilded house of pleasure," found Ryan sad and broken. The madam invited Ryan to live and work in her brothel. It was then that Cora met Ryan, and in making her his mistress, he saved her from a life of prostitution, or at least, so the story went. Cora began hearing and then dreaming of the gold in San Francisco—not, however, gold painstakingly panned from icy streams but rather the gold that traded hands in gambling halls. Ryan devotedly followed. She was again by Cora's side one night in November, 1855, when they went to the theater to see the latest show from a pantomime group that had taken the city by storm.¹⁰⁵

The American Theater offered three seating options, cheap seats in the pit, choice seats in the balcony, and private seats (obscured by curtains) at the back of the pit, intended for men taking in the show with a prostitute or mistress.¹⁰⁶ The Richardsons, then, were appalled when they spotted the Cora and Ryan just a few seats away, rather

¹⁰³ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 235.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Phelps, "All hands have gone downtown": Urban Places in Gold Rush California," *California History* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 133; Jolly, "The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco," 553; Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 83.

¹⁰⁵ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 110-115.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 115. For more on theater architecture and its role in dividing the audience, see Mary C. Henderson, "Scenography, Stagecraft, and Architecture in the American Theatre," in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre: Beginnings to 1870*, ed. Don B. Wilmeth and C. W. E. Bigsby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

than tucked away and out of sight. Richardson demanded that the theater manager expel Ryan, insisting that his wife should not be expected to abide the presence of such a woman.¹⁰⁷ In this moment, the widely circulating anxieties about women in public and “public” women became tangible, manifesting in the righteous Mrs. Richardson—subjected, as King would later describe, to “the breath of the harlot”—standing alongside the fallen Arabella Ryan. The theater manager refused Richardson's demands, possibly to protect his pocketbook, wagering that Cora's set were the more valuable customers, or maybe it was a less-calculated response, simply intended to challenge Richardson and his elite pretensions.

The Richardson-Cora spat sparked a larger debate among theater owners.

Whereas the manger at the American Theater enforced his three-tier ticket system simply according to ability to pay, the Metropolitan manager, John Torrence, imposed a social and moral criteria as well, promising to “prevent the admission of any disreputable females into such parts of the buildings as are occupied by respectable ladies.”¹⁰⁸

Torrence, accordingly, aligned himself with the broader reform efforts, which sought to instill order by categorizing and demarcating urban spaces, and in particular, women's presence within them.¹⁰⁹ The American, instead, hired a police officer to keep order, or at

¹⁰⁷ Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 143.

¹⁰⁸ Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 144. San Francisco, both in the wide range of performances that graced its stages and the heterogenous audiences who attended, was in keeping with other nineteenth-century cities, as Lawrence Levine has explored. Levine also traced the emergence and struggles over rigid cultural categories, which divided performances and audiences according to high and low culture. Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁹ Torrence had only recently purchased and assumed management of the Metropolitan from Catherine Sinclair, who opened the theater in 1853 and ran it until early 1855. One wonders what stance she might have taken on “disreputable” and “respectable” women had she still been the manager. Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 151.

least, be at the ready if needed.¹¹⁰ In the press and in public spaces, some San Franciscans sought to disentangle the mixing and mingling that had marked San Francisco's early years, by remaking the masculine world of the gold-rush into a domesticated city, made safe both by and for women. Sarah Royce, undoubtedly, applauded.

If the theater was a transitional space, a space some men thought fit for their wives and others fit for their mistresses, saloons remained a male domain. After a brief encounter in the street, Richardson sought out Cora at a saloon. Drunk himself, many later said that Richardson hoped to find Cora impaired as well. When the conversation took a violent turn, the two men took their fight to the street where Cora shot and killed Richardson.¹¹¹

Seemingly already ready for action, Sam Brannan gathered together a crowd at the Oriental Hotel, the boardinghouse where Richardson had resided and from which Mary Ball had watched the committee's actions years earlier, wondering whether she would escape San Francisco with her soul intact. Without hesitation, Brannan proclaimed Cora's guilt and called for his life. The city jailers anticipated this reaction, however, and guards protected the jailhouse, ensuring that Cora made it to his January court date.¹¹² Ryan, meanwhile, drew on the profits from her successful brothel to hire one of the best defense attorneys and pay bribes to the judge and jury, all in an effort to secure a ruling of self-defense.¹¹³ The court trial ended in a hung jury, torn between a verdict of murder and manslaughter. Alongside the courtroom hearing, a trial also took place in the press, which

¹¹⁰ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 211.

¹¹¹ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 84; Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 198; Jolly, "The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco," 553.

¹¹² Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 120-123.

¹¹³ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 35-37.

unequivocally branded Cora a murder.¹¹⁴ When news of the bribes leaked out, Cora came, for many, to epitomize depraved masculinity and the intersection of gambling, prostitution, and political corruption. As Cora awaited a re-trial, for James King, Richardson's death and Cora's chance at freedom exemplified all that was wrong in San Francisco. Justice, as defined by King and his readers, became a rallying cry.

In this volatile climate, in which the language of class, virtue, gender, and citizenship converged and erupted in both printed and physical altercations, King redoubled his commitment to reform, proclaiming himself the “champion of the better classes.”¹¹⁵ Both addressing and flattering his audience, King directed his appeal “to every wife and mother and respectable man in the community, and right nobly they do sustain us!”¹¹⁶ Among those King praised was a letter-writer, characterized by King as “one of the most respected merchants” and a “married man,” a pillar of the community in King’s estimation. “Unless,” the letter writer concluded, “there is some protection for life—and those dens of harlots which are scattered all along our thoroughfares are broken up—I shall deem it duty I owe to my family to return to the Atlantic States.”¹¹⁷ “C.,” who withheld his full name from the letter, sought to cloak his call for extra-legal violence under the guise of respectability, the duty of a husband and father. King also invited his female readers, speaking as wives, mothers, and daughters, to share their thoughts on morality and prostitution.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 194.

¹¹⁵ Sherman, “The Vigilance Committee of 1856,” 107.

¹¹⁶ “A Disreputable Houses,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 26 November 1855.

¹¹⁷ “A Vigilance Committee,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 20 November 1855.

¹¹⁸ Ryan, *Women in Public*, 105.

In response to the Richardson-Cora standoff, and perhaps hoping to quell calls for extra-legal action, a government-appointed committee produced a report on prostitution in the city.¹¹⁹ Seemingly shocked and horrified by what they found, the members declared, “Prostitution in all its grades is now found upon almost every street, not hidden and ashamed, but bold, vaunting and threatening.” Evoking the specter of the Richardson-Cora meeting, they insisted, “a virtuous woman cannot walk our streets without meeting the obscene stare and being jostled by harlots.”¹²⁰ At stake was not simply the existence of prostitution in the city but its conspicuous visibility. King, with the authority of a newspaper editor and not a Board of Supervisor, proclaimed that disreputable houses “must be taken out of sight.”¹²¹ Much like the editorial from “C.,” the Special Committee also called on men to act as “fathers, husbands and brothers,” urging them to “banish the hordes of prostitutes which literally swarm upon our streets and squares, if not entirely from our midst, at least into obscurity.”¹²² The special committee recommended harsher penalties against madams, prostitutes, and customers, which the board of supervisors approved.¹²³

Armed with this new legislation and urged on by King and his readers, the city prosecutor drew up cases against brothel owners and workers; the cases stalled, however,

¹¹⁹ A week before the Board of Supervisors released their report, King had demanded a response from the Board, printing the ominous words, “if they don’t do it *drum them out of town!*” Almost certainly the Special Committee had already begun their investigation, but likely King’s agitation nevertheless shaped their response. “A Vigilance Committee,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 20 November 1855.

¹²⁰ “Report of the Special and Judiciary Committee, upon Houses of Ill Fame,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 28 November 1855.

¹²¹ “A Disreputable Houses.”

¹²² “Report of the Special and Judiciary Committee, upon Houses of Ill Fame,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 28 November 1855.

¹²³ “To The Evening Bulletin:—Your fearless articles on ‘houses of ill fame’ have partially stirred up the ‘police’ to their duty,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 5 December 1855.

under a laggard police and judiciary.¹²⁴ In addition to being too lenient overall, one of King's admiring readers insisted that the municipal police and judiciary went after the “small fry,” while “the 'big fish',” the brothel owners, “are permitted to roam abroad as usual.”¹²⁵ Tying together prostitution, gambling, and political corruption, as the central evils facing San Francisco, King continued to call for reform. He blamed the city's political and judicial officials for the city's widespread immorality, for creating, as he saw it, a place in which men such as Cora could thrive and quite possibly get away with murder. He set his editorial ire on the city's politicians, among them James P. Casey, an appointed inspector of elections but known instead to be a “ballot-box stuffer.” Voters, as Philip Ethington has explored, regarded polls as “a civic shrine”; they took umbrage when men such as Casey, appointed to oversee honest elections, were instead the perpetrators of election fraud.¹²⁶ Determined to delegitimize Casey, King uncovered and published sordid details about Casey's criminal past, including a two-year stay in New York's Sing Sing prison. Outraged, Casey visited King at his office to discuss the matter, but King simply dismissed him. The two next met along Montgomery street. Casey brandished his pistol, warned King to defend himself, took aim, and fired. Casey's shot entered King's chest, near his shoulder, just as he crossed in front of George Parker's “gentleman's saloon” at the Bank Exchange.¹²⁷ On-lookers carried King into a nearby building to rest and receive medical care, and Casey turned himself in at City Hall.

¹²⁴ Ryan, *Women in Public*, 105.

¹²⁵ To The Evening Bulletin:—Your fearless articles on "houses of ill fame" have partially stirred up the "police" to their duty," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 5 December 1855.

¹²⁶ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 126; Ethington, *The Public City*, 117.

¹²⁷ Frank Morton Todd and Greater San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, *The Chamber of Commerce Handbook for San Francisco, Historical and Descriptive; a Guide for Visitors ...* (San Francisco: San Francisco Chamber of commerce under the direction of the Publicity committee, 1914), 114.

There, he joined Cora, still imprisoned and awaiting a retrial. Just outside the jail, city police officers stood guard, in order to keep angry citizens out as much as Casey and Cora in. A crowd gathered along Montgomery, buzzing with talk of reviving the Vigilance Committee of 1851.¹²⁸

A City United, A City Divided

The Vigilance Committee officially “reorganized” the next day, May 15, 1856.¹²⁹ They once again set up rooms from which to administer their own form of justice; this time, member Miers Truett offered his warehouse, from which he ordinarily ran a wholesale liquor business, for the Committee Rooms. In the end, they seized an entire block of Sacramento street, near the waterfront between Davis and Front streets, for their Fort Vigilance.¹³⁰ Their mission, however, differed slightly, in that while the first committee focused on civil crimes, the reorganized committee targeted political corruption, which they saw as enabling and perpetuating San Francisco's violence. In the days and weeks following the reconstitution of the Vigilance Committee, thousands of San Francisco men joined, with membership rolls reaching six to eight thousand by the end of the summer.¹³¹ When not at Fort Vigilance, the members joined patrolling militias that marched, in tight columns, “six or eight abreast,” through the streets.¹³²

¹²⁸ Sherman, “The Vigilance Committee of 1856,” 107-108.

¹²⁹ The literature on the vigilance committees is immense and reaches back to some of the earliest accounts of the city. For a review of the scholarship, see especially Robert M. Senkewicz, *Vigilantes in Gold Rush San Francisco* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1985), 203-232 and Philip Ethington, *The Public City*, 90-92.

¹³⁰ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 221; Lell Hawley Woolley, *California, 1849-1913: or, The Rambling Sketches and Experiences of Sixty-four Years' Residence in that State* (Oakland: De Witt & Snelling, 1913), 14; Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 6.

Archeologist Allen Pastron has reflected on uncovering the former Fort Vigilance site in “Digging San Francisco: Allen Pastron reflects on a quarter-century of work,” *Archeology*, 17 April 2007.

¹³¹ Ethington, *The Public City*, 89.

¹³² Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 54-55.

King died just a few days after the vigilantes reformed; the Committee had already set their sights on avenging his murder and executing Casey. The vigilantes surrounded the city jail to claim Casey. While there, they seized Cora as well, since he had, as of yet, escaped retribution. They moved quickly to carry out their double execution, selecting the exact date and hour to coincide with King's funeral procession. In the minutes before Cora's death, Belle Ryan gained admittance to Fort Vigilance, determined to become Cora's wife. The vigilantes complied, but within moments of reciting his nuptial vows, Cora hung next to Casey from a beams extending out of the second-story, front windows of the Committee rooms. Standing atop Hunt's family-friendly International Hotel, California's governor looked on, knowing that the state-militia he could muster was no match for the vigilantes. With King's funeral procession passing by, the men, women, and children who flooded the streets to pay their respects looked on as well.¹³³

In the following days, Cora kept a solitary vigil for her deceased husband, watching over his coffin until it could be safely buried in a Mission Dolores plot. Anger towards the Coras still ran hot in the streets of San Francisco. And, though clearly meaningful for Cora, her final-hour transition from mistress to wife did little to cleanse her soiled reputation.¹³⁴ The mood in the streets also percolated into the press, with strident editorials calling for her to leave town. One such editorial, signed by the “Many Women of San Francisco,” began by thanking the committee and then declared: “But, gentlemen, one thing more must be done: Belle Cora must be requested to leave this city. The women of San Francisco have no bitterness toward her, nor do they ask it on her

¹³³ Sherman, “The Vigilance Committee of 1856,” 110-111.

¹³⁴ “Funeral of James King of William: Vigilance Committee: Casey and Cora Execution,” *Daily Alta California*, 23 May 1856; Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 143-145.

account, but for the good of those who remain, and as an example to others. Every virtuous woman asks that her influence and example be removed from us. The truly virtuous of our sex will not feel that the Vigilance committee have done their *whole* during till they comply with the request of many women of San Francisco.”¹³⁵ Thus, what began as a request that Cora leave the American Theater, thereby distinguishing virtuous and base women and designating public spaces accordingly, ended with a request that Cora vacate the city all together, in order than she might not tarnish the good name of the rest of the city's women. In the end, the Committee took no action, and Cora remained in the city. According to one account, she became a recluse and rarely left her house, while another account insisted that she maintained her luxurious brothel and defiantly walked the city's main thoroughfares, making her presence known.¹³⁶

Many women, despite this defeat in expelling Cora and though excluded from formal membership, continued to actively support the vigilante movement.¹³⁷ They wrote letters to the *Bulletin* to praise the vigilante movement and shape its agenda. The *Bulletin* continued to be a receptive audience for their letters, now under the leadership of James' brother Thomas King. One Committee leader recognized the importance of women's efforts, proclaiming during a pro-vigilante rally, “The ladies are always right, and their endorsement of any cause would insure success; and it is enough to me to know that the ladies are with the Committee.”¹³⁸ As the summer wore on, however, and the heart of the debate moved out of the pages of the papers, discussions in which women took part, and

¹³⁵ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 149.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 149; Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 37.

¹³⁷ Ryan, *Women in Public*, 106-107.

¹³⁸ As quoted by Jolly, “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco,” 563.

into the Committee headquarters, which barred women's entrance, their power diminished.¹³⁹ They still sought, however, to make their presence known. Six hundred women, for example, gathered just outside Fort Vigilance in a mass demonstration of support.¹⁴⁰ The Ladies of Trinity Church, meanwhile, found a way, at least symbolically, to get inside the Fort. They presented the Vigilance Committee with a blue-satin banner, thanking them for their “protection of life and property of citizens and residents of the city of San Francisco,” and perhaps seeking, in a small way, to reinsert themselves in the conversation by claiming wall-space in the Committee Room and remind the members of the women's support and concerns.¹⁴¹

Protecting the citizenry, as lauded by the Trinity Church women, was at the center of the vigilante agenda. It was, however, a campaign centered on the violent enforcement of republicanism and respectability.¹⁴² During the 1850s, as Ethington has explained, San Franciscans hewed to a “republican liberalism hinged ultimately on belief in a single, identifiable public good.”¹⁴³ In this way, San Francisco as a family-town took on yet another meaning—not simply the most literal meaning of a city comprised of settled

¹³⁹ Jolly, “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco,” 567-568.

¹⁴⁰ Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 106.

¹⁴¹ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 40. Several historians have taken up women’s political actions, both by reconceptualizing what constitutes politics and seeking out women’s public actions. See, for example, Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the 19th-century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Glenna Matthews, *The Rise of Public Woman: Woman’s Power and Woman’s Place in the United States, 1630-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000); Martha S. Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹⁴² Erickson, “Welcome to Sodom,” 554; Ethington, *The Public City*, 153.

¹⁴³ Ethington has traced changes in this political culture over time, arguing that by the turn of the century, San Franciscans instead embraced “pluralistic liberalism” predicated on the “existence of multiple, or plural, public goods.” *The Public City*, 8-9.

families rather than of bachelor miners—the image of San Francisco as a family town also spoke to the conception of republicanism as a single, patriarchal vision of the public good, handed down by the vigilantes. In claiming and remaking San Francisco as town of dedicated republican citizens, the vigilantes also participated in the broader re-conception of the California gold-rush that was already underway. No longer a wild west world based on get-rich-quick schemes, luck, chance, or ruthless individualism, early placer miners were instead encouraged to become men of “strong hearts and willing hands,” guided by “industry, perseverance, energy, hope,” and maybe just a little bit of luck.¹⁴⁴ Taking extreme measures to enforce this reformulation, the vigilantes sought to expel from the country those they believed to be of bad character, putting them on out-bound ships.¹⁴⁵ Among those they discussed banishing was Tom Maguire, who had owned and operated the much-celebrated Jenny Lind theaters, often pointed to as evidence of San Francisco's refined, cosmopolitan nature. Earlier in 1856, he had opened Maguire's Opera House; with plush interiors and a mix of sophisticated and bawdy shows, those most-aborred by the vigilantes—politicians, gamblers, and prostitutes—often attended Maguire's shows, but so too did the rest of San Francisco. Possibly even more condemning, Maguire's theater, like each iteration before, adjoined a saloon and gambling hall, the Diana.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, the vigilantes ordered Maguire to leave the state; only after he attested to his “honorable and happy household” did the vigilantes grudgingly allow him to remain.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, xiii.

¹⁴⁵ For a list of those the Vigilance Committee executed or exiled, see Lell Hawley Woolley, *California, 1849-1913*, 21-22.

¹⁴⁶ Foster and Foster, *A Dangerous Woman*, 146.

¹⁴⁷ Ethington, *The Public City*, 159.

Uniting under the banner, “No Creed, No Party, No Sectional Issues,” the membership rosters included a wide-range of San Franciscan men, though the members were disproportionately from the upper and middling classes, such as merchants, store owners, clerks, salesmen, and skilled workers.¹⁴⁸ Merchants who showed reluctance to join often faced threats of withholding business from those who had already enlisted.¹⁴⁹ While, as their motto declared, it may have been an ethnically diverse group, in refusing to take a stand on “sectional issues,” and therefore slavery, the vigilantes undoubtedly alienated black San Franciscans. Gibbs, in a letter written to the *Bulletin* a few years later, drew on the familial language of republicanism that animated the vigilantes to challenge their narrow conception, positing:

I admit the right of a family or nation to say, who from without, shall be a component part of its household or community; but the application of this principle should work no hardship to a colored man, for he was born in the great American family, and is your black brother—ugly though he may be—and is interested in its weal or its woe, is taxed to support it, and having made up his mind to say with the family, his right to the benefit of just government is as good as that of his pale face brother who clamors for his expatriation.¹⁵⁰

He later went on to question the idea of republicanism altogether, suggesting that an emphasis on the public good may not adequately address the needs of all members of society. He provocatively asked readers: “is a republican form of government the most conducive in securing the blessings of liberty of which protection to human life is the chief?” Can a majority adequately protect a minority, he wondered. In so doing, he seemed to be speaking more to his present moment than addressing the vigilantes from decades before. Gibbs recorded his thoughts on San Francisco's early extralegal

¹⁴⁸ Jolly, “The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco,” 563; Ethington, *The Public City*, 92-97. Though, as Erickson has noted, San Franciscans born in at least 17 different countries applied to join the Vigilance Committee. Erickson, “Welcome to Sodom,” 554-555.

¹⁴⁹ Jacobson, *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 133.

¹⁵⁰ *Bulletin*, 5 April 1858 as quoted by Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 242.

campaigns at the turn of the century, as another form of vigilante violence, white mobs lynching black men, proliferated and took the opportunity to draw on San Francisco the past to offer a lesson for the present.¹⁵¹

Returning, however, to 1856 San Francisco, together the vigilantes, municipal reformers, and vocal citizens sought to regulate both people and places. In part, they sought to impose their vision of morality on the city to demarcate and segregate public women and places of vice in such a way that women deemed respectable might venture out without encountering either. Regulating the women and the spaces went hand-in-hand, so as a part of the 1856 anti-prostitution laws, municipal mandates also restricted women's presence in saloons to those working as waitresses or performers.¹⁵²

The vigilantes and their supporters also set their sights on gambling halls. One outraged San Franciscan called upon the Vigilance Committee and the *Bulletin* to take action, declaring, “let the Committee at once seize every professional gambler—the rich ones especially—and banish them forever from our State.”¹⁵³ While reform-minded San Franciscans expressed their vitriol and blamed gambling for the city's erratic boom-bust cycles, gaming halls had in fact been among the city's first successful businesses. One early historian of San Francisco declared them “one of the most prominent branches of business in the city.”¹⁵⁴ They had been among the first businesses to rake in profits and build sturdy and showy (and some even said fire-proof) brick buildings, which became both the visual and social anchors of the city.

¹⁵¹ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 57.

¹⁵² Pauline Jacobson, *San Francisco Bulletin*, 4 August 1917 as quoted in Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 5.

¹⁵³ “Gambling--What is to Be Done?,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 25 July 1856.

¹⁵⁴ John Shertzer Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1878), 235.

The vigilantes, nevertheless, took action, shutting down, for example, the iconic Bella Union. Long-time saloon-keeper, Samuel Tetlow, later reopened the Bella Union as a melodeon, or concert saloon.¹⁵⁵ Games of chance continued to take place within the city's gambling halls turned melodeons, but in more discrete and covert ways—the clinking of coins that had once wafted through the streets grew muffled. In this way, gambling, which had been a hallmark of gold-rush San Francisco, and in fact central to the young city's economy, became, at least for those who sought to claim respectability, a shameful memory. Nodding to a wilder past, one 1856 commentator admitted that while “it is fashionable and right now to denounce the habit,” many of the the '49-ers gambled in their day.¹⁵⁶ Remaking and reframing San Francisco into a white, American, family town, proved to be a violent, expansive, and on-going project, predicated on isolating and obscuring the places in which the city originated, even while leveraging the city's maritime past into a grand, new commercial future. In many ways, it was a project in its earliest stages—the Bella Union's best days were still ahead and the anti-vice campaigns had just begun.

As these demarcations deepened and the city grew, the commercial center moved southward and Market Street took on greater importance. The earliest section of town, along the shifting shoreline of the cove, began its transition from an amalgamated vice district to one overtaken by saloons, dance halls, and “temples of chance,” marketed instead as melodeons. Even the Atheneum Institute, the center of San Francisco's black community, which for a time had been able to accommodate the saloon-crowd on the first

¹⁵⁵ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 125; Parker, *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*, 97.

¹⁵⁶ Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, xvii.

floor and library-goers on the second, became, in 1857, two separate meeting places. The Atheneum Saloon remained along the Plaza, while the Atheneum Institution, with its abolitionist meetings and talks of temperance, found a more dignified meeting place.¹⁵⁷ In this way, San Francisco grew more segregated, owing in part to the vigilantes' and reformers' efforts to define and divide the city's people and public spaces according to their own moral code. The divisions, of course, were not as neat as they hoped, as saloons-owners filled back rooms with covert game tables and San Franciscans themselves proved to be defiantly mobile.

After months spent seeking to divide the city, the Vigilance Committee concluded their reign with a formal display of unity. On August 18, 1856, the vigilantes marched through the streets, in orderly rows and columns, with bayonets and muskets held high. Businesses throughout the city closed and those along the parade route decorated their store-fronts, with flags and banners of support, LeCount and Strong's bookstore among them. "The whole city," the *Daily Alta* proclaimed the next day, "seemed to have put on its gayest attire, and signs of rejoicing were everywhere to be seen and heard."¹⁵⁸ Many of the city's men watched from the street, and some even took part, falling in line with the vigilantes and marching behind. The city's women packed instead into balconies to watch from above, "waving their handkerchiefs and showering bouquets upon the officers and men." By the end, the *Alta* reported, "thousands of the muskets in the ranks were eventually ornamented with flowers placed in the muzzle."¹⁵⁹ Though kept at a distance once again, San Francisco's women made a mark on the vigilantes.

¹⁵⁷ Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 101-102.

¹⁵⁸ "Grand Parade and Review of the Vigilance Committee!," *Daily Alta California*, 19 August 1856.

¹⁵⁹ "Grand Parade and Review of the Vigilance Committee!"

In yet another display of unity, cohesion, and boosterism, George Fardon produced and published in 1856 a photographic album of the city, entitled *Photographs of the Most beautiful Views and Public Buildings of San Francisco*. Fardon's *Album* collected several images of the city that portrayed San Francisco as a socially and economically safe, stable, and thriving city. As Peter Hales has argued, Fardon's work was one of unequivocal municipal boosterism, in which Fardon meticulously addressed “each of the prevailing midcentury prejudices about the western instant city.”¹⁶⁰ Like other boosters before him, LeCount and Strong, for example, Fardon constructed San Francisco as a safe and welcoming domestic environment in an effort to bolster the city's commercial standing. He did this in part by emptying his images of people, such that only the city's infrastructure remained. Whereas the vigilantes sought to banish those who did not fit their vision for San Francisco, Fardon exorcized San Franciscans from his landscape portraits all together. This supported his portrayal of San Francisco as a controlled, cohesive space, unfettered by emerging social hierarchies or contests over public and commercial spaces. Instead, viewers could populate the city according to their own vision of urban harmony. As Hales has explained, “The city that viewer saw through Fardon's book was one defined by the romantic concept of the beautiful—an orderly, stately realm whose unifying characteristic was harmony among the various elements of business, government, and culture as well as the visual harmony of the 'public buildings' Fardon so effectively advertised.”¹⁶¹ Ultimately, in allaying fears about San Francisco as a volatile, gold-rush town, and portraying, it instead as a stable, American city, Fardon

¹⁶⁰ Peter Bacon Hales, *Silver Cities: Photographing American Urbanization, 1839-1939*, Revised. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 79.

¹⁶¹ Hales, *Silver Cities*, 86.

participated in the vigilante project.¹⁶² In summarizing the vigilantes' goals, one observer wrote, "The men who composed the Vigilance Committee were determined to demonstrate to the whole country that San Francisco was and is as now an American town."¹⁶³ The *Annals* authors agreed, confirming San Francisco as an "American town" with boasts of the city's widespread "domestic comforts," its "elegant and handsomely-furnished homes," "beautiful gas-light," and bountiful dinner tables.¹⁶⁴ Though promoters such as LeCount and Fardon were eager to proclaim San Francisco as an "American town" and a rival to any eastern city, their relentless puffery and carefully-staged pictures suggested instead how far the city still had to go. An overcrowded Long Wharf, for example, strewn with boxes and rotting produce and showing signs of wear and disrepair, still greeted those coming and going from the city.

The New El Dorado

After the official disbandment of the Vigilante Committee, efforts to entrench and enforce social hierarchies continued. In 1858, the *San Francisco Herald* printed an anonymous editorial letter that demanded the removal of Sarah Lester, the daughter of Mifflin Gibbs's business partner Peter Lester, from the all-white primary school for the children in her neighborhood. The letter-writer insisted that fifteen-year-old Lester should attend the African American school instead. The letter ignited a firestorm, in which some demanded that Lester be removed immediately, while others argued that because of her

¹⁶² For more on the cultural work of antebellum city views, see Jonathan Prude's discussion, "Engaging Urban Panoramas: City Views of the Antebellum North," *Common-place* 7, no. 3 (April 2007).

¹⁶³ William Heath Davis, *Sixty Years in California: A History of Events and Life in California* (San Francisco: A.J. Leary, 1889), 638.

¹⁶⁴ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 548.

stellar academic record, she should be allowed to remain. The School Board stepped in to rule on the matter. Although they decided that the color line must be enforced, they hesitated to expel Sarah. The Lesters, did not, however, idly sit by; likely in an effort to protect their daughter from such a public controversy, they withdrew Sarah from the school themselves.¹⁶⁵

Amidst such a personal reminder of the bounds of freedom in San Francisco, black San Franciscans more generally faced set-backs and disappointments as well. In 1854, in *People v. Hall*, the California Supreme Court both upheld the 1850 law dictating, "No Black, or Mulatto person, or Indian, shall be allowed to give evidence in favor of, or against a white man" and expanded it to include Chinese immigrants as well.¹⁶⁶ In addition to seeking to overturn anti-suffrage and -testimony laws, San Francisco's black leaders also sought to repeal California's fugitive slave act, which the state legislature passed in 1852 to bolster the federal act.¹⁶⁷

Black San Franciscans seeking greater rights did have some victories, both in and outside of the court of law. In 1856, Mrs. Thompson, a Virginian slave owner, traveled by steamer to San Francisco with the woman she had enslaved, Mrs. Jane Elizabeth Whiting, and Whiting's three children. Realizing that she was on her way to a "free" state, Mrs.

¹⁶⁵ Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 170-171. For more on the racial segregation of African American students in California schools, and especially the legal mandates that dictated segregation, see Noel, "Jeremiah B. Sanderson," 152.

¹⁶⁶ Sucheng Chan, "A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush," in *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People, Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California*, edited by Kevin Starr and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 76.

¹⁶⁷ California, as Clyde Duniway has explained, was one of two states to reinforce the federal act with their own legislation. He summarized the act, writing, "The California fugitive-slave act in 1852 provided not merely that State officers and citizens must assist in the return of fugitives from labor to the States in which their service was claimed to be due, but (in the fourth section) that slaves who had been brought into California voluntarily by their masters before the admission of the State into the union might be reclaimed by their masters and taken back to their respective slave States by the same processes and under the same penalties as if there were really fugitive slaves." Duniway, "Slavery in California After 1848," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1905* (Washington, D.C., 1906), 245.

Thompson demanded that the Whitings present themselves as free servants. A group of abolitionists traveling on the same steamer discovered their true status; perhaps Jane Whiting confided in them or maybe her children unwittingly revealed their condition. They, in turn, assured Whiting that since California was a free state, she and her children would be free upon arrival—as those on the ground already knew, however, the Whitings' future was much more precarious. The abolitionists aboard the ship alerted San Francisco's free black community of the Whitings' impending arrival; they greeted the steamer and shuttled the Whitings to the “Harper & West” boardinghouse, among the black-owned boardinghouses in the city.¹⁶⁸ With the assistance and guidance of an engaged group of black San Franciscans, the Whitings changed their name to Freeman. Jane Freeman secured paid work, and the children remained inside and out of sight as much as possible. Despite Thompson's efforts to locate them, the Freeman's escaped detection. Eventually, one of the other steamboat passengers spotted the children playing and wrote to Thompson, who had since joined her husband in Petaluma. By that point, she did not try to recover them. Mrs. Thompson and Ms. Freeman did, however, meet again, fifteen years later on the streets of San Francisco.¹⁶⁹

While Jane Whiting Freeman's story suggested a hopeful future for enslaved men and women brought to California, Archy Lee's experience revealed how tenuous this freedom actually was. When Charles Stovall, a Mississippi man, brought an enslaved

¹⁶⁸ William West, with the help of Mary Ellen Pleasant, established his boarding house as a safehouse for runaway slaves. Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant"*, 35.

¹⁶⁹ Delilah Leontium Beasley, *The Negro trail blazers of California: a compilation of records from the California archives in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, in Berkeley; and from the diaries, old papers, and conversations of old pioneers in the State of California. It is a True Record of Facts, as They Pertain to the History of the Pioneer and Present Day Negroes of California* (Los Angeles, 1919), 91-92; Nancy J. Taniguchi, “Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush,” *California History* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 161-162.

Archy Lee with him to California, Lee claimed his freedom; he was, however, apprehended and jailed. In 1858, his case reached the California Supreme Court, which ruled that according to state law Lee should be free, but they nevertheless returned him to the legal custody of Stovall.¹⁷⁰ First Sacramento's and then San Francisco's black community, joined by white abolitionists too, erupted in protest. They devised numerous plans that included actions both in and outside of the courtroom to secure Lee's freedom, aided, in part, by George Dennis, who helped pay Lee's legal fees.¹⁷¹ Stovall's legal counsel, which sought to return an enslaved Lee to Mississippi, remained determined as well. As a final desperate measure, they sought to usurp state law by evoking the federal Fugitive Slave act. They called upon the Federal Commissioner, William Penn Johnston, to hear the case. After yet another trial, Johnston finally proclaimed Lee a free man. San Francisco's black residents celebrated.¹⁷² Several state legislators later pointed to the protests for Lee's freedom as a disruption to the social order and, therefore, justification for added measures to discourage African Americans from settling in California.¹⁷³

With the anti-testimony and anti-suffrage laws still in place, new anti-immigration proposals before the legislature, and the personal sting of Sarah Lester's treatment, the promise and allure San Francisco had held nearly a decade before seemed to be fading.

¹⁷⁰ The State Supreme Court judges based their decision on state law, which asserted the illegality of slavery, rather than on the 1852 California fugitive slave act, which stipulated that the state's officials and citizens must aid in the return of those alleged to be fugitive slaves. Even as they supposedly upheld California as "free" state, they made exceptions that served to protect Stovall's ownership claims and re-enslave Lee. Duniway, "Slavery in California after 1848," 246-247.

¹⁷¹ Rudolph M. Lapp, "Jeremiah B. Sanderson: Early California Negro Leader," *The Journal of Negro History* 53, no. 4 (October 1968): 321-333.

¹⁷² Duniway, "Slavery in California after 1848"; Katz, *The Black West*, 128; Rudolph M. Lapp, *Archy Lee: a California fugitive slave case* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1969); Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 148-154.

¹⁷³ B. Gordon Wheeler, *Black California: the history of African-Americans in the Golden State* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1993), 94.

“We had no complaint as to business patronage in the State of California,” Gibbs later explained, claiming to be speaking on behalf of San Francisco's black elite. “But,” he continued, “there was ever present that specter of oath denial and disenfranchisement; the disheartening consciousness that while our existence was tolerated, we were powerless to appeal to law for the protection of life or property when assailed.”¹⁷⁴ Then, news of gold arrived, stirring hope for a new future.

Early in 1858, the discovery of gold was made in the Fraser River, in northwestern Canada, which was quickly organized into British Columbia.¹⁷⁵ Before they set off, as so many had done when they first headed west, San Francisco's black leaders sent a delegation to meet with British Columbia's governor; he assured them that they would receive “all the rights and protections” of citizenship and encouraged them to become integrated members in the community, rather than establishing a community apart.¹⁷⁶ After a decade of seeking to expand Californians' definition of the “great American family” and become more fully a part of society in San Francisco, it was, no doubt, a difficult decision to leave.¹⁷⁷ Jeremiah Sanderson, for example, who had worked alongside Gibbs in the convention-movement, chose to remain in California and continue his work to improve public schools for African American children.¹⁷⁸ Having left the abolition lecture circuit eight years before to come west, Gibbs likely anticipated the

¹⁷⁴ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 63.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁷⁶ Katz, *The Black West*, 81.

¹⁷⁷ Michele Mitchell has explored the complicated question of colonization for African Americans during the mid-nineteenth-century. She has explained the stance taken by Martin Delany, in many ways Gibbs's contemporary, who, “took pains to distinguish between colonization, which he viewed as the racist removal of blacks from the United States, and emigration, which he considered independent initiatives by blacks to leave the United States.” Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 23.

¹⁷⁸ Rudolph M. Lapp, “Jeremiah B. Sanderson: Early California Negro Leader,” *The Journal of Negro History* 53, no. 4 (October 1968): 321–333; Noel, “Jeremiah B. Sanderson,” 151–158.

criticism he would receive for leaving. In 1863, the *Pacific Appeal*, a San Francisco-based African American paper, indirectly addressed Gibbs, writing, “We are certainly getting jealous of Victoria and British Columbia, for attracting so many of our most valuable men to their domain.”¹⁷⁹

Gibbs, nevertheless, prepared to pursue the promise of new opportunities in Canada’s “new El Dorado.”¹⁸⁰ In June 1858, many from San Francisco's black community, joined by migrants from other states as well, headed off, with renewed hope—Archy Lee among them.¹⁸¹ Once in Victoria, the group of three or four hundred “built or bought homes and other property, and by industry and character vastly improved their condition and were the recipients of respect and esteem from the community,” as Gibbs proudly recalled.¹⁸² So, while the freedoms in California had proved a disappointment, Victoria seemed to offer a new frontier and another chance to pursue a freer life.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ as quoted by Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites*, 65-66. For a discussion of the meanings of emigration for aspiring race men, such as Gibbs, see Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, chapter 1.

¹⁸⁰ Peter Winkworth, *The New El Dorado. A Complete View of the Newly Discovered Goldfields in BNA with Vancouver Island and the Whole of the Seaboard from Cape Flattery to Prince of Wales Island*, 1858.

¹⁸¹ Lapp, *Archy Lee*, 62.

¹⁸² Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 63. Two years later, in 1860, census takers recorded the city’s black population at 1,176. While it is difficult to know how many new black migrants arrived in California in the two years, it seems as though a significant percentage chose to relocate in Victoria. Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 13.

¹⁸³ Lapp discusses the experiences of those who settled in Victoria. For the most part, many found economic success and became property owners. Overtime, however, and prompted in part, Lapp argues, by the arrival of American miners, “they found uneven access to public places such as theaters, barber shops, and restaurants.” Tensions that came to a head in an 1860 confrontation at one of the city's most elegant theaters, in which white audience members sought to expel black theater-goers, resulting in a public uprising. See Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California*, 239-254. Philip Foner reprinted an article, on conditions for black migrants in Victorian, reported by a black man and published in *The Liberator* in 1864. The author argued that “There is an much prejudice, and nearly as much isolation, in Victoria as in San Francisco,” though he did confirm that black settlers found more economic opportunities in Canada. Philip S. Foner, “The Colored Inhabitants of Vancouver Island,” *BC Studies: The British Colombian Quarterly*, no. 8 (1970): 29–33.

In 1859, Gibbs briefly returned to the United States to marry Maria A. Alexander, a Kentucky-native who had attended Oberlin college. The two then took the 4,000-mile steamship journey to Victoria.¹⁸⁴ Back in California, the law barring black citizens from testifying remained on the books for another five years.¹⁸⁵ It took a white man robbing a store owned by a black woman, Mrs. Gordon, and brutally murdering her husband, George Gordon, with only black men and women as witnesses to the violence, to prompt the court finally to overturn the law.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Gibbs, *Shadow and Light*, 64; Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites*, 61.

¹⁸⁵ It took another nine years, until 1872, for the Chinese to win their campaign and secure their right to testify as well, as discussed by Chan, "A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush," 76. See also Ira Cross's discussion of the many laws passed to discourage Chinese immigration, in *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935), 77-83.

¹⁸⁶ As Albert Broussard has chronicled, black men in San Francisco did not gain the right to vote until the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869. After a concerted effort to desegregate schools, the Board of Education ruled to end segregation of black students in 1875. Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 17-19.

Chapter Three

The Barbary Coast: A Blemish and Boon

Throughout the late 1850s and 1860s, the oldest section of the waterfront city—settled by the Ohlone Indians, claimed by John Montgomery, prayed for by Mary Ball, cataloged by Charles Kimball, and abandoned by Mifflin Gibbs—shifted from an amalgamated commercial district to one set apart for vice. The city began tucked into the lowlands of Yerba Buena cove, hemmed in by the bay on one side and the surrounding hillsides on the others. The geography of the cove lent itself to a relatively compact city. No longer plagued by a ground-leveling fire every few months, property owners turned their attention to the work of urban expansion. With the reclamation project, builders pushed into the bay and, in search of real estate, they began to develop more of the cove and even the hillsides.

During the 1860s, against the backdrop of debates about what type of city San Francisco would be, many of the business owners sought to claim respectability and escape the deteriorating city-center by relocating a few blocks south. Slowly, their exodus formed a new commercial heart of the city along Market Street. In relocating, they left

bars and brothels to dominate the waterfront streets. San Franciscans had begun moving the shoreline as well, so that some the old waterfront businesses now sat a few blocks inland. The old waterfront, then, was not simply a stretch at the edge of town, but rather it intruded into, even bisected, the developing city.

By the end of the 1860s, San Franciscans had begun referring to this well-worn, vice-laden neighborhood as the Barbary Coast. Though no one seems to know the exact origins of the name, one chronicler speculated that San Francisco's waterfront may have reminded sailors of the “sinister,” “wild African shoreline.”¹ In much the same way that John Frémont had linked the bay with the economic prosperity of Byzantium’s harbor, others forged their own metaphorical connections, relating San Francisco instead with the spectacle, exoticism, danger, and allure of other international port cities. Many, in fact, attributed not only the name but the district’s very existence and eventual deterioration to the sailors who passed through. The saloons and restaurants, as one chronicler explained, became popular gathering sites early on, serving as “the headquarters of all the masters of the merchant maritime.” They, in turn, drew “the toilers of the sea to congregate in great force in the neighborhood.” Then, with so many sailors gathered in one place,

¹ Stephen Longstreet, *The Wilder Shore: A Gala Social History of San Francisco's Sinners and Spenders, 1849-1906* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), 111. The name seemed to hold some resonance, because residents of Virginia City, which grew up around Nevada's silver mines, referred to their vice district by the same name. Goldman, *Gold Diggers & Silver Miners*, 60.

shanghaiers descended on the neighborhood.² As a result, criminality, violence, even murder became commonplace—“evil times fell upon the region.”³

Though many observers blamed sailors for the emergence of the Barbary Coast, which they characterized as an embarrassment, menace, and a scourge, the Coast, in fact, held a more complicated relationship to the city as a whole. In appealing to sailors, shippers, and draymen it not only threatened the rest of the city but rather it bolstered the city’s maritime economy as well.⁴ This was, in fact, the central tension of the district. As a favorite stop for shippers and sailors, the Coast reinforced San Francisco elites’ aspirations for the city as the west coast’s primary port. Simultaneously, however, by entrenching the city’s vice economy, the presence of the Coast contradicted boosters’ portrayals of San Francisco as a financially stable and morally-upright town. Realizing the commercial promises of the Golden Gate, imagined, by the city’s elite, as commercial dominance, demanded that San Franciscans appease both sailors and investors—two groups looking for very different things from a port city. The Barbary Coast, then, both undergirded and undermined the city’s future as the “commercial emporium” and “Metropolis of the West.”⁵ Not only central to the city’s economy, the city’s shifting

² Shanghaiing was a practice of tricking or drugging men, then placing them on ships, with no choice but to work as sailors, at least until the ship once again reached a harbor. While occurring along both coasts, it was especially common in San Francisco, since sailors often headed for Gold Country upon arriving in port, leaving outgoing ships short-handed. For a discussion of shanghaiing, see Lance S. Davidson, “Shanghaied! The Systematic Kidnapping of Sailors in Early San Francisco,” *California Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 10-17 and Bill Pickelhaupt, *Shanghaied in San Francisco* (San Francisco: Flyblister Press, 1996).

³ “The City Front. the Change of the Landing Place of the Ferries,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 13 September 1875.

⁴ As historian Charles Wollenberg has posited, “The district not only provided rest and recreation for merchant seamen, but also was the means by which a maritime labor force could be recruited and controlled,” thus recognizing the importance of the Barbary Coast to the city’s maritime economy without further exploring its contradictions or the ways that San Franciscans sought to resolve them. Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis*, 114.

⁵ Thaddeus S. Kenderdine, *A California Tramp and Later Footprints: or, Life on the plains and in the Golden State Thirty Years Ago* (Philadelphia: Press of Globe printing house, 1888), 274.

shoreline ensured that the waterfront vice district remained in the heart of the city, not easily ignored. For many San Franciscans, it lay between their home and the city's commercial center, the places where they worked, shopped, or sought entertainment. The Coast, then, permeated the city, forcing urbanites to come to terms with its existence, either traversing its streets or circumventing it altogether. This chapter, accordingly, takes up the conflicts and contradictions of the district, examining the ways in which many different San Franciscans sought to exploit, minimize, accept, or revel in the waterfront vice district.

First though, I explore how the oldest section of the city, along the shifting shoreline, became a district set apart for, even given over to, vice. Sailors and shanghaiers, it turns out, were not the only ones who contributed to the making of the Barbary Coast. Instead, many San Franciscans lent a hand. Moral reformers also took part in creating San Francisco's vice district. First through efforts to eliminate vice altogether, many reformers sought to remake the boom town into a family town. Their efforts to eradicate vice proved futile, however, leaving reform-minded San Franciscans to take more resigned approach, seeking instead to confine those they deemed disreputable to a single neighborhood. In attempting, however, to concentrate and consecrate a center for "drunkenness and debauchery," reformers unintentionally reinforced the Coast and the city's reputation as a place for pleasure-seeking.⁶ Boosters, building on this sordid reputation, took yet another approach to managing vice; they sought to fold the city's vice into narratives about its pleasures and mysteries.

⁶ Benjamin Estelle Lloyd, *Lights and Shades of San Francisco* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Co, 1876), 82.

Lawmakers and law-enforcers took part as well. At times, they responded to reformers' pleas and professed to take a hard-line. Many discovered, however, that they had much to gain from a thriving vice economy. Municipal officials, as the city's largest real estate holders, benefited from the high rents they collected, while police officers, as bribe-takers, reaped kick-backs in return for turning a blind eye. As lawmakers and law-enforcers became financially invested in the vice district, they sought to oversee rather than disrupt the vice economy.

Those who labored and leisured in the saloons, dance halls, and brothels participated in the creation of the neighborhood as well. Madams and bar-owners asserted and defended their claim to these blocks, insisting on a space within the city in which to ply their trades. They accomplished this in numerous ways, at times seeking to evade police officers' detection, while at other moments they called upon the police to protect their, often illicit, businesses. As the Coast's reputation grew, some Coasters played into and profited from outsiders' interest and intrigue in the district, bolstering and entrenching its place in the city in yet another way. They also pushed at its borders and sought real estate and customers beyond the Coast's boundaries.

The actions of many San Franciscans contributed to a codified vice district emerging and solidifying from Broadway to Washington and Stockton to the Bay. This chapter considers the lawmakers, police officers, saloon-owners, judges, lawyers, map-makers, gamblers, pickpockets, publishers, dance-hall workers, and guidebook writers, to

name a few, who participated in the making and remaking of the Barbary Coast, a process that was always gradual, incomplete, uneven, and ongoing.⁷

This story of the making of a vice district is, in many ways, a familiar narrative to historians of the nineteenth-century city.⁸ San Francisco was unique, however, in the ways that the maritime and vice economies became intertwined, at once both reliant and at odds with one another. Debates about managing vice became, accordingly, part of discussions about how to reconcile the multiple and competing uses of the waterfront. In

⁷ Most San Francisco historians have started their investigation of the Coast in the 1870s, after a recognizable district had already emerged. Accordingly, they have focused on reformers efforts to accept and manage a vice district within the city, rather than investigating its transformation. Furthermore, in taking up the district as an already formed site, they have not investigated its complicated relationship to the city's maritime economy and San Francisco as a port city. Scholars Neil Shumsky, Larry Springer, and Barbara Berglund have examined the social ordering that took place in Gilded Age San Francisco, as lawmakers, enforcers, and reformers came to accept a vice district within the city. Working at the intersection of geography and sociology, Shumsky and Springer have argued that politicians and police officers responded to an increasing disapproval of prostitution among "respectable" urbanites. The resulting anti-prostitution laws, though unable to suppress the sex trade, did alter its location within the city; the criminalization of brothels, for example, left many prostitutes seeking clients on the streets. Respectable Americans took up these moral crusades, Shumsky has argued, as a means of determining and defining their own virtuosity and propriety, such that identifying and confining vice came to be a central means by which they established and secured their own place in society. Through discursive analysis, Barbara Berglund has likewise taken up questions of social ordering and the meaning of the Barbary Coast to reform-minded San Franciscans, who feared the "racially and sexually transgressive" nature of the place, so monitored it closely. "By geographically containing rather than eradicating the disorder of the Barbary Coast, San Franciscans could assert an image," Berglund has argued, "of a well-ordered city that flirted with, yet existed apart from its infamous vice district." I am starting my investigation of the Coast earlier, before it was a recognizable district, to ask about the many San Franciscans who participated in its makings and the many meanings it held for them. Neil L. Shumsky and Larry M. Springer, "San Francisco's Zone of Prostitution, 1880-1934," *Journal of Historical Geography* 7 (1981): 71-89; Neil L. Shumsky, "Vice Responds to Reform: San Francisco, 1910-1914," *Journal of Urban History* 7, no. 1 (November 1980): 31-47; Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 66, 60.

⁸ Urban vice districts have proven to be futile ground for many historians. A few of the studies that most shaped my thinking about nineteenth and early-twentieth century vice districts include, Joanne Meyerowitz, "Sexual Geography and Gender Economy: The Furnished-Room Districts of Chicago, 1890-1930," *Gender & History* 2 (Autumn 1990); Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*; Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth Century New York* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Alecia P. Long, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Sharon E. Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

this way, street-level power struggles along the waterfront became entwined with much larger questions about the city's place in the nation and the world. For San Francisco's elite, it was a question of how the city might realize the promise of the Golden Gate. Many along the Coast, meanwhile, embraced the vision of a "wide open" town, focusing instead on getting by and maybe getting ahead. This chapter considers the multiple makings and meanings the Barbary Coast, recognizing the ways in which the Coast became a crucible for debates over the city's form and future. In these fights, the city's landscape became both the battleground and the spoils.

From Vigilantes to Politicians

Though many credited the vigilantes with cleaning-up the city during the summer of 1856, according to reform-minded San Franciscans, much remained to be done. During the fall of 1856, the Vigilance Committee ended their reign, relinquished control, and coalesced into a new political party, the People's Party. Despite having just demonstrated the impotence of the state-sanctioned officials and institutions of power, they now sought to take over the very same institutions. They had long blamed career politicians for what they considered to be an ineffectual municipal government. By pursuing political office, they hoped to over-throw those they considered to be career, which they equated with corrupt, politicians and to reduce significantly and permanently the size of government.⁹ The newly-formed People's Party swept the fall elections.¹⁰

⁹ They were, according to Samuel Williams, successful. He granted that the Vigilance Committee "was extra-judicial" but insisted that "it brought order out of anarchy." Then, he continued, "the power it has so terribly wielded, passed into the People's Party, to be exercised through constitutional channels, to be used for popular good." Williams, "The City of the Golden Gate," *Scribner's Monthly*, July 1875, 268.

¹⁰ Ethington, *The Public City*, 221.

Once in office, in keeping with their distrust of government and desire to weaken it, they drastically cut municipal taxes. With most of their tax-generated revenue stream gone, they had no funds remaining for social programs and so left benevolent associations to provide aid to struggling San Franciscans.¹¹ In 1856, when the People's Party came to power, the city was still recovering from the nation-wide depression of the 1855. Furthermore, San Francisco's boom and bust economy, tied to the ebbs and flows of the mining camps, left many without a steady source of income and looking to mutual and benevolent aid societies for support.

Reform societies had, nearly from the start, been a social, economic, and political presence in the city. "The very newness of San Francisco," historian Mary Ann Irwin has argued, "offered a space in which benevolent women could influence community politics through pioneering social welfare programs."¹² Much like joining a firehouse company for the city's middle class and elite men, benevolent societies played an important social role for the women of San Francisco. Sarah Royce, for example, proclaimed the 1850 Benevolent Society benefit party the social event of the year.¹³ In 1853, women from several of the city's churches came together to form the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society, with the goal of aiding poor women in the community. Though many firehouses offered mutual aid to their members, men also formed benevolent organizations, such as the Young Men's Christian Association. When the economy flagged in the mid-1850s, the

¹¹ Irwin, "'Going About and Doing Good': The Politics of Benevolence, Welfare, and Gender in San Francisco, 1850-1880," 239; Daniel Macallair, "The San Francisco Industrial School and the Origins of Juvenile Justice in California: A Glance at the Great Reformation," *UC Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy* 7, no. 1 (2003): 14.

¹² Irwin, "'Going About and Doing Good'," 237.

¹³ Royce, *A Frontier Lady*, 113.

Young Men's Christian Association promised men assistance in finding work.¹⁴ Many of the city's benevolent associations had vocally supported the vigilantes throughout the summer and were now eager to see what was to be done about the moral outrages rampant in the city.¹⁵

Passing Through: People and Places in Transition

With, by the mid-1850s, city-leveling fires coming less frequently, some of the establishments along the oldest section of the waterfront, between Clark's Point and the Plaza, began to show signs of wear and reflect a general deterioration in the neighborhood. Meanwhile, some business owners began relocating slightly south, toward Market Street, as developers filled out the lowlands of the cove and began moving up the surrounding hillsides. It was within the context of this compact commercial district, with only a few choices for an evening at the theater, that the "respectable" Mrs. Richardson had come face-to-face with the "fallen" Arabelle Ryan. In the wake of their encounter, under pressure to act by demands for reform in the *Bulletin* and threats of vigilante action, the board of supervisors had ordered a special committee to investigate prostitution in the city. Even as they registered shock upon finding numerous brothels, they reported on its prevalence "in the most public places, in the full light of day."¹⁶

Addressing its public visibility, in February, 1856, city officials, soon to be replaced with

¹⁴ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 257.

¹⁵ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, 700.

¹⁶ "Report of the Special and Judiciary Committee, upon Houses of Ill Fame," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 28 November 1855.

the People's Party fall sweep, passed a new ordinance that called for "the suppression of Houses of Ill-Fame within the city limits."¹⁷

Above all, the ordinance sought to protect "virtuous persons" by regulating public space. "Nor shall any woman or women conduct herself or themselves, either upon the streets or in their houses, in view of people passing, in such manner as to offend the feelings of virtuous persons who may see them, or in such manner as is calculated to corrupt the minds of the children and youth in the city," the new mandate declared. Rather than criminalizing commercial sexual exchanges, they sought instead to keep "indecent" and "lewd" behavior out of the public space.¹⁸ Debates about gambling likewise centered on its public visibility, leaving one reform-minded San Franciscan and supporter of the vigilantes to celebrate, gambling is "almost universally condemned and discountenanced; we have driven it from our public places."¹⁹ In emphasizing, above all, the public visibility of prostitution and gambling, many reform-minded San Franciscans they took initial steps towards a solution that might, tacitly, allow unmarked brothels and gaming halls, or even and abandoned, out-of-the-way vice district to emerge.

Amidst the mid-1850s efforts to divide the city according to sunlight and shadow and force gambling and prostitution "under the cover of darkness," the on-the-ground divisions of public spaces remained murkier, ill-defined.²⁰ It is for this reason that the Richardson-Cora encounter had become such a flashpoint in the city. San Franciscans were struggling over how to map lines of virtue and vice onto the city streets against the

¹⁷ "Ordinance No. 882," *Daily Alta California*, 22 February 1856.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ "The Law v. Gambling," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 30 September 1856.

²⁰ "Report of the Special and Judiciary Committee, upon Houses of Ill Fame," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 28 November 1855.

fluidity of a relatively compact, boom town. A young Lotta Crabtree, for example, got her start singing in seedy saloons, before going on to an illustrious career on New York City stages. Despite having spent her “younger years before the most vulgar and debased audiences in San Francisco,” she “passed through the filth unstained,” writer Benjamin Lloyd marveled.²¹ Lloyd wrote in the popular “sunshine and shadow” genre, which, in many ways, divided the city according to the same dichotomies of virtue and vice, daylight and darkness evoked by the city’s 1855 Committee on prostitution.²² Finding then, Crabtree amidst the “stagnant swamp” or “pool of human immorality and crime,” as Lloyd called the Coast, he sought a solution that left her untarnished and the Coast nonetheless depraved; he pointed to her talent and angelic youth to explain her rare ability to pass through the waterfront melodeons unharmed.²³ Lloyd’s “sunshine-shadow” rubric did not allow for a district in flux. Another reading of his observation might, however, see it as evidence of the shifting and uneven nature of the district.

²¹ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 158.

²² Several scholars have explored urban sketches or the “sunshine-shadow” genre. Historian John Kasson has explained the perspective of many of the “sunshine-shadow” authors, writing “Material greed and the pressures of the marketplace, these writers insisted, had created new cities polarized between the greedy, snobbish upper class and the degraded, often viscous poor. Such a city could not be grasped as a totality, since it lacked any moral, social, or physical center.” Or, as David Scobey has noted of the genre, observers underscored that “the new metropolis was divided against itself.” Even as “sunshine-shadow” authors sought to lend a coherence to an unfamiliar landscape, by categorizing its people, places, and streets according to virtue and vice, the comprehensibility they sought was predicated on a conception of the city as fundamentally fractured. For scholars’ discussions of the mid-nineteenth century urban sketch, see John F. Kasson, *Rudeness & Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), ch. 3, quotation, pg. 77; Stuart Blumin’s introduction to George G. Foster, *New York by Gas-Light and Other Urban Sketches*, ed. Stuart M. Blumin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*; David M. Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), quotation, pg. 7; Erickson, “Welcome to Sodom”; Patricia Cline Cohen, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); William C. Sharpe, *New York Nocturne: The City After Dark in Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

²³ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 78-79.



Figure 10. Lotta Crabtree. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Not everyone making their way through the Coast was on their way up, of course. As the tenor of the neighborhood changed, once-celebrated performers, who could no longer fill the new, ornate concert halls, resorted to the older, seedier joints. Singer Madame Elisa Biscaccianti, who had been enthusiastically embraced by San Francisco concert-goers just a few years before, made her way to the Bella Union stage. She debuted in San Francisco at the American Theater in March 1852, with the *Alta* declaring that “the evening marked an era in the musical, social, and fashionable progress of the city.”²⁴ When she returned to San Francisco seven years later, after a world tour, she could no longer fill the theater and began drinking. She found a forgiving audience at the

²⁴ *Alta California*, 24 March 1852; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 142.

Bella Union, however, an audience that did not mind if she reached for a table to steady herself as she sang.²⁵ The old waterfront, extending towards Portsmouth Square, was a neighborhood in transition. For some it was a launching point, while for others it was a disappointing end. By the 1860s, this oldest section of the waterfront city became a recognizable vice district, realized, in part, through Lloyd's condemning account and Biscaccianti's sad, boozy renditions. But, in the 1850s, it remained an amalgamated commercial district, a space where San Franciscans mixed and mingled. This section takes up the lives of two San Franciscan women, a struggling Rowena Granice and society-belle Amelia Neville. Together, Granice's and Neville's journeys through the shifting neighborhood illuminate its early fluidity and diversity, of people and places, as well as the hardening lines of virtue and vice.

Newly jobless and with two sons to support, Granice arrived in San Francisco in March of 1856, in the months leading up to the Vigilance Committee's reign, to search for her husband, Thomas Claughley, who had abandoned the family and headed west three years before. During his absence, Granice had supported herself and children by working as an actress at P. T. Barnum's American Museum and writing the occasional short story. With the museum's closing in 1856, however, Granice needed a new source of income, and though Claughley had not sent money home during his absence, Granice came to San Francisco seeking support from her derelict husband.²⁶

²⁵ James Madison, "Some Shadows of the San Francisco Stage," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 1925): 59–63; Cookie Woolner, "The Cultural Significance of Women at the Bella Union Theater, 1849-1906," 2004, unpublished paper in author's possession.

²⁶ R. Dean Galloway, "Rowena Granice," *Pacific Historian*, 24 (Spring 1980): 106; Sherilyn Cox Bennion, *Equal to the Occasion: Women Editors of the Nineteenth-century West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1990), 93.

Granice, who tellingly referred to herself by her maiden name, quickly discovered that Cloughley had not found wealth in California. She once again took control of the family's financial welfare, proposing to Cloughley that he join her in opening and managing a saloon and theater on the Long Wharf.²⁷ By the mid-1850s, junk shops, cheap clothing stores, and saloons lined the wharf.²⁸ Cloughley and Granice rented no. 77 Long Wharf from Charles Kimball, who had moved his Noisy Carrier's Book and Stationary Company inland but continued to live with his family above the old shop space at no. 77. Cloughley and Granice converted the former stationary store and warehouse into a "bit" theater, much like the city's many other melodeons and variety acts, under the banner "The Gaities, Temple of Mirth and Song."²⁹

A visiting Philadelphian, Thaddeus Kenderdine, who traveled to California in search of adventure, later recorded his night at The Gaities. He described the "dense fumes of tobacco" that enveloped the eclectic audience, of "rough miners, fresh from the mountains and now on their way home to the States," "inoffensive looking gamblers seeking whom they might devour, and curious sight-seers."³⁰ Visitors to The Gaities first passed through a barroom that opened into a more expansive theater space, which could accommodate about three hundred in the gallery-style seating that lined three of the walls. The night's entertainment, he recalled, consisted of a mediocre play, an acrobatic routine, a dance by a trope of young boys, and finally a song by a twelve-year-old Lotta

²⁷ Dolores Waldorf Bryant, "No. 77 Long Wharf: From Publishing Hall to Temple of Mirth," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (March 1942): 77.

²⁸ Work Projects Administration, *Lotta Crabtree; John McCullough*, ed. Lawrence Estavan, vol. 6, San Francisco Theatre Research (San Francisco: Works Projects Administration, 1938), 87.

²⁹ Bennion, *Equal to the Occasion*, 93. "Bit" theaters gained their names from their twelve and a half cents admission price or one "bit." Jane Kathleen Curry, *Nineteenth-century American Women Theatre Managers* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 51, n 31.

³⁰ Kenderdine, *A California Tramp and Later Footprints*, 274.

Crabtree (publishing his account during the height of her fame, Kenderdine just might have added Crabtree to the bill to make his night all the more memorable).³¹ Known simply as Lotta, her career began in the California mines. When she arrived in San Francisco, she became the city's golden girl.³² She created quite a sensation at The Gaities when she performed in blackface; audiences thrilled at the little girl's burnt-cork face framed by ringlets.³³ In addition to the bit admission, Granice and Cloughley's meager profits came from the liquor that patrons washed down throughout the performances.³⁴ Granice supplemented this income with her own occasional appearances on nearby stages.³⁵ Though she had originally arrived in the city looking for support from Cloughley, she found herself looking after him instead.

After struggling to run The Gaities together for three years, Granice sought to take sole ownership of the theater by purchasing Cloughley's portion.³⁶ He refused to go quietly. Though she claimed to have fully paid for the establishment by August 1859, he would not turn over the bill of sale and instead asserted a claim of ownership by boarding the theater closed. Undeterred, Granice pried the boards away and declared the theater open for business. Thus began a very public power struggle, in which Cloughley repeatedly boarded up the theater, and, each time, Granice pried it open again. When each complained to the police, officers responded by arresting both. Offering a play-by-play, one newspaper celebrated Rowena Granice's pluck, suggesting that "if she be left alone,

³¹ Ibid., 274-277.

³² Woolner, "The Cultural Significance of Women at the Bella Union Theater, 1849-1906"; Constance Rourke, *Troupers of the Gold Coast or the Rise of Lotta Crabtree*, 1928, 111-112.

³³ Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 52; Gagey, *The San Francisco Stage*, 74.

³⁴ Kenderdine, *A California tramp and later footprints*, 274-277; Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 125.

³⁵ "Evening Diversions," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 23 March 1857.

³⁶ Galloway, "Rowena Granice.," 111.

she will soon get the better of him.”³⁷ Granice, however, took another tack, by portraying herself instead as a victim. In her recounting, she declared that “six vulgar men against one woman was more than I could stand—and having no money to pay a lawyer, I considered to give them possession,” seeking readers’ sympathy.³⁸ Even as outside observers, such as Kenderdine, did much to create the image of the Coast and the Coasters, theater-owners and performers, such as Granice, took an active role in their self-styling as well. In this way, they too participated in creating the legend of the Coast.

During the fall of 1859, Granice finally secured control of the theater, but, by this point, the operation was in deep financial trouble. Even a benefit performance from the now-beloved Lotta could not save *The Gaities* (or the *Varieties*, as Granice had started calling it, in yet another desperate attempt to generate interest and income). Shortly after Crabtree's performance, Granice closed the doors to the theater and saloon permanently.³⁹

The building at 77 Long Wharf likely stood another year and a half or so, until a fire in May 1861 swept through the neighborhood, or, it may have simply fallen into gradual disrepair.⁴⁰ In the succeeding years, Granice wiped *The Gaities* from her own biography.⁴¹ Thomas Claughley died about six months after she closed the theater. A year or so later, in 1861, she married the respectable newspaper editor Robert Steele and went on to a career as a writer and editor. She toured the state giving lectures in which she championed temperance, women's rights and education, and improvements in

³⁷ Jane Kathleen Curry, *Nineteenth-century American women theatre managers* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 47.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Bryant, “No. 77 Long Wharf: From Publishing Hall to Temple of Mirth,” 79.

⁴¹ Frances Elizabeth Willard and Mary Ashton Rice Livermore, *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in all Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Moulton, 1893).

institutional care for orphaned children.⁴² When she died at the turn of the century, chroniclers skipped over her years as an actress and theater owner, instead declaring her 1856 arrival in California the beginning of her illustrious literary career.⁴³ One tribute even proclaimed, “As a friend she was true blue, and in her the cardinal qualities of ideal womanhood were combined.”⁴⁴ Thus, from *The Gaities* to the pantheon of true womanhood, Rowena Granice Steele seems to have made great strides.

Arriving a few months after Rowena Granice, Amelia Ransome Neville landed in San Francisco in June, 1856. She arrived, however, under very different circumstances; not simply scraping by as Granice was, Neville emerged on the scene looking to join San Francisco's “small, but very select” circle of society.⁴⁵ As a young, upper-class, newly-married woman, whose father and husband both held prestigious military posts, she was easily welcomed into the “charmed circle.” She felt herself “shut away from the rest of the world,—so to speak—no communication with the east save by steamer twice a month with news from the ‘white settlements,’” so she undoubtedly cherished her place among the elite.⁴⁶ Despite San Francisco boosters' claims of urbanity and sophistication during the mid-1850s, Neville felt as though she were on the edge of civilization. Born in Ohio, she came of age during an extended stay abroad. While in Dublin, Ireland, she met and

⁴² *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 2 March 1874; Bryant, “No. 77 Long Wharf: From Publishing Hall to Temple of Mirth,” 78-79.

⁴³ “The Day’s Dead,” *San Francisco Call*, 9 February 1901.

⁴⁴ “A Friend,” *Sanoma Index-Tribune*, 9 February 1901, as quoted in <http://www.priscillasharp.com/rowenagranicesteele.html> (22 February 2011).

⁴⁵ A Pioneer, “Early Days in San Francisco,” *San Francisco News Letter*, 30 June 1923. While I do not know for sure that Amelia Neville wrote, as “A Pioneer,” for *San Francisco News Letter*, the style and content is in keeping with her book, *The Fantastic City*. Additionally, Neville wrote for other publications, such as the *Overland Monthly*. The way that she clipped and saved the *San Francisco News Letter* articles further suggests that she may have authored them, though Neville did save many articles on San Francisco life. Amelia Ransome Neville Scrapbooks, 1851-1924, California Historical Society.

⁴⁶ A Pioneer, “Early Days in San Francisco.”

married Captain Thomas J. Neville; together they returned to the United States and made plans to move west with Amelia's parents. After her European travels, San Francisco, even with its pretensions and ambitions of being a great "American city," seemed little more than a frontier town in the eyes of Neville. As she re-counted of her arrival, "Not until the ship rounded the promontory of Telegraph Hill and I saw the long wharf extend out over the shallows, with animated people waving to welcome us, did I forget my disappointment in the thrill of arrival."⁴⁷ An arriving steamship was a much-anticipated event throughout the city; Rowena Granice just might have taken a break from her preparations for the evening performance at the Gaities to walk down the Long Wharf and join the welcoming faces.⁴⁸ What Neville saw as the city's rough edges probably seemed more like opportunities and possibilities from where Granice stood.

When the Ransome-Neville family first arrived, they settled into the International House, just a couple of blocks north of the Long Wharf, at a moment in which the vigilantes were in full-swing.⁴⁹ They later moved to the Oriental Hotel, which Neville described as the "oldest, and the most popular as well as the most exclusive."⁵⁰ They remained at the Oriental for several months, while Col. Ransome considered which neighborhood to make their permanent residence. A friendly rivalry existed, as Neville explained, among the elite families as to the best address, with those who preferred the north side settling along Stockton Street, between Union and Washington, while others selected the south, on Rincon Hill along Harrison and Folsom Streets.⁵¹ The southern

⁴⁷ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 37.

⁴⁸ Lloyd offers an extended discussion about the excitement of "Steamer-Day" in the early city in *Lights and Shades*, 519-523.

⁴⁹ A Pioneer, "Ball Rooms of the Past," *San Francisco News Letter*, 4 August 1923.

⁵⁰ A Pioneer, "Ball Rooms of the Past."

⁵¹ A Pioneer, "Fashionable Locations in the Fifties," *News Letter*, 14 August 1905.

neighborhood became the chic South Park; modeled after an English-square, it boasted brick and stone houses surrounding a central, decorative garden.⁵² It remained popular until 1869, when the construction of Second Street cut into the sand, de-stabilized the mansion foundations, reminding San Franciscans, yet again, of the precarious nature of their city's foundation too.⁵³

Between social calls and shopping trips, Amelia Neville traversed the early city. From her residence at the Oriental Hotel, located at Bush and Battery, the best shopping blocks were within easy reach.⁵⁴ One particularly favorite block of Washington Street, between Kearny and Montgomery, offered all the accoutrements with which to fill a home (or, at least in the meantime, boarding rooms), from French imports and musical instruments to specialty stoves and crockery.⁵⁵ Just over a block away, a “ladies saloon” offered Neville and her friends a respite, where they were certain to be “undisturbed by any thing offensive to the most refined habits and tastes.”⁵⁶ The original Winn's Fountain Head was so successful, in fact, that the proprietor, M. L. Winn, expanded his operation to include two more locations, offering cakes, candies, and ice cream.⁵⁷

⁵² To ensure the prestige of the neighborhood, the deed to the property followed New York's Gramercy Park in stipulating that all structures must be stone or brick. Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*, 205.

⁵³ Solnit, *Infinite City*, 88. San Franciscans, in fact, were reminded fairly frequently of the instability of the very ground beneath their feet. As Albert Richardson noted of the 1865 earthquake “the devastation was much greater on the 'made' lands than on natural soil,” in “Through to the Pacific,” *New York Tribune*, May-June 1869, Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum, http://cpr.org/Museum/Through_to_the_Pacific/Through_to_the_Pacific.html.

⁵⁴ A Pioneer, “Fashionable Locations in the Fifties”; A Pioneer, “Our Business District,” *San Francisco News Letter*, 11 September 1905.

⁵⁵ A Pioneer, “Our Business District.”

⁵⁶ Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco*, as quoted by Charles Lockwood, in “Tourists in Gold Rush San Francisco,” *California History* 59, no. 4 (Winter, /1981 1980): 314-333; Scrapbook, Vol. 9, “Ransome, Leander and Amelia Ransome Neville,” California Biography Collection, California Historical Society.

⁵⁷ *LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory*, 144; Lockwood, “Tourists in Gold Rush San Francisco,” 326.

Some evenings, Neville ventured further afield, making her way, accompanied by her husband, to “the grand social events of a season,” the “subscription parties given in Apollo Hall on Pacific Street.” The Apollo Hall, Neville later recounted, eventually became “part of the notorious Barbary Coast, and even then a far from select neighborhood.”⁵⁸ Nevertheless, San Francisco's stylish set congregated there, because, as Neville explained, it was the only space large enough to hold all of the party-goers.⁵⁹ Though lingering for a moment on the conspicuousness of San Francisco's finest traipsing through a neighborhood slipping into moral and physical decay, she went on to challenge readers' assumptions about the city and district, insisting “it was all mild enough as slums go in seaport cities.” She played on readers' curiosity about the “notorious Barbary Coast,” even placing herself among the Coasters, while also positing a blasé, urbane attitude, with her insistence that it was all pretty mild.⁶⁰

By the end of the 1850s, however, this transitional moment—when women such as Lotta Crabtree, Rowena Granice, and Amelia Neville—could pass through, untarnished, seemed to be coming to an end. In joining the ranks of the respectable, Rowena Granice shed her theater days. She left behind her reputation as a fiery woman who knew how to put on a bit show and serve up hard drinks to rough men, as well as her days of publicly defying her husband, becoming instead Rowena Steele. Amelia Neville, and her circle, resorted instead to newly-constructed hotel ballrooms to dance and

⁵⁸ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 80. As Jacqueline Baker Barnhart has discussed, during the city's earliest days, all classes of women attended public balls. But, as the number of women increased, women such as Sarah Royce sought to ensure that women like Irene McCready were not welcome at their balls (I discuss this episode in Chapter 1). Subscription parties, like those mentioned by Neville, replaced the once open public balls. See *The Fair But Frail: Prostitution in San Francisco, 1849-1900* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), 29.

⁵⁹ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 80.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

mingle.⁶¹ As Steele and Neville left behind the unsavory waterfront streets (for Steele to travel in new circles and Neville to seek new stomping grounds), they likely smiled on their evenings spent along the Coast. Through the lens of distance and nostalgia, they could think back on the district as “all mild enough.”⁶² In leaving it behind, however, they contributed, in a small part, to the changes in the neighborhood, already well underway.

The House Always Wins

Even with the People’s Party in office, for the many San Franciscans who had taken an active part in the vigilante movement over the summer and now found themselves sidelined, it was a difficult transition. One such San Franciscan wrote to the *Bulletin* warning of the possible return of gambling halls; he urged fellow citizens to remain ever-vigilant to “put down this detestable vice.”⁶³ By December, 1856, another *Bulletin* letter-writer, calling himself the “Reformer,” feared that all of the gains made over the summer had been lost, due to a negligent and incompetent police force. Under the mantel of a vigilante enforcer and undercover reporter, the “Reformer” undertook his own investigation. “There are about twelve gambling houses or rooms in which gambling is carried on in this city, the most of which are on Commercial street. Of this number, two or three are private. Of these last, Steve Whipple's house, on Commercial street, is the most magnificently furnished,” he reported. In addition to listing the gambling “hells” (a favorite play on words by reformers, who changed hall to hell), he promised to give “the

⁶¹ A Pioneer, “Ball Rooms of the Past.”

⁶² Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 210.

⁶³ “The Law v. Gambling,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 30 September 1856.

Bulletin the names of the frequenters of that establishment, so that the public may know where these gentlemen spend their time and money.” From the perspective of the “Reformer,” these “gentlemen” garnered undeserved respect in the city, which he threatened to undermine by exposing their names publicly.

He also derided the police, insisting that “I found no difficulty in entering this place, and wonder why the police do not indict them on gambling according to the law passed in 1855.”⁶⁴ For the “Reformer,” this was further evidence of the city’s corrupt and ineffectual police force as well as the career politicians who appointed and oversaw them. Enforcement of the current laws was a key issue for the vigilante-reformers. The California legislature outlawed gambling in the state in 1854. Prior to that, the municipal government had required that gaming hall owners purchase a permit, ostensibly as a means of regulation, but since city officials engaged in little oversight, most saw it as a way for the city to generate revenue.⁶⁵ The state's 1854 out-right ban quickly proved futile and gambling continued in the city, leaving the “Reformer” demanding action in 1856.

His outrage was, in part, justified. Some law-makers and law-enforcers did have a direct stake in the vice economy and little incentive to enforce the anti-gambling and anti-prostitution laws on the books. Not only did brothel and saloon owners pay bribes to officers and municipal officials, but since the city’s inception, many of the town council members had been among the largest real estate owners, including owning the buildings in which saloon and brothel owners established their businesses. For property holders,

⁶⁴ “More of Our Gambling Hells,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 4 December 1856.

⁶⁵ John Shertzer Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1878), 235; Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 69.

housing a brothel or gaming hall promised high rents and large financial returns, while for brothel-keepers or saloon owners, a respectable property owner offered a guise of propriety and therefore security.⁶⁶ The city's 1855 anti-prostitution ordinance had the unintended effect of increasing property-owners' power by granting them the right to terminate the lease of a tenant participating in sexual commerce, making brothel-owners even more desirable tenants.⁶⁷ By stripping madams of their rights as lessees, while also making their business clearly illicit, the law facilitated a cycle in which property owners could charge brothel owners exorbitant rents while retaining the power to evict them without warning. The situation was likely similar for saloons and gaming halls. Though the summer of vigilante "justice" had somewhat curtailed gambling in the city, the "Reformer" feared that without constant vigilance, all their progress would be lost. He concluded his diatribe by calling upon the new Chief of Police, James F. Curtis, to "do his duty."⁶⁸

When James Curtis took office as the new Chief of Police, as part of the ascent of the People's Party, he began by asserting the legitimacy of his office. Though he himself had emerged from the vigilante tradition, he addressed men such as the "Reformer," declaring, "from this date, you can exercise no powers of Policemen, without written consent from this office."⁶⁹ Curtis sought to wrest power from the self-appointed civilian

⁶⁶ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 75-78.

⁶⁷ Theodore Henry Hittell, *The General Laws of the State of California, from 1850 to 1864, Inclusive : Being a Compilation of All Acts of a General Nature Now in Force, with Full References to Repealed Acts, Special and Local Legislation, and Statutory Constructions of the Supreme Court : To Which are Prefixed Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Proclamations to the People of California, Constitution of the State of California, Act of Admission, and United States Naturalization Laws, with Notes of California Decisions Thereon*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft, 1865), 519.

⁶⁸ "More of Our Gambling Hells," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 4 December 1856.

⁶⁹ *Daily Alta California*, 18 November 1856.

police force, distinguish police authority from partisan politics, and return power to officially-sanctioned avenues. This move set San Francisco apart from most other major metropolises, like New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, where the political party in power appointed the police force throughout the nineteenth century.⁷⁰ This process entwined police department decisions with partisan politics and undermined the growth of a professional force, since frequent political turn-overs made a law-enforcement career impossible. Municipal officials had already begun the process of disentangling San Francisco's police department from party politics with the city charter of 1855. The charter established a Board of Police Commissioners, comprised of men from the two leading political parties, to oversee Police appointments. This had the unintended effect of heightening the political struggle and further weakening the police department, contributing, in part, to the power vacuum into which the vigilantes' stepped. Where the new charter had failed, the People's Party, with Curtis at the helm, succeeded. As a result San Francisco developed a professional, independent, and relatively non-partisan police force. Both reflecting and reinforcing these shifts, the department adopted uniforms for the first time, in a public display of a new era of law enforcement.⁷¹

Early in his tenure, Chief Curtis set his sights on the gamblers and gaming halls. In January, 1857, he began a series of raids and arrests. Displaying his power to both gamblers and reformers, Curtis started with some of the most “splendid” and best-known houses, including Steve Whipple's Diana Saloon. Whipple's saloon adjoined Tom Maguire's Opera House—Maguire, who himself had only barely escaped banishment at

⁷⁰ Ethington, *The Public City*, 168.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 168-169; Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 202-204.

the hands of the vigilantes.⁷² Stephen Whipple had been among the early settlers in San Francisco, and his saloon quickly became a popular resort for the city's wealthier "sporting" men.⁷³ To entice San Francisco's upper-crust, "high-toned hells," such as Whipple's, often included luxurious furnishings, crystal glassware, and oil paintings, much like the "gentleman's saloons" that had opened a few years before. When Theodore Barry and Benjamin Patten opened the city's first "gentlemen's saloon," however, they sought a slightly different crowd and made a point of trading for cards for billiards. According to an exposé by the newspaper reporter and editor Albert Evans, Whipple's saloon had sideboards filled with delicacies, such as "champagne, oysters, rich wines, and fiery liquors in glittering cut-glass and silver decanters." Furthermore, "obsequious negro or Chinese servants," pressed visitors "to partake gratuitously of the good things spread before" them.⁷⁴ Whipple likely sought to create a space set apart by race and gender in which the city's wealthy, white "sporting" men could simultaneously relish the sophisticated and unsavory. But, Evan's account must also be read with skepticism.

Evans likely intended to incite readers with his descriptions of such ostentatious luxury,

⁷² "A Descent on the Gambling Hells," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 6 January 1857.

⁷³ Also called "rounders" in the contemporary literature, "sporting men" were single and unattached. They often lived in boardinghouses and spent their evenings pursuing the city's pleasures at the theater, in saloons, dance halls, and brothels. As Timothy J. Gilfoyle has described, "'Sporting men,' 'fancy men,' dandies, and nabobs challenged 'respectable' definitions of urban masculinity and male sexuality. A heterogeneous mix of wealthy and poor, educated and ignorant, fashionable and ragged, sporting male culture valorized a sexual ethic based upon male aggressiveness and licentiousness." Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 86. See also, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*; Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth Century New York* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton University Press, 2006); Cohen, Gilfoyle, and Horowitz, *The Flash Press*; Richard Stott, *Jolly Fellows: Male Milieus in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). Stott includes San Francisco in his discussion of sporting culture, noting especially its connections to New York, as sporting men migrated to San Francisco in search of adventure.

⁷⁴ Col. Albert S. Evans, *A la California. Sketch of Life in the Golden State* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1873), 279.

marking the resort as the product of excess and corruption—a necessary target for Curtis and his men.

The officers' raid on Diana's Saloon was a success. They caught the gamblers red-handed and took several into the station. But, owner Steve Whipple was not among those arrested that night. A later report suggested that he had already retired to the country, a move prompted quite possibly by the growing anti-gambling sentiment in the city. Once safely in the country, Whipple found a new form of gambling to pursue—breeding race horses.⁷⁵

Under increased scrutiny, beginning with the 1854 anti-gambling laws but really taking effect during the 1856 vigilante-reign, gambling hall owners often pushed play out of sight, to back-rooms and upper-floors. They stationed guards outside gaming rooms to screen potential players and warn of police presence. The owners of one especially well-fortified gambling hall outfitted it with a grated door, bolts, bars, alarm bells, and a watchman.⁷⁶ The layers of fortification became, in fact, part of the story, part of the mystery and intrigue of the gambling hall. Albert Evans penned an exposé of a night spent in the city's haunts, promising to penetrate the defenses to offer readers a lurid peak inside.⁷⁷ For readers, it was a familiar tell-all framing device. He began the night at a “snug little saloon,” possibly a slightly-veiled reference to the The Snug, a bit saloon with gaming tables tucked in back, on the ground floor of Tom Maguire's Opera House.⁷⁸ A

⁷⁵ “Death of S. B. Whipple,” *Daily Alta California*, 7 July 1888.

⁷⁶ “Descent upon a Gambling House,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 24 March 1857.

⁷⁷ Evans employed many of the same sensationalist tropes and strategies first popularized by “penny press” papers in the 1830s. For a discussion of “penny press” papers, see Buckley, “Culture, Class, and Place in Antebellum New York,” 25–52; Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 64; Cohen, Gilfoyle, and Horowitz, *The Flash Press*, 1-2.

⁷⁸ Jacobson mentions The Snug in *City of the Golden 'Fifties*, 264.

sign at the far end of the room, reading “Club Room- Now Open,” signaled to customers the gaming tables within. Upon gaining entrance to this inner-most sanctum, Evans found mechanics and shop-keepers gathered around tables with “dealers, dressed in long black robes, which completely hide every article of every-day clothing which they have on, with wire masks which conceal their features, though partially transparent, and slouched hats, which hide every trace of hair, making subsequent identification absolutely impossible.”⁷⁹ Well aware of the types of evidence admissible in court, dealers obscured their distinctive features, constantly adapting to and evading shifts in the law.

Other gambling-hall owners sought to avoid scrutiny by changing their business model, becoming, at least in appearance, concert saloons. Samuel Tetlow, for example, reopened the Bella Union as a melodeon, featuring a variety-show that included “sleight-of-hand artists perhaps; a daring designer of tableaux; a blackface comedian; and often as not, a stinging, full-blooded burlesque” (the name referred to the type of organ typically used in the performances).⁸⁰ Rambling affairs, they typically began a little after eight and ran until midnight, encouraging audiences to linger and drink.⁸¹ By 1860, Gilbert's and the Bella Union employed full-time entertainers, including vocalists, actors and actresses, violinists, pianists, and musical directors.⁸² Much like Granice at the Gaities, Madame Tetlow, Samuel’s wife, ran the theater operations at the Bella Union, booking performers and negotiating deals.⁸³

⁷⁹ Evans, *A la California*, 276-279.

⁸⁰ Pauline Jacobson, “Melodeons of the Fifties,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 8 August 1917; Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 5, 9; Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 47, 127.

⁸¹ Jacobson, “Melodeons of the Fifties.”

⁸² Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the year commencing July, 1860*. (San Francisco: Valentine & Co., Commercial Steam Press, 1860).

⁸³ Jacobson, “Melodeons of the Fifties.”

Though women took the stage and served drinks, and at times even ran the operation, melodeons were expressly male spaces. One first time visitor, who had mistaken believed the Bella Union to be more concert hall than concert saloon, later concluded that, unlike other theaters in the city, the Bella Union was “no place for ladies.”⁸⁴ According to *The Call*, a paper that like the *Bulletin* took up the mantle of reform, it was no place for gentlemen either. They described melodeon-style entertainment as “Songs and dances of licentiousness and profane character” that “pander to that morbid desire of the rabble for obscenity.”⁸⁵ While *Call* disparaged the audience as “rabble,” Tetlow billed his shows as “Music for the Million,” signaling the broad, cross-class, audience he hoped to attract. Soon after, he abandoned the twenty-five cent admission, believing he could profit more from a large, liquor-swigging crowd.⁸⁶ Unlike the three-tier system at the American or Metropolitan theaters, the architecture of the Bella Union and the Gaities reinforced the new, cross-class audience concert-saloon and bit-theater owners sought. Visitors entered a large bar area that opened into a single-tier, ramped seating area.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Letter to the Editor from “Wide-Awake,” December 16, 1857, *Bulletin* as quoted by Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 188.

⁸⁵ *San Francisco Call*, 1869, as quoted by Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 129.

⁸⁶ Gagey, *The San Francisco Stage*, 71.

⁸⁷ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 128; Kenderdine, *A California Tramp and Later Footprints*, 274. While Tetlow billed his show as cross-class, scholar Peter Buckley has instead suggested that concert saloons in New York fostered and served an emerging popular, plebeian culture, while a higher class culture took hold in lecture halls and opera halls. Buckley, “Culture, Class, and Place in Antebellum New York,” 27.

The melodeon shows themselves, already popular in Atlantic cities, took hold in San Francisco as well.⁸⁸ Though Tetlow had first popularized the concert saloon in San Francisco as a way of adapting his gambling saloon to the heightened anti-gambling scrutiny during Vigilance Committee's summer-reign, he soon found the shows to be a draw in their own right. Several Plaza gambling saloons joined the Bella Union in adapting a concert-style format, including the What Cheer, Gilbert's Melodeon, and the New Idea.⁸⁹ As so many of the saloon-turned-melodeon owners hoped, the on-stage festivities seemed to offer at least some cover for the gambling that continued in back rooms.

In transforming their gambling halls into concert halls, San Francisco saloon owners may have also been responding to the downturn in the economy.⁹⁰ By 1853, miners had cleared out many of the surface deposits; the remaining gold required larger equipment, operations, and capital outlays than most miners could manage. The diminishing flow of gold into San Francisco was part of a national financial downturn. Accordingly, the flow of capital from New York banks slowed as well, further compounding the depression in the city. The city would, in fact, soon be re-infused with mineral wealth—this time in the form of silver ore rather than gold dust. Nevada's Comstock Lode, discovered in 1859, had a profound effect on San Francisco. The lure of

⁸⁸ Don B. Wilmet and C. W. E. Bigsby date the first concert saloons to New York and Boston. "Timeline: Beginnings to 1870," in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre: Beginnings to 1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). By the late 1850s and early 1860s, concert saloons had become popular in New York City, according to Brooks McNamara. As in San Francisco, she argues that they typically emerged out of saloons, rather than theaters, and maintained the feeling of a tavern with variety performances. McNamara, *The New York Concert Saloon: The Devil's Own Nights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁸⁹ Pauline Jacobson, "Melodeons of the Fifties," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 8 August 1917; Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 5, 9; Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 63-65.

⁹⁰ Misha Berson, *The San Francisco Stage: From Gold Rush to Golden Spike, 1849-1869*, vol. 1, San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum Journal, 60.

silver ensured the realization of engineer Theodore Judah's dream of a transcontinental railroad, while also rendering the already-wealthy Mark Hopkins, Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, and Charles Crocker—the men who backed and profited from the project—even more so. As a result, during the early 1860s, with the prospects of the silver mines and possibilities of the railroad as enticements, the flow of capital from the eastern seaboard once again returned to the city.⁹¹ The Comstock Lode was, however, a different kind of mining, reliant from the start on heavy machinery and large-scale operations. Though it injected the city with new wealth, it never held the promise of gold, it never invited men to come West with little more than a pan. In the meantime, as the 1850s drew to a close, under officers' watchful eyes, San Francisco saloon owners pursued melodeons as a new revenue channel, as the once-steady stream of gamblers and gold slowed to a trickle.

As owners moved their gaming tables behind fortress-like structures and festive-ruses, for moral reformers, the anti-gambling crusades took on an even greater significance, becoming a battle of good versus evil, in which the very future of the city was at stake. When Curtis and his men outsmarted the gamblers and penetrated their lairs, the *Bulletin* celebrated.⁹² About a month after his successful raid of Steve Whipple's place, Curtis and his men descended again, this time targeting the black-owned Athenaeum. Proprietors James Ricker and John Taylor had opened the Athenaeum in 1853 as a saloon, library, and meeting place for black San Franciscans, but by 1857, the library had been relocated to a more up-standing section of town. The books that had

⁹¹ Dreyfus, *Our Better Nature*, 63.

⁹² “A Descent on the Gambling Hells.”

once filled the second floor were cleared away to accommodate gaming tables instead. No longer the place where Gibbs and others had gathered to talk about the anti-testimony laws, the *Bulletin* now proclaimed the Athenaeum a “notorious negro gambling house.”⁹³ In anticipation of a possible raid, Riker and Taylor, and Philip Humphreys, who ran the upstairs tables, had installed a bell warning system. On the night of Curtis' descent, however, the alarm failed to alert the gamblers in time. The officers reached the second floor to find “a number of colored 'sports' sitting around a table covered with green baize, on which were pieces of pasteboard. Some of the negroes had pieces of ivory in their hands—commonly called 'checks;' others had money.”⁹⁴ They arrested the two owners, Riker and Taylor, and the dealer, Humphreys. A few weeks later, Curtis targeted another gambling house, said to have been owned by French immigrants and “frequented by negroes and a low set of wretches generally.”⁹⁵ Though Curtis' first raid struck at the most fashionable gambling house, where many respected (though, at least according to the “Reformer,” not *respectable*) citizens wiled away the hours, officers also targeted houses catering to those considered to be lower on the social and racial order. In this way, they continued in the vigilante-reformer tradition, targeting those they deemed to be the highest and the lowest in San Franciscan society. They regarded the exorbitant wealth of the highest suspect, undoubtedly gained through gambling, speculation, or other corrupt means, while regarding the lowest as vile and vicious. Both groups, the believed, threatened the upstanding, republican, domestic community they hoped to create.

⁹³ “Descent on a Negro Gambling House,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 9 February 1857.

⁹⁴ “Negro Gamblers,” *Daily Alta California*, 11 February 1857.

⁹⁵ “Descent upon a Gambling House,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 24 March 1857.

Once the arrests were made, it was up to “the Courts whether the action of the Police is to be sustained,” the *Bulletin* reminded readers.⁹⁶ In order to convict someone under the 1854 anti-gambling laws, prosecutors needed evidence of the suspect caught in the act and not simply in the presence of a gaming table. Seeking to address this loophole, the state legislature passed a new, more strident anti-gambling law in April 1857. Two years later, however, legislators bent instead to gamblers, gambling-hall owners, and property owners' lobbying and relaxed the anti-gambling statutes.⁹⁷

Both the lawmakers' complacency and gamblers' adaptability made it difficult for police officers to make arrests and district prosecutors to secure convictions. During a one-year period in 1862-1863, for example, of the nearly seventy people arrested for gambling, less than half were convicted.⁹⁸ As the *Bulletin* complained, the challenge remained in “obtaining the necessary proof,” since “all those establishments keep their doors well guarded,” to slow officers “until all cards, gambling implements and money can be hidden, and the company allowed time to quietly dispose of themselves, by reading books, papers, etc., very unsuspectingly and innocently.” The paper suggested that the board of supervisors “declare public gambling houses public nuisances, and pass an order to suppress them; and then, let the Board, as in case of houses of prostitution, make *general reputation* admissible as evidence to establish the character of these houses.”⁹⁹ Though this would do little in aiding the conviction of individual gamblers or

⁹⁶ “A Descent on the Gambling Hells.”

⁹⁷ Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1862-63* (San Francisco: Charles F. Robbins & Company, 1863), 137; Longstreet, *The Wilder Shore*, 32; Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 69.

⁹⁸ Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1862-63*, 126.

⁹⁹ “How the Fashionable Gambling Houses Might Be Closed Up,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 23 November 1858.

gaming-hall owners, they conceded, it would provide a means of closing the operations altogether. Once again, it placed the emphasis on protecting the nebulous category of the “public good.”

In 1863, the Chief of Police echoed the call made by the *Bulletin* a few years earlier, once again proposing changes in the law that might aid police officers' efforts to raid gambling halls and catch gamblers mid-hand, thereby ensuring they gathered the evidence needed for a conviction. The board of supervisors, seeking to explain the prevalence of gambling in the city and their own inability to check it, concluded, “the existing laws prevent our Police from arresting it materially, and our legislators either have not the constitutional power, or *disposition* to enact laws necessary to enable our Police to arrest its prosperity.”¹⁰⁰ The report placed the blame in the hands of the legislators, suggesting that they were shielding gamblers. And, likely, they were.

Protecting the Virtuous

Above all, the 1855 anti-prostitution ordinance sought to achieve the somewhat vague goal of protecting “virtuous persons” from “harlots” and “houses of ill fame,” but it also included several specific mandates intended to circumscribe prostitution in the city. In addition to specifying and then outlawing the many places and circumstances under which the “practice of prostitution” might occur, city officials also sought to address the problem at all levels. They implicated building owners, mandating that they could not knowingly rent to persons engaged in prostitution, and addressed law-

¹⁰⁰ Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1862-63*, 140.

enforcers, directing “policemen to arrest and convey to the station house, all persons keeping, residing in, or found frequenting any house of ill-fame or who are found at any fandango or ball.” They even included a large incentive for public prosecutors, entitling them “to receive the full one-half amount of all fines collected for violation of this ordinance granting position.”¹⁰¹

Despite an ordinance that included significant punishments and rewards, an even a directive that officers take all suspects to the station house, they rarely arrested women on charges of prostitution or keeping a brothel.¹⁰² During a one-year period in 1862-1863, officers made only two arrests on the charges of common prostitution as well as for keeping a house of ill-fame. They instead were preoccupied with violent acts and threats to private property. Women believed to be prostitutes and madams were much more likely to be arrested for other crimes, with their occupation simply serving as further evidence of poor character.¹⁰³ When, for example, a San Francisco man accused brothel-owners, Annie McBride and Mary Mooney, of stealing three-hundred dollars from him while at their “dead-fall on Pacific Street,” the police arrested the two women for grand larceny without addressing the illegality of their business.¹⁰⁴ In the case of another western mining-town, Marion Goldman has argued that police officers often disregarded prostitution, focusing instead on crimes they considered to be disruptive to civil society,

¹⁰¹ “Ordinance No. 882,” *Daily Alta California*, 22 February 1856.

¹⁰² “City Items,” *Daily Alta California*, 16 June 1858; “City Items,” *Daily Alta California*, 27 November 1858; “Court Proceedings,” *Daily Alta California*, 1 July 1857. New York City police officers also rarely made arrests. As Timothy Gilfoyle has discussed, police officers lived in the ward that they patrolled and likely had relationships and social ties to the people they monitored. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 252.

¹⁰³ *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1862-63*, 128-129.

¹⁰⁴ “Female Pirates,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 February 1873; “A Mountaineer’s Mishap: A Late Adventure on the Lower Barbary Coast,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 10 April 1873. The Police likewise arrested Mary Raynor for robbing William A. Maple, who had “set out in quest of amusement” only to find when he sobered up that Raynor had stolen over two-hundred dollars from him. See “Another Female Robber,” *Daily Alta California*, 10 July 1857.

such as burglary, larceny, arson, or assault.¹⁰⁵ Determining what threatened the fabric of society was, of course, a matter of perspective. Many reform-minded San Franciscans insisted that “licentiousness is undermining the foundations that society stands upon.”¹⁰⁶ Officers, nonetheless, focused, for the most part, on violent acts and threats to private property.

To ensure that they remained otherwise engaged, the women who owned and worked in brothels often paid bribes to officers and municipal officials.¹⁰⁷ Virginia Corbett, who worked as a prostitute, called upon the police for support and protection when a former lover (or maybe previous client) showed up in the middle of the night at her house on Waverly Place, an alley between Washington and Clay well-known for its brothels. Clearly drunk, he first kicked in the door and then kicked Corbett.¹⁰⁸ She fought back, freed herself, and began “shouting police, murder, and screaming so that she could be heard two squares off.” Officers came to the scene, arresting both the assailant and Corbett. Though they charged Corbett with disturbing the peace, the officers who had been at the scene testified on her behalf, insisting that “her house was kept *as quiet as any house of the kind in the neighborhood*.”¹⁰⁹ In the moment of the attack, Corbett unhesitatingly called for the police, who came to her aid; when she stood before the court, they came to her aid once again. Likewise, a few years later, another woman working as a prostitute yelled for help when a man entered her Waverly Place brothel and attempted to drag her away. The police, stationed at the corner of Washington and

¹⁰⁵ Goldman, *Gold Diggers & Silver Miners*, 32.

¹⁰⁶ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 81.

¹⁰⁷ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 75-77.

¹⁰⁸ “A Lover’s Quarrel,” *Daily Alta California*, 15 July 1857.

¹⁰⁹ “As Quiet as Any House in the Neighborhood,” *Daily Alta California*, 15 July 1857.

Waverly, sprung to action and arrested the assailant.¹¹⁰ In both instances, women engaged in sexual commerce, called upon the institution, ostensibly present to police their actions, instead for the protection of their physical and economic well-being. The Barbary Coast police, clearly invested in maintaining the city's vice economy, sought to oversee an orderly exchange of sex and money by curbing the often-related violent outbreaks. They operated in direct violation of the 1856 ordinance that charged them to “convey to the station house” all those engaged in prostitution and instead sought to uphold the vice economy.

When officers did make arrests, they often targeted Mexican, Chinese, and black women working as prostitutes. Brothels employing women of color were less likely to be connected to and enjoy the protection of the city's powerful politicians or business owners.¹¹¹ Additionally, by regulating women of color working as prostitutes, officers and lawmakers policed, even if indirectly, their white, male customers as well. Officers rarely arrested of those “found frequenting any house of ill-fame,” as evidenced by the man's decision to turn to the police for help. George Washington Williams also went to the police to report an assault that occurred while he was “dancing in a house of prostitution,” once again, exposing his own illicit behavior without hesitation. The judge dismissed the case, demanding that Williams and his assailant pay a one-dollar fine to the court.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ “City Items,” *Daily Alta California*, 7 March 1862; “Court Proceedings,” *Daily Alta California*, 5 June 1862.

¹¹¹ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 75. While many Chinese brothel owners lacked protection from the city's elites, according to Barnhart, Ivan Light has argued that many white politicians, even those who espoused some of the most vehement anti-Chinese vitriol, still sought out Chinese brothel-keepers as lessees, because of the exorbitant rents they could collect. Light, “From Vice District to Tourist Attraction: The Moral Career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 3 (August 1974): 372.

¹¹² “City Items,” *Daily Alta California*, 20 May 1858.

As judges sought to push brothels out of public sight, they especially targeted Chinese cribs. From 1854 to 1865, San Francisco police relentlessly sought to remove Chinese brothels from main thoroughfares, such as Jackson and Dupont.¹¹³ Even though her brothel was tucked away on a side street, the police arrested Ah You, a Chinese woman who worked as a prostitute in Chinatown, a district just to the west of the Barbary Coast and also known for its brothels.¹¹⁴ When she came before the court, the judge ordered that she paint her windows, keep the doors closed, and avoid all cause for public complaints.¹¹⁵ For a Chinese woman believed to be engaged in sexual commerce, merely standing in the window of a street-level room could be regarded as illegal sex solicitation. By allowing Ah You's brothel to remain, but only unmarked, city officials preserved the vice economy while also maintaining San Francisco's image as a white, domestic town. In 1865, brothel owners and police formalized this agreement, by resolving that Chinese brothels could continue to operate but only on side streets and out of public view.¹¹⁶ Despite their agreement, police harassment of Chinese women working as prostitutes continued and intersected with broader anti-Chinese and immigration sentiments, eventually leading to anti-immigration legislation. For Chinese immigrants, San Francisco was far from a "wide-open town," as I will explore in chapter five.

When officers did arrest white women on charges of prostitution, they often targeted younger women, focusing perhaps on those whose innocence they believed

¹¹³ Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 81.

¹¹⁴ Her name likely was not "Ah You" but instead was probably misunderstood as such by white officials. Yong Chen has explained that "Ah" was an informal prefix, often used in South China, and recorded as the given name of thousands of Chinese immigrants in official documents. Chen, "In Their Own Words: The Significance of Chinese-language Sources for Studying Chinese American History," *Journal of Asian American History* 5, no. 3 (October 2002): 254.

¹¹⁵ "Court Proceedings," *Daily Alta California*, 23 January 1864.

¹¹⁶ Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 80-81.

might be restored. They, for example, arrested Josephine Jacquot for prostitution, and the judge sentenced her to rehabilitation at the Industrial School. While out on bail, however, Jacquot returned to the Washington Place brothel in which she worked.¹¹⁷ The Industrial School, also called the House of Refuge, had opened in 1859, as an asylum for unruly youth, housing the city's boys and girls of all races and ethnicities under the age of sixteen thought to be heading towards a life of crime. It sought instead to train girls as domestics and boys as manual laborers.¹¹⁸ When Fanny Carique escaped from the House of Refuge, having been sent there because of a prostitution charge, officers re-arrested her.¹¹⁹ Rather than categorizing these young women or girls as degraded and fallen, categories frequently assigned to women engaged in sexual commerce, officers and judges instead characterized them as seduced and endangered. They sought rehabilitation, rather than retribution, it seems. To those sent to the Industrial School, however, the distinction may have seemed slight, since the School maintained a strictly regimented day and housed the boys and girls in "little brick cells with small iron grating."¹²⁰ As the *California Police Gazette* quipped, the onerous life at the House of Refuge pushed girls towards, rather than saving them from, a life of prostitution.¹²¹ Both Jacquot and Carique resisted rescue and sought instead to return to their lives at the brothels.¹²² Whether, in

¹¹⁷ "City Items," *Daily Alta California*, 2 May 1859; "Report of the Grand Inquest," *Daily Alta California*, 30 November 1856. The intent of the House of Refuge, as Lotchin has explained, was to isolate juvenile offenders in order to both protect them from corrupting influences and prevent them from ruining others. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 207-208.

¹¹⁸ Macallair, "The San Francisco Industrial School and the Origins of Juvenile Justice in California," 17-18.

¹¹⁹ *Daily Alta California*, 15 August 1859.

¹²⁰ "The Industrial School of San Francisco," *Hutchings California Magazine* 4 (1859): 58-61, as quoted by Macallair, "The San Francisco Industrial School and the Origins of Juvenile Justice in California: A Glance at the Great Reformation," 20-24.

¹²¹ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 115, footnote 39.

¹²² Escapes were fairly common, especially among the boys, who were often tasked with outdoor manual labor, which gave them more opportunities to get away, as discussed by Macallair in "The San Francisco Industrial School and the Origins of Juvenile Justice in California: A Glance at the Great Reformation," 22.

returning to their brothels, they acted out of fear or free-will we cannot know—likely they simply preferred being the charge of a madam over being the ward of an asylum worker.

White brothel-owners and prostitutes also faced sanction when they took their business too far from the seedy, waterfront streets. Madam Mary Miller, for example, sought to establish her house of ill-repute on “one of the most respectable and most traveled streets in the city.” Both the police and courts rushed to take decisive action. Miller's case, according to the *Bulletin*, was “a sort of test case,” and both the police and the courts sought, definitively, to demonstrate that they would not allow for a “bad house in a vicinity previously of good repute.”¹²³ San Francisco's officials hoped that Miller might serve as a example to “other shameless women” that “they must remove to some of the alleys condemned to the use of the absconded.”¹²⁴ It was, therefore, Mary Miller's boldness, her effort to seek new real estate and new customers, that prompted the police and the courts to act and push prostitutes and brothels back to sordid side streets and alleyways. Perhaps too, had Mary Miller been successful in her ruse, relocating her brothel to a respectable street, her respectable neighbors might not have recognized her as a “fallen” woman. As long as officers and judges could keep the parlor prostitute within the confines of the Coast, should could at best ape but not really claim true womanhood. “It is impossible to suppress [prostitution] altogether,” the Chief of Police finally concluded, but he nevertheless called upon law enforcement agents to remain committed

¹²³ “Houses of Ill Fame - Sentence of Mary Miller,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 21 April 1860; “Court Proceedings,” *Daily Alta California*, 22 April 1860.

¹²⁴ “Houses of Ill Fame - Sentence of Mary Miller.”

to regulating and containing vice, “so as to limit the injury done by it to society as much as possible.”¹²⁵

“Under the Cover of Darkness”

During the late 1850s, San Francisco framed anti-gambling laws and anti-prostitution laws in terms of protecting the public good. Often, this began with a goal of eliminating vice altogether, but when that proved to be impossible, law makers and enforcers began to reconsider how they might best protect the public good. They began to talk instead in terms of “suppressing” gambling and prostitution, pushing them out of sight and “under the cover of darkness.” Protecting the public good became less a matter of eliminating vice than of finding ways to contain it. Without firm boundaries for containment, San Francisco's law enforcement agents, both those working on the streets and in the courts, sought to confine saloons and bordellos to the oldest blocks of the city, where they had first emerged, long-since taken hold and did not, therefore, threaten the “decency” of the neighborhood. Some had long-considered waterfront blocks, near Clark’s Point and reaching inland towards Portsmouth Plaza, a forsaken district, dating back to its days as a Chilean tent community of early miners and prostitutes and reified when immigrants from Australia, a British penal colony, moved in and established Sydney Town. They came to regard it as a fitting receptacle for the city's criminal element—its “wrecks of humanity,” as one observer opined.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ “Annual Report of the Chief of Police,” *Daily Alta California*, 8 February 1859.

¹²⁶ Evans, *A la California*, 272.

While these oldest, waterfront blocks had a sordid reputation, reaching back to the city's gold rush days, for reform-minded San Franciscans, turning them over to vice was never without anxiety, hesitation, and conflict. Because, in fact, of the district's gold rush origins, the old waterfront blocks were now well inland, and hardly an easily avoided, out-of-the-way vice district. The Barbary Coast, rather, cut into the city, leaving many San Franciscans with the choice either to traverse the "vice and iniquity to reach the business portion of the city, or to travel long and inconvenient distances in order to avoid the disgusting scenes."¹²⁷ For reformers, consecrating a vice district was an uneasy solution, for the many San Francisco who benefited from the vice economy, it offered a way of carving the city into neighborhoods of sunshine and of shadow and benefiting from both.

Before she closed the Gaities and left the neighborhood for good, Rowena Granice likely had a chance to observe closely the changes in the district, as lawmakers and law enforcers slowly cordoned it off for vice. Her daily commute, from her home at Dupont and Green to the Gaities on Commercial street (the outgrowth of Long Wharf), would have taken her through the heart of the early city. Some days she might have taken the omnibus, but as a woman determined to make a go of it at the Gaities, it seems more likely that she would have saved the car fare and walked instead. The first few blocks of her walk were mostly residential. Traveling south along Kearny, once she reached Broadway (leading to one of the oldest docks at Clark's Point), the balance of homes and businesses tipped toward the commercial. She might have taken note of the a dry goods

¹²⁷ "Charge to the Grand Jury: Special Instructions as to Houses of Ill-Fame," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 12 April 1872.

store, butcher shop, a jeweler, horse stable, and a liquor shop. At Pacific Street, the center of the early city and a street fast-becoming known for fun, liquor shops and saloons dominated, although attorneys, booksellers, physicians, and apothecaries remained interspersed throughout.¹²⁸ Though perhaps slightly less visible, tucked away on side-streets like Waverly Place, brothels too filled these blocks. As she continued to make her way toward The Gaities, Granice passed Portsmouth Plaza, lined by the Bella Union and Gilbert's Melodeon, just before turning off to head down Commercial to her own bit theater.

Many workers, in fact, shared Granice's commute, as they made their way from the city's residential streets, perched in the hills, through the Barbary Coast, before eventually reaching the newly emerging Market Street business corridor.¹²⁹ Granice, along with the other Pacific and Commercial street saloon owners (with Pacific being near the northern border and Commercial as the southern edge of the Coast), hoped to capitalize on the evening rush, enticing men passing by to stop for a drink, a smoke, or a show at the end of a long day. The saloon and fandango owners that resided in the streets between home and work, not only claimed these blocks out of habit or last resort but also flourished in them.

As saloons, liquor stores, and dance halls came to dominate the the blocks surrounding Pacific street, lawmakers began to make explicit the implicit boundaries of the burgeoning vice district. While city law-makers had, in 1855, taken early steps

¹²⁸ Henry G. Langley, *The San Francisco Directory for the year 1858*. (San Francisco: Commercial Steam Presses, S.D. Valentine & Son, 1858).

¹²⁹ Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856*, 256; Shumsky and Springer, "San Francisco's Zone of Prostitution," 74.

towards regulating vice according to public space, nearly twenty years later, state lawmakers reinforced and solidified these efforts. In 1873, the state legislature stipulated the guilt of “every person who keeps any disorderly house” according to whether “the peace, comfort, or decency of the immediate neighborhood is habitually disturbed.”¹³⁰ By constructing the law in this way, predicating the legality of prostitution on the tenor of the neighborhood rather than on a commercialized sexual exchange, lawmakers tacitly created a vice district. Their regulation of space extended to the individual buildings as well, as they sought to push gambling halls to the upper floors or back rooms and prostitutes into unmarked buildings. Through the regulation of public space, lawmakers and enforcers constructed a strategy for “limiting the injury to society,” while preserving the city's thriving vice economy.

Gambling and prostitution remained prevalent and profitable businesses, for those both directly and in-directly involved. As a result, politicians and police seemed to be operating at cross-purposes. Both, at least at times, heeded reformers' claims but more often they shifted blame or looked the other way, thereby continuing to reap the benefits of bribes and kick-backs and, for a few, high rents too. Accordingly, law-enforcement officials most often sought to keep the madams, prostitutes, pickpockets, and sporting-set within the confines of the Coast, rather than exorcizing them altogether (an impossible task, anyway). Some may have even realized the importance of gambling and especially prostitution to the city's economy as a whole. As a maritime port, needing to attract and entertain sailors, the Barbary Coast served an important purpose. At Ellen McDonald's

¹³⁰ *Amendments to the Codes of California. Passed at the Twentieth Session of the Legislature, 1873-4* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1874).

brothel, for example, as one city newspaper writer reported, “many a luckless mariner has been wrecked.”¹³¹ While distracting and amusing, the Coast establishments also kept the sailors close at hand, within blocks of their ships in fact, thereby capturing their attention until it was time to depart.¹³² In addition to keeping sailors occupied and pacified, as Paul Gilje has explained, waterfront vice districts also provided ship captains some assurance that their crew, who often went ashore freshly paid, would quickly spend all their money and therefore need to return to sea.¹³³ For San Francisco elites, with aspirations of consecrating the city’s maritime importance, pleasing and courting ship captains was of the utmost importance. Miners too, sometimes also carrying several weeks worth of work in their pockets, congregated along the Coast. For the city then, the Barbary Coast ensured that gold and silver cycled through the local economy rather than only flowing out.

As reformers' and officers' efforts turned from suppression to segregation, sailors, miners, gambling-hall owners, and madams continued to seek profit and pleasure along the waterfront, and over time the blocks between Clark's Point and the Long Wharf (from Broadway to Commercial) and extending to Dupont Street and Chinatown on the west, coalesced into a recognizable vice district. In solidifying and segregating the Barbary Coast, reformers satisfied, somewhat, their desire to separate vice from the rest of the

¹³¹ “Police Court. A Heavy Tribute Levied Upon the Iniquitous,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 6 January 1874.

¹³² John F. Kasson has made a similar argument about Coney Island, positing that “Coney acted as a safety valve, a mechanism of social release and control that ultimately protected existing society. Its fantasy led not to a new apprehension of social possibilities, but toward passive acceptance of the cycle of production and consumption. The egalitarian spirit it fostered paradoxically served to reconcile visitors to the inequalities of society at large,” in *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 109.

¹³³ Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

city. They constructed moral maps which they sought to translate onto the streets. Police officers, attorneys, and judges played an important role, implementing and maintaining these maps. When dancehall worker Mary Drenk ventured onto the virtuous side, she found herself sanctioned in court and sentenced to jail time. Known for her “enterprising” Barbary Coast schemes, she set her sights instead on the pocketbooks of San Francisco's middle class, most certainly white, women. She sought to elicit and exploit their sympathies by going door-to-door pedaling gold (or, rather, brass) jewelry and a tale of woe. She claimed to be raising money to reunite with her (fictitious) husband who had abandoned her for the Nevada silver mines. Playing the role of the damsel in distress, she sought to appeal to the charitable aspirations of San Francisco's middle-class women. The courts came down hard. Drenk’s conniving efforts to gain admittance into the homes and hearts of respectable women was not to be tolerated.¹³⁴ Despite efforts to erect and maintain boundaries, San Franciscans themselves remained in motion, crossing and challenging the lines of virtue and vice, and continually rendering the project in progress and incomplete.

¹³⁴ “Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks Documenting San Francisco History and Law Enforcement, ca. 1895-1936.,” The Bancroft Library. University of California, Berkeley; “The Courts,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 6 March 1874; “A Fair Average Swindle. The Distressed Lady who Practices Deception upon the Benevolent,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 4 March 1874; “Mrs. Drenk’s Enterprise,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 March 1874.



Figure 11. “Mary Drenke, a Barbary Coast dancehall worker and pickpocket,” 1874. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Furthermore, amidst reformers’ efforts to minimize the district’s affect on the city by establishing physical boundaries for vice, the Barbary Coast took on a larger symbolic significance. As a discrete site of danger and decay, it became an even larger part of the city’s cultural identity. Even if white, middle and upper class wives no longer passed through the district, like Amelia Neville, who noted that her nights at Apollo Hall on Pacific street had long since passed, gas-light exposés offered the city’s women a peak inside Pacific dives. One such story even invited lady readers to scrutinize the accompanying “engraving closely... to ascertain whether their lords are in the habit of

being detained on 'business.'"¹³⁵ Through reformers' and politicians' efforts to contain vice, they entrenched its physical place in the city and enlarged its discursive significance, leaving one observer to disparage, "even the remotest parts of the city do not entirely escape its polluting influence."¹³⁶ He was right. As a somewhat physically contained and distinctive district, the myths and legends of the Coast grew, and vice and violence became inextricably intertwined with San Francisco's reputation and municipal identity (a link that reformers, perhaps happily, could not undo, since the city's thriving vice economy proved vital to its Golden Gate aspirations).

The Lives and Lore of the Coast

The Barbary Coast comprised not only the physical space of the waterfront-blocks, a retreat and resort for sailors and miners constructed by bar-owners and solidified by reformers, but also a place made of sordid stories and spectacular characters. A larger-than-life district gave way to larger-than-life characters. "Happy Jack," for example, became one of the more infamous Coasters, with a career that included card tricks, grand larceny, assault, robbery, murder, and even a brief stint in the 1870s as a temperance crusader.¹³⁷ For "sunshine and shadow" writer Benjamin Lloyd, none of the Barbary Coast characters—"the petty thief, the house burglar, the tramp, the

¹³⁵ Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 66.

¹³⁶ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 78.

¹³⁷ "Police Court Record," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 December 1869; "Police Court Penalties," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 January 1875; "A Fool and his Money," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 January 1879; "Court Notes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 January 1879; "'Happy Jack' in Jail," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 18 May 1878; "The Killing of Dwyer," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 13 September 1873; "Shot Dead. The End of a Notorious Character," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 April 1889; "Police Court," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 25 October 1872; "Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks Documenting San Francisco History and Law Enforcement, ca. 1895-1936."; Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 115-118.

whoremonger, lewd women, cut-throats and murders”—personified the depravity of the Coast more than the prostitute.¹³⁸ Once a woman entered the Coast, it was as though she entered Dante's inferno. According to Lloyd, her path towards damnation was set, and it was simply a matter of descending the rungs. While Lloyd's narrative would have been familiar to any nineteenth-century reader of urban narratives, he did offer his perspective on the moral geography of San Francisco's Barbary Coast.¹³⁹ The high-class houses, Lloyd explained, stood along the edges of the Coast, along Stockton, Dupont, Market, and Third Street. Prostitutes of a slightly lower order lined Dupont street, while the “vice-worn” women worked along Waverly Place. The crass Waverly women placed themselves on full display, soliciting customers by posing in the windows and doorways, while the Dupont women peeped demurely at potential clients from behind their window shades. The fall of the fallen woman, according to Lloyd, ended at Waverly Street. Though, for the very most unfortunate, an even worse fate remained, that of a “harbor professional,” without even a brothel to work from or call home.¹⁴⁰

The situation on the ground was, of course, much more complicated. Under the label of prostitute, women along the Coast engaged in many different types of monetized sexual exchanges. Lloyd, with his range of fallen women from “sinning sisters” to “harlots,” acknowledged this and yet responded by re-ordering the world and its

¹³⁸ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 79.

¹³⁹ As Mary Ryan has discussed, Lloyd followed popular conventions for describing prostitution, which were “structured around a crude class analysis, as the authors took their readers on a tour that began among affluent madams, proceeded to the modest rooms of harlots of the middling rank, and terminated in the degraded haunts of the streetwalker.” Ryan, *Women in Public*, 73. Newspaper accounts, offering supposed “real-life stories,” followed this structure as well. See, for example, “A Sad End,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 20 February 1872, which tells the dramatic story of a country girl, who came to the city, discovered alcohol, became a Coaster, and finally dropped dead as she entered a Pacific street den.

¹⁴⁰ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 80-87.

ambiguities according to a strident moral map. From the perspective of the women themselves, however, the situation along the Coast appeared quite different. They engaged in different types of work with varying degrees of physical contact and differing degrees of choice or coercion. The financial and status rewards varied as well. For a few, sex work offered the chance to accumulate personal wealth and property, which they could at times leverage into other business ventures or a vertical move within the vice economy. For many others, it was a hard and short life, with many of the women dying from venereal disease, botched abortions, drug use or suicide.¹⁴¹ Brothels could be homes or traps, ranging from gilded bird-cages to squalid sweat-shops. Within these strictures, many of the women working in the Barbary Coast sought to shape their work experiences and exploit the possibilities it availed.

Some women worked the streets, soliciting customers along the Coast's thoroughfares, before taking them to cheap rooms nearby. Derided by Lloyd as the lowest of the low, the “harbor professionals” made use of the waterfront lodging houses, which for 25 to 75 cents offered a cot and likely little more.¹⁴² Others found customers in saloons. Many melodeon and saloon owners hired women to wait on—often called “pretty waiter girls”—and dance for their male customers (and barred their doors to prostitutes not on their payroll).¹⁴³ Some saloon-owners sought to attract customers by turning the women into a spectacle. They dressed the waiters and dancers in gaudy, revealing costumes and, according to Asbury, invited customers to strip the costumes off

¹⁴¹ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 38-39.

¹⁴² Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 81.

¹⁴³ Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 48.

the women for a fee.¹⁴⁴ The women ranged in age and included girls as young as ten, and typically they made between fifteen to twenty-five dollars a week, as reported by Evans and Asbury—unreliable narrators both. Regardless of their job title, sex with male customers was usually part of the job description and served to supplement the women's income. While most of the women's fee went to the saloon-keeper, they were able to keep part of the proceeds from their sex work that took place during their working hours.¹⁴⁵ In this way, the line between bars and brothels often blurred. Teresa Casho, for example, listed by census-takers as a saloon-keeper, shared a household with three younger women who each worked as prostitutes, suggesting that she almost certainly worked as a madam as well. Possibly the women worked as “pretty waiter girls” in Casho's saloon or maybe her saloon was, in fact, more brothel than bar.¹⁴⁶

Women not employed by a bar-owner or brothel-keeper (or at least off the clock) made the most of these blurred lines, trolling public houses looking for customers. They were not, however, completely free agents. According to Evans, typically a “male friend—sometimes her husband, but not often” accompanied the women to the beer cellars to offer protection. In return, the accompanying men laid claim to a portion of the women's earnings.¹⁴⁷ One wonders, for example, about the business and personal relationships among bar-owner, John Murray, and fellow Irish immigrants, James and Margaret Brown, with whom he shared a dwelling. James worked as a bar keeper and

¹⁴⁴ Evans, *A la California*, 296; Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 107-108.

¹⁴⁵ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 107-108.

¹⁴⁶ *1870 United States Federal Census*, M593_81 (San Francisco Ward 6, San Francisco, California), 71A.

¹⁴⁷ Evans, *A la California*, 299.

Margaret as a prostitute—they likely both put in time at Murray's saloon.¹⁴⁸ On nights off, Margaret might have sought out her own customers (and a little income beyond John's grasp). Her husband James, as Evans suggested, quite possibly accompanied her, making his own claim on her earnings. Just down the street, most likely Pacific, were the Rosses who hailed from Scotland and Ireland. Alexander kept a saloon while his wife, also named Margaret, worked as a prostitute, possibly entertaining Alexander's customers or maybe taking her clients to a nearby lodging house.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, William Aatterson, a black man from New York, worked as a bar keeper, while his wife, Mary, a white woman from Mexico, worked as a prostitute.¹⁵⁰ Unlike a bar-keeper husband, who likely claimed a portion of the earnings or maybe helped find customers, William and Mary Ryan worked together even more closely, as accomplices. Both were convicted of being “panel thieves,” a scheme in which a woman brought her customer into a room with a hidden panel through which a partner-in-crime could enter and rob the client.¹⁵¹ We know little about the inner-workings of and power dynamics within these households and couples, pimps, it seems, came in many forms: husband, business partner, and employer.

¹⁴⁸ Henry Grace Langley, *A Map and Street Directory of San Francisco: To Which Are Added Many Items of Valuable Information, Useful for Strangers Visiting the Metropolis of the Pacific* (San Francisco: H.G. Langley, 1872); *1870 United States Federal Census*, M593_80 (San Francisco Ward 4, San Francisco, California), 367.

¹⁴⁹ *1870 United States Federal Census*, M593_80 (San Francisco Ward 4, San Francisco, California), 465A.

¹⁵⁰ In the case of the Aattersons, one wonders not only about the balance of power between William and Mary but also their reception in the neighborhood. Within the context of a district in which cross-racial sexual encounters occurred, how were they treated? See also John Kuo Wei Tchen's discussion of interracial couples seeking to navigate New York City's racial hierarchies in *New York Before Chinatown*, 228-230. Kevin J. Mumford also discusses the prevalence of interracial couple in vice districts, in *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Furthermore, Mexicans held an ambiguous place in San Francisco's racial orderings, so while census-takers regarded Mary as white, she may not have been by neighbors. *1870 United States Federal Census*, M593_80 (San Francisco Ward 4, San Francisco, California), 465B.

¹⁵¹ “The Panel Thieves,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 March 1874; “The Police Court,” 7 March 1874. For an explanation of rouse carried off by panel thieves, see Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: the 19th-century New York City neighborhood that invented tap dance, stole elections, and became the world's most notorious slum* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 213.

Hotel owner Josias Quintrell offers yet another case-study, suggesting the ambiguities of the commercial sex industry. Several women, categorized by census-takers as prostitutes, boarded at his hotel. San Franciscans working in many sectors boarded there as well, including a painter, barber, saloon keeper, bill collector, and contractor. Perhaps, though categorically listed as “prostitutes,” some of them were simply single, working women, whose singleness and proximity to the Coast called into question their virtue. Others, likely did entertain clients in their rooms, since women who could not find room in a brothel or crib often resorted to working on their own.¹⁵² Quintrell’s role too is unclear. The *Langley City* directory later listed him as a saloon owner. Perhaps he owned a second business or maybe he opened a saloon on the first floor of his hotel. If so, it likely became a favorite spot for the women to solicit customers but also may have shifted their relationship to Quintrell, making him a pimp and employer as well as a landlord.¹⁵³

While saloons often doubled as brothels, many women working as prostitutes in San Francisco lived together in a dedicated house, overseen by a madam. Madams chose how to run their houses, with some collecting rent and fees (to pay tailors, police, and housekeepers) from their resident-employees, while others kept a percentage of the women's earnings. In return, madams attracted customers and offered support and protection. Brothels, meanwhile, ranged from grand parlor houses to cramped cribs. Parlor houses offered gaudy imitations of the ornate interiors belonging to the wealthy.

¹⁵² Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 27-28, 32.

¹⁵³ 1870 United States Federal Census, M593_80 (San Francisco Ward 4, San Francisco, California), 383; Henry G. Langley, *San Francisco Directory for the Year commencing March, 1872*. (San Francisco: Henry G. Langley Publisher, 1872), 541.

The women themselves also mimicked the refined manners of gentility. “Were it not for the previous knowledge of the character of the house,” Benjamin Lloyd claimed, “the visitor would never know but that he was in the private parlor of a wealthy gentleman, and his beautiful and affable companions were the brightest stars in the most respectable society—so chaste are their manners and conversation.”¹⁵⁴ Prostitutes working in parlor houses often had their own rooms in which to entertain customers. Less grand brothels often appeared much like boarding houses. In fact, some madams rented rooms to regular boarders, as well as the women working under their oversight. Often, the families of the women who ran boardinghouse-brothels also lived in the house.¹⁵⁵ Phillip and Margaret Appel, along with their daughter Lena, shared a home with four women employed by Margaret, as well as two domestic servants.¹⁵⁶ Many more women worked in brothels comprised of sparsely furnished cubicles, which could hold little more than a bed and wash basin—often, fittingly, called cribs. Sometimes the cramped quarters were further divided to create a separate waiting area, indicative of the many clients that might cycle through on a given night. Cribs could be found filling larger buildings or as stand-alone shacks.¹⁵⁷

Typically the women in a brothel were of the same ethnicity or nationality. In Teresa Casho's house, for example, all the women hailed from Mexico. Many referred to a Pacific Street dance hall, and likely brothel as well, as the “Chilecita,” because of the Chilean and Mexican women who occupied it and men who frequented it.¹⁵⁸ The twenty-

¹⁵⁴ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 84.

¹⁵⁵ Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail*, 33.

¹⁵⁶ *1870 United States Federal Census*, M593_81 (San Francisco Ward 6, San Francisco, California), 69.

¹⁵⁷ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 255; Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 67.

¹⁵⁸ “Resume of San Francisco News,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, 10 February 1857.

five year old Zoe Prejoet employed eight young French women, running what must have been an elegant and exclusive house. Prejoet owned her parlor house, and had significant personal holdings; the women who worked for her also had accumulated personal wealth.¹⁵⁹ The prevalence of Mexican, Chilean, French, or black houses was indicative of San Francisco's racial ordering, but it was also suggestive of the social ties women brought with them to San Francisco. Of the five women in Hattie Wells's parlor house, for example, four hailed from New York.¹⁶⁰ Much like the Baltimorean or Bostonian men, who came together to form their own fire companies, women arriving in San Francisco, seeking work and shelter, likely drew on social and cultural bonds.

Racial mixing in Barbary Coast brothels most often came in the form of black and Chinese domestic servants supporting a house of white women working as prostitutes. In Zoe Prejoet's brothel, for example, two black women, Virginian-born Adele DeMajery and Nova Scotian Lizzy Shelton, worked as a domestic servant and cook. Likewise, Maria Green and Allen Bissell, both listed as mulatto by census-takers, worked as a domestic servant and porter in Hattie Wells's house. Black and Chinese servants not only performed important duties in the parlor houses, but, since only wealthier houses could afford additional employees, they became a status-marker as well, much like the Chinese servants who served the men in Whipple's gaming rooms or Parker's gentlemen's saloon and conferred customers with a sense of social status and racial pedigree. Meanwhile, for the black men and women, who participated in San Francisco's vice economy, even the less-well paid service positions offered some degree of financial opportunity. For Joseph

¹⁵⁹ *1870 United States Federal Census*, M593_81 (San Francisco Ward 6, San Francisco, California), 71B.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

and Elizabeth Paking, a black man and mulatto woman both from slave states, working at Clara Hastings's brothel enabled them to accrue personal property.¹⁶¹ Ultimately, however, despite a chance for personal economic gains, the opportunities black men and women found in brothels were fairly limited, confined to working as a domestic or porter and reifying the city's racial hierarchies.

By contrast, Mary Ellen Pleasant, a black San Franciscan, leveraged her place in the vice economy into greater economic and social standing. She strategically positioned herself, physically and narratively, at the edge of the Barbary Coast, operating in the interstices between respectability and vice. Her reputation, however, reached far beyond the Coast, and she became a figure of controversy and intrigue throughout the city. She accordingly attended to her image, trading on, cultivating, and manipulating it—offering her audience just enough to pique their interest but never enough to satisfy their curiosity. All the while, she professed to be indifferent to the circulating gossip; her dispassion being, perhaps, another facet of her self-styling. She insisted, for example, “I never cared a feather's weight for public opinion, for it is about the most ghostly thing I know of.” She then continued, “if a write-up of me put an extra blanket on somebody's bed or gave a household meat and bread, I would let them lay my character down in the middle of the road and let the whole world jump on it, and then turn it over and let them go it again. So long as my friends believed in me, I didn't bother a bit.”¹⁶² When told by her doctor that she was at death's door, however, she called for Sam Davis, her friend, confidant, and editor of the journal *The Pandex of the Press*, to tell him the story of her life.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 72B.

¹⁶² Sam Davis, “‘Mammy’ Pleasant: Memoirs and Autobiography,” *The Pandex of the Press* 1, no. 1 (January 1902).

Furthermore, she entrusted her life story to Davis alone, seemingly in an effort to retain control of her story and her image, even from the grave.¹⁶³

Though she sought to regulate the re-telling of her story, she played with it as well. Her autobiography, as published in Davis's *The Pandex*, began, for example, with a passage by H. Jerome Fosselli, a palm reader, who offered an assessment of Pleasant's qualities and character. For a woman often accused of voodoo and the occult, it seemed an unusual start. Including Fosselli's reading, however, offered Pleasant a means of telling readers, without boast or conceit, of her character, including "a most profound sense of justice," a will "like cast iron," a great "tact" coupled with "a frankness of speech."¹⁶⁴ Next, Davis established his editorial authority and the authenticity of his account by retelling Pleasant's death-bed wishes that he alone tell her story. Then, finally, came Pleasant's own voice and narrative. Having broken her story into a serial, Davis promised readers the next installment in his next issue of *The Pandex*. When it arrived, however, readers found a note informing them of a disagreement between the author and editor—between Pleasant and Davis. The story would not continue. Pleasant, in fact, went on to live another two years, giving her time to re-tract her agreement with Davis and her story.

"Some people have reported that I was born in slavery, but as a matter of fact, I was born in Philadelphia," she began.¹⁶⁵ Many of those who knew Mary best, however, believed that she was born into slavery.¹⁶⁶ According to one of the earliest historians of

¹⁶³ Davis, "'Mammy' Pleasant: Memoirs and Autobiography"; "The True Story of Mammy Pleasant," *San Francisco News Letter*, 2 September 1916.

¹⁶⁴ Davis, "'Mammy' Pleasant: Memoirs and Autobiography," 1-2.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Hudson, *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant,"* 11-12.

African American abolition activities in San Francisco, Pleasant was born in Louisiana and then purchased by a man named Prince, who sent her to a convent in New Orleans for an education. In return for good grades, Prince promised Pleasant her freedom, and though she held up her end of the bargain, he did not. After Prince's death, she was sold yet again.¹⁶⁷ A more recent historian, Susheel Bibbs, has traced many of Pleasant's origins stories and suggests that she was most likely born in Georgia, the daughter of an enslaved mother and a governor's son.¹⁶⁸ Pleasant, nevertheless, insisted that she was born free.¹⁶⁹ Throughout her life, many called her “Mammy” Pleasant, a name that evoked a slave-past and which she resented greatly. While others used it to undermine, discredit, or belittle her, at times she did embrace her identity as a domestic as a means of garnering sympathy or masking her business success.¹⁷⁰

Pleasant most likely arrived in San Francisco in 1850, although she sometimes placed herself among the revered 49ers. Before arriving in San Francisco, Pleasant had worked alongside east-coast abolitionists and aided with the Underground Railroad. Throughout the 1850s she took an active role in cultivating and sustaining San Francisco's black public culture and helped enslaved men and women, brought into the state by their masters, claim and maintain their freedom. When many of San Francisco's black community left for Victoria in 1858, she and her husband, John, moved to

¹⁶⁷ Harold Camba, “Helen Holdredge Collection, SFH 36,” Box 2, Folder 24, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

¹⁶⁸ Susheel Bibbs, *Mary Ellen Pleasant 1817 to 1904: Mother of Human Rights in California* (San Francisco: MEP Publications, 1996), 1.

¹⁶⁹ As historian Lynn Hudson has speculated, Pleasant possibly portrayed herself as Philadelphia-born to avoid widely-held assumptions that formerly enslaved people were backward and unintelligent. Furthermore, during the antebellum period, free black men and women feared that if they admitted to a past in slavery, they might be captured and re-enslaved. Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant,”* 11-12.

¹⁷⁰ Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant,”* 4.

Chatham, Canada instead. There she continued her abolition activities, crossing paths with John Brown before his famous Harper's Ferry raid.¹⁷¹ Just before the Civil War, she returned to San Francisco and began her own battle, taking on the discriminatory streetcar companies.¹⁷²

With enough material already for an intriguing life-story, by the mid-1860s, Pleasant's most successful years, the apex of both her power and wealth, were still before her—so too were her most scintillating life events, which Davis would later try to capitalize on to woo subscribers to his *Pandex*. In the late 1860s, she opened a boardinghouse (some said brothel) along the Plaza, just down from the Athenaeum she had helped found so many years before. It was a striking building, inside and out, with red lambskin wall-coverings, “rock crystal chandeliers,” and “massive furniture,” recalled one woman who had visited and been dazzled by Pleasant's house as a little girl.¹⁷³ The guest list was impressive too, with some of the city and state's leading political and financial men among her boarders.¹⁷⁴ With its elaborate décor and influential guests, “it was considered fashionable to be seen at her 920 Washington House,” one San Franciscan declared.¹⁷⁵ Pleasant hired an all-black staff to cater to her white guests' needs, likely an effort by Pleasant to provide as many black San Franciscans as possible with jobs. From her boarders, Pleasant learned about the political and economic

¹⁷¹ Pleasant may have funded or helped plan John Brown's raid, as discussed by Hudson, who also notes that the exact nature of her involvement, like so many other aspects of Pleasant's life, “remains elusive.” Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant,”* 39-41.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 38-39, 44. In Chapter 2, I offer a brief discussion of Pleasant's, as well as two other women's, law suits against the streetcar companies.

¹⁷³ Julia Jackson, “Helen Holdredge Collection, SFH 36,” Box 2, Folder 24, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

¹⁷⁴ Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant,”* 58-59; Sparks, *Capital Intentions*, 51.

¹⁷⁵ George S. Lane, “Helen Holdredge Collection, SFH 36,” Box 2, Folder 24, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

wheelings and dealings in the city, insider knowledge that she put to use, buying property and stock investments at just the right moment. From the position of a boarding-house keeper, a “mammy” even, when she wanted to be inconspicuous, Pleasant translated her guests' economic success into her own.

The exact nature of her house—boarding or bordello—remained an item of curiosity and speculation. Even those closest to Pleasant offered contradictory accounts, such as her right-hand man Whitmore, who suggested that Pleasant offered female companionship to guests who so desired. Meanwhile, the son of a longtime friend declared, unequivocally, that nothing of the sort took place at 920 Washington.¹⁷⁶ Two of Pleasant's most dedicated biographers have insisted that she was not a madam. Hudson has speculated that the rumors and accusations may have been a means of discrediting and undermining her, an effort to use scandalous stories to detract from her business acumen.¹⁷⁷ Despite the whispering among her contemporaries, Pleasant remained resolute—she would share what she wanted and no more. As she told the *Call* near the end of her life, “Some folks say that words were meant to reveal thought. That ain't so. Words were meant to conceal thought.”¹⁷⁸ In a world in which “sunshine-shadow” narratives of the city sought neatly to divide it according to morality, Pleasant was defiant in her ambiguity. Much like her 920 Washington house, she straddled the line between virtue and vice. Though perhaps moonlighting as a madam, she also insisted on her right to ride the city's streetcars as a lady.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant,”* 60; Bibbs, *Mary Ellen Pleasant 1817 to 1904*, 5.

¹⁷⁸ Mary E. Pleasant, *San Francisco Call*, 1901, as quoted by Hudson, *The Making of “Mammy Pleasant”*.

Part II.

“American Metropolis of the Pacific”: From an American Town to the Pacific Gateway

Chapter Four

Cultural ties and Rail ties

Through the 1850s and 60s, San Francisco remained a distant outpost at best—a gateway on the edge of the continent. Whether traveling by land or sea, it was a journey of several weeks, or even months, from the eastern seaboard. Yet, even as it remained physically remote, the city’s boosters, reformers, and business owners continued to assert the its Americanness, its cultural ties to the nation.

With the city languishing somewhat, the 1859 discovery of silver, on the eastern side of the Sierras, re-infused San Francisco with capital, from Nevada mines and New

York banks both.¹ The promise of western silver re-animated talks of a transcontinental railroad, a project long-hoped for but often dismissed as an impossible feat. In the midst of growing sectional tensions, many championed the railroad as a national panacea, a network that in connecting the Atlantic and Pacific might reunite North and South as well. It instead took southern secession for Congress to agree on a transcontinental route and pass the 1862 Pacific Railway Act, which provided the funding and land-grant incentives that spurred construction by railroad companies. At the end of four bloody years of war, many continued to champion the railroad (and the newly accessible West) as a much needed antidote for a wounded nation. In numerous ways, then, the 1869 opening of the transcontinental railroad forever altered San Francisco's relationship to the nation. The new, transcontinental communication and transportation networks it fostered drew San Francisco closer to the demographic center of the nation, lending some legitimacy to boosters' long-standing boasts.

This chapter takes up San Francisco's changing relationship to the nation, in the midst of expanding cultural and technological networks. The once-distant frontier town participated and became embedded in national trends, networks, and cultural imaginings. It traces some of the actors, artists, and authors, like Adah Menken, Albert Bierstadt, and Bret Harte, who forged some of the cultural ties between San Francisco and the nation. They played an important role in shaping San Franciscan's conceptions of their city and others' perceptions of it as well. For most of the country, in fact, who would never see or

experience San Francisco or California for themselves, it remained a city comprised of Bierstadt's pictures and Harte's words.²

This chapter examines the process of place-making, focusing especially on the processes that create a "sense of place." Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has emphasized the experiential component of "sense of place," positing that "places are constructed out of such elements as distinctive odors, textual and visual qualities in the environment, seasonal changes of temperature and color."³ In this chapter, I linger on Adah Menken's whirlwind weeks in the city, seeking to capture one piece of San Francisco during the summer of 1863. I also take up William Kittredge's definition of "sense of place," which he has explained as the "set of stories connected to a particular location."⁴ This chapter traces a few of these stories, asking how they become affixed to the San Francisco waterfront landscape.

The works of many cultural producers, including photographs, paintings, reports, guides, and magazine articles, told the story of California as a natural, restorative, and meritocratic landscape. These celebrations focused on the distinctive nature of the California landscape and constructed a supposedly adventurous and independent Californian spirit. Just as they carved out this unique place for California, boosters also attributed the city's supposedly "western" qualities to a deep-rooted American character.

² With the opening of the Pacific Railroad, Charles Nordhoff celebrated that Americans, who had received glowing accounts of California for over twenty years, would finally be able to see it for themselves. Nordhoff, "California," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, May 1872, 865. Historian Martha A. Sandweiss has explored the importance of photography in shaping Americans' perceptions of the West, arguing that because "photographers preceded American settlers, travelers, and tourists into many parts of the West" their images often "became substitutes for firsthand experience. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 3.

³ Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An Experiential Perspective," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (April 1975), 152.

⁴ William Kittredge, *The Nature of Generosity* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 8.

California and especially San Francisco, so the argument went, exemplified the American character, through its mixture of strenuous masculinity, commercial dominance, and imperial importance. Life in California, as the president of Stanford University, writing for a national audience in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly*, later explained, “is a little fresher, a little freer, a good deal richer, in its physical aspects, but for these reasons, possibly, more intensely and characteristically American.”⁵ Through these bold claims, the Californian spirit became not only an example, but in fact the wellspring, of a much-celebrated national identity.

The Golden Gate, as the hub and harbor, figured prominently in San Francisco’s municipal identity and its place in the national landscape. Conceptions and imaginings of California and the Far West as a region, folded into and informed ideas about San Francisco as a gateway city. For faraway audiences especially, the gateway became part and parcel of the city, the state, and even the entirety of the Pacific Slope. Mark Twain, for example, described San Francisco as residing at and presiding over a most-important cross-roads. According to Twain:

The great China Mail Line is established, the Pacific Railroad is creeping across the continent, the commerce of the world is about to be revolutionized. California is Crown Princess of the new dispensation! She stands in the centre of the grand highway of the nations: she stands midway between the Old World and the New, and both shall pay her tribute. From the far East and from Europe, multitudes of stout hearts and willing hands are preparing to flock hither; to throng her hamlets and villages; to till her fruitful soil; to unveil the riches of her countless mines; to build up an empire on these distant shores that shall shame the bravest dreams of her visionaries. ... Half the world stands ready to lay its contributions at her feet!⁶

⁵ David Starr Jordan, “California and the Californians,” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1898, 800-801. Charles Sedgwick Aiken made a similar argument, asserting that in California the “qualities of West and East, and North and South, are here mingled and developed.” Aiken, *California Today, San Francisco, Its Metropolis* (San Francisco: California Promotion Committee of San Francisco, 1903), 24.

⁶ “Mark Twain’s Farewell,” *Alta California*, 15 December 1866.

While the transcontinental railroad seemed to solidify the nation's hold on the continental U.S., the Golden Gate, at the far edge of the empire, opened onto new opportunities, new frontiers and horizons, according to Twain. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, San Franciscans began to assert a national and global preeminence, stemming from the city's unique gateway position. In this way, the state's political and commercial elite sought to ground the nation's imperial future in the California landscape. They revealed the multi-layered nature of the Golden Gate metaphor, which could encapsulate and celebrate both regional and national exceptionalism, thereby animating imperial ambitions. Artists, authors, and municipal boosters located the future of Manifest Destiny along San Francisco's shores, insisting that the city would be both the realization and promise of a new Pacific Empire.

Reflecting on San Francisco's Golden Gate, at the end of his transcontinental tour, Ohio politician Harvey Rice concluded, "Nature has done her part, and now invites man to do his part."⁷ While had Nature, according to Rice, readied (and even pre-destined) the city for cultural and commercial importance, it was still up to San Franciscans to recognize and actualize its promises. San Franciscans seemed eager to play their "part," exactly what that would look like, however, remained an unfolding question.

Menken Makes her Mark

Actress and poet, a woman of scandal and intrigue, Adah Isaacs Menken arrived by steamer in San Francisco in August, 1863, becoming, for a season, the city's most

⁷ Harvey Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope; or, First Impressions* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1870), 122.

famous and celebrated shape-shifter.⁸ She got her start in New York City's concert halls, having turned to the stage when her attempts at a writing career failed. Her interest in plot and character-development proved useful, however. Described by one scholar as “fearless in her manipulation of her own image and the media” with “an uncanny knack for measuring the social weather,” she took charge of her image on and off the stage, billing herself simply “The Menken.”⁹ Throughout her multiple marriages, she held on to her first husband's name, making it synonymous with her many self-stylings. As one Menken scholar has noted, her alter-egos “surfaced along multiple ethnic, cultural, and class spectrums,” including “a white American working-class survivor, a New Orleans child performer, a hard-knock Memphis heroine, a coddled Frano-Spanish heiress, a Jewish daughter.”¹⁰ She deployed these multiple identities in strategic ways, moving skillfully “from one register of social power to another.”¹¹

When Tom Maguire, a theater-man and self-promoter in his own right, recruited Menken to come West, she had already made a name for herself. Maguire, the financier of her stay and a principal beneficiary of its success, wanted to ensure her run on the stage would be the event of the season. As hoped, her reputation preceded her, and an especially large audience gathered to see her steamer, the *Golden Gate*, make its way into the harbor. The crowd was eager to catch their first glimpse of “The Menken.”¹² She came to perform an opera that had taken New York City audiences by storm two years

⁸ Renée M Sentilles, *Performing Menken: Adah Isaacs Menken and the Birth of American Celebrity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Foster and Foster, *A Dangerous Woman*; Allen, *Horrible Prettiness*, 96-101.

⁹ Sentilles, *Performing Menken*, 8.

¹⁰ Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 134.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹² Foster and Foster, *A Dangerous Woman*, 146.

earlier—the *Mazeppa*. Though few San Franciscans or New Yorkers had the time or money to travel between the cities, the fact that performers increasingly counted San Francisco as a part of newly national circuit—bringing the same show to both audiences—spoke to a growing commercial culture. And, it suggested a growing national culture, of which San Francisco was apart, that was emerging and taking hold too.¹³

Mazeppa was a theater standard and could have quickly become tired had Menken not breathed new life into it. Star-crossed lovers reside at the center of the story, and their future hinges on a climatic moment when an evil Count, betrothed to Mazeppa's love, is about to kill his romantic arch-rival. But instead of killing Mazeppa outright, the Count, in a cowardly move, straps him, naked, to a horse and releases the animal into the wild, thereby condemning Mazeppa to a long, slow death. Heroically, Mazeppa frees himself, returns, and secures his beloved. Menken aroused interest in the play by taking on the male-role of Mazeppa, and then fueled speculation about what, *if anything*, she would wear during the wild ride. Even with Menken's extended New York run, many, even those who had seen her performance multiple times, continued to wonder what exactly she was wearing.¹⁴ Maguire re-doubled Menken's efforts, papering the streets with advertisements to provoke curiosity and debate. In the weeks before the show, Maguire encouraged Menken to tour the city by horseback, thereby becoming her own, living billboard and generating further excitement and speculation. As she rode through the town, he sold advance tickets, at a fifty cent premium.¹⁵

¹³ Janet Davis explores the ways in which traveling performances, such as the circus, contributed to the making of the nation-state and a shared national culture. Davis, *The Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Allen, *Horrible Prettiness*, 96-97.

¹⁵ Foster and Foster, *A Dangerous Woman*, 150; Allen, *Horrible Prettiness*, 100.

Opening night did not disappoint. The *Alta* described the frenzied scene: “At an early hour last evening, Washington street and all the adjacent thoroughfares were thronged with people, all intent on effecting the most desirable position—in fact any position—in Maguire's Opera House, to assist at the initial performance of Adah Isaacs Menken. We doubt if a similar audience was ever gathered together on a like occasion.” The audience, they effused, was “radiant with female beauty, and in point of character, the assemblage was brilliant in the extreme.”¹⁶ Amelia Neville took her place, with other members of San Francisco society, among the parquet beauties.¹⁷ When the moment arrived for Menken to charge across the stage, bareback on a mustang, the audience likely leaned in—enthralled, breathless, transfixed. Then, with a blur, she was gone, having flitted across the stage so quickly that uncertainty remained.¹⁸ With questions swirling, one thing was certain, Menken was the “toast of the town.”¹⁹

Her attire was only part of her intrigue; Menken enthralled audiences with the gender-defying physicality of her performance as well. In a review for a Virginia City, Nevada paper, a young Samuel Clemens (playing with his own identity by signing the piece “Mark Twain”) seemed to search for the right metaphor and tried out a few: “she bends herself back like a bow; she pitches her head foremost at the atmosphere like a battering ram; she works her arms, and her legs, and her whole body like a dancing jack.”²⁰ His choice of a “ram,” and therefore male sheep (uncastrated at that), had gendered as well as sexual undertones. As Janet Davis has discussed, by the turn of the

¹⁶ “Amusements,” *Daily Alta California*, 25 August 1863.

¹⁷ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 54.

¹⁸ Foster and Foster, *A Dangerous Woman*, 155.

¹⁹ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 54.

²⁰ Mark Twain, “The Menken--Written Especially for Gentlemen,” *Golden Era*, as quoted by Foster and Foster, *A Dangerous Woman*, 156.

century, a new feminine ideal of athleticism and physicality was emerging, both alongside and in contrast to older notions of feminine propriety and domesticity. Though female nudity could be threatening, when women remained exemplars of “domestic womanliness” and “objects of titillation,” they retained their respectability.²¹ As a seemingly unmoored force—a woman who could bend and bow her body, with a constantly rotating husband—Menken, however, embodied the danger and transgressive potential of women's nudity, prowess, and sexuality.

In her offstage life, she also played with gender ambiguities, disguising herself as a man to carouse the Barbary Coast with her fellow actors. The theater itself, at Washington and Montgomery, hovered on the edge of the Coast and exploited its fringe location—filling the parquet with society women, while gambling men traded chips in the Snug saloon below. Menken, however, craved all the excitement the Coast could offer. She donned men's attire to gain free-reign of the city and, once disguised, she headed two blocks north of the theater to the notorious Pacific—nicknamed Terrific—Street.²² After a night of revelry, with a quick costume-change she could once again become a lady and claim respectability (or at least as much respectability as a woman of the stage could claim).

²¹ Davis, *The Circus Age*, 83. See especially Davis's discussion of new feminine ideals and “respectable female nudity” in chapter 4.

²² Historians have noted several instances when nineteenth-century women dressed in male garb to gain access to all-male spaces. Peter Boag, in addition to exploring the meanings of cross-dressing in nineteenth century frontier society generally, has discussed instances when women donned male attire to see the Barbary Coast for themselves. Boag, *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 37. Several historians of the Civil War have also discussed women's use of male clothing to participate in the war in ways typically reserved for men. See, for example, Lauren Cook Burgess, *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Private Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

After a six-month run in San Francisco, Menken, like actress Lola Montez before her, headed to the mines in search of new audiences and new adventures. Montez had come through San Francisco in 1853, drawing audiences with her signature Spider Dance, in which she pulled her dress higher and higher as though trying to shake free of a spider. She ended her run by settling briefly in Grass Valley (part of Gold Country, outside of Sacramento) before setting off for Australia in 1855 at the height of its gold rush.²³ Passing through ten years later, Menken headed instead to the latest boom-town, Virginia City. Many silver miners had already led the way, and she followed what was quickly becoming a well-worn path. Montez's and Menken's trajectories suggest the interconnections between trade, mining, and entertainment networks. News of newly discovered out-croppings traveled fastest along already existing trade-networks, some of which had their origins in colonial Spanish routes. As miners sought new diggings, entrepreneurs, along with rogues and confidence men, soon followed, solidifying mining routes and creating boom towns. Entertainers, seeking new audiences, sought out and entrenched these same paths.²⁴ In Virginia City, Menken could stir-up intrigue anew, as audiences once again speculated about her costume, which—at her invitation and provocation—led to questions about her body, ethnicity, and sexuality. Menken elicited

²³ Jacobson, “Melodeons of the Fifties.” News of the discovery of gold in Australia reached San Francisco in August 1851, prompting some miners to leave for new diggings in Australia. Ricards and Blackburn, “The Sydney Ducks,” 24.

²⁴ Harold E. Briggs and Ernestine Binnett Briggs have argued that theaters were often the first cultural institution in a frontier town. In particular, they emphasized the importance of the railroad to early performance circuits. In the case of San Francisco, however, Tom Maguire and other theater managers brought performers west even before the railroad made travel easier and faster. Briggs and Briggs, “The Early Theater on the Northern Plains,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (September 1950): 231–264. Lawrence Levine has likewise discussed the popularity of Shakespeare productions in mining camps, in *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 19. For a discussion of the transnational Pacific performing circuit, see Matthew W. Wittmann, “Empire of Culture: U.S. Entertainers and the Making of the Pacific Circuit, 1850-1890” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2010).

curiosity by stretching and transgressing the bounds of mid-nineteenth century audiences' expectations surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class.

Because she so skillfully manipulated and traded-on these markers, her performances, both on and off the stage, resonated and enthralled. The fact that audiences in both New York and San Francisco recognized these markers suggested that a new national (and transnational) culture was emerging, enabled by faster and more extensive transportation networks, reinforced and illuminated by the movement of culture through these conduits—in the form of touring entertainers and widely-circulating publications.²⁵ In this way, just as Menken pushed at the bounds of nineteenth century society, she participated in its actualization as well. Maguire too, who had nearly been banished from San Francisco during the vigilante's 1856 reign, cultivated this national culture, as a major theater-owner and financier of traveling performers. While reformers and boosters had long made claims about San Francisco as an American town, offering a narrow definition of Americanness as domesticated respectability, Maguire and Menken forged national cultural ties as well. They offered a glimpse of a newly emerging nationwide culture as well as another vision of San Francisco, highlighting the city as a “wide open” town.

Even though San Francisco was just one stop along a larger tour, Menken's brief presence along the Coast left lasting resonances. Long after she had moved on, her mark

²⁵ The scholarship on the culture industry is immense. A few of the works that especially shaped my thinking on entertainment circuits and print culture include, Allen, *Horrible Prettiness*; Richard Malin Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Verso, 1996); John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown*; Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North & South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Davis, *The Circus Age*; and James W. Cook, “The Return of the Culture Industry,” in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O'Malley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

could still be seen in the burlesque dancers, who later became melodeon standards, and in the slummers, who donned new identities in pursuit of their own raucous night along the Coast.

From silver and iron

Though Menken's *Mazeppa* confirmed and solidified cultural connections between New York City and San Francisco, and even gave weight to claims of San Francisco as an “American town,” the physical ties connecting the two coasts remained tenuous at best. Many Americans, as historian William Deverell has noted, regarded California as sitting “at the furthest hazy reach of Manifest Destiny's gaze,” leaving many Californians to hope that an overland railway might bring the state into the national fold. Furthermore, amidst rising sectional tensions at the end of the 1850s, some hoped that a transcontinental railroad might indirectly connect North and South as well and lend the country a greater sense of cohesion.²⁶ For some D.C. politicians then, rail lines spanning and connecting the country came to signify the hope and future of the nation. While for San Francisco leaders, desiring that families would arrive, settle, and develop emotional and economic ties to the land, railways promised the migration and trade routes necessary for prosperity. Perhaps more than any other, engineer Theodore D. Judah dreamed of and worked towards a transcontinental railroad, exhibiting a relentlessness that led some to mock him as “Crazy Judah.” He determined a route over the seemingly-impossible heights of the Sierra Nevada range and then traveled east to promote it. Though many

²⁶ William Francis Deverell, *Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10-11.

championed the possibilities that a transcontinental railroad might bring, he was unable to secure public or private funding needed to realize his grand scheme.²⁷

Then, for a second time in the region's history, a chance-discovery changed everything. By the end of the 1850s, many miners had left California's gold country (along the western slopes of the Sierras), having returned home or headed for new diggings. One such miner, Sam Davis, set off for Canada's Fraser River, but Davis gave up after encountering numerous disgruntled and discouraged men. Davis too returned to California. At just seventeen years old, he was eager to follow “gold excitements” as they popped up all over the state.²⁸ Others, however, had already “chased so many rainbows” and lacked Davis’s fresh-faced enthusiasm for each new report of gold.²⁹ Thus, the miners who remained in California were casting about, searching for and dreaming of the next El Dorado.

While pursuing gold on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada mountains, prospectors hit the next mother lode—this time in the form of silver. Beginning in 1850, placer miners en route to California's gold country had found gold in the eastern Sierra streams (about two hundred miles northeast from San Francisco). Though their take was often smaller than that of the miners working the western slopes of the Sierras, a few determined placers continued to pan the eastern watershed. Ten years on, they encountered a new frustration—a heavy, dark mineral that stubbornly clung to the gold. After a season spent battling and discarding the “black-stuff” and the realization, as they

²⁷ Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 5-7.

²⁸ Sam Post Davis, *The History of Nevada* (Reno: Elms Publishing Co., 1913), 233.

²⁹ Grant H. Smith, *The History of the Comstock Lode 1850-1920* (Reno: Nevada State Bureau of Mines and the Mackay School of Mines, 1943), 7-10.

dug deeper, of the deposit's depth, some miners sold their claims and left. Another miner and ranch-hand, B.A. Harrison, weighing his options, took a sampling of the black rock riddled with gold to an appraiser. There he happily discovered that while the rock held a sizable amount of gold, its value more than tripled once it was recognized as a silver specimen as well. Harrison and his two companions, like James Marshall and John Sutter in '48, planned to keep their findings quiet but, as before, word seeped out. The silver bonanza began.³⁰

During the fall of 1859, Comstock silver reached San Francisco and the city dwellers joined the miners in celebration. Three years later, urbanites, without even heading to the mines, could get in on the action. Because much of the investment capital that had first animated the city dried up along with the placer mines during the mid-1850s, capitalists seeking to despoil the silver ores, which required expensive hydraulic machinery, needed a new source of funding. In 1862, proprietors seeking funds, set up the San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board.³¹ “The town went wild,” one *Overland Monthly* writer later reported, with “every one who was able to do so, dealing in mining stocks. Staid merchants, ministers of the Gospel, servant girls, artisans, and gamblers of both sexes, besieged the Stock Boards in tumultuous gatherings, all animated

³⁰ Dan De Quille, *History of the Big Bonanza: An Authentic Account of the Discovery, History, and Working of the World Renowned Comstock Silver Lode of Nevada: Including the Present Condition of the Various Mines Situated Thereon; Sketches of the Most Prominent Men Interested in Them* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Co., 1876); Henry DeGroot, “The Comstock Lode,” *The Overland Monthly*, June 1873, 490-491; Smith, *The History of the Comstock Lode*, 1-18; Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998).

³¹ Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 36-37; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 116.

by the desire to make a fortune.”³² A few years later, in 1864, William Ralston founded the closely-linked Bank of California.³³

With the Stock Exchange, San Francisco, which was just beginning to shed its reputation as an “instant city,” built on risk-taking and credit, became a speculator town once again.³⁴ James Bryce, in his magnum opus, *American Commonwealth*, derided the new Stock Exchange, insisting it made everyone a gambler. It not only undermined the city's political and economic stability, he argued, but bred “recklessness and turbulence in the inner life” of Californians.³⁵ The Stock Exchange was, in fact, quite unlike a game of cards based entirely on odds. Instead, Ralston’s friends and business associates, who came to be known as Ralston's Ring, controlled both the Stock Exchange and the Mines and positioned themselves to maximize their profits from both.³⁶ The Stock Exchange became “the heart of San Francisco,” Robert Louise Stevenson concluded, “continually pumping up the savings of the lower quarters into the pockets of the millionaires upon [Nob Hill].”³⁷ So, as police officers addressed gambling in the city, busying themselves, for example, with raids on the black-owned Athenaeum saloon, the truly dangerous

³² John Finlay, “Banks and Banking,” *Overland Monthly*, January 1896, 84.

³³ For more on Ralston and the California Bank, see Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 38-44. See also David Igler, who has traced San Francisco's history as a regional financial center, beginning during the gold-rush years when capitalists from around the country flocked to San Francisco to turn “real property into a highly liquid commodity,” making “city-based ventures into cast regional enterprises.” Igler, “The Industrial Far West: Region and Nation in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Pacific Historical Review* (2000): 179.

³⁴ Barth, *Instant Cities*.

³⁵ James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth: The Party System. Public opinion. Illustrations and Reflections, Social institutions*, vol. II (New York: Macmillan Co., 1894), 426. Ann Fabian has explained the suspicion and disdain with which farmers held speculators, who were trading and profiting from a good that they had not labored for and did not own. Fabian, *Card Sharps and Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 153-154.

³⁶ For a larger discussion of the Ralston and his extensive involvement in both mining operations and the financial industry, see Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, chap. 1. Furthermore, as Igler has noted, “the San Francisco-based silver kings John Mackay, Jim Fair, James Flood, and William O'Brien (also known as the Irish Big Four) operated a handful of banks and mining companies in the Comstock region,” in “The Industrial Far West,” 176.

³⁷ As quoted by Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 43.

wagers, which in fact were not bets at so much as calculated swindling, took place at the Stock Exchange.

While exacerbating the city's economic volatility and moral ambiguities, the Comstock mines solidified San Francisco's position as a regional hub, establishing the city as a financial and manufacturing center.³⁸ Ralston and the founders of the Stock Exchange built up Montgomery and Market “in magnificent style,” contributing to the southward shift of the commercial heart of the city, towards Market Street and away from the older Barbary Coast blocks.³⁹ Foundries and refineries, meanwhile, took over the district to the south of Market, especially the real estate along the bay. By 1867, as historian Gray Brechin has discussed, “San Francisco's fifteen foundries employed twelve hundred men and exported machinery to mining regions opening throughout the Pacific.”⁴⁰ As Menken trod the mining paths, looking for an audience in Virginia City, the Scott brothers, and the owners of Union Iron Works, were right behind.

With new energy and capital flowing into San Francisco from the Comstock Lode, Judah resumed his quest for financial backing. This time, he appealed to capitalists along his proposed route over the Sierras, finally persuading Sacramento businessman Collis Huntington to invest. Huntington, in turn, convinced fellow-businessmen Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and Leland Stanford to join in as well. In April 1861, with four big new

³⁸ Drawing on figures compiled from several scholars, David Iglar has estimated that “by 1875, \$1 billion in gold and \$300 million in silver had been sifted and blasted by mining corporations from the Far West's landscape.” At the beginning of the 1870s, Richard Walker has noted that for a brief time the San Francisco Mining Exchange surpassed New York as the world's largest stock market. Iglar, “The Industrial Far West,” 167; Walker, “At the Crossroads,” 78.

³⁹ Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 68.

⁴⁰ Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 126.

investors, Judah had the necessary funding to incorporate the Central Pacific Railroad under California law.

Meanwhile, it was becoming increasingly clear that the promise of a transcontinental railroad would be unable to hold the nation together. It had instead become yet another source of sectional tension, a subsidiary of the larger fight over the expansion of slavery into the western states, with both northern and southern legislators vying for the rails to pass through their cities and towns. In June of 1862, after secession and with southern legislators gone, Congress approved a route west out of Omaha and promised both public funds and land to the two private companies, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific, eager to undertake (and profit from) the momentous enterprise.⁴¹ Construction got underway in 1863, with Leland Stanford ceremoniously lifting the first shovel-full of dirt in Sacramento. Chinese labors, many of whom the Central Pacific Railroad Company brought over expressly for railroad construction, as well as Irish workers, unceremoniously dug and placed the rest of the line.⁴²

⁴¹ Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 6-7; Deverell, *Railroad Crossing*, 10-13.

⁴² For a discussion of the construction of the railroad, see Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, chap. 1 and White, *Railroaded*, 26-36. The early months of construction were marked by starts and stops, as workers battled the muddy, difficult terrain and CP's executives constantly ran short on capital. For a discussion of the economic, political, and social changes in China's Pearl River Delta that contributed to Chinese migration to the United State's west coast, see Ira Cross, *History of the Labor Movement in California*, 80; Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil*, chapter 1; Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 80-87; and Yung, Chang, and Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 7. American and European imperialist treaties and economic ventures—attempts to draw China into their economic sphere—disrupted China's local market economy. Already destabilized, the Opium War, natural disasters, and a population explosion wreaked further havoc on the local economy. Many agricultural families struggled to make ends meet on small family plots, divided and sub-divided to their limit under the weight of the population boom. In response to their current crisis and in keeping with a long-standing regional practice, many farming families sent a family member to the city, to earn money and help with expenses. Sometimes an older son left or often young husband and father. In cities such as Canton or Hong Kong, men hoped to find new economic opportunities and scrape together enough to send to their families who remained in Chinese villages. In China's port cities, they met American merchants and missionaries, who encouraged them to seek new opportunities in San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver, and other West Coast ports.

As the Central Pacific and Union Pacific companies raced toward one another, each seeking to lay down more track and claim greater resources, San Franciscans anticipated and celebrated their growing importance to the nation.⁴³ One such writer began by praising all that telegraph lines had already done to connect the coasts and then declared the Pacific Railroad “the morning and evening prayer of the Californian.”⁴⁴ Many looked forward to a new relationship with the eastern seaboard, in which New York City might be a “neighbor” rather than an “antipode.”⁴⁵ Some even entertained grand and absurd visions, positing, for example, a future in which San Francisco might reign supreme, claiming even New York City as a suburb.⁴⁶ As San Francisco writers reoriented the nation, declaring San Francisco the new metropolis, they explained and justified their boasts by pointing to the Golden Gate as the key site where networks of trade and transportation intersected. As Twain declared, “The great China Mail Line is established, the Pacific Railroad is creeping across the continent, the commerce of the world is about to be revolutionized.” According to this vision, this mental map, San Francisco and its Golden Gate might become the national meeting-place, the center-point, and even nucleus. He punctuated his musings by asking: “Has any other State so Brilliant a future? Has any other city a future like San Francisco?”⁴⁷

⁴³ Iglar has listed the number of acres granted to the largest western railroad companies, citing 24 million to Southern Pacific, 7.3 to Central Pacific, 40 to Northern Pacific, and 19.1 to Union Pacific. Iglar, “The Industrial Far West,” 171. Modifications to the 1862 Pacific Railway Act, in 1864 and especially in 1866, fueled the competition between the Central and Union Pacific lines, as Richard Orsi has explained, in *Sunset Limited*, 14.

⁴⁴ Gazlay, “San Francisco, Past and Present,” 185.

⁴⁵ Albert Richardson, “Through to the Pacific,” *New York Tribune*, May-June 1869, Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum, http://cpr.org/Museum/Through_to_the_Pacific/Through_to_the_Pacific.html.

⁴⁶ Charles Wadsworth, for example, proclaimed, “it is still, perhaps, safest to dismiss from our minds the pleasing illusion that yonder iron road is, in our day, to bring New York over the Sierras that it may be a suburb of San Francisco” in *A Call to Praise*, 1868 as quoted by Deverell in *Railroad Crossing*, 12.

⁴⁷ “Mark Twain’s’ Farewell,” *San Francisco Alta California*, 15 December 1866.

As San Franciscans looked to a bright future, when the transcontinental railroad would, as they imagined it, place San Francisco at the center of the nation—a grandiose, but nonetheless persistent notion—the city did solidify its place as a regional hub and marketplace. This was, in part, fueled by the Civil War. During the city's early years, San Franciscans turned to far away markets for even basic needs, looking to New York for goods ranging from clothing and cutlery to butter and liquor. “There is no people in the world who, in proportion to their numbers, import so largely of foreign goods, or who pay such high prices for them,” San Francisco booster and writer John Hittell lamented.⁴⁸ During the war, however, Californians found it more difficult to import food and manufactured goods from the eastern seaboard. The need for food became so dire, in fact, that the state government implemented a grant system, the Bounty Act of 1862, which promised large payouts to farmers who were able to achieve massive yields. The program, as historian Gerald Nash had noted, was a complete failure. Not only were most farmers unable to reach the production mandates, but the state lacked the administrative capacity to oversee it.⁴⁹ Even as the Bounty Act failed, the strain and isolation brought about by the war created a market for northern California food-growers and fueled agricultural development. San Francisco's manufacturing industries, already infused with capital from the silver mines, grew as well. By 1870, as Richard Walker has noted, the city “produced more manufactured goods than all other western cities combined and dominated the regional market.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ John Shertzer Hittell, *The Resources of California: Comprising Agriculture, Mining, Geography, Climate, Commerce, &c., and the Past and Future Development of the State* (San Francisco: A. Roman, 1863), 330–333.

⁴⁹ Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 69.

⁵⁰ Walker, “At the Crossroads,” 78.

With the city's regional power growing, many San Franciscans assumed that the transcontinental railroad would only solidify the city's standing, bringing more power and commerce. Central Pacific executives, meanwhile, dealt their first blow, signaling the substantial and complicated role the railroad company would come to play in California politics. In the fall of 1869, Central Pacific selected Oakland, over Sacramento or San Francisco, as its terminal city.⁵¹ Oakland, from the perspective of CP officials, offered numerous geographic, political, and economic advantages. Sitting on the eastern side of the bay, it was well-positioned for both shipping and overland trade, without requiring, as would San Francisco, transportation lines to cross or circumvent the bay. "Equally important to the Big Four," as Charles Wollenberg has maintained, "Oakland was still a small community whose economy and politics the railroad could easily dominate."⁵² In selecting Oakland, they imbued San Francisco's east bay rival with a new-found cultural importance too, since, concomitantly, the position became increasingly coveted as the nation's gaze turned more and more toward the Pacific. Some San Franciscans feared that their place as the primary West Coast gateway might be in at risk. San Franciscans nevertheless joined cities all along the overland route to celebrate the ceremonial joining of the two lines in Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869 (although Central Pacific subsidiaries did not complete the final section between Sacramento and Oakland until

⁵¹ Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 18.

⁵² Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis*, 125.

November).⁵³ Meanwhile, chroniclers on the other side of the country, such as journalist Albert Richardson and politician Harvey Rice, rushed to ride the rails, report on their journeys, and affirm Manifest Destiny's arrival along the west coast.

Amidst this celebratory chorus, dissonant voices emerged as well. In an article entitled "What the Railroad Will Bring Us," journalist Henry George, who spent much of his adult life in San Francisco, posited a detailed attack. He insisted that in addition to making San Francisco the primary port of the west and a great metropolis--"the importer, the banker, the market, the centre of every kind"--the railroad would simultaneously saddle San Francisco with "all the social problems that are forcing themselves on older communities."⁵⁴ Opportunity, he maintained, would come at a price. As one of his close friends later recalled, George had recently travelled to New York City, eager to see the economic heart of the nation. While he found prosperity, he also saw "poverty so degrading that its victims had lost all hope of escape and much of the desire for it; while between the two were a harrowing fear and a paralyzing dread of poverty, a dread that seemed worse if possible than poverty itself."⁵⁵ Whereas many declared the railroad's

⁵⁴ Henry George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us," *The Overland Monthly* 1, no. 4, October 1868, 300.

⁵⁵ Louis Freeland Post, *The Prophet of San Francisco* (Chicago: L. S. Dickey, 1904), 15. According to Post, George began to develop his thoughts on economic inequality in the *Overland* article, which he later expanded in his book, *Progress and Poverty*.

linking of New York and San Francisco as an unmitigated good, George believed that the railroad would reproduce the social and economic inequalities, rampant along the eastern seaboard, upon the California landscape.⁵⁶ For George, San Francisco's gold-rush days represented a meritocratic paradise, in which men of all nations arrived on equal footing, with little more than a pick and a spirit of determination. He celebrated the days of the "honest miner" of the placers."⁵⁷ These days, however, as so many could attest, had never truly existed. George, nevertheless, mourned their passing, insisting that the railroad only accelerated their demise.

George enumerated his fears in the newly-founded *Overland Monthly*, a literary magazine with aspirations of being the *Atlantic Monthly* of the West.⁵⁸ The *Overland's* masthead illustrated George's predictions, through its depiction of a formidable bear growling at the railroad tracks, symbolizing "the coming engine of civilization and progress."⁵⁹ Since the 1846 Bear Flag Revolt, the majestic and muscular grizzly had been a symbol of California, formally commemorated on the state flag and as the state animal. The coming railroad, as George explained in the pages of the *Overland*, was about to destroy the bear, and with him, the California spirit he exemplified. George offered a xenophobic and class critique, in which he attributed the loss of California's spirit of independence to the arrival of "the Chinaman, the millionaire and his laborers, the mine superintendent and his gang."⁶⁰ Rather than seeing Chinese and white workers as sharing

⁵⁶ In 1880, as the enormity of the railroad's corporate power became clearer, Henry George made the converse argument, suggesting that easterners could glimpse the nation's dystopic future in the railroad's control of the political economy in the West, which Devereil has discussed in *Railroad Crossing*, 45–46.

⁵⁷ George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us," 305.

⁵⁸ Noah Brooks, "Early Days of the Overland," *Overland Monthly*, July 1898, 3.

⁵⁹ "Etc.," *Overland Monthly*, July 1868, 99–100; *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁰ George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us," 305.

a common experience stemming from the power of corporate capitalists, George instead linked the Chinese laborer with the millionaire, blaming Chinese workers, arguing that they possessed an inherent willingness to be taken advantage of, for the growth and power of monopolies. He linked his anti-Asian attitudes with his critique of corporate capitalism, seeing both as the antithesis of independence.⁶¹ “This aggregation of wealth into large lumps, this marshaling of men into big gangs under the control of the great ‘captains of industry,’ does not tend to foster personal independence—the basis of all virtues—nor will it tend to preserve the characteristics which particularly have made Californians proud of their State,” he lamented.⁶² He not only anticipated the railroad monopoly, and the ways in which it would concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a few, but also predicted the ways in which the railroad in particular would homogenize society, replacing local businesses with large, overpowering, national corporations. Even the mighty bear—or the independent-minded placer miner—would be no match for national networks, George feared.

Through his critique of the coming railroad, Henry George participated in the creation of a utopian (and misleading) past for California and a distinctive Californian spirit, which, in fact, became a central argument for promoting further investment in lines of trade and communication between the east and west coast (thereby hastening the passing of all George had celebrated).⁶³ During the city's gold-rush days, merchant

⁶¹ For a discussion of the intersection of George’s anti-Asian attitudes and his critique of capitalism, see Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land*, 93-94 and Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 92-103.

⁶² George, “What the Railroad Will Bring Us,” 305.

⁶³ *The Overland Monthly* title-page, likewise, reinforced George's contradictory message, by combining a growling bear, which appeared to be attempting to ward off progress, with the tag line “Devoted to the Development of the Country.” See also Frost's discussion of *Overland Monthly* writers’ ambivalence in *Never One Nation*, 149-150.

boosters had sought to highlight a series of exemplary “American” qualities, hoping to obscure San Francisco's precarious origins. They portrayed San Francisco, as George Fardon had, as a safe and stable city—a blank urban canvas, ready to be peopled and financed. As cultural and economic networks pulled the state into the national fold, however, another narrative emerged, praising and longing for a distinctive Californian character said to have been forged in its gold rush origins. George suggested that the problems plaguing the nation threatened to envelop and destroy this Californian spirit, arguing “We shall lose much which gave a charm to California life; much that was valuable in the character of our people.”⁶⁴

George was, in fact, one of many who created and cultivated notions of a distinctive Californian spirit, rooted in and invigorated by notions of a meritocratic past and a wide-open, rugged landscape. As legends of Californian exceptionalism grew, they often became linked with larger and long-standing narratives about a unique American character. In this iteration, rather than being competing identities, regionalism and nationalism became linked, intertwined, even united. Challenging once again notions of California as a distant outpost, some westerners claimed that they were the very heart of the nation. Just as many had participated in proclaiming San Francisco an American town—a contentious, at times bloody, and always unfinished project—so too were many engaged in creating and locating American exceptionalism along the western shore. It is to these cultural producers we now turn.

⁶⁴ George, “What the Railroad Will Bring Us,” 306.

Locating the Wellspring of the American Character

Among the honest placers, championed by Henry George, were boyhood friends, Collis and Carleton. Two young, enterprising Yankees, they headed west, setting out for the California gold fields in '51. They left with little more than their knapsacks and an enterprising New England spirit, ready to be enlivened by the California landscape—or, at least so the story went. Perhaps, however, Collis Huntington and Carleton Watkins got off to a slightly more auspicious start. Huntington's wife, Elizabeth, in fact, accompanied them on their westward journey via two steamers and a railroad crossing in Panama. After arriving in San Francisco, they continued on to Sacramento, where Huntington already owned a general store—hardly the level playing field envisioned by Henry George.⁶⁵

Watkins first worked for Huntington, traveling among mining camps selling and delivering goods. He then moved to San Francisco and worked for a book dealer. During his hours spent clerking, he met a daguerreotypist, who later taught and employed Watkins. By 1856, Watkins had his own photography studio, from which he worked as a commercial photographer, taking studio portraits and commissioned landscapes.⁶⁶ Miner-turned-author James Hutchings commissioned Watkins to take several pictures of

⁶⁵ Ralph H. Anderson, "Carleton E. Watkins Pioneer Photographer of the Pacific Coast," *Yosemite Nature Notes* 32, no. 4 (April 1953): 33; Peter Palmquist and Thomas Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840-1865*, 1st ed. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002), 578.

⁶⁶ Scholars have discussed many facets of California photography, including its role in travel and guide book literature, place in government geologic surveys, popularity among viewers, and role in shaping technological advancements in the medium. See, for example, Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*; Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Viking, 2003); Amy Scott, ed., *Yosemite: Art of an American Icon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Amy Lippert, "Consuming Identities: Visual Culture and Celebrity in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco" (University of California, Berkeley, 2009). Two helpful overviews and annotated bibliographies include Peter E. Palmquist, ed., *Photographers: A Sourcebook for Historical Research*, 2nd ed. (Nevada City: Carl Mautz Publishing, 2000) and Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*.

Yosemite, which were then turned into engravings to accompany his writings on the Valley.⁶⁷ Watkins returned to Yosemite in 1861, with cameras designed to accommodate larger glass plates, which he hoped would enable him to capture, in the form of large-format prints, the vast, spectacular landscape.⁶⁸ The prints from his trip generated not only local interest but excitement in eastern cities as well. In 1862, Goupil's Gallery in New York showcased some of Watkin's Yosemite photographs in a small exhibit, which he then followed with a published album in 1863.⁶⁹ Many have since credited Watkins' images with spurring legislation, signed by President Lincoln in 1864, to set aside the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove as protected lands for public use.⁷⁰

Also prompted by Watkins' images, as well his own fond memories of an earlier adventure as far west as Wyoming, landscape painter Albert Bierstadt was eager to see Yosemite Valley and capture its grand vistas.⁷¹ Bierstadt portrayed panoramic scenes through perfectly rendered details and, like other painters in the Hudson River School, he

⁶⁷ James Mason Hutchings began promoting Yosemite in 1856, in his *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*. He later published *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California*. Many have credited him with establishing Yosemite as a tourist destination. John Shertzer Hittell later published a guidebook with Eadweard Muybridge's photographs, arguing that engravings could not adequately capture the majesty of the of the site. James Mason Hutchings, *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California* (San Francisco: J.M. Hutchings & Co., 1862) and John Shertzer Hittell and Eadweard Muybridge, *Yosemite, Its Wonders and Its Beauties: With Information Adapted to the wants of Tourists about to Visit the Valley* (San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft & Co., 1868). For scholars' discussions of Hutchings's and Hittell's promotion of Yosemite, see Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 181-182 and Weston J. Naef and J. Paul Getty Museum, *Carleton Watkins in Yosemite* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2009).

⁶⁸ Naef and J. Paul Getty Museum, *Carleton Watkins in Yosemite*, 3-4.

⁶⁹ Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*, 580; Naef, *Carleton Watkins in Yosemite*, 5.

⁷⁰ Anderson, "Carleton E. Watkins Pioneer Photographer of the Pacific Coast," 34.

⁷¹ Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*, 111; Alfred C. Harrison, "Albert Bierstadt and the Emerging San Francisco Art World of the 1860s and 1870s," *California History* 71, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 75.

was becoming well known for his awe-inspiring, ostentatious landscapes.⁷² In 1863 he took the overland route to California, which included traveling by train, stagecoach, and finally horseback. After several months spent along the Pacific Slope, he returned to his New York studio, to translate his trip onto canvas, painting, in part, from photographs taken by Watkins, as well as his own sketches and memories.⁷³ *Looking Down Yosemite Valley*, among the paintings resulting from his trip, showcased some of Yosemite's most impressive granitic features as well as a lush valley-floor, all bathed in hazy, golden light.⁷⁴ Through his combination of vast scope and minute detail, his paintings—even of a massive granite slab like El Capitan—took on an ethereal quality.

Bierstadt also conveyed a sense of other-worldliness by portraying the landscape as pristine, untouched, natural. Likewise, rising-photographer Eadward Muybridge, who also became known for his Yosemite views, vacated his landscapes of actual people.⁷⁵ After Albert Bierstadt and his wife, Rosalie, moved to San Francisco, he and Muybridge became friends, venturing to Yosemite and the Sierras together in 1872. Their trip resulted in Muybridge's *Sierra Albumen* and Bierstadt's *Donner Lake from the Summit*.⁷⁶

⁷² Lee Mitchell, "Bierstadt's Settings, Harte's Plots," in *Reading the West: New Essays on the Literature of the American West*, 102-104; Harrison, "Albert Bierstadt and the Emerging San Francisco Art World of the 1860s and 1870s," 74-87. For a discussion of the Hudson River School, and especially the role of the Hudson River painters in shaping conceptions of the Catskill mountains, see Stradling, *Making Mountains*, chap. 2.

⁷³ *Carleton Watkins: photographs from the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1997), 106.

⁷⁴ Albert Bierstadt, *Looking Down Yosemite Valley*, Oil on canvas, 64 1/2 x 96 1/2 in, 1865.

⁷⁵ Hood and Haas, "Eadward Muybridge's Yosemite Valley Photographs, 1867-1872." As Philip Brookman has discussed, in the photograph "From Mosquito Camp, No. 22," part of Muybridge's *Valley of Yosemite* Album, he did include an axe in foreground and pair of men in the background (who only really become visible through closer study), thereby gesturing towards man's effect on the landscape. Philip Brookman et al., *Helios: Eadward Muybridge in a Time of Change* (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2010).

⁷⁶ Palmquist and Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West*, 111; Harrison, "Albert Bierstadt and the Emerging San Francisco Art World of the 1860s and 1870s," 83; Eadward Muybridge, *Valley of the Yosemite, Sierra Nevada Mountains, and Mariposa Grove of Mammoth Trees*, 47 albumen photographs, 17 x 21 1/2 in., 1872, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Albert Bierstadt, *Donner Lake from the Summit*, Oil on canvas, 1873, The New York Historical Society.

In clearing their landscape of human figures, both Bierstadt and Muybridge intentionally omitted the Yosemite Indians who lived in the Valley. Beginning in 1851, the U.S. government sought to remove and relocate the Indians who lived in the Sierras. The Yosemite Indians, however, were unwilling to leave and the government's removal efforts were unsuccessful. In the years before the railroad, so few Anglos made their way to the valley that it remained largely Indian land.⁷⁷ Shortly after his 1872 Yosemite trip, Muybridge embarked on another project, this time commissioned by the U.S. army to document the Modoc War (the federal government had already removed the Modocs, without a treaty, from their northern California ancestral home, but in 1870 the Modocs returned and sought to reclaim their land).⁷⁸ In his Modoc War series, he offered a study of Indian life (as well as landscape pictures depicting the harsh, lava beds that served as the battlegrounds). These images too reached eastern audiences, as, for example, engravings in *Harper's Weekly* magazine.⁷⁹ The Yosemite Indians, meanwhile, persisted. Throughout the 1860s, Yosemite remained a rugged, distant, and curious sight, unaccessible for almost all Anglo Americans.

With Lincoln's act to establish the Valley as a park, the interest cultivated by authors' and artists' Yosemite scenes, and finally the greater access to the West afforded by the railroad, Yosemite became a requisite part of a western tour. Those who could make the trip were eager to see Muybridge's perspectives, both his grand, untouched

⁷⁷ Between 1855 and 1863, only 406 Anglo Americans visited the Valley. Mark Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National Park Ideal, 1864-1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (February 1996): 30.

⁷⁸ Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 108.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

vistas and his voyeuristic looks at Indian life.⁸⁰ At the end of the tour, as a grand finale of sorts, awaited San Francisco and the Golden Gate.⁸¹ Still, of course, the sights of California remained unreachable for most. For them, California became a place of beauty, grandeur, and expansive landscapes comprised of Bierstadt's, Muybridge's, and Hutching's words and images.

Soon, readers across the country added Bret Harte's miner to their California composite. In his story, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," Harte began with an empty landscape—as depicted by Watkins, Bierstadt, and Muybridge—and filled it with his own colorful characters.⁸² Born Francis Brett Hart in Albany, New York, he moved to California in 1853, where he worked as a miner and then journalist, preferring to go by Bret Harte. He became a mainstay in an emerging California literary scene that grew up around magazines such as *The Golden Era* and *The Californian*, and included a group of well-known and up-and-coming writers, such as Ambrose Bierce, Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard, Ina Coolbirth. Not surprisingly, Adah Menken, who had been an aspiring writer since her New York days, worked her way into this self-proclaimed bohemian group too.⁸³ Harte served as the editor of *The Overland Monthly*, the newest magazine to join this emerging scene. *The Overland* sought to set itself apart as a

⁸⁰ As Mark Spence has discussed, Yosemite Indians sought to exploit tourists' interest in Indian culture as a way of earning a living and remaining in their ancestral home. Phil Deloria has also examined the ways in which Lakota Indians seized circumscribed opportunities by performing Indianness. In addition to making a living and seeing the world, Lakota performers sought to remake racial stereotypes by taking part in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Shows. Though the shows demanded that they display both violent savagery and pacified containment, they nevertheless sought to remake racial stereotypes from within the bounds of these strictures. See Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness," 27-59; Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2004), 52-108.

⁸¹ Chapter 5 explores the western tourist circuit in more detail, including the ways in which both Yosemite, and the Yosemite Indians, and the Barbary Coast, and its residents, became objects for tourists' scrutiny. For tourists, they were both promoted and packaged as remnants of a Wild West past.

⁸² Francis Bret Harte, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," *Overland Monthly*, August 1868.

⁸³ Sentilles, *Performing Menken*, 177-178.

magazine produced by and expressly for westerners.⁸⁴ Accordingly, in his “The Luck of Roaring Camp,” which appeared in the *Overland's* second issue, Harte sought to capture some of the west's “local color.” To do so, he drew on the established tradition of emphasizing the international tenor of San Francisco and the mining camps, filling his story with characters like “French Pete,” “Kanaka Joe,” Stumpy, “Kentuck,” and “Cherokee Sal.” As authors of the urban sketch created a Barbary Coast populated by colorful and recognizable characters, Harte took part in establishing the archetypal miner.⁸⁵ Above all, as scholar Lee Mitchell has discussed, Harte constructed all of his characters as “essentially the same, fundamentally good, living in a natural world revealed as likewise radically egalitarian.”⁸⁶ By starting with a blank and vast landscape, then peopling it with an international cast of characters, Harte, like Henry George, cast California as the epitome of American meritocracy.

Reframing San Francisco as a site in which all gathered, on equal footing,
required, however, a profound and persistent forgetting—forgetting that Huntington

⁸⁴ Brooks, “Early Days of the Overland,” 9. Other publications, such as the *Pacific Monthly*, also sought to promote the Pacific Slope. As *Pacific Monthly's* editor described, “We shall endeavor to make the interests of the Pacific States our interest, and shall faithfully and candidly devote our columns mainly to placing before the world, and more particularly our brethren, friends, and kinsmen of the Atlantic Slope, such facts in regard to them as will interest, instruct, and benefit.” As a magazine published out of New York and by mostly eastern authors, the *Overland* editors scorned its outsider perspective. They even mocked its derivative title (drawn from the well-established *Atlantic Monthly*) as “hackneyed.” The *Pacific Monthly* only lasted six months. The *Overland Monthly*, meanwhile, sought to take a decidedly western perspective and cultivate a western identity, while also seeking to appeal to a national audience. Many articles, such as Henry George's “What the railroad Will Bring,” illustrated this ambivalence, in that its writers both promoted the Pacific Slope, thereby encouraging tourists and immigrants, while also taking a protectionists stance. For the history of the *Pacific Monthly* and *Overland Monthly*, see “Ourselves,” *Gazlay's Pacific Monthly*, January 1865, 1 and Charles H. Shinn, “Early Books, Magazines, and Book-Making,” *The Overland Monthly*, October 1888, 342.

⁸⁵ John Kuo Wei Tchen has discussed Harte's depiction of Chinese man, Ah Sin, as a trickster, noting that many of Harte's characters became oft-cited stereotypes. Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown*, 196-199.

⁸⁶ Mitchell Lee, “Bierstadt's Settings, Harte's Plots,” in *Reading the West: New Essays on the Literature of the American West*, ed. Michael Kowalewski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 113. See also Susan Lee Johnson's discussion of Harte's story, in which she describes the social world posited by Harte as “an amoral community of men [that] confronts a baby's birth and begins to build a world worthy of that child.” Johnson, *Roaring Camp*, 337-339, quote 339.

arrived as a business owner and Gibbs penniless, with little means of protecting any capital he acquired. Yet, with so many invested in and perpetrating this narrative, it took hold. This narrative explained and also justified San Francisco's social hierarchies: in a world in which everyone arrived as equals, Collis Huntington's rise to the top could be explained, defended, and perpetuated. Though Henry George longingly celebrated San Francisco's early days in the hope of guarding against the coming capitalists, he in fact participated in creating a utopian past that could easily be distorted to legitimize those he despised.

Rediscovering a shared purpose

In the years surrounding the Civil War, commentators imbued the California landscape, this so-called meritocratic paradise, with even greater importance. Arriving in San Francisco in 1860, just months before the Civil War, Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King portrayed the Pacific Slope, and especially Yosemite, as a site in which the regions of the nation might meet, rediscover their common purpose, and find healing and reconciliation.⁸⁷ Instead of reconciliation, however, war came. After years of proclaiming itself an “American town,” the secession of the southern states forced Californians, many of whom had roots in the South, to declare more formally their allegiance to the nation. King called on Californians to make this declaration, and many, in fact, later credited him with saving California for the Union. When considered alongside other commenters,

⁸⁷ Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 103-104. Like Thomas Starr King, Reverend John Todd visited California and emphasized the awe-inspiring nature of the landscape, claiming that in Yosemite one could see “the foot-prints of his presence, and the finger-marks of his power.” Todd, *The Sunset Land: Or, The Great Pacific Slope* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1870), 119-120.

however, King participated in the larger project of affirming California's Americanness while also carving a new place of importance for the Pacific Slope.⁸⁸

Traveling to Yosemite in the year after the War, Frederick Law Olmsted reiterated King's assertions, positing California once again as a national antidote. Olmsted, who had already gained fame as a leading landscape architect and had, just months before, toured war-torn battlefields, regarded Yosemite as another landscape born out of the Civil War. "It was during one of the darkest hours," Olmsted declared, "before Sherman had begun the march upon Atlanta or Grant his terrible movement through the Wilderness, when the paintings of Bierstadt and the photographs of Watkins, both productions of the War time, had given to the people on the Atlantic some idea of the sublimity of the Yo Semite, and of the stateliness of the neighboring Sequoia grove"⁸⁹ Set apart by Lincoln as a respite while the nation was still torn asunder, Olmsted argued that in the post-war years Yosemite might serve an important role in restoring the soul of the war-wearied soldier. In its expansive vistas, Olmsted hoped the sojourner might find "the deepest sublimity with the deepest beauty of nature."⁹⁰ Commentators like Olmsted furthermore argued that California, already the manifestation of Manifest Destiny, could also become the physical site in which Americans once again discovered a shared spirit and a common purpose.

⁸⁸ Thomas Starr King, *Christianity and Humanity: A Series of Sermons* (Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1877). For a larger discussion of King and the oft-repeated story of his importance in saving California for the Union, see Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, 97-105.

⁸⁹ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865*. For a discussion of Yosemite as a place of national healing, see Deverell, "Niagara Magnified": Finding Emerson, Muir, and Adams in Yosemite," 12.

⁹⁰ With such an important role to play, Olmsted hoped that all Americans might be able to visit and experience Yosemite for themselves. In its current state, however, it remained "a rich man's park." In order that Yosemite might become a park "for the free enjoyment of the people," he proposed specific infrastructure changes, including a road that would reduce travel costs and a set of cabins to provide a "free resting place for visitors." Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove*. Based on her own trip to Yosemite in 1872, Sarah Woolsey estimated that the trip cost between \$130 and \$150. Woolsey, "A Few Hints on the California Journey," *Scribner's Monthly*, May 1873.

Thus, the California landscape, and Yosemite in particular, might be a site for much-needed individual and national healing.⁹¹

For easterners, curious about what the West had to offer but uninterested, as of yet, in making the lengthy journey themselves (especially in the years before the completion of the transcontinental route), Watkins, Bierstadt, Harte, and Muybridge, brought the California landscape, from the Marin headlands to Yosemite's granite peaks, into their homes and imaginations. Bret Harte's "The Luck of the Roaring Camp," found a national audience through multiple and liberal re-printings, for example. In the minds of many, then, Harte's west became *the* West. Then, with the opening of the Pacific Railroad, for the fortunate few who could afford a \$70 second-class or \$150 first-class ticket, the only thing left to do was to go and see the West for themselves.⁹²

⁹¹ Despite Olmsted's grand hopes and promises, for those who made the trip, the experience seemed to be mixed. Five years later, actress, writer, and lecturer Olive Logan found none of these things. Instead, she told of the "perils and tortures" she encountered, warning the unsuspecting pleasure traveller against the journey. Logan's despair began in San Francisco, in fact, when she discovered that she would need a "Bloomer costume" to ride a horse during the trip. After a miserable, hot, and long journey through Yosemite Valley, only to be rewarded, she insisted, by a "lovely" but not extraordinary view, she concluded, "I can truly say that I never in my life saw a more miserable set of people than the poor candle-moth tourists who were gathered this summer in the Yo Semite Valley." Meanwhile, Harvey Rice, who likely arrived only a few months later, seemed to encounter an entirely different scene. He described the Valley as "Nature's hallowed retreat, quickly being overtaken by tourists "who devote themselves to sight-seeing, frolic and fun, dancing, cards and billiards." Olive Logan, "Does it Pay to Visit Yo Semite?," *The Galaxy*, October 1870; Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 128.

⁹² "Central Pacific Railroad Schedule," October 18, 1869, Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum, http://cprh.org/Museum/Ephemera/CPRR_Schedule_1869.html. Susan Coolidge noted that a round trip ticket from New York in May 1872 was just under three-hundred dollars. Travelers should also budget, she advised, three dollars a day for meals and cost of a Pullman car, in "A Few Hints on the California Journey," *Scribner's Monthly*, May 1873.

Chapter Five

Meeting at the Golden Gate

No longer satisfied with simply being an “American town,” boosters began instead to proclaim San Francisco a cosmopolitan and international city. As New York journalist Albert Richardson observed, though “we are content with 'Metropolitan,’” for San Franciscans “nothing will serve but 'Cosmopolitan.’”¹ While these characterizations—national and global—appeared contradictory at first, commentators resolved the tension by folding claims of cosmopolitanism into larger national and imperial projects. They sought to reify the city's standing as an American town through bold proclamations of the city's importance as an Imperial City. In this way, as national politicians' imperial ambitions grew, San Franciscans added new meanings to an already multi-faceted Golden Gate metaphor. Once again, this metaphor proved flexible, expansive, and useful, this time positing San Francisco as the nation’s most cosmopolitan urban space.

¹ Albert Richardson, “Through to the Pacific,” *New York Tribune*, May-June 1869, Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum, http://cprh.org/Museum/Through_to_the_Pacific/Through_to_the_Pacific.html. See also James William Buel, *Metropolitan Life Unveiled, or Mysteries and Miseries of America's Great Cities* (St Louis: Historical Publishing Co., 1883) 337.

Cosmopolitanism, meanwhile, was itself a multi-layered moniker. Many characterized the city as a meeting ground at the juncture of multiple empires—a place where “the Occident exchanges salutations across the waters with the Orient.”² Or, as Harvey Rice, declared, San Francisco will be the site where “Europe, Asia and America will meet, shake hands, and be good friends. Here they will concentrate their wealth, exchange commodities, gamble in stocks, and test the comparative sharpness of their wits.”³ In many ways, this description echoed other, earlier portraits of San Francisco. Much like the gold-rush arrivals’ characterizations, commentators continued to boast that our streets included “people of every nation.”⁴ This emphasis on a diverse population became central to the re-casting of San Francisco's gold-rush past as a meritocratic paradise—a time when men of all nations arrived on equal footing, eager to make their fortune. According to the retelling, with each man simply seeking to improve his condition, without prior advantage, the resulting separation of the wheat from the chafe could only be credited to the individual. In the 1870s re-formulation, which drew on multiple layers of the meeting-place metaphor, the city became not only a place where individuals “rubbed shoulders” across lines of race and class but also a symbolic gathering place, where racial, social, and national hierarchies could be exhibited and sorted out. Boosters celebrated San Francisco as a city that possessed French restaurants and Chinese tea houses. Surveying the dining options, one visitor noted that “the Frenchman, scanning the *menu* of the Maison Dorée, may fancy himself at the Troise Frères, in Paris; while the German finds his sauerkraut, the Italian his macaroni, the Spaniard his

² Rev. A. W. Loomis, “The Old East in the New West,” *Overland Monthly*, October 1868, 360.

³ Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 92.

⁴ Loomis, “The Old East in the New West,” 360.

picadillo, and the Welshman his leek, each at his own house of refreshment.”⁵

Accordingly, San Francisco offered Americans a place in which to discover the wider world without leaving the safe confines of United States' shores. It was the “Paris of America,” many suggested.⁶ Sitting at the doorstep to the Pacific, San Francisco possessed and offered the more dangerous and erotic sights and sounds of the Far East as well.

Arguments about the city's international (or cosmopolitan) tenor co-existed with assertions of Anglo American dominance. “The flavor of New England,” journalist Samuel Bowles assured readers, “can be tasted above all other local elements.”⁷ Or, as another writer insisted, “Asia, Europe, and America have here met and embraced each other; yet the mark of America is over and upon all.”⁸ As a profoundly American place—a place where independent-minded miners had met and where all nations might now gathered—San Franciscans insisted their city could be the site from which the United States might oversee, expand, and preside over a vast and longed-for empire. Ideas of the West as the wellspring of the American character, with San Francisco as a golden gateway opening to a Pacific empire, converged to create the much-celebrated notion of San Francisco as an international city ready to partake in the nation-building project. Or, as one of the city's newspaperman proudly proclaimed, San Francisco would be “the metropolis of an empire.”⁹

⁵ Mrs. Frank [Miriam] Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate (April, May, June, 1877)*. (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1877), 120.

⁶ See, for example, Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 29.

⁷ Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad--Open*, 77.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁹ Evans, *A la California*, 131.

Having explored, in the last chapter, the some of the makings and meanings of the mythic West and the importance of the Golden Gate in this formulation, this chapter returns to San Francisco's waterfront streets, considering how the mythology of the West shaped the contours of the cityscape. It explores ideas about the West, as a place of rugged ingenuity, mapped onto San Francisco streets. The landscape, in fact, became the repository for a newly-emerging sanitized, celebratory, and intriguing vision of the Wild West. This chapter explores the city's growing tourist industry, recognizing it as a place where ideas and experiences of San Francisco intersected, collided, and merged.

It takes up the perspectives of outsiders looking in and San Franciscans looking out. While many San Franciscans made bold and relentless proclamations, some, of course, remained unimpressed. Arriving in San Francisco in the late-spring of 1872, writer Helen Hunt Jackson found herself wondering, "Is this all?" Apparently, too many boasts from San Francisco boosters had reached her in New York, leaving her underwhelmed when she saw the city for the first time. From her perspective, San Francisco was nothing more than a poor facsimile of lower Manhattan, offering the same dull shops and merchandise that one could find at the corner of Canal and Broome. "Have I crossed a continent only to land in Lower Broadway on a dull day?," she bemoaned.¹⁰ Just a few years before, San Francisco merchants would have counted Jackson's sentiment a great success, such as the writer who declared that, with all of San

¹⁰ Helen Hunt Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878), 77. *Bits of Travel* was first published as a series of letters in the *New York Independent* in June 1872. In return for the letters, the *Independent* likely funded Jackson's trip. "William S. Jackson Papers, Part 2, Ms 0241, Box 3, Folder 29", April 8, 1872, Tutt Library, Special Collections, Colorado College, <http://www.coloradocollege.edu/library/SpecialCollections/Manuscript/WSJ2-3-29.html>. Other visitors drew a favorable comparisons between San Francisco and New York City, such as Edward Dwight Holton, who declared Market Street the "Broadway of San Francisco." Holton, *Travels with Jottings. From Midland to the Pacific*. (Milwaukee: Trayser Brothers, 1880), 39.

Francisco's "modern conveyances" and improvements, "one almost fancies himself in the streets of New York."¹¹ By the 1870s, however, many hoped to be something more than an east-coast knock-off.

"How to Go and What to See"

As Watkins, Muybridge, and Harte generated interest in California, the opening of the Pacific Route created a new opportunity for some mid-westerners and easterners to experience California for themselves. As historian Catherine Cocks has discussed, during the middle of the nineteenth century, the growth of cities, leisure time among the well-to-do, and commercialization gave rise to a new type of traveler—the urban tourist.¹² With the opening of the new, cross-country route and the promise of more tourists heading west, travel writers and journalists raced to publish the must-have guide to California.

Guidebooks, then, emerged out of burgeoning tourism and print industries.¹³ They grew out of travel writing, city directories (such as Charles Kimball's street-by-street accounting of San Francisco), and urban sketches (like Benjamin Lloyd's *Lights and Shades*) and drew on existing and expanding publishing networks and reading audiences, as evidenced by the growth and popularity of magazines among middle-class readers.¹⁴

¹¹ David M. Gazlay, "San Francisco, Past and Present," *Gazlay's Pacific Monthly*, March 1865, 189.

¹² Cocks, *Doing the Town*, 1-8. Will Beecher Makintosh has argued that the tourist, as a distinct category apart from the broader category of travelers, emerged after 1820. Makintosh, "Expected Sights: The Origins of Tourism in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2009), 3.

¹³ For a discussion of the history and origins of guidebooks, see Richard Gassan, "The First American Tourist Guidebooks: Authorship and the Print Culture of the 1820s," *Book History* 8 (2005): 51-74; Cocks, *Doing the Town*, 143; Makintosh, "Expected Sights," chapter 2.

¹⁴ For a discussion of periodicals and their popularity in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, see Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993; Ohmann, *Selling Culture*; Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Scott E. Casper et al., eds., *A History of the Book in America: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, vol. 3 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), chapter 7.

Atlantic Monthly writer Samuel Bowles, for example, first published his conversational travel notes in the pages of the magazine; he then compiled the articles into a stand-alone guide entitled the *Pacific Railroad—Open: How to Go and What to See*. Many guidebook authors, such as Bowles, offered to hold the hand of the unseasoned traveler each step of the way, from New York to San Francisco and back again.¹⁵ Seeking an even wider consumer audience, they also promised interesting and helpful facts for the resident, business traveler, or settler—anyone “who turns his face westward.”¹⁶ Many of the initial transcontinental-travel guides focused on facts and figures, offering timetables and ticketing information as well as statistics on the size, industries, and buildings of the towns along the route.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroad companies took an active interest in the guides, furnishing many of the details inside.¹⁸ As a quintessential consumer product, guidebooks often came in soft-cover, travel editions that tourists could purchase along the railroad lines. They exemplified the

¹⁵ Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad—open*. Less of a guide and more a personal account, Bowles also wrote *Our New West: records of travel between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean* (Hartford: Hartford Publishing Co., 1869). J. St. John likewise took a similar tone, assuring readers, “You can trust what I say. I shall not mislead you. I shall not urge you to make any investment; not shall I puff any town. ...I want your confidence, and intend to deserve it.” St. John, *The Californian Tourist’s Guide Book* (San Francisco: California Tourist’s Guide Publishing Co., 1886), 5.

¹⁶ Henry T. Williams, *The Pacific Tourist: Williams’ Illustrated Trans-continental Guide of Travel* (New York: H.T. Williams, 1878), 4.

¹⁷ For an example of this style of guide, see *Pacific Coast Travelers’ Guide and San Francisco Business Directory* (San Francisco: Guide Publishing Co., 1869); H. Wallace Atwell, *Great Trans-continental Railroad Guide* (Chicago: G. A. Crofutt & Co., 1869); Joshua L. Tracy, *Guide to the Great West: Being a brief, but carefully written, description of the country bordering upon all the principal railroads of the West, with maps and illustrations* (St. Louis: Tracy & Eaton, 1870); Lick House, *Tourists’ Guide, Giving Principal Routes from Chicago and Saint Louis to San Francisco. Also, Information for Reaching All Points of Note in California ... the Hotels at Various Places, and Much Other Valuable Information* (San Francisco, 1871); Rand, McNally and Co’s *Western Railway Guide* (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Co., 1871).

¹⁸ Many thanked officials from the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroad Companies for providing information, such as *Great Trans-continental Railroad Guide* (Crofutt & Eaton, Publishers, 1870), 9. In subsequent years, the railroad companies, such as the Southern Pacific, which took over the CP, produced their own promotional materials. SP, for example, founded *Sunset* magazine in 1898 as a promotional tract that encouraged readers to travel or migrate to the regions they served, from Louisiana to California.

commercial potential of the intersecting transportation, tourism, and print culture industries.

Despite bold promises of comprehensiveness, as Sarah Woolsey and Helen Hunt Jackson prepared for their westward adventure in 1872, wishing “to know exactly how, when, and where to go, what to carry in their trunks, and how much money the expedition is likely to cost,” they found the available guides lacking.¹⁹ When Woolsey returned home, she sought to fill the gap, offering her own detailed account of all of the particulars in the pages of *Scribner's*. In subsequent years, as more authors and tourists had a chance to ride the rails, guidebooks became more elaborate, combining statistics and fare-tables with detailed first-hand experiences and prescriptive instructions.²⁰

Charles Nordhoff, for example, advised travelers to “eat only two meals per day on your journey,” reminding readers, “you are not exercising nor working.”²¹ Henry Williams had a tip for men traveling with women, instructing them “to telegraph to your hotel in advance, requesting nice rooms reserved, always mentioning that you have ladies.”²² Nordhoff’s guide even recommended a favorite guidebook, “Croffut's excellent 'Trans-Continental Guide,’” favored for all its “particulars.”²³ While those who embarked on the transcontinental journey were likely accustomed to traveling short distances by rail, the

¹⁹ Coolidge [Sarah Chauncey Woolsey], “A Few Hints on the California Journey.” Nordhoff’s “California,” article appeared in *Harper's* the same month that the two women left, and though Woolsey did not single out his account as lacking, she did suggest (by referring to some of the engravings that accompanied his report) that his was among the accounts she consulted.

²⁰ Examples of this type of guide include Nordhoff, *California*; Turrill, *California Notes*; Williams, *The Pacific Tourist*.

²¹ Nordhoff, *California*, 34. Many of Nordhoff’s traveling tips for the journey out west first appeared as articles in *Harper's* starting in May, 1872.

²² Williams, *The Pacific Tourist*, 12.

²³ Nordhoff, *California*, 37.

Pacific Railroad offered something new. Travelers recognized this and guidebook authors reminded them of it, hoping to cash-in while promising to lend a hand.

Many travel writers also expressed a larger sense that the railroad was re-making the world—forever altering people's sense of time and space. The transcontinental railroad was truly remarkable, collapsing a journey that had previously taken weeks or even months into seven days.²⁴ Writing of the Pacific Railroad, Bowles expounded, “it is the unrolling of a new map, the revelation of a new empire, the creation of a new civilization.” It would, he promised, expose visitors to “a new world of nature and of wealth.”²⁵ Guidebook authors encouraged readers to make the trip and see this new world for themselves. As further encouragement, Williams reassured, no where in the world “is travel made so easy and comfortable as on the Pacific Railroad”—as agreeable, he promised, as an afternoon spent in a drawing-room, with the advantage of changing scenery.²⁶ Or, as Woolsey concluded her article full of tips and tidbits for the traveler: “Go! don't give it up! ... the pleasures of travel survive its pains.”²⁷

Those who packed their Croffut and Nordhoff guides and boarded the Union Pacific en route to San Francisco, however, often found the experience of traveling across the country to be cramped, jarring, and grueling. “How is the body to steel itself against

²⁴ According to Nordhoff, the trip from New York to California, without stops, took seven days. Nordhoff, *California*, 20.

²⁵ Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad--open*, 5. Contemporaries marveled at the new maps created by the railroad or, in other words, the ways that the technology remade space. Scholars have since explored this idea as well. See especially Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918: With a New Preface* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). As Makintosh has explained, not only did the transit technology contribute to a sense among travelers of time and space being remade, but the entire commercial apparatus surrounding travel changed, which in turn further changed travelers' perceptions and experiences. Makintosh, “Expected Sights,” chapter 3.

²⁶ Nordhoff, *California*, 19; Williams, *The Pacific Tourist*, 8.

²⁷ Coolidge [Sarah Chauncey Woolsey], “A Few Hints on the California Journey.”

unwashed people and diseased people with whom it is crowded, elbow to elbow, and knee to knee for hours,” Helen Hunt Jackson wondered.²⁸ She found some comfort in the Pullman cars, which offered privacy and quiet. Much to her dismay, however, they ended at Odgen, Utah, the transfer point from the Union Pacific to the Central Pacific line (a few years later, travel along the Pacific Railroad improved and travelers could charter a Pullman car from New York and to San Francisco without even changing cars).²⁹ Jackson, meanwhile, enumerated the many inconveniences and discomforts of the Central Pacific's “Silver Palace” cars, detailing her difficulty finding a place to stow her things, sit comfortably, and prepare for bed. Adding insult to injury, she discovered that the polished-plating of her “silver” sleeping compartment created a mirror in which she could see the reflection of those on either side of her, shattering any illusion of privacy offered by the curtained nook.³⁰ After such a taxing journey, Jackson arrived in San Francisco, finally, exhausted and out of sorts. Yet, at least according to her guidebook, a whole slate of activities and destinations awaited her.³¹

A 360° View

Guidebook authors often encouraged tourists to begin at the Cliff House, hailed as “the furthest Western civilized point of our country.”³² It sat on the edge of the peninsula, on the ocean-side of Golden Gate. Though it was about six miles outside of town, after

²⁸ Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, 4.

²⁹ Nordhoff mentioned the possibility of chartering a Pullman car all the way to the Pacific in *California*, 20. See also pages 27-31 for his longer discussion of Pullman cars. Cocks has discussed the discomfort of rail travel and the improvements made by mid-century in *Doing the Town*, 45-46, 54.

³⁰ Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, 29-35.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

³² “Point Lobos and the Cliff House,” *Appletons’ Journal of Literature, Science, and Art* IV, no. 68 (16 July 1870): 75-77. Both Turrill and Nordhoff encouraged tourists to begin their trip at the Cliff House, in Turrill, *California Notes* and Nordhoff, *California*.

opening in 1863, it quickly became a favorite destination for wealthier San Franciscans. Later, the construction of Point Lobos Avenue made it accessible to even more pleasure-seekers.³³ In directing visitors to the Cliff House first, to gaze upon the Golden Gate, guidebook authors sent them to the symbolic heart of the city. Charles Nordhoff invited tourists to breakfast on the verandah, with “China, and Japan, and the King of the Cannibal Islands, looking at you across the broad Pacific.”³⁴ The Cliff House, then, gave first-time visitors a viewpoint from which to contemplate the city and its larger national and global position.

It was not all seriousness, however. The Cliff House also overlooked Seal Rock, named for a colonies of seals and sea-lions that basked on the out-cropping. Many found the animals ridiculous, and they became a tourist favorite. Occasionally stunt artists and daredevils added to the sights. In 1859, Charles Blondin created a sensation with his tightrope walk at Niagara Falls, and as the craze spread, circus performer James Cooke, brought the stunt to San Francisco in 1865. Before an audience of nearly 1,500, Cooke made the 150-yard crossing from the Cliff House to Seal Rock.³⁵ For visitors from Atlantic states then, the Pacific Ocean may have been new even as some of the spectacles and entertainers likely seemed familiar. A year later, Rosa Celeste, repeated the feat, and, determined to out-do Cooke, she promised to journey back by rope as well. Despite a hair-raising moment when the wind came up, forcing Celeste to throw her balance pole

³³ Sam Brannan built the first Cliff House, in 1858, at what is today Sutro Heights. Then, in 1863, Senator John Buckley and C. C. Bulter selected the location over-looking Seal Rock for their Cliff House, turning its management over to Captain Foster. Each successive Cliff House has been built at this spot. Smith, *San Francisco's Lost Landmarks*, 61.

³⁴ Nordhoff, *California*, 62.

³⁵ Gail MacGowan, “Land’s End in San Francisco,” *Guidelines: Newsletter for San Francisco City Guides and Sponsors*, http://www.sfcityguides.org/public_guidelines.html.

from side to side, she returned to the Cliff House triumphant. According to one observer, she surpassed even Boldin's Niagara stunt, on account of the distance, winds, and, above all, her sex.³⁶ No doubt many of those who had marveled at Menken's performance three years before, made their way to the ocean to see Celeste's feat as well. In the years that followed, both stunt artists and sight-seers continued to trek to the Cliff House.

On her first morning in San Francisco, Helen Hunt Jackson dismissed the obligatory Cliff House start. She instead hired a hack-driver to show her around, in order that she might get a sense of the city.³⁷ After observing the homes, streets, and hills, she concluded, San Francisco “is hopelessly crowded and mixed, and can never look from the water like anything but a toppling town”--hardly the picturesque, majestic viewpoint many hoped she might gain.³⁸ Guides and boosters underscored the importance of the panoramic perspective, encouraging tourists to seek-out vista points from which to gain a composite, all-encompassing view of the city.³⁹ Later in her trip, she did make the requisite Cliff House trip. While she found the views impressive, she complained that the crowd's sentimental fawning over the seals nearly ruined the excursion.⁴⁰

Early guidebook authors often hoped that tourists might find their trip “delightful as well as instructive.”⁴¹ Nordhoff, for example, reminded readers that the journey to San Francisco “costs no more than the steamer fare to London, and is shorter than a voyage across the Atlantic.” In this way, he placed a trip to San Francisco alongside the Grand

³⁶ “The Female Blodin,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, 4 July 1866; “Repeats the Feat,” *Daily Alta California*, 29 June 1866.

³⁷ Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, 77-80.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁹ Cocks, *Doing the Town*, 156-160.

⁴⁰ Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, 82-84.

⁴¹ Nordhoff, *California*, 19.

European tour, which had long been considered an important finishing-component of an upper-class education, for both young men and women. In order for the trip West to be “instructive,” the tour needed to include a wide-scale sense of the city, as well as a detailed understanding of its built environment and social structures.⁴² It is for this reasons that the Cliff House, with its panoramic-viewpoints and playful seals, made for such a sound starting point. Once tourists gained a larger perspective, guidebook authors hoped they might get a close-up look at the infrastructure and workings of the city. They suggested readers visit the Mint, to see the process of money-making, the dry docks at Hunter's Point, where China steamers awaited repairs, or the source of the city's water supply twenty miles south of the city.⁴³ Not forgetting the “delightful” sites as well, they also included an afternoon enjoying the menagerie at Woodward's Garden.

Ultimately, guidebook authors hoped that days spent investigating the city's industry and infrastructure would contribute to tourists' comprehensive understanding of the city. Some travelers, such as Harvey Rice, embraced their assignment, reporting in letters home on the city's bright commercial future, as evidenced, he wrote, by Market Street's magnificence.⁴⁴ Likewise, another dutiful traveler carefully reported on each of the buildings and thoroughfares he visited, including the Merchant's Exchange building, Ralston's Bank of California, and the Masonic Temple, recounting his observations on stationary bordered by engravings of the city's premier sights.⁴⁵ Jackson, meanwhile,

⁴² As James William Buel remarked, San Francisco would not become a true pleasure destination until the fare for cross-country travel became more reasonable. Buel, *Metropolitan Life Unveiled*, 343.

⁴³ Turrill, *California Notes*, 58-59; James B Bradford, *The Strangers' Guide to the City of San Francisco: Gives the Location of Places of Amusement, Banks, Churches ... and Other Valuable Information*. (San Francisco: Bacon & Company, Book and Job Printers, 1875), 47.

⁴⁴ Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 68.

⁴⁵ “Anonymous - 1879,” 30 March 1879, California Historical Society.

found herself bored by the destinations suggested in Bancroft's Guidebook, insisting that they would interest only the most serious of travelers.

In many ways, the recommended tours of the city during the 1870s paralleled the perspective offered by a Bierstadt painting, in which a vast landscape became apparent through carefully rendered details. Charles Parsons, likewise, offered an overview of the city in his 1878 “Birds eye view.” He captured well-known buildings and industrial centers with precision, while allowing other blocks to fall-away with non-descript buildings and houses. Parsons’s illustration, much like the contemporary guidebooks, sought to convey a sense of the “essence of California life” and “the future of California's wealth.”⁴⁶



Figure 12. Charles R. Parsons, “The city of San Francisco. Birds eye view from the bay looking south-west,” 1878. *Courtesy of the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.*

⁴⁶ Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad--open*, 65.

Ideally, through trips to the Cliff House and the Mint, tourists developed their own birds-eye view of the city. For those who wanted something to take home with them, however, photographer Eadward Muybridge had just the thing. In 1877 and '78, from atop Mark Hopkin's Nob Hill mansion, Muybridge took two 360-degree panoramas of the city, rotating his view-finder over the course of the day to capture each perspective of the city. In the dark room and printing house, he later, as Rebecca Solnit has described, stitched together “many discontinuous pieces of time into a plausible but fictitious continuity,” transforming “a circular space into a linear photograph.”⁴⁷ For a viewer walking the seventeen-foot length of his 1878 panorama, it was both a comprehensive view of the city—a look from an ideal and rare vista in the center of the built-up district—and a disorienting perspective. From frame to frame, California Street, a familiar landmark, seemed to point in multiple directions, shifting with Muybridge's rotating perspective. Furthermore, the shadows of a seemingly singular moment in time shifted and jumped, since he placed, side-by-side, frames linked by space but from different points in the day.⁴⁸ Like the railroad, with photography, time and space seemed once again to move in unexpected ways. For only eight dollars, tourists could take this view of the city with them, imagining what it might be like to be among the Big Four, presiding over San Francisco.⁴⁹

While a panoramic perspective (or view from the top), gained from vistas and supplemented by detailed looks at industry and infrastructure, gave tourists some sense of

⁴⁷ Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 161, 159-160.

⁴⁸ For a detailed description of Muybridge's technique and the unique perspective it offered, see Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 160-162.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

life in California, a fully “instructive” tour included a close-up look at the city's underside as well. Parson, Muybridge, and a visit to the dry docks captured the exterior of the city; guidebook authors next invited readers to peak inside.

“A Cruise on the Barbary Coast”

For many authors and visitors, a “delightful and instructive” tour—a true sense of the city's social workings—included a trip to the Barbary Coast. In keeping with the sunshine-shadow genre, which promised to acquaint readers with the best and worst of a city, tour guides also insisted that visitors should explore all facets of life in San Francisco. Both, in fact, seemed to linger on the “mysteries and miseries.”⁵⁰ They justified their lurid curiosity as educational, insisting, for example, that “the philosophic student of human nature, as well as the curious observer of social customs, cannot consider his knowledge of any city complete until he has personally seen and actually known, not only the highest, but the lowest, amusements extensively patronized by its people.”⁵¹ The Barbary Coast's alley-ways, Albert Evans promised, offered an ideal “study for the student of humanity.”⁵² One oft-carried guidebook seemed to discourage tourists from visiting the Barbary Coast, giving its “precise locality, so that our readers may *keep away*. Give it a '*wide berth*,' as you value your life.”⁵³ Yet, with such specific directions, they likely drew as many visitors to the district as they discouraged.

⁵⁰ Buel, *Metropolitan Life Unveiled*.

⁵¹ “Shot Dead. The End of a Notorious Character,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 April 1889.

⁵² Evans, *A la California*, 133.

⁵³ George A. Crofutt, *Crofutt's New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide* (Omaha: Overland Pub. Co., 1879), 216.

Most guides recommended that tourists employ a guide to lead them through San Francisco's steamy "underworld," suggesting they ask the on-duty police officer. This further highlights police officers' complicated role in the vice economy. Ostensibly, they sought to uphold law and order, but more often, officers accepted (or demanded) bribes from brothel-owners. In return, they overlooked a bordello or even came to the aid of a prostitute dealing with a violent client. Thus, rather than shutting down the vice industry, they facilitated it, by seeking to curtail the most egregious and violent acts. When tourists came through, officers benefited yet again, this time by confiding their knowledge of the district's most dangerous places, its "disguised brothels" and "underground dives," which they had so carefully overlooked as bride-takers.⁵⁴

Tours often included a walk through the streets of the Barbary Coast and Chinatown, thereby underscoring the close proximity and similar character of the two quarters.⁵⁵ As though a street-view was not enough, guides offered tourists a peak inside the homes, dives, and dens. As one newspaperman recounted, his police-officer guide knocked on the door of a home in the Barbary Coast district. An unsuspecting woman came to the door, but since nothing was discernible through the darkness, the two men pushed their way inside.⁵⁶ As "students of humanity" and with an officer at their side, tourists seemed to believe that nothing was beyond reach.⁵⁷ Samuel Bowles, addressing

⁵⁴ "The Amateur 'Rounder'," *Daily Alta California*, 28 October 1872.

⁵⁵ Evans, *A la California*, 139; Nordhoff, *California*, 63.

⁵⁶ "The Amateur 'Rounder'."

⁵⁷ At the same moment that middle or upper-class tourist burst into the homes of poorer San Franciscans with a sense of curiosity and entitlement, they were imbuing their own homes with a greater degree of privacy, seeking to create a separation from the fears and vices of urban life. Elizabeth Klimasmith has explored the ways in which nineteenth-century ideas about urban space and domestic space arose alongside and in opposition to one another. Klimasmith, *At Home in the City: Urban Domesticity in American Literature and Culture, 1850-1930* (Lebanon: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

his readers as travel companions, likewise insisted that while in Chinatown, “we must look into their homes, compact, simple, yet not over clean or sweet-smelling quarters, into their restaurants, and their theatre, if it is open, and into their 'Josh Houses.’”⁵⁸ Thus, as readers of the sunshine-shadow studies, they grew accustomed to a voyeuristic look inside the spaces in which a city's poor lived and worked. Then, as tourists, they sought the same up-close view. While sunshine-shadow narratives offered a titillating look at city life from the safety of one's own home, the police officer too gave tourists' a similar sense of reassurance. Much the same way they had gawked at the Cliff House seals just days before, tourists visited the Barbary Coast to peer at the poor.

For visitors, meanwhile, a tour of the Barbary Coast not only offered a look at San Francisco's present-day underbelly but also seemed to offer a window into its wilder past. As Miriam Leslie saw it, the district illustrated “the social status of San Francisco in the early days, when the report of gold attracted every desperado on the Continent to its search.”⁵⁹ Albert Evans too dwelled on the Coast's multi-national population, noting the “fallen and hopelessly degraded” Spanish and Chinese women, “Chinese coolies,” and “Hindoo washermen.”⁶⁰ For both, the district held the vestiges of the proverbial men-of-all-nations gambling table from '49. Furthermore, both anticipated, even hoped that, they

⁵⁸ Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad--open*, 72. Likewise, after praising the completeness of his host's tour, which included the shipping and residential parts of the city, another visitor insisted that the only thing left to see was “one of the most remarkable and filthiest places that can be found in any city of America”-- Chinatown. “Lenz's World Tour Awheel,” *Outing*, August 1893. Frederic M. DeWitt recommended that tourists visit at night, when the tourist could be sure that *his* (DeWitt discouraged ladies from visiting) voyeurism would be rewarded. “The workmen are resting, gaming, or smoking opium, and you see a very different die of life,” DeWitt insisted in *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir and Guide to San Francisco: A New Handbook for Strangers and Tourists* (San Francisco: F.M. De Witt, 1900), 30. For a discussion of Chinatown's as tourist attraction, see Ivan Light, “From Vice District to Tourist Attraction: The Moral Career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940,” *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 3 (August 1974): 367-394 and Raymond W Rast, “The Cultural Politics of Tourism in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1882-1917,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 1: 29-60.

⁵⁹ Leslie, *California*, 139.

⁶⁰ Evans, *A la California*, 273-274.

might catch a glimpse of the lowest of the low or an infamous scene. Leslie, in fact, “saw nothing objectionable,” except for a few “hollow-eyed, sallow-cheeked, vicious-looking men and women lounging in the doorways and windows.”⁶¹ Nevertheless, her perception of the district as a vile, sink-hole remained unchanged. Though Evans recounted his time in the Barbary Coast as a single night, one wonders how many times he returned to the Coast before he found (or conjured) the quintessential scenes of debauchery he later described. Walking down one of the most infamous alleys, he apparently stumbled upon a French-woman (suggested to be a prostitute by her nationality and presence in the Coast), lying in a pool of blood, with a fractured skull. Her murderer had already disappeared into the night.⁶²

As yet another part of the great western tour, the Barbary Coast functioned alongside Yosemite in creating and fulfilling tourists’ expectations of their western trek. The tour of the Barbary Coast offered a different, less flattering, perspective of California's wild landscape, but, it was equally important in re-creating a mythic West. It, just as much as Yosemite’s wild landscapes, suggested evidence of a meritocratic, if ruthlessly competitive, past out of which the Anglo-miner had triumphantly arisen. As a vestige of a Wild West past, the Barbary Coast offered visitors a chance to be tourists of that past, to emerge themselves as the triumphant Argonaut—their character tested, strengthened, and affirmed.

⁶¹ Leslie, *California*, 139.

⁶² Evans, *A la California*, 303.

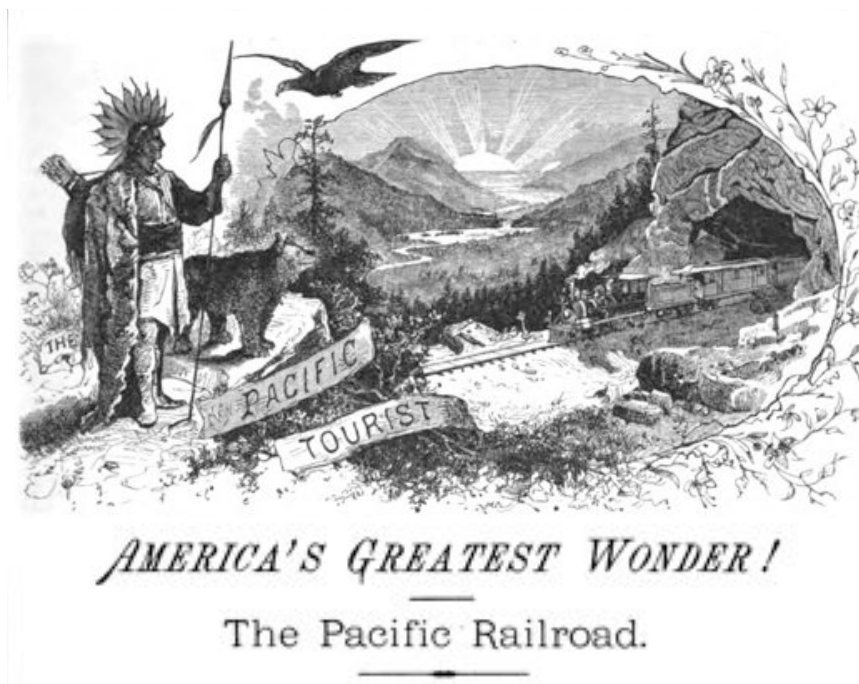


Figure 13. Henry T. Williams, “America’s Greatest Wonder!” In *The Pacific Tourist: Williams’ Illustrated Trans-continental Guide of Travel* (New York: H.T. Williams, 1878).

Not all who visited the Coast sought the comforting presence of a guide. Some came less as tourists and more as participants, hoping to partake in rather than simply peer at, the revelry and mayhem. On Saturday nights, according to Albert Evans, many working-class men from surrounding communities descended on the Coast, looking for a good time.⁶³ Soldiers posted at the Presidio also sought escapism in the quarter. Two such soldiers, Patrick Rafferty and Patrick Lawlor, obtained a leave of absence to celebrate the day of their patron Saint. A Coaster, G. Howard, befriended the men, enlisting them in his plan to empty the saloon's safe. Lacking the finesse of a career-criminal, both soldiers left behind articles of clothing that could be traced back to them. The police tracked down

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 276.

and arrested all three men.⁶⁴ While slummers hoped to enjoy a night of revelry and then return to their own, more familiar streets (or, in this case, the military base at the Presidio), some found themselves caught in the mire of the Coast.

The city's middle- and upper-class men also sought the Coast's unique brand of entertainment—from bawdy burlesque shows, to cheap prostitutes, or drinks in a deadfall. A San Francisco man, who lived along Mission Street, ventured to the Coast one night, making friends with a stranger named Gordon. After an evening spent together at a dance cellar, the two men parted ways, when the Mission-street man noticed that his gold watch was gone. He reported the theft to the Police, who found Gordon with “two beer girls on his arm.” Though they arrested Gordon, he no longer possessed the watch, having most likely passed it off to one of the women, who they also later realized was his wife.⁶⁵ A similar fate befell a man living in a Marin-community north of the city, who returned by ferry “a sadder and a wiser man”⁶⁶ Coasters, it seems, often spotted and sought out strangers to the neighborhood, and newspapers were quick to warn the out-of-towner, especially the naive country visitor, of the dangers awaiting him in the big city.⁶⁷ More experienced slummers left their valuables in safe-keeping before descending into the Coast's deadfalls, according to Evelyn Wells's fictional account of a night of exploits in the “premier sin-spot of the world.”⁶⁸ Closing with a nod to the sunshine-shadow city genre, one sight-seer told of breathing “a heavy sigh of relief” as he turned “out of the

⁶⁴ “A Battle on the Barbary Coast,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 20 March 1876.

⁶⁵ “Fell Among Thieves,” *Daily Alta California*, 7 March 1868. See also “Stranger Robbed on the Barbary Coast,” *Daily Alta California*, 16 April 1869.

⁶⁶ “Wrecked on the Barbary Coast,” *Daily Alta California*, 29 September 1868.

⁶⁷ See, for example, “Wrecked on the Barbary Coast”; “Local Matters. Another Countryman Fleeced,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 17 December 1869; “Notes from the Courts,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 9 June 1873.

⁶⁸ Evelyn Wells, *Champagne Days of San Francisco* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939), 120.

evil-ordered alley into the main street” and spotted the first light of dawn and headed for home.⁶⁹

For slummers and sight-seers, then, the Coast was a place of intrigue, revelry, escape, and danger. For coasters, meanwhile, it was a place to profit or simply scrape by, while reformers continued to maintain it was a “stain upon her brow” or a “sink of moral pollution.”⁷⁰ These categories, of course, were not always so neat: some reformers became sight-seers, slummers became coasters, and some coasters moved on. For many, then, the district held multiple and even contradictory meanings. Even as the Barbary Coast became one of the “sights” of the city, part of a gritty nostalgia trip, it continued to function as the center of the city’s vice district.⁷¹ As the district grew more storied and more flocked to see and experience it for themselves, the lawmakers, reformers, madams, politicians, saloon-owners, prostitutes, police officers, newspaper reporters, and sporting men who had participated in the making of San Francisco’s vice district lost control over its images and meanings—at the very moment, in fact, when its meanings seemed more important than ever.

⁶⁹ “The Amateur ‘Rounder’.”

⁷⁰ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 87; *The Call*, 28 November 1869 as quoted in Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 100.

⁷¹ The Red-Light Abatement Act, passed in 1913, was intended to eradicate prostitution from the city; it instead shifted the city’s vice district to the Tenderloin (a neighborhood between upper Market Street and Nob Hill). Through enforcing the Abatement Act, San Francisco police officers and court officials succeeded in closing many of the Coast’s brothels. Prostitution then moved to the streets, seedy hotels, and taverns in the Tenderloin. Shumsky, “Vice Responds to Reform,” 31–47; Shumsky and Springer, “San Francisco’s Zone of Prostitution,” 71–89; Boyd, *Wide-open Town*, 39.

“Faded Women”

Amidst this backdrop of a larger-than-life Barbary Coast, the city's boosters and politicians, over the course of the 1870s, sought to claim and assert the city's importance to the nation and the world. This ensured that the relationship between the city and its vice district continued to be—as it had from the start—contested, complicated, and ever-changing. Named after the supposed debauchery of a distant African port and adjoining Chinatown, the Barbary Coast confirmed San Francisco's identity as an exotic, foreign, and international place. Its bordellos and peep-shows reinforced the city's Parisian flair. Originally intended by reformers as a forgotten, worn-down site in which to contain the city's degenerates, it had instead become a place in which tourists, slummers, and sight-seers sought to uncover and revel in the city's seedy underbelly and exotic flare. Furthermore, as reformers discovered, Coasters did not stay neatly in their sink-hole. Rather they left the entire city, according to one observer, to contend with a generation of men who had acquired “their education on the city front, the Barbary Coast, the Bella Union, and the low dance cellars.”⁷² With tourists flocking to the Coast and Coasters terrorizing the city, reformers once again turned their attention to the district. Yet, their scrutiny did little to alter the vice economy. Reformers who sought to clean-up the Coast, had not only the Coasters to contend with but also the boosters who had firmly embedded the district within the city's emerging tourism industry and police officers, who had carefully positioned themselves to mediate and profit from the exchange. For many, the Coast remained a remnant of the city's volatile and violent boom-town past—a past that

⁷² “San Francisco’s Most Pressing Question,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, 17 November 1875.

could be contorted and manipulated to make different arguments about how to achieve a bright future.

As a district with multiple meanings, over which any one group had long-since lost control, the Coast both undergirded and undermined San Francisco's new, grander Golden Gate aspirations. For this reason, its form and presence remained fraught. Thus, as some sought to place San Francisco on a global stage, fights over what type of city San Francisco would be occurred at the street level. As the battle continued, one commentator finally concluded that San Franciscans might demand, once again, the iron-rule of a vigilance committee.⁷³

During the Coast's early years in the mid-1850s, as a vice district began to take hold, municipal and state lawmakers sought to regulate the tenor of the neighborhood by outlawing gambling. As a result, saloon owners pushed card tables into back rooms behind locked doors or remade their gambling halls into dance-halls. Female employees had long been popular among the gambling hall customers, who often flocked to their card tables, but, in the new saloons-turned-melodeons, women came to play an even more central role. When reformers sought to take-down gambling, to remake San Francisco, as a reputable, even family-friendly, town, they likely did not anticipate that they would conversely create more bar-jobs for women.

Melodeons, in fact, proved to be a profitable business model. Samuel Tetlow, in response to the reform crusades of the late 1850s, restructured the Bella Union from a gambling saloon to a concert saloon. Based on its success as a melodeon, in 1868, Tetlow

⁷³ "San Francisco's Most Pressing Question."

demolished the old Bella Union and built a new, grander theater on Kearny Street, at the edge of the Barbary Coast.⁷⁴ His new theater exemplified both his past profits and future ambitions, with a spacious interior and room for 700 theater-goers. Praised as “the prettiest and best arranged” in the city, it boasted a perfect incline, which enabled everyone sitting in the parquette to see over the audience members seated in front of them.⁷⁵ While Tetlow swelled with pride over his new grand theater and Benjamin Lloyd conceded that the new space attracted better players and a better crowd, Evelyn Wells maintained that it is still nothing more than a “rowdy vaudeville house.”⁷⁶ Either way, it was a “rowdy” house that attracted and employed more women than ever before.



Figure 14. *Ballet at the Bella Union, 1870.* Courtesy of the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum.

⁷⁴ Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 9; “The Old Bella Union,” *The Collectors Journal*, December 1932.

⁷⁵ *Figaro*, 14 November 1868, as quoted by Work Projects Administration, *Theatre Buildings*, 10.

⁷⁶ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 157; Wells, *Champagne Days of San Francisco*, 32.

With the growing popularity of concert saloons and exposés, such as Albert Evans's, reporting the conditions along the Coast, reformers became alarmed by the number of women working in deadfalls. Reminiscent of the *Bulletin's* 1855 campaign against gambling, *The Call* sought an ordinance to regulate women's working conditions.⁷⁷ They successfully prodded municipal leaders to action, resulting in an 1869 mandate that women could not work at a “dance-house, or ball-room, or saloon, or place of entertainment where liquors are sold or used” from midnight to dawn.⁷⁸

Ostensibly, this law was intended to protect women, but it seems likely that it also sought to protect men as well.⁷⁹ According to many descriptions of raucous nights along the Coast, it was the male customer, more than the female workers, who risked peril. The Coaster women were, after all, already fallen, at least according to many. Thus, it was the naive stranger, a country-boy hoping to “do” the town (already a familiar stock-type in Coast stories), who was susceptible to a woman's charms and at risk of being taken by a cunning beer-girl. According to one reporter, saloon-owners often employed “abandoned women” to lure and then occupy customers.⁸⁰ Upon entering the saloon, according to another reporter, it was as though a Siren-like trap was set into motion. The “frail sister” serving drinks assisted a bar-full of “demoiselles, some fair, some hideous, some fat, some lean, some drunk, and very few completely sober.” They immediately surrounded

⁷⁷ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 106.

⁷⁸ *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1868-9, Ending June 30, 1869*, sec. 32, 463.

⁷⁹ Sharon E. Wood has discussed Bucktown, the vice neighborhood in Davenport, Iowa, explaining the ways in which the city decided to regulate women's presence within the district as a way of keeping saloons and dance halls safe for male customers in *The Freedom of the Streets*.

⁸⁰ “A Quiet Murder: The Notorious Ned allen Killed in the Bull Run Saloon--The Assassin at Large,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 3 November 1873.

the “greenhorn” victim, each vying to be the “single nymph,” who would “take him in charge” and claim him “as her particular plunder.”⁸¹

Though many celebrated the passage of the new ordinance to restrict women's employment in saloons, little was done to enforce the new law.⁸² Having accomplished so little, reformers next sought to regulate women's patronage of liquor-selling establishments. The resulting 1876 law mandated that women could not be present in a saloon or drinking cellar between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. Though this mandate also went largely unenforced, officers did occasionally conduct a raids.⁸³ Once again, lawmakers targeted poorer women, who labored and leisured in the Barbary Coast. They left untouched the places where and times when wealthier women drank and socialized. Lillie Coit, a San Franciscan socialite, for example, often met her husband and male friends for a lunch of “oysters and brandy punch” at the Bank Exchange.⁸⁴ The Bank Exchange had first opened as a gentlemen's saloon, and boasted marble counters, walnut paneling, and a much-admired oil painting of “Samson and Delilah.”⁸⁵ By 1872, it had become such a favored place of socialization for both men and women that its lingering flavor as a “gentlemen's saloon” signaled patrons' class standing more than their gender. So, while Lillie Coit passed many afternoons at the Bank Exchange and evenings at the

⁸¹ “The Amateur ‘Rounder’”; Evans, *A la California*, 296.

⁸² Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 106; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 215.

⁸³ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 106; “Raid on a Dive,” *Alta California*, 26 May 1877. One visitor, William MacGregor, meanwhile, praised Americans for not allowing “the female sex to degrade themselves by becoming 'Hebes' in public places”; he evidently did not take the Barbary Coast nighttime tour. MacGregor, *San Francisco, California, in 1876. For private circulation only*. (Edinburgh: T. Laurie, 1876), 46.

⁸⁴ “Coit, Lillie Hitchcock”, Monday, January 22, 1872, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

⁸⁵ The large painting by Paul Emil Jacobs depicted a nearly-nude Samson and barely-covered Delilah, recounting the Biblical story of his capture and her heart-break. Birgitta Hjalmarson, *Artful Players: Artistic Life in Early San Francisco* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1999), 22. The artwork, as David Scobey has discussed, contributed to remaking male spaces, such as “gentlemen's saloons,” into places where women gathered as well. Scobey, “Nymphs and Satyrs: Sex and the Bourgeois Public Sphere in Victorian New York,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 37 (Spring 2002): 43-66.

French restaurant the Poodle Dog, imbibing wines and liquors (often to the point of leaving her feeling sick and dull the next day), she was untouched by the new regulations banning women's presence in drinking cellars and saloons.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, the law did directly threaten the access poorer women, some of whom worked as prostitutes without the support or confines of a brothel or crib, had to their customers, which they often solicited in bars. Like the 1869 ordinance, it was only loosely enforced. Many women likely risked getting caught and continued to seek customers in beer cellars. But, this did place even more power in the hands of saloon proprietors, since they too risked being arrested if officers conducted a raid. Thus, rather than protecting women, as reformers so often championed, the law instead placed more power in the hands of police officers who sought bribes and bar-owners, who may have demanded a cut of the profits in return for shouldering the risk.

Anti-Chinese Attitudes, Anti-Prostitution Laws, Anti-Immigration Acts

In addition to regulating poorer women who labored and leisured in the Barbary Coast, lawmakers and reformers also singled out Chinese women. In the wake of the 1856 Cora-Richardson confrontation and anxieties about women in public encountering “public” women, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors commissioned a report on the state of prostitution in the city. In addition to making broader claims about the prevalence of prostitution in the city, the committee specifically addressed Chinese prostitutes. They

⁸⁶ Her behavior did not, however, go completely unsanctioned. The city's most exclusive women did not accept Coit within their circle, possibly a comment on her public drinking or perhaps her eccentric and outspoken demeanor. Denna Paoli Gumina, “Biography of a Diary: Three Months in the Life of Lillie Hitchcock Coit” in Lillie Hitchcock Coit Papers, Francisco MSS Box 15, folder 11, SFPL History Center.

argued that many of the Chinese women in the city had been enslaved in China and then imported to California to work as prostitutes.⁸⁷ Though they did not blame the women themselves, but rather their “degraded owners,” they nevertheless characterized the women as “miserable beings” and “wretched creatures,” who often became diseased and sickly, ending up at publicly-funded hospitals and as a public burden. Once they defined Chinese women as fundamentally enslaved, child-like, and degraded, they rendered them diametrically opposed to the respectable, republican “abode for the virtuous” they desired San Francisco to be. In this way, they linked anti-prostitution efforts with anti-immigration measures.⁸⁸ In pitying but not empathizing with the women, they rendered them alien and began proposing measures to exclude them from California.

Historian Judy Yung has traced the push and pull factors that contributed to Chinese women arriving in San Francisco to work as prostitutes during the mid-nineteenth century. Chinese women, she has argued, often found themselves caught between patriarchal-Chinese and racist-American social, cultural, and economic structures. As Yung has explained, “the demand for Chinese prostitutes by both Chinese and white men intersected with an available supply of young women sold into servitude by impoverished families in China. What resulted was the organized trafficking of Chinese women, which proved immensely profitable for the tongs that came to control the trade in San Francisco.”⁸⁹ Whereas many Chinese women arrived as unfree labor,

⁸⁷ “Report of the Grand Inquest,” *Daily Alta California*, 30 November 1856.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 30.

either indentured or enslaved, many white women migrated to San Francisco as independent workers, intending to work at as prostitutes in brothels for wages.⁹⁰

These widely divergent beginnings shaped the women's lived experiences working as prostitutes. Many white women worked in smaller houses, often with four to ten women, so perhaps they had more control over their day-to-day working conditions and more opportunities to become a madam themselves. Conversely, most Chinese women worked in large-cribs, often with thirty or more women. Furthermore, while women, often themselves former prostitutes, ran most of the white brothels, men were much more likely to oversee the Chinese houses.⁹¹ Certainly, working-conditions varied from brothel to brothel, but the structural differences between white and Chinese houses likely made daily life especially difficult for Chinese women engaged in sexual commerce.⁹²

While anti-prostitution and anti-Chinese sentiments became intertwined in early discussions of prostitution in the city, anti-immigration efforts grew markedly in the mid-1860s. By the end of the decade, the railroad employed fewer workers, and Chinese laborers sought work in factories. As historians Alexander Saxton and Philip Ethington have explored, unskilled white workers felt threatened and anti-Chinese sentiment grew. White workers began forming Anti-Coolie leagues. The Democratic party, then, seeking

⁹⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁹¹ I am drawing these conclusions based on my survey of the *1870 U.S. Federal Census*, but as Yong Chen has discussed, the *Census* may be a better source for understanding white perceptions of Chinese Americans than Chinese Americans' lived experiences. Chen, for example, cites that census takers often assumed that all Chinese women were prostitutes, even listing a five-year-old girl as a prostitute. Chen offers a nuanced discussion of the ways in which the sources that scholars have relied on has profoundly shaped and limited their studies on Chinese American history. See *1870 United States Federal Census* (San Francisco, California); Chen, "In Their Own Words," 254-255.

⁹² See also Ivan Light's description of the social conditions for Chinese women working as prostitutes in "From Vice District to Tourist Attraction," 370-371.

an issue by which to rally voters and regain political power, embraced anti-Chinese sentiment and mandates.⁹³

Meanwhile, many middle-class reformers took a paternalistic stance toward Chinese women working as prostitutes. Albert Evans expressed this position, insisting, they “are intellectually only children, and are more to be pitied and less condemned than the fallen of their sex of any other race.”⁹⁴ In 1859, the Chief of Police argued that “common humanity dictates that the law should be made to minister to the protection of these miserable beings.”⁹⁵ Some took up this mantle of benevolence and sought to offer protection. Though they were not part of the anti-Chinese movement, the image they perpetrated of Chinese immigrants reinforced, for the most part, rather than challenged anti-immigration arguments. A group of Presbyterian women, for example, founded the Chinese Mission Home in San Francisco in 1874 with the goal of rescuing and reforming, or in other words Christianizing, fallen Chinese women. As Nayan Shah and Peggy Pascoe have discussed, through Chinese Mission Homes, white middle-class women sought to assert their own female moral authority by aiding Chinese women they deemed victims. Chinese women, meanwhile, leveraged the aid offered to carve their own place within and between Chinese patriarchal structures and white Victorian femininity.⁹⁶

⁹³ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, chapter 4.

⁹⁴ Evans, *A la California*, 274.

⁹⁵ “Annual Report of the Chief of Police,” *Daily Alta California*, 8 February 1859.

⁹⁶ Peggy Pascoe, “Gender Systems in Conflict: The Marriages of Mission-Educated Chinese American Women, 1874-1939,” *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1989): 631-652; Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), chap. 4; Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 34; Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 110-115. In a discussion on different sources and perspectives for understanding Chinese immigrants' and Chinese Americans' experiences, Yong Chen distinguishes among different outsider perspectives, noting that Protestant missionaries often held a deep understanding of Chinese culture but, nevertheless, frequently expressed a strong sense of “them” vs. “us.” They too, therefore, contributed to views of Chinese immigrants as foreign and alien. And, in this way, they perpetrated among white San Franciscans a sense of pity towards (rather than empathy with) Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. Chen, “In Their Own Words,” 253.

Though Chinese Mission Homes sought to remake, rather than excise, Chinatown, they nevertheless perpetuated notions of Chinese women as degraded and victims. Together working-class labor anxieties and middle-class benevolence and paternalism converged to form a stronger anti-immigration effort.

Starting in 1865, the San Francisco board of supervisors began passing legislation specifically targeting Chinese brothels.⁹⁷ Prior to this newest slate of mandates, the Courts had treated Chinese brothels much the way they did white houses of ill-fame. They focused on their potential harm to the public and seeking to minimize their public presence. With the new measures, however, both lawmakers and enforcers went after Chinese women working as prostitutes with new zeal. After the passage of the 1865 “Order to Remove Chinese Women of Ill-Fame,” for example, police officers arrested 136 women for common prostitution, whereas during the previous year they had only arrested one.⁹⁸ A few years later, under the direction of Chief of Police Patrick Crowley, the Chinatown police force increased their scrutiny and sought to shut down as many brothels as possible, arresting not only the women working as prostitutes but the men who sought their services as well.⁹⁹

More than prostitution, San Francisco's municipal officials feared and regulated interracial sexual encounters. It is for this reason that early on they sought anti-Chinese

⁹⁷ Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 32; Theodore Henry Hittell, *The General Laws of the State of California, from 1864 to 1871 Inclusive, Being a Compilation of All Acts of a General Nature, with Full References to Repealed Acts, Special and Local Legislation, and Statutory Construction of the Supreme Court, to Which are Prefixed Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, Passed by Congress During that Period, and Ratified by the Constitutional Number of States* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1871), 251.

⁹⁸ Jacqueline Baker Barnhart, *The Fair But Frail: Prostitution in San Francisco, 1849-1900* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), 49.

⁹⁹ *Chinese Immigration: The Social, Moral, and Political Effect of Chinese Immigration* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1876), 59-61.

immigration measures as a means of curtailing prostitution in the city. Immigration measures, however, could not practically be mandated or enforced at the city-level; so, the city's board of supervisors focused instead on criminalizing Chinese prostitution. The state legislature, meanwhile, took up measures to criminalize immigration. In 1870, they passed "An act to Prevent the Kidnapping and Importation of Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese Females for Criminal or Demoralizing Purposes." Then, in 1876, the California legislature conducted a hearing on the "social, moral, and political effect of Chinese immigration," in which they underscored the threat Chinese immigrants posed to white society, with the utmost danger being that of the Chinese prostitute. As one officer testified, "Most of the Chinese houses of prostitution are patronized by whites, by young men and old ones." He went on to tell of an encounter with a Chinese woman, who, when he went to arrest her, indicated she was sick. The officer assumed that it was venereal disease, but she showed him it was small-pox, yet, "she was sitting there soliciting prostitution from white people," he scorned.¹⁰⁰ Commissioners especially sought tales of young boys visiting Chinese cribs. One doctor who took the stand testified that "I have seen boys eight and ten years old with diseases they told me they contracted on Jackson street."¹⁰¹ When another doctor testified that, after visiting the cribs, the boys "go among the white girls and distribute these diseases very generously," the danger and menace seemed complete.¹⁰² The legislative committee sought to draw on and fuel anxieties about miscegenation, framing it as an endangerment to society as a whole, to bolster anti-immigration laws. This report once again underscored portrayals of Chinese women as

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 103.

¹⁰² Ibid., 107.

child-like, degraded, and diseased. This time, however, according to the committee, the women were not only likely to become a public burden but rather a public health menace as well.¹⁰³ With powerful anti-Chinese, anti-prostitution, and anti-immigration arguments circulating and intertwining, the federal government, with the 1875 Page Act, reinforced state efforts by denying entrance to the U.S. by Chinese, Japanese, and Mongolian women intending to work as prostitutes, as well as men and women seeking contract work or perviously convicted as criminals.¹⁰⁴ The Page Act became a precursor for the further-reaching Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882, which prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years.

The convergence of anti-prostitution and anti-Chinese measures is only one strand of a larger, intertwined story—one of the many ways in which white Californians racialized, targeted, and banned Chinese women, before seeking broader exclusion measures. The Page Act, and then the Chinese Exclusion Act, targeted Chinese men too, by also prohibiting entrance to those seeking contract work. In the next chapter, I'll take up the distortion of class warfare into race warfare, as white workers, facing unemployment and hardship in the midst of the 1873 depression, erupted in protest, with the Great Strike of 1877, in which workers sought to challenge the monopolistic power of the railroad companies. But, ultimately, white workers in San Francisco directed their anger and energy toward Chinese workers instead, abandoning their class critique in favor of anti-Chinese immigration measures.

¹⁰³ See also Susan Craddock, *City of Plagues* and Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides*, who have explored the intertwined discourses of race, space, medicine, and public health in relation to Chinese immigrants and Chinatown in San Francisco.

¹⁰⁴ Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 32.

Putting the Can-Can on Trial

Just over fifteen-years after Adah Menken took San Francisco by storm with her risqué ride, another performance had the city talking, this time asking both “what was she wearing?” and “how high?!” Over the course of the 1870s, the performances at the melodeons grew more bawdy and elaborate. They were no longer intended simply to distract reformers and police officers from illicit back-room gambling but had instead become the main attraction. Reformers became concerned about the tenor of the shows, especially the newest French-invasion—the can-can. In an effort to clean-up the Coast, they once again turned their attention to the women working in the dance halls and melodeons.

While reformers disapproved of the can-can in low, Coast establishments, Charles Stoddard, writer for *The Chronicle*, grew irate when the can-can arrived on the stage of the somewhat-more respectable (so likely more important space of boundary-keeping) Standard theater. During the 1850s and 1860s, many of the theaters hovered at the edge of the emerging vice district. They had, like the rest of the city, grown up in the mudflats of the Cove and continued to operate there, even as the waterfront neighborhood grew more seedy. Slowly, however, many respectable businesses began to relocate further south, giving the oldest part of the city over to vice. Concomitantly, playhouse culture began to diverge as well. Some of the theater managers, seeking to re-brand themselves as family entertainment and hoping to boast the best and most fashionable in stage design, re-located further south as well. By the late 1870s, the respectable theater culture

centered around the California Theater, as well as a few former melodeons, such as the Standard and Bush Street Theater, which sought to keep up by elevating their fare as well. This new locus of activity was about five blocks south of the the Coast and Maguire's Opera House, which had once dominated the theater scene.¹⁰⁵

In February 1879, a new troupe, the Madame Rentz Minstrels and Santley Burlesque, arrived at The Standard.¹⁰⁶ The all-female cast structured their show much like a minstrel performance, with an interlocutor and black-face circle, while adding vaudeville-favorites, made popular by Lydia Thompson in London and New York during the 1860s.¹⁰⁷ By February, the Rentz-Santley Company played to a full-house.¹⁰⁸ Hoping to keep audiences coming back, the troupe made some changes to their program a few weeks later, quite possibly at that point adding the can-can to their repertoire.¹⁰⁹ Charles Stoddard attended and, appalled by what he saw, made a complaint to the Police department. When the Chief of Police, John Kirkpatrick, inquired, the Rentz-Santley manager, Michael Leavitt, invited him to judge for himself at that evening's performance. That night, Kirkpatrick, accompanied by at least one guest, settled into a private box to enjoy the performance, while an officer watched from the floor and took notes on all he

¹⁰⁵ Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 137-138; James Madison, "San Francisco Theatrical Memories," *San Francisco News Letter*, 2 September 1925.

¹⁰⁶ "Amusements," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 21 February 1879.

¹⁰⁷ Work Projects Administration, *Minstrelsy*, ed. Lawrence Estavan, vol. 13, San Francisco Theatre Research (San Francisco: Works Projects Administration, 1939), 100; Allen, *Horrible Prettiness*, 163; Davis, *The Circus Age*, 87. Not only did the Rentz-Stanley troupe draw some of their moves from Thompson's "British Blondes," but in fact, they suffered a similar fate. In 1868, New Yorkers thronged to see the Blondes perform at the working-class Wood's Theater. When the troupe moved to the more respectable Niblo theater, reform-minded New Yorkers responded with outrage. For a more detailed discussion of the "British Blondes" and responses to their performance at Niblo's, see Allen, *Horrible Prettiness*, chap. 5.

¹⁰⁸ "Amusements."

¹⁰⁹ "The Standard," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 10 March 1879.

saw.¹¹⁰ When the two men convened the next day, Kirkpatrick insisted that the women wore tights, while the officer believed “she appeared only in *puris naturalibus*.” Unable to decide, they issued a warrant.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, thrilling at the prospect of a public debate, Leavitt instructed newspaper reporters to write up the controversy “in a sensational style.”¹¹² With the whispering and speculation running rampant—*tights? no tights?*—the Rentz-Santley dancers played once again to a packed house, this time with many of the board of supervisors present, eager to see for themselves.¹¹³

When the Santley Blondes appeared in Court the next day, they knew to dress the part; regardless of their attire the night before, they wore long, dark skirts.¹¹⁴ The defense requested a jury trial, which got underway a few weeks later.¹¹⁵ Witnesses took the stand, some contending that it was an “indelicate exhibition,” while others maintained that they “did not see anything out of the way.”¹¹⁶ Mabel Santley sought to explain the “mysteries of the can-can costume,” while Stoddard insisted that the problem was not the length of the skirt but the fact that the dancers did not keep it around their ankles.¹¹⁷ The jury, in the end, found Santley guilty of indecent exposure. Yet, rather than putting an end to burlesque in San Francisco, the “Can-can” trial expanded its popularity in the Barbary Coast dives. Now that it had graced a more respectable stage, Barbary Coast performers sought new, bawdier iterations, seeking ways to shock audiences once again.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ “Mabel Santley’s Blondes,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 March 1879; “The Can-Can Dancers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 March 1879.

¹¹¹ “Mabel Santley’s Blondes,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 March 1879.

¹¹² “A Questionable Performance on a Judicial Stage: Noteworthy Witnesses and Strange Argument,” *Daily Evening Bulletin*, March 27, 1879.

¹¹³ “Mabel Santley’s Blondes,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 March 1879.

¹¹⁴ “The Female Minstrels,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 March 1879.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ “The Can-Can Dancers.”

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 107.

Though Stoddard, in the name of moral reform, did not triumph over the can-can, he did, at least temporarily, return it to the Coast. Adolph Sutro, likewise, sought to return Coasters to their quarters. Sutro, trained as an engineer, made his money in the Comstock mines, and then, in 1879 began investing in San Francisco real estate, setting his sights on the largely undeveloped, sand-dunes at the western edges of the peninsula.¹¹⁹ Over the course of the 1870s the Cliff House remained a popular resort, and a favorite breakfasting spot for tourists and socialites. At night, however, the tenor changed and a Coaster, sporting set took over. In 1881, Sutro purchased the Cliff House and determined to remake a portion of Lands End into a Sutro Heights pleasure garden.¹²⁰ Embarking on this endeavor, he began by banning Coasters. He then created a pleasure-garden from which tourists could overlook the Pacific Ocean, the Golden Gate, and contemplate a Pacific empire.

¹¹⁹ Ethington, *The Public City*, 373-374.

¹²⁰ Rast, "Tourist Town," 151-152.

Part III.

“Queen of the Pacific”: Imperial Ambition in a Rising and Falling City

Chapter Six

Guarding the Gate

By the 1870s, the very word “California” had, for Helen Hunt Jackson, become synonymous with the utmost pleasure.¹ In her writings, she began to use California in place of “satisfaction” or “delight” even before her own westward adventure; thus, it was a California comprised of Carl Watkin's Yosemite photographs, Mark Twain's musings, and Samuel Bowles's *Atlantic* pieces. New accounts of the golden land continued to

¹ By 1870, according to Kate Phillips, Jackson used “California” in her personal letters as a synonym for pleasure. In subsequent years, the California of Helen Hunt Jackson's imagination would shape many future tourists' conception of the place, through the 1884 publication of her *Romona*, described by Pheobe Kropp as a “melodramatic romance about an Indian Cinderella,” which “painted the region's past as a sublime historical narrative—tragic, breathtaking, luxurious, and intimate.” Jackson, as Kropp has discussed, modeled her novel after Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and intended it as a critique of the ways that Anglos and Californios had treated mission Indians. Instead, it was more often read as “regional fiction,” along the lines of Mark Twain. Kropp has underscored Jackson's role in shaping notions of California's romantic Spanish past, while also placing Jackson within a larger context that included cultural producers similarly engaged in constructing a romanticized Spanish past. Phillips, *Helen Hunt Jackson: A Literary Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 164; Kropp, *California Vieja*, chapter 1; Helen Hunt Jackson, *Romona* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1884).

appear just days before her trip, with overwrought descriptions and promises, among them, Charles Nordhoff's *Harper's* article.² Nordhoff's promise that "certainly in no part of the continent is pleasure-traveling so exquisite and unalloyed a pleasure as in California" only fueled her excitement.³ Yet, the final leg of her journey, the ferry-ride from Oakland to San Francisco, fell short of her grand expectations. "It seems an odd thing to cross over America—prairies, deserts, mountains—and then, after all, be ferried to the western edge of the continent," she reflected.⁴ Jackson, furthermore, was not the only one to be underwhelmed by the final ferry-boat ride and the San Francisco port that greeted her. The cultural production of the California landscape, a land of "milk and honey," of pleasure and delight, had, in many ways, surpassed the material manifestation of the port-city, creating a sense of dissonance and disappointment for those who made the trek. The waterfront infrastructure simply could not meet the laudatory adjectives being heaped upon it.

During the city's gold-rush days, newcomers had landed at the Long Wharf, but, as the waterfront became more built up, the number of wharves expanded and each dock came to serve a distinct purpose.⁵ The Pacific Street dock became the primary landing place for passenger boats, including the Marin and Oakland ferries and the Sacramento

² "Distant journeys," as Yi-Fu Tuan has noted, "begin in the armchair where Edens and Utopians are concocted." Tuan, "Images and Mental Maps," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 65, no. 2 (January 1975), 212. In terms of specifically what Hunt read before her journey, her travel companion, Sarah Woolsey, refers obliquely to consulting Nordhoff's account before their trip in Susan Coolidge [Sarah Chauncey Woolsey], "A Few Hints on the California Journey," *Scribner's Monthly*, May 1873.

³ Charles Nordhoff, "California," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, May 1872, 866.

⁴ Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, 40.

⁵ According to a report on the port, as of 1869, 24 wharves jutted into the bay. "Harbor Commissioners' Report," *Daily Alta California*, 5 January 1869.

river-steamers.⁶ The scene at the Pacific wharf was noisy and chaotic; the clank of cargo crates being loaded and unloaded at the nearby piers filled the air. Additionally, as one 1850s visitor described it, “a crowd of hotel runners, wharf-rats and loungers” swarmed the dock, crowding the passengers as they tumbled “pell-mell down the crowded gangway.” He then continued: “almost suffocated by the yelling, surging crowd, I am glad to get away, leaving the greenhorns to the tender mercies of the sharpers and runners.”⁷ Arriving over ten years later, politician and traveler Harvey Rice also told of an “army of noisy and uproarious hackmen,” jockeying with one another for the best position from which to secure customers, or rather “victims” as Rice saw it.⁸ With so many drivers and hotel runners competing for new arrivals' attention, most pleasure-travelers barely stepped off the dock before being swept off to their destination by a driver. Those who continued along the Pacific wharf, however, and into the city, quickly found themselves in the midst of the city's worn-down, vice-ridden Barbary Coast.⁹ Thus, for newcomers, the Pacific Street wharf offered a bleak first impression of the city, while for Coasters it offered an endless supply of greenhorns.

With the completion of the Pacific Railroad route, municipal officials regarded the city as newly on display, and, as a result, they continued their obsession with the Barbary Coast. They sought to contain prostitution and gambling to the Coast blocks, and then,

⁶ Oakland traffic left from the dock between Pacific and Broadway, referred to by some as the Pacific Street dock and by others as the Broadway dock. “City and County of San Francisco” (San Francisco: Henry G. Langley, 1861), David Rumsey Historical Maps Collection; “Bancroft’s Official Guide Map of City and County of San Francisco” (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1873), David Rumsey Historical Map Collection; “The City Front. the Change of the Landing Place of the Ferries,” *San Francisco Bulletin* 13 September 1875; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 32.

⁷ Kenderdine, *A California Tramp and Later Footprints*, 269.

⁸ Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 62.

⁹ Asbury, *The Barbary Coast*, 101.

within the Coast, to curb the most violent crimes. Though most owners of “respectable” businesses had relocated further south, to the burgeoning scene along Market Street, the waterfront infrastructure, including the designated passenger dock, continued to reflect the city's early days. Accordingly, it still directed visitors to what had once been the center of the city. With the Coast proving intractable, the city needed a new entrance—a more fitting gateway for its new-found, or at least much-longed for, prominence.

While city boosters and politicians trumpeted their gateway location, championing their position at the intersection of water-ways and rail-lines, the meeting of land and water transit networks was neither easy nor natural. They nevertheless described it as a harmonious and inevitable link, proclaiming San Francisco the site “where the railroads of a continent and the fleets of two oceans clasp hands and complete the circuit of the globe.”¹⁰ This chapter returns to the wharves and land-fill projects of Chapter 1 to trace how San Franciscans sought to construct their city as a likely meeting-place and eventually as a commercial center. It denaturalizes San Franciscans’ rendering of their city as an inevitable port, showing instead the great lengths and uneasy alliances by which public and private entities struggled to make the city an economic hub.

During the city’s early years, a financially-crippled town council had turned to private entrepreneurs and shareholders to build-up the docks. Yet, the task of overseeing a working waterfront quickly proved too large for any single enterprise. This chapter, then, also takes up the state’s political economy, tracing the relationships forged between public and private entities, each of whom sought to control the much-desired waterfront

¹⁰ Higgins, *To California and back*, 116.

property. It considers the joint stock companies, who built the first docks, and the formation of a state-appointed harbor commission, tasked with overseeing the port. It also considers the growing role played by railroad officials, such as Central Pacific's Big Four, tracing their ascent of Sacramento's Capitol Hill and San Francisco's Nob Hill.

As a part of declaring San Francisco a natural commercial hub, a place where railways and waterways met, boosters began to celebrate the state as a natural, bountiful agricultural landscape as well. In much the same way that San Franciscans remade Yerba Buena's mudflat into a navigable harbor and port, this too required a concerted effort to remake the landscape. It entailed turning ranching land into horticultural plots, and then crops into commodities. In conjunction with judges', bankers', and laborers' efforts to remake the arid countryside into a cornucopia, overflowing with produce, commercial boosters promoted an agricultural economy as a way of refashioning the state's social landscape too. Since the 1850s, when "temples of chance" had dominated the city's social geography, many commercial boosters had begun to champion the family farmer as the ideal immigrant. He would be an antidote to the selfish, lawless, reckless miner, they promised. Anglo farmers, they insisted, would not only cultivate and enrich the soil but they would do the same for the social fabric too. Through their hard work and community ties, farmers would ultimately free the state from the boom-bust cycles of mining, or at least so boosters' hoped.

This chapter moves among the registers of the Golden Gate, from a wide-scale view of San Francisco as the place where global transit lines "clasped hands," to an on-the-ground look at the manifestation of these intersecting networks. It traces the

development of a produce market, as a site where grand boasts about San Francisco as a port and bread basket converged and took shape through individual interactions. It considers the Italian tenant farmers and Chinese vegetable peddlers, who, on an intimate scale, comprised the so-called “circuit of the globe.”¹¹ In discussions of the city’s place in the market economy and decisions about creating new city marketplaces, ideas about the Golden Gate remained at the center. As San Franciscans fought over the making of the Golden Gate, the contours of the waterfront and the countryside, the fight ultimately became one of who would and would not be included in its promises—whom the gateway would be open to and barred against.

Control of the Harbor

Though, in 1851, representatives at the state level formally relinquished their claim to the San Francisco waterfront, officially giving up properties that had already (some claimed legally, others illegally) been sold to private investors, questions over who would control the waterfront remained central, contested, and ongoing. As harbor engineer Thomas J. Arnold reflected in 1875, “the western coast of the American continent is remarkably deficient in harbors; and the interest of San Francisco, of the State, and indeed of the entire commercial world, demand that this one should be carefully guarded against injurious encroachments from all sources.”¹² With so many vested interests, decisions about who would control the waterfront were never resolved with any finality.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² T. J. Arnold, “The Future of San Francisco Harbor,” *The Overland Monthly*, November 1875, 407.

As part of the 1851 decision, the state designated a legal waterfront line, finally clarifying, amidst speculators' struggles for bay-front properties as the shoreline shifted, the end point for the land-fill project. Many referred to it as the Red Line because of the bright, hard, red pen cartographer William Eddy had used when marking it on a map. While land speculators held some bay-front, or even underwater, properties, when the state handed down the Red Line, the city still owned a significant portion of the legal waterfront. Over the next few years, however, with a near-bankrupt municipal budget, the town council members relied on the water-lots as a source of revenue. The city turned its waterfront holdings over to privately-held joint stock companies for a set number of years. Unable to fund harbor infrastructure projects or even meet their debt obligations, city leaders exchanged the possibility of future revenues from dockage fees for immediate pay-outs. In return, the joint stock companies built wharves and reaped the resulting profits. Together, individual private ventures constructed a port of finger wharves that extended from nearly every street that adjoined the Bay.

Even as the port became more built-up, the landfill shoreline remained inconsistent, fragile, and unstable. From the start, the landfill project had been haphazard, and crews had used whatever materials available, ranging from the charred refuse from the city's many early fires to rocks quarried from the nearby hills. Constant dredging was needed to maintain the line between land and water, to preserve a dry shore and the deep harbor.¹³ Some began to talk of the need for a retaining wall to protect the shoreline. Without, however, a single entity charged with overseeing the harbor, each corporation continued,

¹³ San Francisco was not the only port to face problems of silt and ships running aground. See also Seth Rockman's discussion of dredging projects in Baltimore and efforts to maintain the harbor in *Scraping By*.

unsuccessfully, to pursue individual, make-shift solutions. Furthermore, with no presiding body, some investors built unauthorized or poorly constructed wharves, which only further cluttered the bay. Additionally, under the strain of heavy-usage and the erosive saltwater, many of the wharves and pilings showed signs of rot and wear. Just a few years earlier, Yerba Buena Cove had been unnavigable, lacking the necessary deep-water docks; now, with wharves clogging the cove, many ocean-faring ships continued to struggle to find an adequate place to dock.¹⁴

By the mid-1850s, some, especially city merchants and inland farmers, began to think that the infrastructure of the the golden-gate port was too important to the economic health the state as a whole to leave to San Francisco land speculators and private investors. They began to talk of organizing a body to oversee the waterfront, though its shape and composition remained hotly debated. Three of the city's prominent land speculators, meanwhile, hoped to preserve their corporate control of the waterfront. They proposed a bill that granted a single, private corporation the title to the entire waterfront. The corporation, they promised, would take responsibility for maintaining the piers, including constructing a seawall, or bulkhead, to protect the made-land from eroding. In return, the single corporate entity would enjoy a monopoly and collect all of the wharfage and cargo fees. Additionally, the corporation would only pay a percentage of their gross earnings instead of municipal taxes, which they projected to be a considerable savings. Commission merchants, who functioned as the middlemen in the importing and exporting business, feared monopoly-control of wharfage rates. They vehemently opposed the

¹⁴ Voget, "The Waterfront of San Francisco," 10–12; Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 109–111; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 48.

speculators' plan. The dock stock-holders, meanwhile, took their bill and the debate to the state legislature. Year after year, they submitted plans in Sacramento, and each time, the bill failed.

After several years of organizing, battling, and politicking, settling who would control the port remained unresolved, fraught, and evermore urgent. Many of the arrangements between the city and joint stock companies had been ten-year charters, a large portion of which had been brokered in 1853 to assuage a municipal budgetary crisis. Accordingly, they were set to expire in 1863. With the deadline nearing, many joint stock companies anticipated losing control of their docks, so delayed making costly and much-needed repairs. The wooden wharves were rotting away. Efforts to dredge had also been abandoned. An 1859 federal geological survey highlighted the dire nature of the situation, reporting, for example, that a section that had, in 1853, been fifteen feet deep was, six years later, only three feet deep.¹⁵ The harbor was falling into an even greater state of disrepair.

In January 1860, the speculators finally secured a victory in both houses for their Bulkhead Bill, and it looked as though they had achieved long-term corporate control of the waterfront. Governor James G. Downey, however, would not acquiesce. Sacramento and San Joaquin delta farmers and San Francisco merchants and shippers continued to oppose the corporate take-over. Governor Downey, in response, vetoed the Bulkhead Bill. Interior farmers and shippers advocated for a state body, rather than a municipal one, to

¹⁵ United States Coast Survey. *City of San Francisco and Its Vicinity, California*. Chart Map. (Washington: U.S. Coast Survey, 1859) David Rumsey Historical Map Collection; United States Coast Survey. *Entrance to San Francisco Bay California*. Chart Map. (Washington: U.S. Coast Survey, 1859) David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

control the region's most important harbor.¹⁶ City merchants wanted to be free of the corporate dock-owners and the high wharfage rates they charged. Though securing the entire waterfront no longer seemed possible, corporate dock-owners still hoped to retain control of individual wharves. As each group dug-in, the question of who would control the waterfront reached an impasse.¹⁷

Only the immediacy of the expiring leases, as historian Gerald Nash has noted, finally propelled the groups to reach a compromise.¹⁸ The resulting bill, signed into law in 1863 by the succeeding governor, Leland Stanford, placed the waterfront under the purview of a three-person commission, with one committee member appointed by California voters, one by the state legislature, and one by San Francisco voters.¹⁹ The resulting body, the Board of State Harbor Commission (BSHC), would take possession of the entire waterfront, including, as the leases expired, the privately held water-lots and wharves.²⁰ The law dictated that the BSHC would determine and collect the wharfage and dockage fees and oversee the leasing of public land. With the revenue they generated, the bill charged the commissioners with maintaining the current harbor infrastructure, adding to and improving upon it as needed, and dredging the bay to preserve a deep-water

¹⁶ Nearly one-hundred years later, city and state governments again battled for control over the waterfront. In the 1960s, as the San Francisco Port lost business to Oakland, many in San Francisco feared that the state-appointed harbor commission did not have the city's interests at heart. As historian Peter Hendee Brown has argued, "San Francisco felt that the commission, which was comprised of five gubernatorial appointees, was out of touch with the needs of the city and the port and ineffective at securing the state funding for the harbor improvements needed to ensure San Francisco's future competitiveness, so they began to advocate for local control of the port." Through a 1968 act, the city regained control of the port. See *America's Waterfront Revival*, 40.

¹⁷ This history is drawn from Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 111–112; Voget, "The Waterfront of San Francisco," 12–14; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 20–21.

¹⁸ Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 113.

¹⁹ The composition of the BSHC and the method for appointing commissioners changed over time, as Voget has discussed. After 1873, the Governor appointed all the commissioners and San Francisco voters no longer participated in electing one of the members. See "The Waterfront of San Francisco," 190–191.

²⁰ The shoreline in question, as Dow has explained, ran from the Presidio to Second Street, with the BSHC taking control of this entire stretch of waterfront, in "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 22.

harbor. Additionally, and perhaps above all, the law directed the BSHC to build a seawall to protect the wharves and shoreline. After a protracted debate, this signaled a significant shift; no longer a patchwork collection of private entities, a single public board would now take control of and oversee the San Francisco waterfront.²¹

A Land of Milk and Honey

Over the course of the 1850s, inland farmers had entered the state-wide debate over the San Francisco waterfront as a new constituency. Writers and boosters, such as Josiah LeCount, Charles Strong, and Eliza Farnham, had, since the 1850s, championed the steady, respectable, yeoman farmer as the key to the state's future prosperity. Elite bankers, real estate agents, merchants, industrial farmers, and manufacturers formed groups, such as the California Immigrant Union in 1869, to reach and persuade east-coast and midwestern Anglo Americans to take up farming and settle in the state.²² As long as mining remained the California's main industry, "the hap-hazard life of the miner" would

²¹ When the BSHC took over the shoreline in 1863, San Francisco's was the the only state-owned and operated harbor in the country, as noted by Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 114–118; Voget, "The Waterfront of San Francisco," 15; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change," 21–22. Other cities were also grappling with the issue of public versus private control of the waterfront. Ari Eisenberg has discussed the debate in New York City, in "Life on the Margins: The Contested Space of Greenwich Village's Hudson River Waterfront, 1890-2001," (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2008), 17. For many San Franciscans, the public ownership of the San Francisco docks became a point of pride. Luther Wagoner and Col. W. H. Heuer, *San Francisco Harbor: Its Commerce and Docks with a Complete Plan for Development* (San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1908), 13.

²² Or, as Casper Thomas Hopkins framed it, a "combined effort for peopling the state of California by immigration from Atlantic States and Europe" was an "absolute necessity." See *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question: Showing Why the 'California Immigrant Union' was Founded, and What it Expects to do* (San Francisco: Turnbull & Smith, 1869), 3. Richard Orsi notes that Southern Pacific played an important role in supporting boosterism organizations, such as the California Immigrant Union. Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 143-144.

shape the social and economic make-up of the state, the Immigrant Union decried.²³ Even Bret Harte, who celebrated life in the diggings and had helped create the archetypal miner, discouraged *Overland Monthly* writers from using the “appellation ‘honest miner’” during his time as the editor. “The less said about the motives of some of our pioneers the better; very many were more concerned in getting away from where they were, than in going to any particular place,” he concluded.²⁴ Harte’s own stories about the miners ultimately contributed to salvaging and remaking the image of the “honest miner,” but, in the meantime, the Immigrant Union placed their hopes for the state’s future in the hands of the “honest farmer” instead.

Boosters, such as those in the California Immigrant Union, cast the farmer as an Anglo American immigrant with a Puritan work-ethic and family responsibilities. They championed this construction as the antidote to all of the state’s problems. Unlike the specter of the wayward, individualistic miner, criticized for despoiling California of its riches, only to gamble them away or carry them back east (or the even more reviled Chinese miner who dreamed of returning to the Pearl River delta a rich man), the Anglo farmer, as they rendered him, would literally and figuratively cultivate roots in California. Bring your family, one promoter encouraged, highlighting the ease with which a farmer’s wife would be able to grow flowers around the house and, in the process, create a “settled and contented feeling.”²⁵ These immigrant campaigns and pleas came amidst

²³ Hopkins, *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question*, 4. Titus Cronise offered a harsher assessment, insisting that those first drawn to California too often displayed “habits of lavish expenditure, lack of repose in social manners, recklessness in business, undue haste to be rich, want of restraint over the young, too great indifference to the solid essentials of character in public and private, a hard materialism.” Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California*, x.

²⁴ Bret Harte, as quoted by the Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 57.

²⁵ Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California*, 386.

overwhelming evidence that most migrants considered their time in California finite; during the city's first two decades, only one in four immigrants stayed longer than eight years.²⁶ Immigration advocates, then, sought not only to foster a rootedness to the land and community, but they also regarded farming as a steady, sound endeavor. Born out of respectable and diligent work, that argued that it would result in a reliable income. It too, they promised, would free the state's economy from the boom and bust cycle of mines (the boom and bust of an agricultural economy went, not surprisingly, unacknowledged). Californian's economic elite remained determined to domesticate the Wild West, insisting that agriculture held a "great promise of a bright future for the State and its commercial metropolis."²⁷

To attract farmers, boosters told of the rich soil and mild climate. They sought to render California a natural agricultural landscape, ready and ripe for the taking. "Fruits of every kind thrive," the *Overland Monthly* promised.²⁸ Pictures, articles, and fact-laden charts enumerated the oranges, lemons, olives, almonds, nectarines, walnuts, pomegranates, cherries, apricots, peaches, apples, hops, chicory, grapes that grew, naturally and easily, in the state.

Alongside this discursive construction of bountiful agricultural landscape, judges, bankers, and farmers were also engaged in the herculean effort of making California into

²⁶ Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 5.

²⁷ J.S. Silver, "Farming Facts for California Immigrants," *Overland Monthly*, August, 1868, 182. For other booster accounts intended to attract settlers, and especially farmers, see Casper Thomas Hopkins, *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question: Showing Why the 'California Immigrant Union' was Founded, and What it Expects to do*, San Francisco: Turnbull & Smith, 1869 and Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California; All About California and Inducements to Settle There*, 6th ed. (San Francisco: California Immigrant Union, 1873). See also historian Mark Fiege's discussion of farmers and Johnny Appleseed, as an oft-overlooked but nevertheless important archetype in American frontier stories, in *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), chapter 6.

²⁸ Silver, "Farming Facts for California Immigrants," 180.

farmland. During the days of Spanish and Mexican rule, cattle ranches had covered the interior of the state. In the years after the U.S.-Mexico War, Anglo immigrants sought to wrest the land from its Californio owners. As judges worked to uphold Anglo settlers' property claims, bankers took part too. Farmers relied on creditors for the money to purchase supplies, seeds, equipment.²⁹ Promotional writer Titus Cronise, meanwhile, eagerly anticipated the day when the Anglo take-over would be complete and "the word 'ranch,' like the idea and system it represents, has only a historical meaning, and when small farms, well tilled, dot the lovely plains now abandoned to herds of cattle."³⁰

Farmers and labors, alongside the efforts of judges and bankers, also played an important role in turning cattle-grazing land into horticultural land. Chinese immigrants, as historian Sucheng Chan has discussed, played a major part in remaking the interior of the state into farmland. During the gold rush, many Chinese immigrants took up truck gardening, often converting plots of land secured as mining claims into a garden. They sold their produce to the miners. As truck gardeners, they could avoid the Foreign Miner's tax as well as draw on the knowledge they had acquired during years spent as farmers in China's Pearl River delta. Many Italian immigrants also turned from mining to truck farming. They too had come from farming regions. Early on, some Italian truck farmers established small communities at the edge of the burgeoning city.³¹

²⁹ Richard White explains the flow of credit in the context of the mid-19th century agricultural economy, in *Railroaded*, 80. See also Cronon's discussion of Chicago's importance as a financial center, in that its banks financed smaller, hinter-land communities, in *Nature's Metropolis*, 269-279.

³⁰ Titus Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California: Comprising Early History; Geography* (San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft & Company, 1868), xi.

³¹ Deanna Paoli Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978), 33; Richard Brandi, "Farms, Fire and Forest: Adolph Sutro and Development 'West of Twin Peaks'," *The Argonaut* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003), foundsf.org.

During the 1860s, when some Anglo settlers in the interior of the state began pursuing agriculture, they relied on Chinese laborers' expertise in levee building and land reclamation, gained along the Pearl River, to transform the Sacramento and San Joaquin River deltas into useable farmland. They provided not only knowledge but also labor. During the 1860s and 70s, some Chinese immigrants worked as small, tenant farmers or sharecroppers. As tenant farmers, they remade the landscape one small plot at a time—a plot that at the end of a ten-year lease cycle they turned back over to its owner. Others worked as hired-hands for an emerging agribusiness industry. They typically joined Irish and German immigrants, as well as Native Americans in the fields. More than any other groups, large-scale farmers sought out Chinese workers. They quickly embraced Chinese farmhands as seasonal workers, a migrant labor force that they could hire and fire at will. “The Chinese are in many ways useful and perhaps essential factors in the development of California,” Charles Keeler concluded. “In the fruit picking and packing industry,” he explained, “they are more reliable, more mobile and in every way more dependable than white labor.”³² “Mobile” and “dependable,” according to Keeler, or perhaps more accurately, expendable, in the minds of industrial farmers, Chinese immigrant farmers

³² Charles Augustus Keeler, *San Francisco and Thereabout* (San Francisco: California Promotion Committee, 1902), 68. During a summer spent in the Sacramento Valley, Mary Cone, likewise, observed the important role played by Chinese immigrants who served as a seasonal labor supply in *Two years in California* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1876) 140.

played a central role in transforming California into an agricultural landscape.³³ Yet, the subsequent celebrations of California as a natural “land of flowers as well as a land of fruits,” eclipsed the role of the Chinese farmer, clinging instead to portrayals of Chinese immigrants as expendable laborers and perpetual outsiders.³⁴

Where Rail-lines and Water-ways Meet

For all the supposed inevitability of the Golden Gate, the infrastructure that supported San Francisco's self-proclaimed position as the West Coast entrepôt required constant maintenance and improvement. As the members of the newly-formed Harbor Commission got to work to ensure that San Francisco did not rot away and return to a swampy mudflat, the Central Pacific Railroad Company was, in 1863, just a few months into laying the tracks of the transcontinental railroad. The CPRR, along with Pacific Mail Steamship Co., comprised, what Mark Twain declared, “the grand highway of the nations.”³⁵ Though writers, like Mark Twain, waxed about their easy meeting and celebrated their convergence in San Francisco, the two corporations were, in fact, in

³³ Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil*, chapter 4 and 8. See also Douglas Sackman's discussion of Chinese immigrants' work as tenant farmers and farmhands, especially his discussion of the Chinese immigrants' agrarian dreams and limited, though nevertheless important, attainment of those aspirations. Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 126-135. Hispanic miners also, as John Kuo Wei Tchen has also discussed, took up truck gardening, in response to legal measures (such as the Foreign Miner's Tax) and violent explosions by white miners. Tchen, “Introduction,” *Gentle's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984), 6. While Sucheng Chan and John Tchen have underscored the important role played by Chinese immigrants in the development of California's agriculture economy, Patricia Limerick cautions against measuring a group by their economic contribution to the U.S. economy. She instead seeks to consider Asian immigrants within the larger story of conquest, arguing that scholars should ask: “what place did Asian immigrants occupy in the broadest picture of the conquest of both nature and natives in North America?” in *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 196-199.

³⁴ Joseph Carey, *By the Golden Gate, Or, San Francisco, the Queen City of the Pacific Coast: With Scenes and Incidents Characteristic of its Life* (Albany: The Albany Diocesan Press, 1902), 117.

³⁵ *San Francisco Alta California*, 15 December 1866.

direct competition with one another. Fierce rivals, they competed for freight and passenger business as well as political favors in Sacramento.

Recognizing the eminent threat of the railroad, the corporate giants who had dominated the California landscape during the 1850s and 60s, the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. and Wells Fargo and Co., came together, with one over-seeing water traffic and the other land. Together, they hoped to stymie the recently-formed Central Pacific. One of CP's Big Four, Collis Huntington, traveled east to pursue the company's interests in Washington, while Leland Stanford ran for governor of California to gain a stronghold in Sacramento. Huntington, then, worked to secure federal funding in the form of the the 1862 Pacific Railroad Act, while Stanford, as head of the Republican party in California, sought state subsidies.³⁶ Through these ongoing efforts, at the state and federal level, CP executives continued to improve their loan rates and secure promises of bigger government payouts upon completion. In the face of greater subsidies and CP's ever-increasing political and economic power, smaller rail lines collapsed, only to be folded into the growing giant.³⁷ CP's purchases included California & Oregon Railroad, which provided access to the Northwest, and Southern Pacific Railroad, and with it, the promise of a route to southern California. Even more coveted, though, with the acquisition of SP, CP gained the federal franchise, which had been granted to SP, to build the western portion of a southern transcontinental route. Before the Pacific Route was even complete, the Big Four had their eyes on a southern route.

³⁶ As historians William Issel and Robert Cherny have underscored, California's commercial elite "understood that the economy was political and they realized that success for their far-reaching business concerns required a firm grasp of politics." Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, 123.

³⁷ As Richard Orsi has explained, rather than collapsing their acquisitions into CP, the Big Four instead "owned them in partnership and controlled them by varied, complicated leases to the Central Pacific Railroad," through "unwieldy" stockholding arrangements, *Sunset Limited*, 24.

Then, in 1869, the same year they completed the transcontinental route, they conquered one of the state's former giants, Wells Fargo. In return for a controlling share of the business, the Big Four made Wells Fargo the overland distributor for CP. More importantly, this deal made Wells Fargo a CP subsidiary; Stanford placed himself among the directors.³⁸ Having already expanded overland to the north, south, and east, CP officials sought next to acquire oceanic routes. In 1871, the railroad conglomerate strong-armed the Pacific Mail Steamship Company into negotiations. Then, three years later, they circumvented Pacific Mail altogether, forming instead their own trans-Pacific steamship company. Seemingly tone-deaf to the emerging anti-railroad sentiment, which had begun even before the completion of the transcontinental railroad and was, by the early 1870s, coalescing into a forceful opposition movement, CP officials selected a bombastic name for their new enterprise. They declared their new steamship company the Occident and Orient.³⁹ Stanford again took the helm, serving as the company's president.⁴⁰ The vision of the Golden Gate, as a majestic meeting-ground, where rail-lines and water-ways naturally and easily converged, came instead at a significant cost, resembling instead more and more the head from which an octopus-like CP extended its expansive reach.

As rail and steam companies fought for corporate control over the transit networks, the BSHC took over the infrastructure of the waterfront. For their first four years of

³⁸ My summary of the power struggle among CP, Wells Fargo, and Pacific Mail Steamship Company is drawn from: Noel M Loomis, *Wells Fargo* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1968), 210-212; Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932*, 120-123; Deverell, *Railroad Crossing*, 27-28; Iglar, "The Industrial Far West," 174; Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 9-14, 17-21; Robert J Chandler, *Wells Fargo* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2006), 17.

³⁹ Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 18-19; Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 148; Deverell, *Railroad Crossing*, 40-42.

⁴⁰ Frederick H. Hackett, ed., *The Industries of San Francisco: Her Rank, Resources, Advantages, Trade* (San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Co, 1884), 22.

existence, litigation and lingering charters stymied the Commissioners' progress. Despite their slow start, they did turn to the problems that had prompted their inception, beginning with a design contest for plans for a seawall. In 1866, they awarded a cash prize and construction contract to engineer A.H. Houston for his plan. He proposed a multi-part bulkhead, intended to fortify the most fragile portions of the shoreline. Houston's plan called for a rock-filled trench to serve as the foundation for the seawall. Most of the rock came from the nearby Telegraph Hill. Contractors repeatedly returned to the hillside until they had gouged large sections from its flanks, resulting in unsafe grades, public outcry over the destruction of a landmark, and finally a court-mandated order to cease. Though Telegraph Hill stood ravaged, without a retaining seawall to hold the made-land in place, the reclamation project remained unstable and haphazard. In order to maximize the eventual reclaimed land, Houston's seawall ran along the Red Line, well beyond the extant shoreline, creating a muddy, partially filled strip between the bay and the city front.⁴¹ By 1869, construction crews had completed four sections of the seawall and, many hoped, made important strides toward stabilizing the waterfront.⁴²

Then, the transcontinental railroad arrived, and the tonnage of goods entering the San Francisco harbor, and therefore the wharfage the BSHC collected for infrastructure improvements, dropped immediately and drastically.⁴³ The new seawall, furthermore, had

⁴¹ One major problem of the piecemeal nature of the land-fill projects was that it resulted in different fill levels. In 1853, the city had designated an intended land-fill level. Prior to their ruling, individual land-fill projects had moved at different paces, creating major drainage problems. In some areas, the water no longer ran to the bay, but instead pooled inland, where it destabilized foundations and made roads unnavigable. Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 46-48.

⁴² Edward Morphy, *The Port of San Francisco* (Sacramento: Board of State Harbor Commissioners; California State Printing Office, 1923), 27-28; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 50-55; Corbett, *Port City*, 80-82; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 264.

⁴³ Edward Morphy's estimate of the tonnage before and after the railroad suggests an over a forty percent drop. See *The Port of San Francisco*, 29 and BSHC, *Report for the Two Fiscal Years Ending July 1, 1871*, 7.

yet to reduce BSHC's maintenance costs. The patch-work sections and angular lines of the seawall quickly proved problematic. Its uneven, hard lines exacerbated the problem of silt deposits, creating new current patterns and pockets where debris collected. To combat the silt, the BSHC still needed to dredge the bay constantly—an expensive endeavor, which the seawall was supposed to obviate. Dredging proved particularly costly for the city because of the kickbacks embedded in the municipal contracts. In the face of both design failures and financial strain, the BSHC stopped, at least temporarily, work on the seawall. The wharves, meanwhile, continued to deteriorate with astonishing rapidity. They were, as the BSHC would later discover, infested by a wood-eating marine worm.⁴⁴ Ten years into their tenure, the BSHC had made little headway addressing the major problems that had prompted their inception and long plagued the port.⁴⁵

As, during the early 1870s, infrastructure problems mounted and the money for harbor projects dwindled, the BSHC redoubled their efforts to assert their control over the waterfront. They began by limiting the types of leases they would issue to private entities, granting fewer leases for shorter lengths of time in an effort to hang onto as many of the

⁴⁴ Especially troublesome in San Francisco, as Michael Corbett has explained, was a particular type of marine worm, which ate through the wood. A pier that might be expected to last 25 years in another port, sometimes only lasted two or three years in San Francisco's waters. The worms proved a considerable challenge for the BSHC; accordingly, in early twentieth century, they turned to concrete building materials. Michael Corbett, "Fundamental San Francisco: The Creation of the Port and the Development of the City," *Voices & Views: Contemporary Historians at the Presidio*, Presidio Trust, San Francisco, California, 17 November 2011. A survey of the problems caused by the "pile worm" and possible solutions attributed the worms' arrival to the influx of ships during the gold rush. E. M. Blake, C. E. Grunsky, Charles A. Kofoid, and G. M. Hunt and C. L. Hill, *Report on the San Francisco Bay Marine Piling Survey* (San Francisco: The Committee, 1921), 9.

⁴⁵ Morphy, *The Port of San Francisco*, 28-30; Dow, "Bay Fill in San Francisco," 52-57; Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 214

wharfage fees as possible.⁴⁶ Next, they sought a new, large-scale plan. In 1870, they appointed Thomas J. Arnold as the “Engineer of the Sea Wall” to address the shortcomings of the Houston plan. After three years of careful consideration, Arnold submitted a comprehensive proposal. Above all, he proposed a new, sweeping waterfront and corresponding seawall. This would, he argued, reduce the tidal friction that caused the silt accumulations. In order to smooth out the waterfront line, the BSHC would need to attain, from the state, control over land that lay beyond the current boundary line. Though legislators had proposed leasing the state-controlled land, or in other words following the city’s lead in using the harbor-front as a source of revenue, they had never been able to come to an agreement. Accordingly, in securing land beyond the Red Line, Arnold and the BSHC gained access to unfettered land and greater control over the future shape of the city front. Arnold proposed widening East Street (later renamed the Embarcadero) to a uniform 200-feet, with space designated for rail lines. He also made provisions for improved drainage and sewage systems.

Arnold sought to ensure that the San Francisco port would be the all-important meeting place for oceanic ships and overland railcars. Yet, the state legislature was slow to approve Arnold’s plan. He appealed directly to the public in the pages of the *Overland Monthly*, insisting that no less than “the commercial interests of the world” rested on San Francisco’s “maintenance of [a] good tidal harbor.”⁴⁷ In 1877, the state legislature finally agreed. They accepted Arnold’s proposed bulkhead line as the new legal waterfront and

⁴⁶ Edward Morphy, *The Port of San Francisco*, 28. The state government also stepped in, as Nash has discussed, pursuing new measures to stop corruption in municipal contracts. Nash has enumerated the many Commissioners who were directly involved in siphoning port profits. The state legislature responded by passing new mandates, forbidding commissioners from holding shares in companies that profited from the business at the port. Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 215-220.

⁴⁷ T. J. Arnold, “The Future of San Francisco Harbor,” *The Overland Monthly*, November 1875, 402.

designated a pier line six hundred feet beyond as the outermost boundary for wharves.⁴⁸

Arnold proposed a retaining seawall to serve as an anchor for a bulkhead wharf, which could support both the Embarcadero roadway and shipping piers. Construction of the new seawall began in the fall of 1878 and ended in October 1910, when crews finished the last section of the seawall and completed the enclosure of Yerba Buena Cove.⁴⁹



Figure 15. “Bancroft’s Official Guide Map of City and County of San Francisco,” 1873. This map depicts the angular lines of waterfront, which greatly contributed to the challenges of maintaining the port. *Courtesy of the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.*

⁴⁸ F. P. Deering, *The Codes and Statutes of California, as Amended and in Force at the Close of the Twenty-sixth Session of the Legislature, 1885*, vol. 1, 4 vols. (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney Co., 1886), 399.

⁴⁹ The BSHC and construction crews did not complete the entirety of the seawall until 1924, when they finished the final section near China Basin. For a discussion of the seawall, both its design and construction, see William H. Morton, “Harbor Master’s Report,” *San Francisco Municipal Report, 1873-874* (San Francisco, 1874), 327; Thomas J. Arnold and Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor, “Map Exhibiting the Salt Marsh, Tide and Submerged Lands Disposed of by the State of California in and Adjacent to the Bays of San Francisco and San Pablo and now Subject to Reclamation” (San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1874), David Rumsey Historical Map Collection; Federal Writers’ Project, *San Francisco*, 33, 40; Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 214-215; Dow, “Bay Fill in San Francisco,” 56-59; and Corbett, *Port City*, 78-88, 139-141.

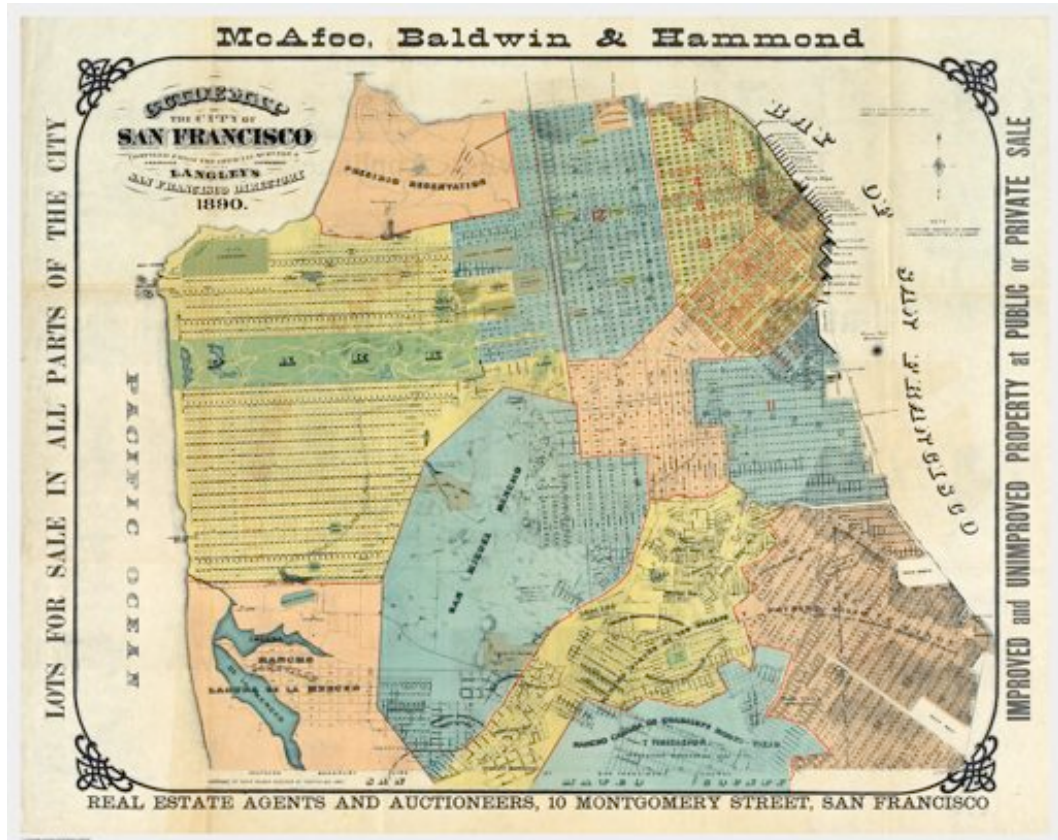


Figure 16. Henry G. Langley, “Guide Map Of The City Of San Francisco,” 1890. Langley’s map highlights the smooth shoreline, created by the seawall. *Courtesy of the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.*

Going to Market: Where California’s Agricultural and Commercial Ambitions Meet

Amidst boosters' bold claims about California's agricultural riches and its commercial possibilities, the city’s infrastructure and supply lines did not adequately connect growers and buyers. Small-scale farmers, in particular, experienced the hardships caused by the lack infrastructure. Many Italian immigrants, for example, worked as truck farmers. They tended small plots of land in the city and its outskirts, selling the produce

they grew.⁵⁰ In pursuit of individual-buyers, as well as grocers, restaurant owners, and produce exporters, small farmers carted their goods to waterfront—to the nexus of the city’s regional and international transportation networks. Early on, some Italian immigrants, often from the port city of Genoa, stepped in as commission merchants. They took over finding buyers for truck farmers’ goods, brokering the relationship between California producers and long-distance buyers or local retailers, selling the goods on consignment.⁵¹ It was a haphazard system though, and at the end of their the long journey, with produce quickly ripening, farmers could not always find buyers for their goods.

To facilitate trade and serve the needs of the many Italian-American farmers who gathered to sell their produce along the water's edge, two associations formed during the early 1870s: the United Vegetable Dealers and the San Francisco Gardeners and Ranchers Association. Together these two groups established a permanent, wholesale market, which would ensure that farmers had a place to sell their goods while also solidifying commission merchants’ place in the supply networks. The United Vegetable Dealers and San Francisco Gardeners selected the block between Pacific and Clark and Davis and

⁵⁰ As Sucheng Chan has discussed, immigrants from non-English speaking countries often pursued small-scale farming and produce peddling because they could get along with limited English-language skills and minimal start-up costs. According to Gumina, Chinese, Portuguese, Irish, Jewish, Syrian, and French immigrants all took part in supplying the city through truck gardening. Many truck farmers settled in Hayes Valley, Bayview, Visitation Valley, Noe Valley, Lake Merced, and beyond the city in Colma. Another group, whom Richard Brandi has discussed, rented land from Adolph Sutro, purchased with his Comstock Fortune, at the wind-blown, western edge of the peninsula. Chan, *This Bitter-sweet Soil*, 107; Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco*, 33, 97; Brandi, “Farms, Fire and Forest.”

⁵¹ Gumina notes the important role played by Genovese immigrants in *The Italians of San Francisco*, 97-99. Steven Stoll, meanwhile, offers a longer description of commission merchants role in the fruit trade, in *The Fruits of Natural Advantage*, 68-69.

Front for their market. In 1876, they opened Colombo Market. Capitalizing on the activity at Colombo, several produce merchants established businesses nearby.⁵²

From the start, the Colombo Market served as a wholesale space. Commission merchants, both at Colombo and in nearby trading houses, took an active role in the fruit trade. They orchestrated the importation from inland farmers and the exportation of fresh, as well as dried and canned, goods. Farmers also rented stalls at Colombo, where they sold directly to peddlers, grocers, and restaurateurs, seeking produce for the the city's large hotels and retail spaces.⁵³ Individual vendors, in turn, sold the produce at the city's public markets, fruit-stands, or even door-to-door. Both Italian and Chinese vegetable peddlers offered home delivery, with Italian immigrants typically carting their produce by horse-drawn wagons or pushcarts, while Chinese vendors often carried their goods on a pole balanced across their back.⁵⁴ More mobile than the Italian vendors' push- or horse-carts, many of the Chinese peddlers caught the first ferry to Oakland, after they purchased goods at the Colombo Market, and sold their produce in the East Bay.⁵⁵ In this way, the Colombo Market became an important wholesale space, central to both long-distance and local food distribution networks. Through farmer-run produce markets and fruit dealers'

⁵² Mary Cone described the process, whereby steamers traveled down the Sacramento River, collecting crated produce from farmers and delivering it to commission merchants, who then sent the empty crates back on the steamer to be returned to the farmers. Cone, *Two years in California* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1876), 137-138.

⁵³ "Italian Market. Vegetables Sold by Genoese in Picturesque Attire," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 18 October 1884.

⁵⁴ "The Vegetable Trade," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1883. While Italian farmers and Chinese and Italian produce vendors met at the Colombo Market, relations between the two immigrant groups was tense. Both were also involved in selling fish, a market which the Italian immigrants had successfully cornered, by aggressively excluding others who tried to take part. As a result, Chinese fisherman shipped their dried fish across the Pacific or sold fresh seafood to other Californian costal communities. Italian fisherman, meanwhile, dominated the wharves at the northern edge of the waterfront, where they unloaded and sold their goods in the hours before daylight. Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco*, 81-81 and Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown*, 5-6.

⁵⁵ "The Peddler's Paradise," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 7 September 1878.

negotiations, California produce reached dining tables in New York's Fifth Avenue as well as Bay Area tables.⁵⁶

Visitors to San Francisco, eager to see California's "horn of plenty," oft-cited by merchants associations and travel writers, lingered over the fruit markets. They, in turn, praised the bounty and abundance in their own travelogues. Northeasterner Samuel Bowles lauded the city's fruit-stands, expounding upon the strawberries, peaches, pears, figs, oranges, limes, and bananas, "all at moderate prices, and all in such abundance on the hotel tables and in the streets as to make a fruit famished New-Englander rub his eyes and prick his flesh lest he be in a fairy-land dream."⁵⁷ Another visitor proclaimed the fruit market "one of the great sights of the Golden City."⁵⁸

Many San Francisco residents, meanwhile, dreaded their market trips. To reach the Clay Street public market, for example, which sat just blocks from the Colombo Market and the waterfront, shoppers had to trudge "down muddy, narrow streets"—quite possibly lingering evidence of the city's early drainage problems and beginnings as Yerba Buena land-fill.⁵⁹ Market-goers also had to navigate the Barbary Coast district, passing its boarding-houses, dance halls, and saloons, which lay mostly quiet during the day but nevertheless bore signs of their night-time raucousness.⁶⁰ Though law-makers and law-

⁵⁶ Developments in technology, from preservation to transportation, and a commodities exchange played an important role. For a discussion of developments in California's canning industry, as well as a list of some of the east coast hotels that proudly served preserved California produce in the early 1860s, see Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 38. For a discussion of the importance of commodities exchange, expanded transit lines, and refrigerated cars, as well as the persistent challenges, see Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*. Regarding the California context, see Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage*, 64-68 and Earl Pomeroy, *The American Far West in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 12.

⁵⁷ Bowles, *The Pacific Railroad--Open: How to Go*, 66.

⁵⁸ "The Vegetable Trade," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 July 1883.

⁵⁹ "The People's Market's," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 December 1895.

⁶⁰ More specifically, according to the *Chronicle*, a trip to the market included walking "past sailors' boarding-houses where half-drunken loafers lounge and stare." "The People's Market's," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 December 1895.

enforcers sought to contain the Coast, laying at what was once the center of the city, it still separated the city's residential neighborhoods and commercial waterfront, making it difficult to avoid altogether.

Chinese immigrants, recognizing San Franciscans' aversion to the public markets, sought to fill the niche by becoming door-to-door vegetable vendors. In so doing, as historian Sucheng Chan has explained, they adapted “an ancient Chinese practice to the California environment.”⁶¹ The city’s white middle and upper class women, rather than braving the public markets, often preferred the home delivery offered by Chinese vegetable peddlers.⁶² “The colorful figure of the Chinese vegetable vendor,” became a familiar sight, according to Amelia Neville, passing through the residential neighborhoods, with “a flexible pole and, slung on either end of it, a huge basket overflowing with fresh greens and glowing fruits that bobbed rhythmically to his swinging gait.”⁶³ Despite their many pleased customers, as anti-Chinese sentiments grew, the board of supervisors sought new ways of targeting Chinese residents. In 1870, they passed a law that ban residents from walking on the sidewalk with a pole loaded with goods. Though the new law did not markedly change Chinese peddlers’ carrying practices, it did signal growing anti-Chinese feelings and tactics. Furthermore, in selecting pole-carrying practices, they specifically targeted a practice that made Chinese San Franciscans more visible on the streets. It also showed continued efforts on the part of San Francisco lawmakers to shape the racial make-up of the city by curbing the rights of some San Franciscans—a practice that they city and state leaders had first employed

⁶¹ Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil*, 87.

⁶² “The Vegetable Trade.”

⁶³ Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 193.

with the state constitution, which restricted the suffrage and testimony rights of African American, and then Chinese and Native American, Californians.⁶⁴

Despite the important role of Chinese laborers, in both cultivating and distributing the state's newest export, boosters and politicians instead celebrated the contributions of the Anglo farmer and settler. Citing the growing population of Anglo farmers, "a better class of farmers is fast taking the place of the earlier settlers," one writer claimed.⁶⁵ Titus Cronise, likewise celebrated the new immigrants' arrival. California, he insisted, "is no longer looked upon as the isolated abode of a nomadic and somewhat lawless community, absorbed mainly in gold seeking, and generally indifferent to the healthy pursuits and nobel concerns of life—but as a well-ordered commonwealth, prolific in natural resources and capacities beyond all its sisters."⁶⁶ For many, then, the Anglo farmer became the impetus for and rightful recipient of the riches of the Golden Gate.

The Big Four's Coronation

Though San Franciscans had hoped and believed that the coming of the transcontinental railroad would confer upon the city a place of regional, national, and even international importance, thereby securing San Francisco as "Queen of the Pacific," they found instead that these networks worked in unexpected and contradictory ways.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ethington, *The Public City*, 255; Neville, *The Fantastic City*, 193. The law, however, must have gone largely unenforced, since visitors to Chinatown continued to comment on Chinese men carrying poles laden with goods. Neville attributed the eventual decline of Chinese peddlers, balancing their goods on a pole across their back, to a concerted effort on the part of Chinese associations. Mae Ngai has discussed Chinese associations' Americanization measures as part of their larger efforts to gain greater rights for Chinese San Franciscans. Ngai, "How Chinatown rose from the ashes," *The New York Times*, 17 April 2006.

⁶⁵ J.S. Silver, "Farming Facts for California Immigrants," 176.

⁶⁶ Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California*, v.

⁶⁷ Frost, *Never One Nation*, 139; George W Dickie, *The Commerce of San Francisco: What is Required to Revive and Stimulate the Trade of this Port with the Outside World* (San Francisco: Industrial Publishing Co, 1891); Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 28; Hopkins, *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question*, 3.

Alongside the transcontinental project, smaller railroad companies built numerous local and regional lines as well. One booster, as a result, predicted that “within twelve months San Francisco will be connected by rail with all the principal towns of the interior at distances from 50 to 200 miles north south or east and with the Great Basin of Nevada and Utah by the Pacific railroad.”⁶⁸ These smaller lines, the majority of which CP had purchased by 1870, combined with improved ferry service, made, for example, daily commuting from Marin and the East Bay possible.⁶⁹ In this way, the railroad seemed to connect and cohere the communities surrounding the Bay into a single metropolitan region.

Simultaneously, however, a Pacific Slope “netted with iron tracks” also strained regional ties.⁷⁰ In addition to connecting communities, the transcontinental railroad, supplemented with local lines, brought San Francisco into competition with every other city along the route. As a result, many of the surrounding towns became less reliant on the Pacific metropolis. For the first time, communities along the rail line throughout northern California could just as easily and often more cheaply get their goods from Omaha as from San Francisco. In connecting the city to new markets and suppliers as far east as Iowa (and from there, the rest of the country), the railroad simultaneously connected every town along its route with eastern suppliers too. Though, in the years before the railroad, San Francisco boosters had eagerly anticipated the goods they would export and the new markets they would access, many had neglected to consider the goods

⁶⁸ Titus Fey Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California: Comprising Early History; Geography*, ix.

⁶⁹ Iglar, “The Industrial Far West,” 174; Orsi details CP’s take-over of its rivals’ lines in *Sunset Limited*, 17-21.

⁷⁰ Henry George, “What the Railroad Will Bring Us,” *The Overland Monthly*, October 1868, 298.

the might arrive from the east. Within months of the golden-spike celebration at Promontory, a writer for San Francisco's *Golden Era* decried, "Eastern cranberries are coming over the railroad."⁷¹ With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the protected market that had begun to emerge during the late 1850s and early 1860s, further fueled by California's isolation during the Civil War, began to waver.

Rather than bolstering San Francisco's place as "Queen of the Pacific" as promised, the transcontinental railroad instead solidified the political and economic dominance of the Big Four. In mid-1870s, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and Collis Huntington each got to work on a Nob Hill mansion, selecting a vantage point from which to preside over their kingdom. From one of Stanford's picture windows, as a *Chronicle* writer reported, "the whole city seems to be a green basin at the feet of the observer."⁷² Though they began their careers in Sacramento and selected Oakland as the Pacific Route's terminus, San Francisco proved to be the cultural and commercial center of the Pacific Slope.⁷³ Accordingly, Stanford, Hopkins, Crocker, and Huntington positioned themselves atop one of the city's fabled "seven hills" and regarded themselves as its monarchs.

⁷¹ *Golden Era*, 14 November 1869, as quoted by Frost, *Never One Nation*, 139.

⁷² Even the Central Pacific Railroad office was within view, as noted in "Stanford's Home," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 February 1875. Gray A. Brechin notes that Nob Hill real estate spiked in value after Andrew Hallidie designed the first commercial cable car, making the steep climb up the hill less onerous. Hallidie modeled his cable system on mining technologies. On Nob Hill, then, the money and technology that drove San Francisco's political economy converged. Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 65.

⁷³ In 1873, the CP executives moved their corporate office from Sacramento to San Francisco. Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 18.

A City on the Move

By the early 1870s, with more people entering the city and the city's regional preeminence in jeopardy, the Harbor Commission agreed that the city needed a better landing dock for ferryboat passengers. A new ferry depot was, in fact, just one facet of Arnold's 1873 plan for the waterfront. Over the course of several meetings, the BSHC settled on four new ferry slips at the Market Street wharf, formerly a landing place for freight and fishing boats.⁷⁴ In relocating the passenger dock and adding a Ferry House, the Harbor Commissioners hoped to create a welcoming entrance to the city. They had sought to move visitors away from the worn-down, gritty Barbary Coast streets and toward the city's new, burgeoning thoroughfare.⁷⁵ Their decision reflected and bolstered the south-ward shift of the city's commercial center, thereby showcasing and strengthening Market Street's importance—"fast becoming the leading business artery of the city," according to one guidebook author.⁷⁶ Further reinforcing Market Street's importance, the street car companies had also selected the base of Market as the street car terminus. The new Ferry House, then, joined city and Bay Area passenger transportation networks.⁷⁷ By connecting visitors directly to the city's commercial artery, Commissioners sought to underscore San Francisco's regional economic importance, giving weight to boasts of San Francisco as a "great commercial emporium."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ "The New Ferry Houses: Beautifying and Improving the City Front—Tear Away the Old Buildings," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 July 1875.

⁷⁵ BSHC, *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 1875* (Sacramento: G. H. Springer, State Printer, 1875), 29.

⁷⁶ Henry T. Williams, *The Pacific Tourist: Williams' Illustrated Trans-continental Guide of Travel* (New York: H.T. Williams, 1878), 262.

⁷⁷ BSHC, *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 1877* (San Francisco: Joseph Winterburn & Company, 1877), 25.

⁷⁸ "The Future of the City," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 May 1906.

While the law establishing the BSHC stipulated that they should rely on wharfage and rental fees for their harbor improvement projects, a project of this magnitude required additional resources. The BSHC turned to the California state treasury for financing.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Central Pacific's president and the former state governor, Leland Stanford, sought to take part in the planing and design of the BSHC project, hoping to leverage the government-funded project into a boon for Central Pacific.⁸⁰ He requested that all four of the proposed slips be devoted to CP ferry lines. Though the Commissioners denied his request, they did promise most of the new wharf to CP, offering three of the four new slips. The Commissioners reserved the fourth slot for the North Pacific Coast Railroad's ferry line, which provided service to Marin county.⁸¹ With the slips divvied up, the Central Pacific and North Pacific Railroad Companies constructed their own passenger accommodations, including ticket offices, waiting rooms, and baggage rooms. The Central Pacific "long shed" covered its three slips and dominated the wharf. Even with the protracted struggle over who would control the waterfront, culminating finally in the creation of the BSHC, the state budget for waterfront improvements remained woefully inadequate. As a result the BSHC continued to turn to corporations, such as the Central Pacific Railroad, to fill the gap, making, in return, concessions that compromised their control over the docks.

⁷⁹ "The New Ferry Slips," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 21 July 1875.

⁸⁰ In this way, Stanford drew on and furthered a tactic of industrial capitalism, perfected, according to David Igler, by business tycoons in the west. "While landownership and resource extraction functioned to varying degrees in eastern and southern industrial development," Igler has argued that "the drive to consolidate land and resources as a long-term business strategy played out more dramatically in the Far West." Igler, "The Industrial Far West," 172-173.

⁸¹ "The New Ferry Houses," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 July 1875.

When the new Ferry House at Market Street opened in September, 1875, the Harbor Commission quickly discovered that they had limited control over the tenor of the waterfront. By relocating the landing dock, they could divert tourists, at least temporarily, from the Barbary Coast, but the hawkers and hackmen, who had been a staple at the Pacific Street wharf, soon followed. The “army” that had greeted Rice at the Pacific wharf in 1869, continued to swarm the arriving boats.⁸² Arriving two years after the completion of the new Ferry House, Miriam Leslie wrote of the excitement she felt as she crossing the bay and nearing San Francisco. Her enthusiasm dissipated, however, when she spotted the “vociferous” crowd gathering on the dock, awaiting the ferry's arrival.⁸³ Walter Marshall, on an American tour from England, echoed Leslie's complaints, proclaiming, “What a motley crowd below!”⁸⁴ A special harbor division of the San Francisco police force sought, meanwhile, to keep the “motley” crowd in order. Their waterfront duties kept them so busy, in fact, that the harbor police requested that the board of supervisors construct a new Station house at the port, so that they could arrest miscreants and deliver them station without being long away from their post.⁸⁵ Despite Commissioners' efforts to remake the landing dock, the waterfront remained crowded by aggressive solicitors and swindlers. The waterfront economy, was, after all, comprised of

⁸² Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 62.

⁸³ Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate*, 113-114; Stanley Wood, *Over the Range to the Golden Gate: A Complete Tourist's Guide to Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Puget Sound and the Great North-west* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, Publishers), 150.

⁸⁴ Continuing, he then declared, “Palefaces, negroes, Chinese; white, black, and yellow.” Having commented on the city's international populace, his arrival in San Francisco seemed complete. See W. G. Marshall, *Through America; or, Nine months in the United States* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881), 259. William MacGregor too noted the “variety of races which inhabit the city-- Americans, English, Germans, Italians, French, Swiss, Spaniards, Chinese,” insisting “no other American town can compare with it.” MacGregor, *San Francisco, California, in 1876*, 26.

⁸⁵ “Harbor Police Station,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 10 September 1875.

a largely transient workforce whose livelihood relied on travelers and transit lines—moving four blocks south to the new Market Street wharf was hardly a deterrent.⁸⁶

Though the relocation project did not markedly change the character of the passenger docks, it did reinforce San Francisco's importance as a Bay Area hub—a place from which ferry lines and street-car lines converged and radiated.⁸⁷ By the mid-1870s, one Bay Area resident estimated that at least eight thousand people, most of whom lived locally, crossed the Bay each day.⁸⁸ Each ferry, at 250 to 300 feet long, could accommodate several hundred passengers between the standing room on the lower deck and elegant salons in the upper deck.⁸⁹ In this way, the new Ferry House underscored San Francisco's centrality to the Bay Area—it affirmed Market Street's growing importance as the city's commercial artery.

While the Harbor Commission relocated the passenger terminal further south, seeking some distance from the waterfront's rough entertainment district and suggesting the beginnings of a rationalized waterfront, the process of compartmentalization proved more difficult. With many competing uses for the waterfront, including commercial shipping, passenger transportation, and entertainment, it proved difficult to cordon off each, separate and apart from the others. Accordingly, the markers of regional networks,

⁸⁶ Though the BSHC hoped to leave vice behind, the Chief of Police anticipated that the nucleus of petty crime would shift too and requested to have the waterfront police station relocated next to the new ferry depot. See "Harbor Police Station," *San Francisco Bulletin*, September 10, 1875. The original waterfront police station had been located at Drumm and Commercial Streets, when the Long Wharf served as the center of activity. Corbett, *Port City*, 78.

⁸⁷ "The New Ferry Houses."

⁸⁸ Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 391-392. Transportation engineer, Bion Arnold, later reported that 2,655,671 passengers traveled to the City from the East Bay in 1873, while by 1877 he suggested that 5,570,555 people made the trip. Bion J. Arnold, *Report on the Improvement and Development of the Transportation Facilities of San Francisco* (San Francisco: B.J. Arnold, 1913), 422.

⁸⁹ Edward Dwight Holton, *Travels with jottings. From midland to the Pacific* (Milwaukee: Trayser Brothers, 1880), 39.

such as the Ferry House, and facets of the international maritime economy, continued to compete and overlap.

A Class War becomes a Race War

During the 1870s, as the railroad companies grew, so too did the strength of anti-railroad groups. Many different movements, as historian William Deverell has argued, fought “beneath (and for possession of) the anti-railroad banner.” The anti-railroad movement proved so malleable and multi-purpose, according to Deverell, because “‘the railroad’ could be a speeding locomotive, a nameless collection of corporate officials, a bought newspaper, or an eminently powerful political lobby.”⁹⁰ Farmers, merchants, and laborers each harbored their own resentment towards Central Pacific, as one contemporary and early historian of California noted. Central Pacific, by making “the weight of their hand felt wherever their interest was involved,” only elicited more ill-will.⁹¹ Despite the enthusiasm with which many San Franciscans had anticipated the railroad, the disappointment was almost immediate. Instead of opening new markets for California-produced goods and fulfilling San Franciscans’ grand visions of the city as a distribution center, the city became instead a dumping ground for cheap eastern goods. Fledgeling factories that had opened in the protective climate of the Civil War, now closed their doors or hired Chinese workers at reduced wages. In just a few short years,

⁹⁰ Deverell, *Railroad Crossing*, 41.

⁹¹ Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 374.

many San Franciscans, working and commercial classes alike, felt and resented Central Pacific's grasp.⁹²

Then, in September of 1873, a banking panic plunged the country into an economic depression, and San Franciscans' disaffection towards big business, and especially railroad companies, mounted. Economic panics, as Richard White has noted, typically hit during the spring and fall, according to the rhythms of the agricultural economy. "Farmers," White has explained, "withdrew money or took out loans to finance planting and harvest in the spring and fall, and to meet these demands country banks withdrew their deposits from their corresponding banks in New York," while "in winter and summer unused funds flowed back to New York because of the interest its banks offered."⁹³ Banks, then, extended credit to business owners and investors during the summer and winter, with the understanding that they could "call" the loan, demanding liquid funds, at any time. Jay Cooke, owner of the major lending house, Jay Cooke & Company, underwrote the Northern Pacific Railway Company (NP). When the fall of 1872 came, and with it the need for liquid funds, Cooke scrambled to sell his railroad securities. Northern Pacific, however, was nowhere near completing the transcontinental line and the securities were hardly an enticing investment. Cooke's political connections came to his aid in 1872, but after white-knuckling it through another year, he still could not sell the NP securities and gather the funds necessary to meet his firm's mounting obligations. In September 1873, Jay Cooke & Company collapsed, taking with it many smaller banks too. In an effort to limit the effects, the New York Stock Exchange closed

⁹² Hopkins, *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question*, 3; Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 18.

⁹³ White, *Railroaded*, 80.

for ten days and many banks froze payments. But, the damage had been done: credit tightened, wages dropped, prices fell, and bankruptcies doubled. The Panic of 1873 became the Long Depression, an economic slump that lasted the rest of the decade.⁹⁴

Alongside their anger towards railroad companies, white factory workers in San Francisco blamed Chinese laborers for their economic straits. From the days of the 1852 Foreign Miner's Tax, intended to preserve Californian's riches for Anglo miners and "check the tide of Asiatic immigration," white Californians had regarded Chinese miners with suspicion and disdain.⁹⁵ White miners, who often worked individually, considered their own independence as the hallmark of their standing as men and citizens. They understood their own status in contrast to enslaved black laborers, thereby linking their sense of independence to racial orderings as well. As Anglo Americans traveled west and encountered Chinese laborers, some of whom were indentured, they often placed them in the same categorization as enslaved black workers. This categorization continued over the course of the 1860s, reinforced by corporate employers, such as Central Pacific, who relied on San Francisco-based Chinese merchants to recruit Chinese workers. Chinese merchants and commercial houses functioned as employment agencies, brokering relationships between out-of-work laborers in China and labor-seeking employers in the United States. Often, Chinese workers could not afford the ticket to cross the Pacific, so Chinese merchants and commercial houses paid the travel expenses in exchange for a number of years of contractual labor. In the minds of many white Californians, this made

⁹⁴ My discussion of the Panic of 1873 is drawn from Rauchway, *Blessed Among Nations*, 40-42; White, *Railroaded*, 16, 34, 80-87; Nicolas Barreyre, "The Politics of Economic Crises: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 04 (October 2011): 403-409; and Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 162.

⁹⁵ As quoted by Yung, Chang, and Lai, in *Chinese American Voices*, 9.

all Chinese immigrants "serfs or slaves," and suspect.⁹⁶ This blended too with assumptions about Chinese women, working as prostitutes, as degraded and enslaved, which I discussed in the last chapter. Social, racial, and political categories became embedded, intertwined, resulting in the derogatory slurs of "yellow slave" and "coolie."⁹⁷

Yet, even as white San Franciscans derided Chinese workers as enslaved "coolies," they also saw them as an extension or the epitome of a new form of corporate power. They feared the burgeoning industrial order, dominated by corporations, like CP, and blamed Chinese laborers for supporting and sustaining this new economic order. They charged Chinese workers with accepting slave conditions, or made racially-based arguments about what Chinese workers could, uniquely, withstand. "They work at what would be starving wages to a white man, for a few years, then leave for home with their

⁹⁶ Reverend A. W. Loomis discussed the widely held belief, among white Californians, that nearly all Chinese immigrants were "serfs or slaves" of the Chinese Six Companies, in "The Six Chinese Companies," *Overland Monthly and Out West*, 1, no. 3, September 1868. Scholars continue to debate and discuss the role of the Chinese Six Companies, who later organized under the name the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The Chinese Six Companies functioned as a mutual aid association, offering services and protection to Chinese immigrants living in the United States, ranging from securing housing to legal representation. They also served as a powerful agency of social control, keeping tight control over the Chinese community, ensuring, for example, that those who came as contractual laborers, an agreement also known as the credit-ticket system, repaid their debts. China did not, until the end of the 1870s, have a consulate in San Francisco; until that point, the Six Companies served as the diplomatic intermediary. As a part of this role, they sought to address anti-Chinese measures, often by challenging their legality in federal court. For an assessment of the Chinese Six Companies, and the many roles they played, see, Him Mark Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System," *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* 1 (1987), 13-51; Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943*, 72-73; Shah, *Contagious Divides*; 131-138; Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, "The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the smuggling of Chinese immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico border, 1882-1930," *Journal of the Southwest* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 37-62; Yucheng Qin, *The Diplomacy of Nationalism The Six Companies and China's Policy Toward Exclusion* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the term "coolies," and, in particular, the ways in which it evoked and mapped onto mid-nineteenth century racial hierarchies, see Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 160-167; Moon-Ho Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies'," 677-701; and Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 126-131. Chinese intellectuals, meanwhile, responded to both the legal measures and pervasive anti-Chinese attitudes. Chinese merchant, Norman Assing (Yuan Sheng), responded to the 1852 Foreign Miners' Tax first by insisting that he too embraced the republican ideals expressed in the U.S. Constitution. He next challenged the legality of racially-based laws under a constitution that espoused liberty. But, in a final rhetorical move, he insisted that, within the current racial hierarchies, Anglo Americans should regard Chinese nationals as more closely aligned with Europeans than with African Americans. See his letter, "To His Excellency Governor Bigler," reprinted in *Chinese American Voices*, 9-12.

hoarded earnings,” became the disgruntled white workingman’s refrain.⁹⁸ Not only did they blame Chinese laborers for bringing down the pay-scale and working conditions for all workers, but ultimately, they argued that the very presence of “un-free” Chinese workers would jeopardize the freedom of all workers. “We have a system of coolie labor which is death to free white labor,” one commentator proclaimed.⁹⁹ In a perverse twist, then, they blamed Chinese workers, alongside CP executives, for the solidifying corporate, industrial order.

What began as organized efforts to evict Chinese miners from particular diggings during the 1850s, became, during the 1860s, Anti-Coolie labor organizations. Some white factory workers emblazoned their goods with a “white label,” which informed consumers that white workers had produced the good; they called on consumers to boycott goods not carrying the tag.¹⁰⁰ In response to white workers’ demands, the state took up a number of anti-Chinese measures during the 1860s, including the Anti-Coolie Act, which demanded that all Chinese-born residents pay a tax.¹⁰¹ City officials also pursued exclusionary measures. Though only the state and federal government could pass laws curbing immigration, the board of supervisors often tested the bounds of municipal jurisdiction. In 1873, for example, they ban laundries from certain sections of the city. This was the nation’s first zoning law, which the courts deemed unconstitutional.¹⁰² Through both legal mandates and modes of intimidation, San Francisco politicians, business-owners, and

⁹⁸ “Lenz’s World Tour Awheel: San Francisco,” *Outing* 22, no. 5 (August 1893): 363.

⁹⁹ Jennett Blakeslee Frost, *California’s Greatest Curse* (San Francisco: J. Winterburn & Co.), 10.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of anti-Chinese organizations, see Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 72-75 and Shah, *Contagious Divides*, chapter 6.

¹⁰¹ Exemptions included those who had already paid the Foreign Miner’s Tax and those engaged in agricultural work, since farmers needed laborers, as discussed by Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*, 77.

¹⁰² Ethington, *The Public City*, 255-256.

property managers, nevertheless, kept Chinese San Franciscans confined to Chinatown.¹⁰³

Even as they passed laws that mandated the separation and exclusion of Chinese immigrants, they justified these laws by insisting that the Chinese immigrants refused to assimilate, characterizing them “as oil with water.”¹⁰⁴ White San Franciscans, in this way, made separation and exclusion both the justification and goal of their actions.¹⁰⁵

By the summer of 1877, nearly four years into the economic depression, tension and uneasiness ran high. Many unemployed San Franciscans blamed Chinese workers, rather than the depressed economy. When, in July, 1,400 Chinese immigrants arrived in

¹⁰³ Formal and informal means of segregation often reinforced one another, such as laws that restricted property ownership to those eligible for naturalized citizenship, ensuring that Chinese American could not purchase property, and property-managers’ unwillingness to rent properties outside of Chinatown to Chinese Americans. Don Mitchell notes the ways in which property laws entrenched Chinatowns in *Lie of the Land*, 95. For a discussion of the legal measures and modes of intimidation by which white San Franciscans confined Chinese San Franciscans to a limited number of blocks within the city, see Tchen, *Gentle’s Photographs of San Francisco’s Old Chinatown*, 3; Shah, *Contagious Divides*, chapter 1; Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 193; Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 21. Even as Chinatown functioned as a segregated, slum—and many Chinese American found their opportunities for work and home to restricted within its boundaries—it also provided a sense of identity and community. Sarah Deutsch has posited and explored this idea in relation to Mexican Americans and the role of the barrio, in *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Lisbeth Haas has examined this further in *Conquests and Historical Identities in California*, chapter 5. The battle for the International-Hotel, a federally-subsided apartment building, which many elderly Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese Americans called home, offers one San Francisco example. When the building became part of a larger redevelopment project and, in 1968, the building’s management company sent eviction notices, the I-Hotel became a centerpiece in a larger “struggle for identity, self-determination, and civil rights,” as discussed by James Sobredo, “From Manila Bay to Daly City: Filipinos in San Francisco,” in *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 279. See also Estella Habal, *San Francisco’s International Hotel Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 428. For a discussion of the role of immigration policy in shaping conceptions of citizenship and national belonging, see Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*. While racism has been a central role in nation-building, as Ngai has explored, Erika Lee has considered transnational anti-Asian attitudes, revealing a “hemispheric Orientalism.” Nation-states, she has argued, “developed their own understandings of ethnic and cultural difference through transnational connections and comparisons,” concluding that racial formation can best be understood when considered as both a nation-building and a transnational process. Lee, “The ‘Yellow Peril’ and Asian Exclusion in the Americas,” *Pacific Historical Review* 74, no. 4 (November 2007): 545.

¹⁰⁵ Charlotte Brooks has described this “circular process,” writing that white San Franciscans “cited the Chinese menace in order to justify the rigid segregation of Chinatown, and then used the poor conditions that hypersegregation created as evidence of the danger the Chinese posed. In this circular process, beliefs about Chinese undesirability, filth, labor competition, and low living standards became so ingrained in the city’s traditions and in the minds of its white residents that these ideas continued to shape San Francisco’s racial geography long in the twentieth century.” Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 15.

the city, the mayor began to prepare for a possible riot. Then, on July 21, railroads across the country announced another round of wage cuts, reducing wages that were already devastatingly low, and workers erupted in anger.¹⁰⁶ Workers from Pittsburgh to Baltimore, Buffalo to Kansas City went on strike, bringing nearly half of the country's rail-lines to a standstill.¹⁰⁷ To express their solidarity and assert their own demands, eight thousand San Franciscans gathered on an empty sandlot near City hall.¹⁰⁸ The crowd included white factory-workers and farmers, both of whom considered the railroad as a threat to their self-ownership.¹⁰⁹ As urban laborers saw it, the railroad, as a monopolistic employer, held too much power in setting the terms of employment--evidenced by CP's latest announcement that they were cutting wages, yet again. Many rural Californians, meanwhile, resented the railroad's dominance as a major land-holder, able to set the terms of the real estate market and price out small farmers wishing to own a piece of land. For small farmers who had secured a plot, the railroad, which controlled 80 percent of the state's rail lines, set the freight rates too--rates that they continued to raise, even as they dropped wages.¹¹⁰ Unemployed factory-workers and farmhands joined in too. The city's

¹⁰⁶ Central Pacific, along with many of the railroad companies in the East, announced wage cuts. When news of the strike spread, they rescinded the cuts. But, the workers' uprising had already been set in motion, as discussed by Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 113.

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the strikes that took place around the country, see David Omar Stowell, ed. *The Great Strikes of 1877* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Michael A. Bellesiles, *1877: America's Year of Living Violently* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁸ They called for an eight-hour day, ending tax loop-holes for the rich, federal control of railroads, the reduction of city officials' salaries to a rates commensurate with skilled labor. While the original workingmen's demands seemed clear, in the weeks following the violence, contemporaries debated which sub-set of protesters had turned violence. Saxton *The Indispensable Enemy*, 114-115 and Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown*, 7.

¹⁰⁹ For an intellectual history of the notion of self-ownership, see Jeffrey Sklansky, *The Soul's Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

¹¹⁰ Bellesiles, *1877*, 107.

business class stayed away from the Sand lot for the most part, dismissing and deriding the whole crowd as lazy rabble-rousers or, by the newly-coined term, "hoodlums."¹¹¹

The Sandlotters began with chants such as “Down with the Bloated Monopolists!” but as evening came, “To Chinatown!” became the rallying cry instead. The day began with formal speeches addressing the railroad's power and expressing solidarity for eastern workers, but rumors about violence in Chinatown began to fly. As night fell and the formal speeches ended, a few people along the edge of the gathering shouted anti-Chinese slurs and the already widely-shared feeling swept through the crowd. The Great Strike in San Francisco mutated from a class rebellion to a race riot. Because Central Pacific had hired thousands of Chinese immigrants and had even pushed for easier immigration measures, many white workers regarded Chinese workers as emblematic of railroad's far-reaching power. They believed that Chinese laborers, both in the city's factories and valley's fields, fueled and undergirded the expansion of corporate power, rather than recognizing them as similarly positioned, vulnerable workers.¹¹² United and animated by the anti-Chinese chants, some set out from the sandlot to burn the Chinese quarter, the Pacific Mail docks (which brought Chinese immigrants and, by this point, CP owned), and Chinese-owned laundries on the outskirts of town. Through arson and violent attacks, the rioters killed several Chinese San Franciscans.

¹¹¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary*, in fact, traces the origins of the word “hoodlum” to San Francisco in the early 1870s, defining it as a “youthful street rowdy; ‘a loafing youth of mischievous proclivities’; a dangerous rough.” hoodlum, n. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹¹² For a discussion of the confluence of anti-Chinese feeling among urban and rural workers (both increasingly industrial laborers), see Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil*, chapter 8; Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage*, chapter 5.

Unable to regain order, city officials turned to the federal government and San Francisco's business class for help. William Coleman, a wealthy merchant but more importantly a leader from both the '51 and '56 Vigilance Committees, stepped forward to reorganize vigilante force. Four, some say six, thousand San Franciscans joined Coleman to patrol the streets and restore order (as with twenty years before, most of the vigilantes belonged to the business class). With pick-handles in hand, this band of vigilantes again championed extralegal measures in the name of "law and order." The Sandlotters and revived vigilantes, called by many the Pickhandle Brigade, confronted one another in the streets. The volatile situation erupted when, most likely at the hand of a Sandlotter, another fire broke out along the docks. The fire flashed and grew, gaining strength as it enveloped several barrels of whale oil. It spread to Rincon Hill, and rioters tried to prevent the firemen's efforts to contain the flames. The battle, between Sandlotters and the Pickhandle Brigade and the Firemen and the fire, converged at Rincon Hill. The next morning, the dock smoldered and three lay dead. Meanwhile, federal gun boats, sent for by an anxious Governor William Irwin, lay at the ready in the harbor. The Chinese Six Companies took action too, arming Chinatown residents with rifles and hatchets. They also sent word to recruiters in China, and for the rest of the summer and into the fall, significantly fewer Chinese immigrants arrived at the Pacific Mail Steamship dock.

What began as the "Railroad Question" ended as the "Chinese Question." Both the Democratic governor of California, William Irwin, and the Republican William Coleman

sought to punctuate the violence by calling for a halt to Chinese immigration.¹¹³ With an election year coming, Henry George predicted certain victory in California for whichever party could capture voters' anti-Chinese vitriol.¹¹⁴ Out of the sandlot a third political party emerged, the Workingmen's Party, with the charismatic, coarse, and determinedly anti-Chinese Denis Kearney at the helm. While Kearney briefly captured the city's attention and the Workingmen's Party briefly took power, their reign was short-lived.¹¹⁵ As status quo returned, Collis Huntington, nevertheless, feared that Congress, possibly animated by the anti-railroad demonstrations, might try to recoup the federal dollars they had loaned to CP; he pursued a plan to safeguard Central Pacific's profits by re-organizing the company under Southern Pacific's banner.¹¹⁶ His legal maneuverings and a

¹¹³ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 115-116. Though anti-Chinese sentiment was widespread, not everyone sought exclusion. Large-scale delta farmers, representatives of a burgeoning industrial farming constituency, also espoused anti-Chinese attitudes. But, they simultaneously coveted a large pool of cheap laborers and opposed anti-immigration measures that might threaten their labor supply. Well into the twentieth century, as Don Mitchell has explained, industrial, large-scale farmers sought to overturn anti-immigration measures. After the 1882 Exclusion Act, they turned to Japanese immigrants for labor, and eventually relied on Filipino, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and white migrant workers, "and any other embodied bit of labor power they could get their hands on." See Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 83-109, quote 93. In 1903, for example, the *New York Times* published a plea by the California Promotion Committee seeking fruit pickers. Blaming the Chinese Exclusion Act for the shortage of "cheap labor," the Promotion Committee representatives especially sought women and children as fruit pickers, claiming that their small hands and frames made them best suited for the work. "Fruit Pickers in Demand," *New York Times*, 16 July 1903.

¹¹⁴ George, "The Kearney Agitation in California," 442. Though George embraced an anti-Chinese stance and blamed the railroad monopoly for the state's large population of Chinese laborers, he also, as Alexander Saxton has noted, understood that "the use of the Chinese issue in politics" served the monopoly too "since it would tend to distract and immobilize potentially radical segments of the population." Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 155. Jennett Blakeslee Frost likewise, argued that politicians adopted an anti-Chinese stance for their own political gain in *California's Greatest Cruse*, 12-14.

¹¹⁵ Several scholars have traced the rise of the Workingmen's Party in California, including Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California*; Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*; Philip S. Foner, *The Formation of the Workingmen's Party of the United States* (New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1976); Michael Kazin, "The July Days in San Francisco, 1877: Prelude to Kearneyism," *New Labor Review* 3, no. 1 (June 1980): 5-47; Neil L. Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political Protest and the Workingmen's Party of California* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991); Ethington, *The Public City*.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of Huntington's reincorporation of Central Pacific as Southern Pacific, see Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 24. Central Pacific's status within the corporation became a central issue in the U.S. Supreme Court's 1912 decision that Union Pacific's ownership of Southern Pacific violated the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. For a discussion of the legal proceedings and Central Pacific's role, see Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 37-44.

shifting tide protected CP (now SP), since, by the 1880s, much of the anti-railroad sentiment had been diffused and re-directed towards Chinese immigrants.

While pursuing anti-Chinese measures dominated California politics and the state boasted several anti-Chinese acts, West Coast legislators had yet to achieve exclusionary measures at the federal level. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868, an agreement between China and the United States upholding the “free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects, respectively for purposes of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents,” stood in the way of a federal exclusion act.¹¹⁷ California voters and law-makers, nevertheless, pursued further-reaching exclusionary measures and tested the bounds of state jurisdiction. They pressed for a renegotiation of the Burlingame Treaty and measures to halt Chinese immigration. “The gate must be closed!,” one legislator declared from the national congressional floor.¹¹⁸ With a national treaty in the way, the issue threatened to spark a new conflict over state’s rights.

Over the course of the 1870s, as historian Alexander Saxton has recounted, abolitionists lost power in the Republican party, and with them, the principled objection to exclusion disappeared. The only remaining obstacle seemed to be the treaty, but, by the summer of 1879, the U.S. minister to China, responding to the formidable bipartisan anti-Chinese alliance that had coalesced in Washington, was on his way to China to re-open negotiations.¹¹⁹ The resulting 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited Chinese laborers from immigrating and denied Chinese residents the possibility of becoming naturalized

¹¹⁷ “Article V,” *Text of the Treaty between China & the United States*, 1879, 5-6.

¹¹⁸ Edward K. Valentine, as quoted by Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 30.

¹¹⁹ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 133-137, 177-178.

citizens for the next ten years. The federal act was the culmination of repeated efforts, on the part of California voters and law-makers to render Chinese immigrants a separate group, excluded from the national fold. In the years following the 1882 Act, the exclusion was nearly complete. In 1887, Chinese immigration hit its lowest point, with the United States only admitting ten Chinese immigrants. For Chinese immigrants then, the Golden Gate now stood well-guarded.¹²⁰ White San Franciscans, across class lines, had discovered an iteration of the gateway-moniker about which they could agree.

¹²⁰ The Chinese Exclusion Act ended, for the most part, what had been a dynamic pattern of migration, in which many Chinese workers hoped to travel to the United States and make enough money to return to their family in China or bring their family to the United States. Some Chinese immigrants found loopholes, either by entering the United States through Canada or Mexico or by obtaining paperwork that declared their status as one of the groups of Chinese still allowed to immigrate (merchants, students, diplomats). For discussions of the extent and harshness of the law, as well as the ways in which Chinese immigrants thwarted it, see Yung, Chang, and Lai, *Chinese American Voices*, 103-107; *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943*, edited by Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Kevin Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan, *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998); Lee, *At America's Gates*; Hansen, "The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the smuggling of Chinese immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico border, 1882-1930"; Anna Pegler-Gordon, "Chinese Exclusion, Photography, and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy," *American Quarterly* 58 (March 2006): 51-77; Lee, "The 'Yellow Peril' and Asian Exclusion in the Americas," 542-543. See especially Judy Yung's discussion of her own family history of immigrating, returning to China, and navigating the rule of exclusion, in *Unbound Feet*, 1-4.

Chapter Seven

Golden Grain and Golden Fruits

In 1879, Robert Louis Stevenson ferried from Oakland to San Francisco and later wrote of crossing the “bay of gold and corn.”¹ Others too were quick to connect California’s golden past with its agricultural future. “California will, in future, be as well known for its fruit as for its gold,” one promoter proclaimed.² With descriptions of rich, fertile soil, laden first with gold, then with wheat, and later with fruit, the metaphor seemed almost over-determined. As the promise of gold waned, San Franciscans turned to the state's agricultural bounty as the new promise and economic future for the state. From the city's early, boom-town days, many had hoped that staid, Anglo farmers, committed to the land and dedicated to its future, might ensure the city’s economic prosperity. Furthermore, as San Francisco's commercial and political elite sought to solidify the city's place in regional, national, and international trading networks, the state's grains and fruits—moving from the city's hinterland (by horse-carts, local railroads, and river steamboats) and then redistributed to distant marketplaces by water-

¹ Robert Louise Stevenson, *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Boston: Jefferson Press, 1910), 478.

² *The Builders of a Great City: San Francisco's Representative Men, the City, Its History and Commerce.*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: San Francisco Journal of Commerce Publishing Co., 1891), 19.

ways and rail-lines—epitomized their aspirations. Municipal boosters' anointed California the country's fruit basket and declared that San Francisco would be its “warehouse and market place.”³ This reflected a shift in the city’s municipal ambition: whereas once San Franciscans had declared the city a gathering place, they now sought to be the center of commerce (and one favorably weighted toward exports).

San Franciscans sought, throughout the 1850s and 60s, to assert their place among the country's growing metropolises, pointing to the Golden Gate as both the evidence and promise of the city's future prominence.⁴ Through violent acts and bold proclamations, San Franciscans insisted upon their Americanness. During the 1870s, as cultural and technological networks drew San Francisco closer to the national fold, San Franciscans, who had once billed their town as American as any other, began instead to underscore the cosmopolitan qualities of their city. They sought to carve out for the city a unique contribution to the nation-state. From these boasts, came depictions of San Francisco as an international meeting site, a place where, as in Harvey Rice's imagining, Europe, Asia, and America might meet, shake hands, and be good friends.⁵ As the nineteenth century drew to a close, however, Rice's scene took on a new, more sinister tone.

San Francisco's political and business elite anointed San Francisco as a commercial center—the Queen of the Pacific—by envisioning regional, national, and

³ Earle Ashley Walcott, “San Francisco: The Gateway of the Orient,” *Sunset*, July 1902, 156.

⁴ James Delgado has traced the change in San Francisco from an international trading hamlet to an imperial frontier, arguing that whereas during the 1830s and 40s San Francisco was an “entrepôt, or zone of free exchange,” merchants “saw an opportunity in Gold Rush San Francisco to create a permanent base in the northern Pacific [and] in a sense hijacked the process of integration. They envisioned the city as a new entrepôt that could give them access to the Pacific Rim and provide an American outpost for the domination of Asian trade and perhaps, in time, the entire ocean.” Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*, 164-165.

⁵ Rice, *Letters from the Pacific Slope*, 62.

transnational networks as emanating from and converging in San Francisco.⁶ The Southern Pacific's boosterism magazine, *Sunset*, likewise published a poem entitled “Imperial San Francisco,” in which the city presided over a domain that included the surrounding countryside and the “nations of the earth,” ultimately making the city a “fit portal of empire”:

Imperial Rome on Seven Hills
Sat, and her greatness from afar
Was seen by all the world;
But in her day the world itself
A single hemisphere barely encompassed.
Imperial San Francisco from her hundred hills
Looks out upon a field so vast
That all the glories of the days long gone
Are overcast,
And through her ever open gate
The nations of the earth their treasures bring.
Fair city of the West,
Translucent mirror of the Golden State,
Fit portal of an empire great and free,
*We thee salute!*⁷

Not only did San Franciscans make ever-reaching territorial claims, starting with the countryside and ending with “all nations,” but in so doing, the city's elite sought to tip the globe and reorient the east-coast Atlantic worldview. From the perspective of those along the eastern-seaboard (and therefore most of the nation), San Francisco remained, even with the transcontinental railroad, a distant outpost—reachable only by a several-days journey. San Franciscans sought to challenge this viewpoint, suggesting that from San Francisco things appeared a bit differently. They posited a Pacific-centered worldview, with San Francisco at its foci. San Francisco boosters went to great lengths to make San

⁶ J.G. Player-Frowd was one of many who made this argument, stating that “few cities in the world are more favorably situated, in a commercial point of view, than San Francisco, and she may well lay claim to the proud title of the Queen City of the Pacific.” Player-Frowd, *Six months in California*, 18. See also Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 349 and Benjamin Franklin Taylor, *Between the Gates* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1883), 71.

⁷ H. Robt. Braden, “San Francisco,” *Sunset*, July 1899, 96.

Francisco-centered arguments, such as one writer who declared, “we are now the center of a commerce extending half round the globe.”⁸ Another, meanwhile insisted that San Francisco “is in the center of the territory of the United States,” supporting his near-indefensible claim by citing the city's latitude.⁹ San Francisco writers, ultimately, underscored the city's centrality, claiming that all-possibilities opened from and riches returned through the Golden Gate, the “portal of an empire.”¹⁰



Figure 17. *Sunset*, May 1900.

These boasts came as the city faced numerous set-backs and economic conditions on the ground worsened, the hyperbole grew. The transcontinental railroad, as Henry

⁸ Hittell and California Immigrant Union, *All about California*, 34.

⁹ Wilson Hamilton, *The New Empire and Her Representative Men: Or, The Pacific Coast, Its Farms* (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing House, 1886), 83.

¹⁰ Braden, “San Francisco,” *Sunset*, July 1899, 96.

George had feared, challenged San Francisco's place of regional importance. San Franciscan business elites sought to recover and reinforce their regional importance, by investing in other Pacific Slope cities with new capital flowing in from the Comstock Lode. San Francisco, according to David Iglar, briefly served “as the regional financier.”¹¹ During the 1880s the city enjoyed regional supremacy. Ultimately, however, “the window of opportunity San Francisco had once enjoyed began to close” with the “simultaneous challenge of national corporations from the East and urban upstarts on the city's periphery.”¹² Then, with the crash of 1893, the city again struggled to hold its position.¹³ Even as the city flagged, however, boosters' boasts grew ever-louder.¹⁴

Throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, “golden grain” and “golden fruits” became the city and state's new gold, its new symbol of a prosperous future. Even as the state’s newly developing agricultural industry took on greater significance, the many groups who sought access to and control over the the port had differing visions of how to realize and express San Francisco's marketplace standing along the waterfront. Farmers, merchants, railroad representatives, and the Board of State Harbor Commission (BSHC), became embroiled in heated debates over access to the docks. The Harbor Commissions' perspective of how to project San Francisco as a national and international city—a city on display—conflicted, for example, with several California farmers'

¹¹ Iglar, “The Industrial Far West,” 182.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For a discussion of the Far West region and San Francisco’s place relative to other Pacific Coast cities, see Corbett, *Port City*, 58-63; Iglar, “The Industrial Far West,” 159–192; Walker, “At the Crossroads.”

¹⁴ Yong Chen has noted that this discourse of “western fantasies” emerged “in response to social crises as the western states became increasingly connected to the domestic circuits of commerce and to hemispheric and trans-Pacific political economic structures in the process of U.S. expansion.” He goes on to examine the tension between notions of American exceptionalism and U.S. imperialism, arguing that the U.S. mounted imperial acquisitions under the guise of American exceptionalism but then justified violent acts by racializing and exoticizing another nation's people in “In Their Own Words,” 119.

associations, who sought dock-space, free of charge, to sell the state's much-celebrated fruits and grains. The BSHC sought to manifest the city's imperial ambitions on the San Francisco waterfront at the end of the nineteenth century with the construction of a grand new Ferry Terminal. Small farmers, meanwhile, waged a multi-year campaign for a free, public market just north of the passenger depot, seeking a place from which to sell their goods directly to consumers. So, while many made claims about the city's unrivaled position, as gateway, portal, hub, and center, this vision meant different things to different San Franciscans. Laying at the center of the debate remained the question of how to best attain the promise of the Golden Gate and who would reap its riches.

This chapter considers the many groups, including farmers' collectives, merchants' associations, railroad corporations, and the state-appointed Harbor Commission, who vied for control over and access to the waterfront. Each sought to make a case for their particular vision of a commercially successful waterfront, a vision that underscored their own importance to the city fulfilling its gateway promise. What constituted a "working" waterfront, or, in other words, how to bolster San Francisco's economic and cultural dominance, remained debated and up for grabs. With many different visions of what a prosperous harbor might look like—what shape the Golden Gate should take—these groups often found themselves at odds. The San Francisco waterfront, after all, simultaneously served, to varying degrees of success, many purposes, as a municipal, regional, national, and even transnational hub and harbor. As one first-time visitor, taking in his initial surroundings noted, the "large ocean steamers from Japan or China, from Australia or Panama, Oregon or Vancouver," juxtaposed

alongside “picturesque little steamers which convey the tired man of business to his suburban retreat across the bay.”¹⁵ Thus, the harbor epitomized and encapsulated San Francisco's much-desired spheres of influence, the many different commercial networks of which San Francisco's merchant and political elite sought to position themselves at the center.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, San Franciscans with varying degrees of power engaged in contests over space and place, often deploying long-standing metaphors to make and remake the waterfront landscape. While the city's commercial and political elite sought to maintain, and even manifest, the illusion of San Francisco's imperial dominance at the very best and relevance at the very least, they sought to displace the people and things that contradicted their vision. Others too, simultaneously, claimed the promises of the Golden Gate, seeking instead to realize their own vision for the city front along the wharves. Despite the near-deafening imperialistic din, inland Anglo farmers, Chinese vegetable vendors, and Italian wholesale fruit dealers all sought to claim their own piece of the golden, gateway city.

“Cornucopia of the World”

Through the efforts of boosters seeking settlers, judges upholding property claims, bankers issuing loans, and farmers and hired-hands planting and harvesting crops, Californians made the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley into an agricultural landscape. The state's wheat production grew throughout the 1860s, and by 1870, it became the state's

¹⁵ MacGregor, *San Francisco, California, in 1876*, 9.

leading non-mineral export. This placed California among the leading wheat-growing regions in the world. During the 1880s, agricultural products surpassed mineral exports to become the dominant force in the state's economy.¹⁶ The relentless boosterism and declarations of California as a land of milk and honey seemed to be working.

As the state's agricultural economy grew, commercial associations, like the California Immigrant Union, responded by increasing their promotional efforts. Southern Pacific, also eager for more people to settle in the state, contributed to the Immigrant Union's efforts. Then, in the mid-1880s, SP launched their own campaign to promote immigration.¹⁷ One of their posters, directed toward midwestern and east coast audiences, proclaimed California the "Cornucopia of the World" and promised, "Room for millions of immigrants." As the state's major landholder and shipper, SP was eager to promote immigration and the agricultural economy. SP executives realized that their biggest profits would come through handling freight, or, in other words, a California countryside filled with small farmers, shipping goods to distribution cities, like Chicago or San Francisco.¹⁸ Even as SP embraced the small farmer as their ticket to profitability, this did not assuage farmers' anti-railroad sentiments. But, it did mean that, at times, both SP and small farmers sought the same ends—robust markets for California's agricultural products. In 1898, SP launched yet another promotional campaign, this time in the form of *Sunset* magazine, named for their Sunset route, which stretched from Louisiana to Oregon. The publication promoted travel and migration to the states along Southern

¹⁶ Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 63; Walker, "At the Crossroads," 78.

¹⁷ Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 150-151.

¹⁸ For a discussion of SP's promotional campaigns, intended to draw immigrants and ultimately cultivate new customers, see Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, chapter 6 and White, *Railroaded*, 456-460.

Pacific Rail lines, as well as trumpeting, to those who would remain at home, the delights of products produced along their route.¹⁹



Figure 18. “California, Cornucopia of the World,” Broadside, 1883.

As the state’s agricultural economy grew during the last decades of the nineteenth century, San Francisco, as the preeminent west coast port, claimed its much-desired place as “Queen of the Pacific.” The city seemed to have finally achieved Frémont’s vision. It had become the regions most important gateway for goods. The grains and fruits traveled into San Francisco by rail and riverboat steamers and then flowed out of the city via long-

¹⁹ For more on *Sunset*, see Barbara Berglund, “Western Living *Sunset* Style in the 1920s and 1930s: The Middlebrow, the Civilized, and the Modern,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 133-157; Kevin Starr, “Sunset Magazine and the Phenomenon of the Far West,” in *Sunset Magazine: A Century of Western Living, 1898-1998* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Libraries, 1998); Paul C. Johnson, *The Early Sunset Magazine, 1898-1928* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1973).

distance water and rail shipping lines. Perhaps even more important to the city's place of regional dominance than its role as an entrepôt, however, was its role as a regional financier. During the 1880s, the city's San Francisco banks and investors supplied credit to other fledging regional communities. San Francisco investors hoped that by supporting and investing in other West Coast cities, like Seattle, Oakland, and Los Angeles, they would bolster the strength and significance of the region as a whole, and, in turn, advance San Francisco too. For a time, the strategy worked, and San Francisco as lender seemed to be yet another expression and affirmation of the city's role as gateway.²⁰

The Crash of '93 and Celebration of '94

Michael de Young, owner of the Republican *Chronicle* and U.S. senatorial seat hopeful, was among the city's individual investors and large real estate holders.²¹ As plans for the 1893 Chicago Colombian World's Exposition got underway, de Young served as California's representative, planning and organizing the state's exhibit for the Fair. While there, he made time to shill for San Francisco. During the dinners, banquets, and planning meetings in Chicago, he asked exhibitors, "How would you like to go to San Francisco?" As he later recounted, "they all said, 'Splendid.'"²² Once the Chicago

²⁰ With the economic crash of 1893, San Francisco's regional hold wavered; the earthquake of 1906 challenged it again. San Francisco, however, largely retained its hold on the region until the 1920s, when Los Angeles then began to surpass San Francisco as the west coast's leading port. For a discussion of San Francisco's regional dominance, see Corbett, *Port City*, 58-63; Iglar, "The Industrial Far West," 159-192; Walker, "At the Crossroads."

²¹ Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 180-181; White, *Railroaded*, 399.

²² M. H. de Young, "De Young family business papers, 1877-1991," interview by Ben Macomber, 10 April 1922, container 1: folder 30, The Bancroft Library. University of California, Berkeley.

Fair opened, in May, de Young returned to San Francisco to oversee its recapitulation along the West Coast.²³

National events overtook the celebration in Chicago, jeopardizing the success of the Columbia Exposition and, more importantly, sinking the country into the greatest economic depression it had yet known. As historian Richard White has explained, during the boom of the 1880s, bankers had freely and eagerly invested in the railroads. They looked only for signs of profitability, disregarding or burying information to the contrary, before selling bonds to European investors. With investors pressing for greater returns, the transcontinentals took on more debt, constructing new lines, even as their profits fell. “The railroads,” according to White, “charged full speed into the Panic of 1893.”²⁴ Within weeks of the Chicago Fair’s opening, the Panic of 1893 and the subsequent national bank failures plunged the entire country into a five year economic depression. California farmers felt the economic strain acutely. They had already been struggling under the weight of repeated years of bad harvests and weak agricultural markets. The Panic only compounded their debts.²⁵

Even as California farmers struggled, de Young hoped that the California Midwinter Fair might be a chance to showcase the state’s agricultural products and

²³ “The Life of M.H. De Young: September 30, 1849 to February 15, 1925,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Sensitive to charges that the San Francisco’s Midwinter Fair was simply an inferior encore of the Chicago event, organizers sought to distance their Expo from its Chicago origins, insisting instead that it was about showcasing California’s “natural” advantages. California Midwinter International Exposition, *The Official Guide to the California Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: G. Spaulding & Co, 1894), 13. From a design standpoint, Willis Polk praised the simplicity of the White City, declaring it like a dream, while declaring the San Francisco knock-off “a frightful nightmare.” Polk, “‘Sunset City Discords,’ The Wave, December 2, 1893,” in *A Matter of Taste: Willis Polk’s Writings on Architecture in the Wave*, ed. Richard Longstreth (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1979), 48-50.

²⁴ White, *Railroaded*, 393. See White’s discussion of the causes and outcomes of Panic of 1893 in *Railroaded*, chapter 9.

²⁵ Iglar tells the story of one farmer, Joseph Warren Matthews, who entered the labor market in an effort to hold on to his heavily mortgaged farm, while his wife Rebecca sought to maintain the farm. Iglar, “The Industrial Far West,” 160.

promise. Feeling that the Midwinter title did not adequately convey California's natural advantages, he added the tagline, "The Land of Sunshine, Fruit and Flowers."²⁶ The Fair's location, at the western edge of the peninsula, in the foggy, sand dunes of the Golden Gate Park, seemed to cut against de Young's new branding. De Young, however, as one of the major holders of the parcels of property surrounding the park, was eager for an attraction that might draw people and businesses to the western reaches of the city. Many hoped, as Gray Brechin has discussed, that Golden Gate Park might do for San Francisco's real estate market what Central Park had done for New York's. De Young was among the speculators, who had purchased numerous blocks surrounding the park blocks and now hoped to bolster their value.²⁷

Reaching for all of the available tropes, organizers also proclaimed the exposition the "Commercial World's Fair²⁸," reiterating, yet again, the commercial significance of San Francisco's gateway location. In this iteration, the Golden Gate also took center stage. The welcoming pamphlet told readers, "we lay our treasures at our Golden Gate and ask of other States and nations to bring theirs to lay besides them, and then we extend the hand of friendship and hospitality to all mankind and bid you leave ice and snow and biting air behind and come to us."²⁹ Sculptor Rupert Schmid drew together the Fair's two tag-lines in a ornate fountain, prominently placed in front of the Fair's main building. Atop the fountain, sat the "modern California, young and fruitful--seated upon her

²⁶ M. H. de Young, "De Young family business papers, 1877-1991," interview by Ben Macomber, April 11, 1922, 7, container 1: folder 31, The Bancroft Library. University of California, Berkeley.

²⁷ Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 180-181.

²⁸ Rast, "Tourist Town," 245-247.

²⁹ California Midwinter International Exposition, *The Official Guide to the California Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco*, 18. See also *California Midwinter International Exposition Information for Intending Exhibitors*.

mountain tops, while at her side stands the guardian bear, and at her feet lied the ‘Horn of Plenty.’” One side depicted “Commerce,” while the other displayed “Agriculture,” thereby claiming both for California.³⁰

Meanwhile, for San Franciscans struggling to find work, with national unemployment rates reaching 18 percent, first building the Fair, then staffing it offered workers much-sought after wages.³¹ De Young championed his part, as the Fair organizer, in getting San Francisco’s unemployed men back to work.³² A rival paper, the *Examiner*, saw things differently, complaining that the job-openings at the Fair had drawn job-seekers from all over the country, leaving the city “overrun with women and girls looking for work.”³³ For some, the city inundated with unattached and unemployed women seemed a frightful proposition indeed. Many turn-of-the-century commentators, as historian Joanne Meyerowitz has discussed, came to regard single women, who headed to a city in search of work as “women adrift.” They derided them as the epitome of selfish individualism, criticizing the women for eschewing family and domestic responsibilities by striking out on their own.³⁴

The Midwinter Fair celebrated the miners of ’49, who had shed their reputation for being selfish and hapless, one might even say adrift. Over the last decades of the nineteenth century, many cultural producers had participated in sanitizing and then

³⁰ California Midwinter International Exposition, *The Official Guide to the California Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco*, 33.

³¹ Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 18.

³² “The Life of M.H. De Young: September 30, 1849 to February 15, 1925,” 8; de Young, “De Young family business papers, 1877-1991.”

³³ as quoted by Berglund, *Making San Francisco American*, 200.

³⁴ For a discussion of attitudes towards single, unattached and untethered, women in the city, see Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) and Wood, *Freedom of the Streets*.

celebrating the miner, from winking references to bygone Wild West days during tour of Barbary Coast haunts to Bret Harte's tales of the "Roaring Camp." The Mining Camp of '49 was among the most popular exhibits among fair-goers. It offered visitors a chance to explore "the original huts once occupied by the many time millionaires of to-day," as well as "the early homes of Mark Twain, Bret Harte and John W. Marshall, the first discoverer of gold in California."³⁵ The Mining Camp, then, became a life-size testament to the fortitude and rugged masculinity of the Argonaut, while directly connecting these larger-than-life characters of the past with the city's contemporary commercial elite. San Franciscans' hand-wringing over the single women, who flocked to the city in search of new economic opportunities—a new cohort of "gold-seekers" one might even say,—underscored the highly gendered nature of these celebrations of an individualistic spirit. While turn-of-the-century men, all too often routinized by the expectations of an industrial or managerial job and again by the strictures and expectations of domestic home-life, might embrace individualism to preserve and bolster their own sense of a robust masculinity, when women acted similarly, contemporaries read it as a threat, an aberration, and a dangerous new trend.

De Young, meanwhile, regardless of the supposed undesirables, descending on the city seeking job openings at the Fair attracted, remained unwavering. He fit the Fair within a triumphal narrative arc of the city's economic recovery. "The Midwinter Expo," he concluded, "turned out to be the Savior of San Francisco," and, as its chief

³⁵ California Midwinter International Exposition, *The Official Guide to the California Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco*, 107. See also Barbara Berglund's analysis of the Mining Camp, in *Making San Francisco American*, 189-199.

mastermind, he seemed quite willing to extend this status to himself as well.³⁶ The city's path to economic recovery was, of course, not so linear. In fact, as the Midwinter Fair came to a close on July 4th, a national railroad strike was underway and spreading, reaching Sacramento on June 29th. With workers on strike and Southern Pacific cars at a standstill, the city and region entered into a summer of uncertainty and turmoil.³⁷

Descended from Argonauts

Just four years after the Midwinter Fair, the city's commercial and political elite found yet another occasion to recast and celebrate a mining past and project a bright economic future for San Francisco and California as a whole. This time, they seized on the fifty-year anniversary of Marshall's discovery of gold, commencing a week of Golden Jubilee festivities followed by a month-long Mining Fair. The Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, two social and mutual aid associations comprised of white Californians who could trace ties to the “sturdy pioneers” who arrived before statehood, planned a city-wide celebration.³⁸ As an opening for the week's events, the Golden Jubilee committee found a way to both affirm California's tie to the nation and its distinctive, Argonaut past. They arranged for President William McKinley to open the Fair with a telegraph key at the White House that rang a bell in San Francisco. It was the Vigilantes' bell, who had also, in their own way, sounded it in 1851 and '56 to affirm the city's national ties, its rightful place as an American town.³⁹ After a week of Golden

³⁶ “The Life of M.H. De Young: September 30, 1849 to February 15, 1925,” 8; de Young, “De Young family business papers, 1877-1991.”

³⁷ For more on the strike, see White, *Railroaded*, chapter 10.

³⁸ “California's Natal Day,” *The New York Times*, 11 July 1884.

³⁹ “California Mining Exhibition,” *The New York Times*, 30 January 1898.

Jubilee celebrations, the Mining Fair opened. The Mining Fair schooled visitors on the many different methods of mining, from panning to hydraulic techniques, with the star-attraction being a guided walk through a re-created mining tunnel. Mining Fair organizers invited especially those on their way to the Klondike gold fields, suggesting that San Francisco would, as it had in '49, be the gateway to gold country.⁴⁰

Much like the Midwinter Fair too, the Golden Jubilee offered yet another opportunity for San Francisco boosters to regale visitors with their triumphal vision of the city. As the fifty year anniversary, it became a moment to reflect on and recount the city's history. The coordinators of the Golden Jubilee told the story of a sleepy, Mexican village being awakened by the arrival of industrious Yankees. California, under Spanish, then Mexican, rule, was "a land of slumber, a land where it is always afternoon," according to a former San Francisco *Tribune* editor turned *New York Times* writer. The "mere fact," he continued, "that the American flag floated over California changed all this."⁴¹ Though a seemingly fond portrayal of a simpler time, it was also a imperialistic recounting.

Coming in the midst of the Spanish-American War, boosters recast San Francisco's history as a progressive, teleologic tale, in which the city, in order to reach its full

⁴⁰ Wilson, "California's Jubilee," 167; "The Mining Fair Opens," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 January 1898. Wilson insisted that any man planning to try his luck at the Klondike should plan to visit San Francisco's exhibition first in order to familiarize himself with mining tools and techniques. In an effort to maintain and assert their position as the Golden Gate, San Francisco merchants sought to make San Francisco the outfitting way station for those on their way to the Klondike. The Midwinter Fair also included a Mining Camp, which Barbara Berglund has discussed in *Making San Francisco American*, 185-199.

⁴¹ Noah Brooks, "California's Golden Jubilee." *The New York Times*, 24 January 1898. For other Golden Jubilee histories of a sleepy Mexican town becoming a robust American harbor, see "The Jubilee Begins," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 January 1898 and "The Mining Fair Opens." This was, of course, a complete mischaracterization of life in and the economy of Alta California. As Rosaura Sánchez has explained, "The world of Alta California was no an idyllic 'pastoral' society; on the contrary, it was a cattle-raising, labor-intensive, tallow-and-hide producing economy with a largely 'unfree' labor force made up of Indian men and woman whose ancestors has lived on those lands for generations," in Rosaura Sánchez, *Telling Identities: The Californio Testimonios* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 168.

potential, or for anything of importance at all to happen, had to enter a period under U.S. rule. Though the on-going contests for Manila and San Juan remained unspoken, they too, these many accountings of San Francisco's history seemed to suggest, might only become industrious, magnificent cities if given a chance to prosper under the American flag.

While the city's sleepy, Spanish past was something to smile at, it was not something to celebrate.⁴² Instead, boosters reserved their praise for the days under U.S.-rule, when, San Francisco "developed by American energy into the most important city of the Pacific shore, has now taken a new impetus of growth and has before it a more brilliant future than the most sanguine of its founders dared anticipate."⁴³ While the Golden Jubilee was a moment to look back, it was, just as much, a moment to look ahead. As one verbose writer proclaimed, "with one hand pointing proudly to the first half century of her life of simple origin, California pauses to-day on the threshold of her future with a heart full of courage and self-reliance."⁴⁴ Those at the Golden Jubilee seemed to have reached a consensus, while the state's history lay in gold mined from the ground, its future lay in the gold it grew. Writing for a national audience in the months following the Jubilee, Stanford University president David Starr Jordan declared, "but it is not gold alone that in California has dazzled men with visions of sudden wealth. Orange groves, peach orchards, prune orchards, wheat-raising, lumbering, horse-farms, chicken-ranches, bee-ranches, seal-poaching, codfishing, salmon-canning,--each of these

⁴² Pheobe Kropp has examined the romanticization of the Spanish past and the cultural work it accomplished, explaining that for Anglo Americans it was a way of celebrating a preindustrial era, while also championing narratives of progress. For Californios, meanwhile, it was a means of responding to and protesting their displacement. Kropp, *California Vieja*, chapter 1.

⁴³ Keeler, *San Francisco and Thereabout*, 9.

⁴⁴ "The Jubilee Begins."

has held out the same glittering possibility.”⁴⁵ Lady California, then, pointed not only to a dazzling past, but also seemed to be ushering in a brilliant future.

The Golden Jubilee, ultimately, offered a chance to draw together and put on display many different circulating tropes about San Francisco, past, present, and future. As a celebration of the fifty-year old discovery at Sutter’s Mill, it offered yet another chance to laud and showcase the reclaimed and sanitized ‘49er. No longer the hapless, greedy, and lawless miner, derided by many during the 1850s, the Argonaut, remembered fondly during the 1890s, was ruggedly masculine, independent, upwardly mobile. Likewise, while gold itself had proved a volatile foundation for the state’s early economy, resulting in repeated boom and bust cycles and a disheartening slump during the mid-1850s, fifty years on, the Jubilee presented a straight-forward account of the promise of gold. With Jubilee events that looked to both the past and future, boosters definitively linked the state’s past metallic wealth with a future based on agricultural riches. “Golden grain and golden fruits” will be, an *Overland Monthly* writer promised, “greater than that dug from the ground.”⁴⁶

To complete the cultural and economic transfer from gold dug from the ground to gold grown in it, California boosters recast the farmer’s lineage, much as they had refashioned the miner’s. No longer an antidote to the miner’s recklessness, farmers became instead the natural and inevitable descendants of the Argonaut. “The gold-seekers, the ‘Argonauts,’ the ‘men of ’49’” were not, according to a pamphlet writer for

⁴⁵ David Starr Jordan, “California and the Californians,” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1898, 797.

⁴⁶ S. G. Wilson, “California’s Jubilee,” *Overland Monthly*, February 1898, 167.

the Midwinter Fair, “a race apart from us, to be speculated about with idle curiosity and amused interest, they were our forefathers.”⁴⁷

This teleologic history, remade genealogy, and mixing and mingling of mineral and agricultural metaphors, converged in a jingoistic celebration of the Anglo American settler. “The best crop we raise in California is our crop of men and women,” one newspaper writer declared with self-congratulation.⁴⁸ More than simple parochialism, casting the Anglo farmer as the progeny of the Anglo miner, reinforced the progressive narrative of San Francisco becoming American. In this retelling, Anglo farmers legitimized their claim to the land and its riches. In so doing, they erased the Miwok and Ohlone, who had called the Bay Area home, and the Californio rancheros, who had parceled out the land. They instead declared themselves as the new rightful owners. They eclipsed the pivotal role of Chinese farm workers and vegetable vendors too, whose labor helped turn California into an agricultural landscape, both by working the land and distributing its fruits. They instead echoed the sentiments of the 1852 Foreign Miners’ tax, which had sought to claim the riches in newly-acquired California, fresh from the hands of Mexican leadership, as the purview of Anglo settlers.

⁴⁷ California Midwinter International Exposition, *The Official Guide to the California Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco*, 16.

⁴⁸ “City’s Visitors are Given Generous Welcome at Receptions at which Prominent Residents of San Francisco are Hosts,” *San Francisco Call*, 21 October 1903.

*“First thing that meets the Eye”*⁴⁹

For those who ferried over for the 1894 Midwinter’s Fair or the 1898 Golden Jubilee, a rather pedestrian shed, first built in 1875, greeted them.⁵⁰ Derided by many as barn-like, it continued to link Bay Area travelers, and to a lesser extent overland visitors, to the city—cultivating a commuter culture of laborers, shop girls, and clerks while reasserting connections between surrounding communities and the city’s commercial center.⁵¹ It fell short, however, of asserting the larger regional dominance San Francisco’s commercial and political elite hoped to convey. The Ferry House should, according to one commentator, assert “links between the metropolis and the outer world,” rather than simply being “the peculiar property of the thousands of commuters” on their way to “suburban homes.”⁵² So, with boosters’ unrelenting proclamations of San Francisco as the “center of commerce” and “natural emporium of the West,” Harbor Commissioners, at the end of the 1880s, sought once again to secure the necessary support and funds to remake the ferry landing, this time proposing a building that might solidify to boosters’ visions of grandeur.⁵³

⁴⁹ “Ferry Buildings,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 February 1889.

⁵⁰ By the 1890s, three railroads crossed the continent and regardless of which route visitors took, they had to cross the Bay by Ferry for their final leg. Taliesin Evans noted in *All About the Midwinter Fair, San Francisco, and Interesting Facts Concerning California*. (San Francisco: W.B. Bancroft & co., 1894), 25.

⁵¹ Benjamin Lloyd offered a detailed description of the ferry-boat riders, noting the mechanics, clerks, bankers, and merchants who crossed the Bay each day, in Lloyd, *Lights and Shades*, 391-392.

⁵² “The New Ferry House,” *Pacific Rural Press*, 22 April 1893.

⁵³ Dickie, *The Commerce of San Francisco*, 15; BSHC, *Report*, 1899, 10.



Figure 19. “The Old Oakland Ferry Building, 1890.” *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

They desired a building that could more easily accommodate the increasing ferry traffic and symbolically evoke San Francisco's prime, gateway location. As such, the depot should be beautiful as well as utilitarian, since, as many insisted, it “will be the first thing which will meet the eyes of hundreds of thousands of people on their first visit to San Francisco.”⁵⁴ San Francisco's new Ferry building, the city's commercial elite hoped, would signal the city's shift from a local and regional hub to a national and transnational marketplace. As the “gateway to the metropolis of the Pacific,” as one author declared and the “gateway of America, the portal through which flows the travel and the

⁵⁴ “Ferry Buildings,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 February 1889.

commerce of the Occident and the Orient,” according to another, the new Ferry Building, many hoped, would project and embody the city's standing as a preeminent harbor.⁵⁵

While the Harbor Commissioners petitioned the State legislature to secure the necessary funding for the project, the Southern Pacific Company sought to secure their own place along the docks. Echoing, in many ways, Leland Stanford's 1875 attempt to claim the Market Street wharf for Central Pacific's exclusive use, they proposed taking over the project and constructing their own private Ferry Building.⁵⁶ Though the city and state government had long-relied on private corporations to build and maintain the waterfront infrastructure, they had retained the ownership of the property. Southern Pacific owned dock-space in the southeastern, industrial section of the city. Thus, SP's dogged campaign to construct the Ferry Building was likely an effort to secure a foothold along the most-prized waterfront property in the city. The California legislature, meanwhile, refused to give in, insisting that the building would be state-owned, with the various ferry and railroad companies paying rental fees to the State. Many, nevertheless, feared it would remain public in name only, with Southern Pacific successfully manipulating the State into building a terminal for SP's exclusive use and benefit. These fights over who would control the waterfront and the use of public money to further private gain played out in the months before voters decided whether or not to allocate money for the construction of a new Ferry House.⁵⁷ Despite voters' misgivings about SP's

⁵⁵ “The New Ferry Depot,” *Commercial News-Annual Review*, 1898; “A Palatial Ferry Building,” *San Francisco Evening Post*, 23 December 1896.

⁵⁶ Charles E. Naylor, “The Ferry Passenger Depot,” *Overland Monthly*, February 1897; William Doxey, *Doxey's Guide to San Francisco and the Pleasure Resorts of California* (San Francisco: W. Doxey, 1897), 89.

⁵⁷ “The Ferries Building,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 August 1892; “The Depot Act,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 November 1892.

role in the new depot, the state legislature and then voters (by a small margin) approved \$600,000 for waterfront improvements and the construction of a new Union Depot and Ferry-house in 1892.⁵⁸

The Harbor Commission appointed Arthur Page Brown, a young San Francisco architect, to design and oversee construction of the depot.⁵⁹ Brown proposed a two-story building, 840 feet in length (although it was later shortened to 660 feet as a cost-savings measure), with recurring arches reminiscent of Roman aqueducts extending its length and a central bell tower, modeled after a Spanish cathedral, rising from the center.⁶⁰ He proposed an equally impressive interior, with a large, expansive nave, opening into side rooms where ticket offices, baggage areas, waiting rooms, and office space would be located.⁶¹ The building would span six ferry slips, with four devoted to Southern Pacific's East Bay ferries and two reserved for North Pacific's Marin lines.⁶² Late in 1895, just before construction got underway, Brown was seriously injured in a carriage accident and died a few months later. Before his death, he appointed Edward R. Swain to take over as the supervising architect of the project.⁶³

With \$600,000 allocated for materials and building costs, construction companies and building suppliers clamored for contracts. Meanwhile, the Harbor Commissioners and

⁵⁸ Whereas the 1863 bill, which formed the BSHC, stipulated that they should use the wharfage fees they collected for maintenance and harbor improvement projects, because of the magnitude of this project they sought a special bond. "The Depot Act"; Nancy Olmsted, *The Ferry Building* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1998), 11.

⁵⁹ Page had already designed the California building for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, as well as buildings and homes throughout the city, so seemed like fitting choice to design the city's gateway. Among those working in his firm were two young architects, Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck, both of whom later participated in large-scale municipal projects. For more on the history of the Ferry Building, see Olmsted, *The Ferry Building*.

⁶⁰ As Nancy Olmsted has noted, Page modeled the bell tower on that of the Seville Cathedral in Spain. Olmsted, *The Ferry Building*, 11-13.

⁶¹ "Ferry Depot Waiting-Room," *San Francisco Examiner*, 1 December 1896.

⁶² "The Big Depot," *San Francisco Call*, 20 January 1893; "The New Ferry House."

⁶³ "A Palatial Ferry Building," *Evening Post*, 23 December 1896.

the Governor's Office fought over the power to grant contracts and control the construction budget. After considerable delay and a Supreme-court hearing, the court upheld the Harbor Commissioners' power to issue contracts.⁶⁴ Controversy continued, however, as companies competed for the Commission's favor. The masonry company with the lowest bid, for example, proposed facing the Ferry Building with Oregon gray stone. After drawn-out negotiations, the BSHC granted the bid instead to a company promising to use Colusa stone from a nearby quarry. They argued that California's celebrated entryway should be built with state materials by local workers. This led to yet another stand off, this time with the Stonecutters' Union. In an effort to recover the many months of lost time, the Commission sought to mandate a ten-hour work day. The Stonecutters' Union objected, citing California's eight-hour workday. *The Chronicle* took a decidedly anti-Union position, ridiculing the stone cutters as childlike, as a "few men fooling around with the few granite blocks."⁶⁵ The BSHC, meanwhile, insisted on the Californianness of their new gateway, at the expense of the working conditions for actual Californians.

The unending power struggles and delays left travelers navigating "the dirty, old-fashioned, grimy" Ferry House. Many grew impatient with the delays and blamed the Harbor Commission.⁶⁶ Some feared that the project would languish, "never to be

⁶⁴ "The Union Ferry Depot Building, A Six Hundred Thousand Issue," *Chronicle*, 3 March 1896; "Harbor Commission Upheld by the Law," *Chronicle*, 19 March 1896; "Editorial," *San Francisco Call*, 21 March 1896; "Harbor Commissioners' Report."

⁶⁵ "Against Colusa Stone," *San Francisco Call*, 1 April 1896; "Rushing Work on the Ferry Depot," *San Francisco Call*, 16 July 1896; "Depot Scandal," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 1 March 1897; "Work on the Ferry Depot," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 March 1897.

⁶⁶ "A Depot to be Proud of," *San Francisco Call*, 18 January 1898. The *Bulletin* in particular reported on the traveling publics' growing impatience with the delays. See, for example, "Depot Scandal"; "Harbor Board Scandal," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 14 January 1897.

anything but an outline of iron bars against the sky,” as one *Bulletin* editorial bemoaned.⁶⁷ Nearly two years after groundbreaking, as questions swirled about the contracts, costs, and delays, several of the city's newspapers began to examine every facet of the construction process, revealing graft and corruption at every turn. *The Call*, hoping to bolster its muckraker bona fides, was especially persistent. Together, city papers uncovered evidence of kickbacks for contracts, swapping building materials for cheaper alternatives, and patronage, speculating that the State, and therefore Californians, had been robbed of at least \$100,000, with the final project costing over one million dollars (and \$400,000 over budget).⁶⁸

In response to the rampant accusations and public disgust (and likely still resentful that the Commissioners had triumphed over the governor's office in the contracts battle), the governor of California, James Budd, appointed Major Harney to the Harbor Commission to be a voice for reform.⁶⁹ Mocking the newest member's reform agenda, as well as his powerlessness against the deep-rooted graft, *The Wasp* portrayed Harney with “his new weapon” against corruption—a broom. Portrayed as fussy and effeminate, *The Wasp* issued a classed and gendered critique of the reform-minded Commissioner.⁷⁰ In the fall of 1898, a grand jury reviewed the BSHC's actions and ruled

⁶⁷ “Editorial,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 23 February 1897.

⁶⁸ “Editorial,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 18 March 1897; “Incompetent or Corrupt,” *News Letter*, 19 February 1898; “More for Pine than they asked for Oak finish,” *San Francisco Call*, 15 March 1898; “Editorial: Scapegoats not in demand,” *San Francisco Call*, 18 March 1898; “Work that will stand Criticism,” *San Francisco Call*, 29 March 1898; DeWitt, *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir and Guide to San Francisco*, 47.

⁶⁹ “Editorial.”

⁷⁰ Adam Rome, in “‘political hermaphrodites’: Gender and Environmental Reform in Progressive America,” explores effeminization as a “well-established trope of political denigration,” focusing on the use of this trope to undermine the nascent environmental movement during the Progressive era. Rome, *Environmental History* 11, no. 3 (July 2006). See also Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), chapter 1.

that they had acted fraudulently, at the loss of at least fifty thousand dollars to the State and about ten percent of the project's total budget.⁷¹ By the time their ruling came down, however, the depot had been open nearly three months and San Franciscans were ready to enjoy their new "gateway." As the embodiment and manifestation of the city's newfound commercial prominence and national importance, however, it seemed to be an inauspicious start.



Figure 20. "Ferry Building." *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

As the Harbor Commission intended, the Ferry Building quickly became the central convergence point in the city, both physically and imaginatively. Just "as 'all

⁷¹ "Grave Charges Sustained by the Grand Jury," *San Francisco Call*, 23 September 1898.

roads lead to Rome,” one author cleverly quipped, “all ferry lines center at the foot of Market street, and all street railways radiate from that point.”⁷² Emerging from the Ferry Building, Charles Keeler recognized himself to be at the intersection of the “city highways,” with freight docks spreading out on either side, while “bells are clanging on cable cars, newsboys are piping the sensation of the hour,” and “hurrying of the crowd” scuffled along the cement walks.⁷³

While, like Keeler, nine-tenths of all those who entered San Francisco passed through the Ferry Building, not everyone was welcomed through its doors.⁷⁴ Under the Exclusion Act and its 1892 renewal, Chinese immigrants, arriving by steamship, could not land at the passenger dock. They first had to be approved by a “Chinese inspector,” an immigration official charged with ensuring that the prospective immigrant met the criteria or, in other words, that working-class Chinese immigrants did not gain entry. With no designated place for these inspections, steamships often passed Chinese passengers from ship to ship until an inspector came aboard to approve or deny their entrance. After relying on makeshift solutions for over sixteen years, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company—the company responsible for most of the traffic between San Francisco and China—established a detention facility at a distant wharf, well away from the passenger and commercial activity of the waterfront. The Ferry Building, intended as the first thing visitors, or more accurately white American and European visitors, would see, opened that same year. For many Chinese visitors and immigrants, however, an overcrowded and

⁷² “The New Ferry Depot.” *Commercial News-Annual Review*, 1898.

⁷³ Keeler, *San Francisco and Thereabout*, 34.

⁷⁴ California Promotion Committee, *San Francisco and Its Environs*. (San Francisco: California Promotion Committee, 1903), 19.

unsanitary “detention shed” greeted them instead. While most Chinese immigrants eventually gained entrance into the country, some were held for months in the shed before being deported or finally allowed to enter.⁷⁵

With, as one observer suggested, fifteen to twenty thousand visitors passing through the depot daily, or as another described, “streams and counterstreams of humanity hurry in and out and round about,” the Harbor Commission remained actively involved in the daily operation of the New Ferry Building.⁷⁶ In 1875, they had been unsuccessful in their attempt to change the tenor of the passenger docks; with the opening of the new building, however, the Harbor Commission insisted on closely regulating who would greet arriving passengers. Shoe-shine and paper-stand operators, seeking to solicit travelers within the Ferry Building, had to apply for the privilege. One such enterprising owner of a bootblacking business proposed placing twenty shoe-shine stands throughout the depot, each staffed by “a particularly pretty Italian girl” dressed in a costume of “Turkish bloomers, sailor caps with red tassels and close-fitting jackets.” The Women’s State Federation for Public Good, objected and proclaimed the “bloomer-girl bootblacks” a “disgrace to our City” and antithetical to the public good.⁷⁷ The Harbor Commission agreed, possibly seeing the pretty, costumed bootblacks as too reminiscent of the costume-wearing, pretty waiter girls who filled the concert saloons and dance halls of the

⁷⁵ Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10–11.

⁷⁶ Carey, *By the Golden Gate*, 34.

⁷⁷ “Bloomer Girl Bootblacks,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 20 August 1898; President’s Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:617, California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California; “Along the Water front,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 30 August 1898. Marshall notes the popularity of boot-blacks, crediting the obsession among wealthier San Franciscans with having their boots resemble “looking-glasses.” He also discussed the competition for customers among those working as bootblacks, in *Through America, or, Nine months in the United States*, 267-268.

Barbary Coast—a site from which the Harbor Commission had sought to distance the landing docks for over twenty years.⁷⁸

To ensure order, they also secured a Harbor Police force, dedicated to monitoring the Ferry Building and surrounding wharves.⁷⁹ Chinese travelers were especially likely to face scrutiny. Based on a sole accusation, for example, the Harbor police locked up a Chinese man, without evidence or even knowing the man's identity. Another group under close surveillance were those suspected by the Harbor police to be confidence men and pickpockets, who, despite all efforts to keep them away, had flocked to the new Ferry depot.⁸⁰ As such a self-consciously symbolic site, the Harbor Commission and Harbor Police monitored it closely, hoping to craft the impressions of the thousands of visitors entering the “gateway” city.

Fruit in Jars, Fruit in the Bay

Throughout the 1880s, as the commercial center of the city shifted slightly to the south, along Market Street, business at the wholesale Colombo Market nevertheless remained robust. It drew on and reinforced the much-longed for regional and national networks, serving as a way-station for produce coming from farms in the city and the central valley, while also providing a distribution point for local and distant retail markets. Italian-American farmers maintained their hold on the business at Colombo, with some moving exclusively into the distribution business to become fruit commission

⁷⁸ Asbury offers a detailed description of the Barbary Coast's "pretty waiter girls" in *The Barbary Coast*, 107-108.

⁷⁹ "News of the Waterfront," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 September 1904.

⁸⁰ "Pickpockets Find many Easy Victims," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 May 1903; "Tell thier Troubles to the Policemen," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 April 1905; "Arrested on Suspicion," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 May 1900.

merchants.⁸¹ Even with business strong, a considerable amount of fruit at both the Colombo wholesale market and nearby public markets, such as the Clay Street Market, went to waste. While fruit distributors and buyers haggled over prices, harvests sat and began to rot. At other times, everything ripened at once, creating a glut at the markets. To avoid over-saturating the market and driving down prices, farmers and distributors resorted to dumping their fruit into the Bay. Though farmers in and surrounding the city had carefully carted their goods to market and farmers from the interior had loaded their produce onto trains headed to city markets, the precious golden produce could, nevertheless, become refuse bobbing in the Bay.⁸² “Golden fruit,” abandoned in the Bay, became even more disheartening in the 1890s, as farmers struggled against repeated bad seasons and the lasting effects of the crash of ‘93. Some farmers began to wonder if they needed another avenue for distribution.

The Harbor Commissioners, meanwhile, facing the ongoing costs of maintaining the seawall and the aging and rotting piers began considering ways increase their revenue. They proposed shortening the period of time that goods could remain on the pier free of charge and increasing the wharfage fees.⁸³ With the '95 harvest season eminent, an organization of produce wholesale-dealers, the San Francisco Produce Exchange, declared their opposition to the new fees. They predicted that if the BSHC raised its rates,

⁸¹ “Italian Market. Vegetables Sold by Genoese in Picturesque Attire.”

⁸² DeWitt, *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir and Guide to San Francisco*, 34. As Richard Orsi has noted, despite all of the efforts to remake California’s semi-arid landscape into a horticultural one, one of the biggest issues was not supply but demand. After all that farmers, developers, scientists, and railroad officials had done to make California into a productive agricultural landscape, the next goal was to create consistent, reliable markets for the new, cash crops. Oris, *Sunset Limited*, 317.

⁸³ President’s Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:613, California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California; BSHC, *Harbor Rules, Regulations, and Rates* (Sacramento: A. J. Johnston, Supt. State Printing, 1893).

the San Francisco port would lose business to other ports.⁸⁴ The Board of Trade, a state-wide merchants' association founded in 1877 and dedicated to promoting and publicizing the state's farming and mining industries, sent representatives to eastern cities to shill for California's "golden fruit."⁸⁵ They sought to secure east coast buyers for California produce, thereby bolstering San Francisco's significance as a much-needed marketplace for the state's goods. All of this work would be for not, the San Francisco Produce Exchange warned, if the BSHC increased shipping rates.

While wholesalers, boosters, and the Harbor Commissioners fixated on distant markets for California's produce, Bay Area and inland farmers recognized the need for a robust local economy as well. Some came to believe that a free public market would provide much needed relief. They wanted another outlet for their produce that was, like the Colombo Market, at the junction of waterfront transit routes. And, like Colombo, the farmers wanted a space with the basic infrastructure of a market, with stalls for storing, displaying, and selling their goods. Twenty years before, the Colombo Market had offered just the service farmers now sought. It had begun as a space that connected small farmers with retail buyers and restaurateurs, but it had since become a key part of the city's wholesale fruit district. Farmers again wanted their own dedicated selling space, a place free from the middlemen and commission houses who now dominated Colombo.

⁸⁴ To T. C. Friedlander, Secretary S.F. Produce Exchange, from Secretary, Board of State Harbor Commissioners, 12 July 1895, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:687, California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California. The San Francisco Produce Exchange began as a mutual aid society in 1880, under the *Articles of incorporation and By-laws of the San Francisco Produce Exchange Mutual Benefit Association* (San Francisco: C.A. Murdock & Co., 1880).

⁸⁵ Frederick H. Hackett, ed., *The Industries of San Francisco: Her Rank, Resources, Advantages, Trade* (San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Co, 1884), 19; DeWitt, *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir and Guide*, 21.

San Francisco's wholesale fruit market, as historian Deanna Gumina has described, "was a rough one with tough, cold-eyed, and seasoned veterans buying and selling."⁸⁶

Commission houses, as they grew more profitable, began offering farmers much-needed advances, for seeds, farm equipment, or irrigation system improvements. While farmers' desperately needed the loan, these advances also left them indebted to the Commission House and struggling to return to profitability. Adding further insult, many farmers regarded the commission men as parasites who illegitimately profited from the farmers' own hard work.⁸⁷

A *public* market, then, would enable farmers to find their own buyers and maximize their returns on their produce. They envisioned a public market also as a means of reaching local customers, thereby enabling producers could find buyers for their ripest and most fragile goods—goods that would never survive transport or even a few days sitting the produce commissioners' warehouses.⁸⁸ The farmers also wanted a *free* public market, insisting that the BSHC should waive their wharfage fees; a move that would, they promised, make San Francisco port a favorite for farmers and shippers alike.

While the commission merchants spent the '95 fruit season campaigning against the Harbor Commissioners' proposed wharfage increase, several farmers' associations, including granges, fruit exchanges, creamery collectives, and farmers' clubs, began

⁸⁶ Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930*, 103.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 101; Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage*, 69; Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 360.

⁸⁸ The *Chronicle*, in fact, chastised farmers for too often foisting their over-ripe and rotting produce upon the San Francisco market. The *Chronicle* hoped that with a free market on state property, the market would have an inspector, responsible for ensuring the quality of the produce for sale. See "The Honest Fruit-Grower," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 July 1897. Chicago, as Orsi has noted, functioned as a warehouse and distribution center for most of the nation's produce. Because of the distance to Chicago and the lag time within the supply chains, much of the produce went bad. See Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 317-318.

mobilizing an organized campaign to fight for a Free Public Market.⁸⁹ Resentful of the profits collected by parasitic urban middlemen and responding to several years of economic hardship, some farmers formed cooperatives, including Granges or the California Fruit Growers' Exchange. With a cooperative, farmers banded together to advertise, distribute, and sell their produce, eliminating the role of produce merchants. The cooperative, in turn, returned all of the profits, minus operating costs, to the participating farmers in proportion to the goods they supplied.⁹⁰ A free public market, then, was part of this larger effort to cut out the middlemen. Farmers' collectives argued that a free public market would benefit both producers and consumers, by enabling producers to get fresher produce to consumers faster, while offering consumers easier access to higher quality foods at lower prices.⁹¹ Insisting that the market would be good for small rural growers and San Franciscans alike, one East Bay farmer made a promise that had the ring of a rallying cry: "Give us a free market and we will give you good wholesome fruit and vegetables."⁹²

As a possible site for their new, free and public, market, farmers proposed the blocks just above the Market Street wharf, between Davis, Drumm, Pacific, and Vallejo Streets.⁹³ This seemed to be an ideal spot, near the flow of pedestrian traffic from the

⁹⁰ Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 362-363; Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage*, 74-76.

⁹¹ "The Water Front Market," *San Francisco Call*, 21 January 1898; "Vegetables will find a Free Market", 14 July 1898; "Farmers' Club Meeting"; President's Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records. F314:614.

⁹² President's Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records. F3413:614.

⁹³ "Senators Talk of the Free Market" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 February 1899.

Ferry Building and near the exchange point for produce at Jackson Street Wharf.⁹⁴ The Jackson wharf served as the main produce dock; it was the place where dockworkers unloaded ships carrying cargo from inland farmers and commission merchants orchestrated its sale and export. In requesting space just north of the Ferry Building, the farmers sought to position themselves perfectly between two of the waterfront's key uses, that of commercial shipping and passenger transportation, angling to take advantage of both. With a new Ferry Building underway, however, the Market Street dock took on greater significance, and the BSHC was not about to give coveted dock-space over to the produce merchants or farmers without a fight. In response, farmers' associations, fruit wholesalers, and Southern Pacific entered the fray.⁹⁵

Railroad giant Southern Pacific supported the farmers in their campaign. It was not a natural or easy alliance, but as the primary rail company bringing fruits from the interior of the State to the water's edge, they had much to gain.⁹⁶ Southern Pacific's current loading docks were nearly two miles from the wholesale produce district and the

⁹⁴ According to the Harbor Commission, 83 percent of fruit, vegetables, and perishables that entered the city was unloaded at the docks between the Jackson Street Wharf and the ferry wharf at Market Street. The rest of the produce, which was handled by Southern Pacific Company, was landed at Third and Townsend. BSHC, "Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners: For the Two Fiscal Years Commencing July 1, 1896, and ending June 1898," (Sacramento: A.J. Johnston, Superintendent State Printing, 1899), 9.

⁹⁵ "A Free Fruit Market," *San Francisco Examiner*, 22 April 1896; "They Want a Free Market," *Evening Post* 27 May 1897; "Farmers' Club Meeting," *San Francisco Call* 15 December 1897.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the long-standing distrust and resentment among farmers towards SP, see William Deverell's discussion of the Mussel Slough tragedy. Several farmers squatted on SP land, refusing to leave; the standoff eventually culminated in a shoot-out that left six people dead. At the time of the debate over the Free Market, Frank Norris's fictional account of the event had just been published. Though farmers were resentful of SP's power and ability to set freight rates, the railroad did seek to promote California's agricultural economy—less to aid farmers than to increase the amount of goods shipped and, therefore, their own profits. SP encouraged farmers to join Granges, finding it much more efficient to deal with a collection of farmers rather than each individual farmer forging their own shipping arrangements. See Deverell, *Railroad Crossing*, 56-57; Frank Norris, *The Octopus: A Story of California* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1901); Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, chapter 12.

Jackson Street wharf.⁹⁷ A free market, however, offered a chance for SP to secure dock-space to load and unload their produce cargo right in the heart of the docks dedicated to shipping produce, and better yet, without wharfage fees. If granted greater access to the wholesale fruit district, they would be able to “double the fruit and vegetable business,” they promised.⁹⁸ Though their efforts to single-handedly construct, and therefore control, the new Ferry Building failed, the public market seemed to offer another means by which Southern Pacific might gain access to and control over coveted wharves at center of the commercial activity.⁹⁹

Despite farmers' and Southern Pacific's requests, the Harbor Commission refused to allocate a dock near the Ferry Building for the Free Public market. They simply would not give up the wharfage rates or dock space in the very heart of the city's waterfront. Not only would they lose revenue, by turning over the city's most-profitable docks to the farmers, but the BSHC would also be responsible for the infrastructure of the market and its up-keep, making it yet another drain on their limited budget.¹⁰⁰ The BSHC instead proposed a market at Fisherman's Wharf, nearly a mile away and, as SP point out, not on the rail line. If Fisherman's Wharf became the terminus for produce, SP would have to transfer the goods brought by rail from the interior onto ferry boats to reach the wharf,

⁹⁷ This is why Southern Pacific so eagerly supported the Free Market. It offered them a chance to secure dock space at Jackson Street, right in the heart of the produce import-export business. BSHC, “Biennial Report,” 1899, 9.

⁹⁸ President's Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records. F314:614.

⁹⁹ “Free Market Location May not be Assigned”; “Free Market for Produce,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 April 1898; “A Free Market More in Favor,” *San Francisco Call*; “President's Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:616.

¹⁰⁰ “The New Free Market,” *The Wave*, 3 April 1897; “A Public Market,” *San Francisco Examiner*, 28 January 1897.

resulting in delays and additional expense.¹⁰¹ Both the farmers and SP continued to press for dock space near the Ferry Building and the commercial heart of the city.

The commission merchants and shipping companies, meanwhile, were vehemently opposed to the new Free market, which threatened to cut them out of the food distribution networks all together. They charged SP with trying to “deprive them of their bread and butter.”¹⁰² Another commission merchant declared, “Let then open a free market,” confident that “then the farmers would come to the conclusion that we are not the robbers they thought we were.”¹⁰³ The most vehement opposition came from the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, owned by the prominent shipping company Goodall, Perkins, & Company. They also oversaw the Pacific Coast Railway Company, and between their steam and rail companies, they controlled much of the coastal trade from Alaska to San Diego.¹⁰⁴ Goodall, Perkins, & Co. held the dock proposed as the site for the Free Market. If required to give up their dock space, they threatened to relocate to Seattle, bringing, of course, their business with them.¹⁰⁵

The city newspapers remained unsympathetic to the produce merchants, joining instead the farmers and Southern Pacific in the fight for a free market. The *Bulletin*, for example, presenting itself as the voice of the people—the San Francisco consumer and

¹⁰¹ “The Free Market: A Question as to the Best Location,” *Evening Post*, 30 March 1897; “A Free Market More in Favor” *San Francisco Call*, 29 April 1896.

¹⁰² Draft of a letter from the Permanent Committee, representing producers, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:617, California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

¹⁰³ “A Free Market for Fruit Dealers” *Chronicle*, 25 December 1895.

¹⁰⁴ Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco 1865-1932*, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Draft of a letter from the Permanent Committee, representing producers, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:618, California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California; “Senators Talk of the Free Market” *Chronicle*, 14 February 1899; “Insurance Maps. San Francisco, California, Vol. 1” (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1905), 3.

the Sacramento Delta farmer—sought to spur the Commission to action, reminding them, “The fruit season is now at hand... Unless the free market is established immediately we will have the annual trouble over gluts and will witness fruit floating oceanward on the tide.”¹⁰⁶ Despite the *Bulletin* writers’ efforts to spur the BSHC into action, another fruit season came and went.

As the debate lagged on and the city papers surfaced evidence of corruption and graft in the construction of the Ferry House, the writers’ took a more accusatory stance. Many charged BSHC with yielding to powerful commission merchants, who did not want to lose their monopoly over the fruit trade. The *Chronicle*, for one, insisted that BSHC “members truckle to powerful corporate influences in a manner that is difficult to reconcile with any assumption that they are faithful and impartial administrators.”¹⁰⁷ Charges of graft had long plagued the BSHC. In 1873, the first large scandal broke, implicating two of the three commissioners, one of which was Jasper O’Farrell, who had prepared the 1847 survey of the city. O’Farrell died before beginning his sentence; his fellow commissioner, however, served seven years for embezzlement in the San Quentin State Penitentiary. Many of the Commissioners had perviously worked for the major shipping companies and retained ties to their former employers. In 1883, the state legislature passed new regulations, including a mandate that forbid Commissioners from holding an interest in the business of the port.¹⁰⁸ Though legislators had sought to clean

¹⁰⁶ “Wanted, A Free Market,” *San Francisco Bulletin*, 8 May 1897.

¹⁰⁷ “Harbor Board and the Free Market,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 March 1899; “Free Market Location May not be Assigned,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 February 1899; “They Want a Free Market,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 May 1897.

¹⁰⁸ Nash, *State Government and Economic Development*, 215-220.

up the Commission, many continued to suspect Commissioners of holding ties to shipping companies, seeking bribes, or serving their own business interests.

The BSHC, in many ways, found themselves between two corporate powers—the shipping companies and fruit commissioners, who sought to retain their stronghold of the produce market, and SP, who sought dock space and to circumvent the wholesalers. The produce merchants and shipping companies, characterized in the fruit market debate as the powerful, corporate enemy, sought to reframe the debate. They sought to remind the public of SP's octopus-like nature, its desire to wrap its tentacles around the state-owned docks. Once SP secured dock space for perishable goods, one produce wholesaler charged, the railroad company would undoubtedly remain there, even if the free market failed.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps fearing that the commission merchants' charges might turn public opinion against the market, SP representatives left the farmers associations to take the lead in the fight for dock space. Possibly, they reasoned that public support would be greater if they positioned themselves alongside the farmers as David and left the fruit commissioners and the BSHC to serve as Goliath.¹¹⁰ The farmers acknowledged their support for SP's request for additional dock space, insisting that they simply wanted a Free Market and the necessary dock space allocated for *any* transportation company that served their farmers.¹¹¹ The BSHC, nevertheless, remained inert, siding with the produce commissioners through inaction.

¹⁰⁹ "Free Market Location May not be Assigned," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 February 1899.

¹¹⁰ "Harbor Board and the Free Market," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 March 1899.

¹¹¹ "Draft of a letter from the Permanent Committee, representing producers," President's Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records, F3413:617.

Seeking to usurp the Harbor Commission's oversight of the port, the farmers' associations took their campaign to the state legislature. Receptive to the farmers' arguments, in 1897, the state legislature passed a bill that approved a market along the waterfront, dictating that "Harbor Commissioners shall set aside a sufficient number of docks, divided into stalls, which shall be occupied by producers only, free of charge, for the sale of perishable products arriving in this city by water or rail."¹¹² Additionally, they stipulated that the market was to have precedence over other projects when the BSHC allocated the Harbor Improvement Fund.¹¹³ Believing that they had succeeded in securing a market, farmers began flooding the BSHC office with applications for a space at the eagerly-anticipated Free Public Market.¹¹⁴

The legislature and governor failed, however, to take the key step of designating actual dock-space. Though the state government sided with the farmers in passing the Free Market bill, they, like the BSHC, did not want to upset Goodall, Perkins, & Company, so left the matter of a location for the market unaddressed.¹¹⁵ The Harbor Commission, despite the passage of the bill, continued to be stubbornly inert. Farmers' groups demanded that the Harbor Commission comply with the state legislation and allocate dock-space, while the Harbor Commission continued to undermine the project through inaction.¹¹⁶ In going to the state legislature, and re-opening the fight among

¹¹² "The New Free Market," *The Wave*, 3 April 1897.

¹¹³ Voget, "The Waterfront of San Francisco," 106.

¹¹⁴ President's Correspondence 1863-1915, Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records. F3413:616.

¹¹⁵ "Vegetables will find a Free Market," *San Francisco Call*, 14 July 1898; "Free Market Location May Not Be Assigned," *Chronicle*, 15 February 1899.

¹¹⁶ "Harbor Board and the Free Market," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 March 1899.

municipal and state agencies for control over the waterfront, the Farmers' associations undoubtedly further alienated the BSHC.

The new Ferry Building, meanwhile, opened. Even as they filibustered a working produce market, the Commissioners approved elaborate displays of Californian fruits and flowers in the expansive nave of their new Ferry Building. The State Board of Trade, headquartered on the third floor of the Ferry Building, created a permanent exhibit of the "fruits and products of California." They filled glass jars with apples, pears, grapes, oranges, lemons, and grapefruits "the size of one's head" and then invited travelers and tourists to admire the "beautiful and widely varied resources of California's soil."¹¹⁷ The Ferry Building became a space in which to showcase "a hint of what the 'Wild West' can produce."¹¹⁸ Whereas San Franciscans had, during the 1850s, sought to distance themselves from an all-too-present "Wild West," insisting that San Francisco was as safe and sophisticated as any other American city, they now celebrated their "Wild West" past—or, at least, a re-imagined "Wild West," sanitized, domesticated, and epitomized by the diligent farmer who tilled his fields and reaped "golden fruits" as a reward.

Rather than acquiescing to a Free Public market and the accompanying stains, smells, rotting produce, and, perhaps above-all, the visual evidence of struggling California farmers, the Harbor Commission instead sought to maintain tight control of

¹¹⁷ As Frederick H. Hackett has noted, the Board of Trade organized in 1877 to protect and promote the business interests of its members, in *The Industries of San Francisco: Her Rank, Resources, Advantages, Trade* (San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Co, 1884); For examples of the Board of Trade's displays and events, see DeWitt, *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir and Guide to San Francisco*, 21; California Promotion Committee (San Francisco, *San Francisco and Its Environs.*, 51; "Some of the Sights of San Francisco," *Sunset*, July 1899, 91; "Pythian Carnival Week Opens With Oratory in Ferry Nave," *San Francisco Call*, 12 August 1902; "City's Visitors are Given Generous Welcome at Receptions at which Prominent Residents of San Francisco are Hosts.," *San Francisco Call*, 21 October 1903.

¹¹⁸ "Some of the Sights of San Francisco," 91.

their newly renovated wharf. They envisioned creating a manicured boulevard in front, catering to picnickers and holiday crowds rivaling Golden Gate Park. Willis Polk, one of the building's designers, proposed a peristyle and arch, in the hope of creating an aesthetically coherent landscape for the Ferry Building that would encompass the visitor in a Beaux Arts wonderland.¹¹⁹ His plan would have set the Ferry Building apart, neatly cordoning off the passenger depot from the waterfront's many other uses. His proposal failed, however, because in separating the Ferry Building, it would have also bisected the Beltway Railroad. Central to Arnold's 1878 plan for the waterfront, the Beltway Railroad ran the length of the Embarcadero and transported goods between wharves—though construction on the waterfront rail line did not actually begin until 1890.¹²⁰ With the failure of Polk's plan for setting the Ferry Building apart, the waterfront's many uses remained less segregated; they continued to bump up against and compete with one another.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ "Ferry Building - Peristyle & Arch at the foot of Market Street," Willis Polk Collection, (1934-1), Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design. University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California.

¹²⁰ Crobett, *Port City*, 38.

¹²¹ Still seeking a solution 10 years later, the BSHC painted a "white line" on the stone pavement in front of the Ferry Building to "make the limits of encroachment by canvassers, hotel runners, hackmen, newsboys and expressmen." Now, the *Chronicle* promised, "the traveling public may pass to and from the ferries without molestation or annoyance," See "Commuters Come and Go in Peace," *San Francisco Chronicle* 22 November 1907.



Figure 21. Edward H. Mitchell, *The Ferry Building - San Francisco, Cal.*, Postcard.

Despite their reticence to sully the Ferry Building grounds, the BSHC still needed to find a way to comply with the 1897 state law mandating a free public market. In 1899, they finally declared that “all wharves and bulkheads at which fruit, perishable products, etc., are now landed, shall constitute a Free Public Market.”¹²² They did not, in accordance with the law, provide the proper infrastructure for the market place. As expected, the produce, fish, and poultry from the nearby wharves spilled onto the ferry slips and passenger walkways. “There is nothing more offensive than the smell which greets the nostrils of the traveling public every afternoon arising from the coops of chickens and ducks and the boxes of decaying fish which crowd passageways,” the *Chronicle* charged, calling on the BSHC to take action.¹²³ As they sought to navigate the

¹²² BSHC, “Biennial Report,” 1899, 9.

¹²³ “Misuse of the Ferry Landing,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 November 1902.

many uses of the waterfront, the BSHC found themselves satisfying almost no one: the farmers still wanted their market, while passengers wanted a clean transit depot. The fruit commissioners, who maintained their stronghold on the market, were likely the only ones pleased with the BSHC's continued inaction. The farmers' associations again went to the state legislature, hoping this time to secure a bill that would stipulate dock space. The state again supported the free market, granting both money for the project and a one-year deadline for establishing a market.¹²⁴



Figure 22. Charles Weidner, *A Busy Day at the Docks*, Postcard, 1905.

The Board of Trade, meanwhile, continued to claim, at least the interior of the Ferry Building as a showcase space, highlighting the best of the city and always ready for

¹²⁴ "Farmers Watch with Interest the Plan for a Public Market," *San Francisco Call*, 18 January 1903; "Free Market Bill is Passed," *San Francisco Call*, 13 February 1903; "Another Free Market Bill," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 February 1903; "No Site for Free Market," *San Francisco Chronicle* 9 April 1903; "Free Market to Relieve the Consumers" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 September 1907.

events. During the fall of 1903, the Board of Trade, for example, hosted an American Bankers' Association convention. Conventions were among the Board of Trades most recent schemes for promoting the city. Municipal promoters declared San Francisco a Convention City, an easy and natural meeting place, with four transcontinental railroads to transport visitors and hundreds of hotels and restaurants to delight.¹²⁵ In the name of promoting the city, no claim seemed too grand. As the U.S. made new territorial claims, annexing Hawai'i and the Philippines, for example, one *Sunset* writer declared, "California, now in the middle of Uncle Sam's possessions, is our country's natural vacation ground."¹²⁶ While the city's hospitality industry enjoyed the infusion from convention attendees, hosting the American Bankers' Association held the added advantage of possible long-term gains for the city. The Board of Trade welcomed the representatives from financial institutions across the country with the hope that by displaying California's fruits, cereals, wines, and sunshine, the bankers would return to their midwestern and eastern towns and offer more loans to farmers setting out for California.¹²⁷ Though the Board of Trade members made bold claims about San Francisco as the new commercial center, the city remained, as it had from the start, reliant on east-coast investors. Reaching bankers had always been a key part of the Board of Trade's strategy, but whereas they had earlier sent representatives east, they now sought

¹²⁵ W. A. Bissell, "San Francisco as a Convention City," *The Overland Monthly*, August 1904, 105-107.

¹²⁶ James R. Day, "A California Vacation," *Sunset*, August 1904, 349.

¹²⁷ "City's Visitors are Given Generous Welcome at Receptions at which Prominent Residents of San Francisco are Hosts." The California Promotion Committee, an organization made up of the city and state's commercial leaders and also housed in the Ferry Building, worked alongside the Board of Trade. They likewise sought to encourage the "homeseeker, orchardist, farmer, mechanic, dairyman, stockraiser, and manufacturer" to make California their home. Charles Sedgwick Aiken, *California Today, San Francisco, Its Metropolis* (San Francisco: California Promotion Committee of San Francisco, 1903).

to bring their audience west.¹²⁸ The 1903 Bankers' convention was one of many events hosted by the Board of Trade, with the goal of promoting the city and attracting both migrants and investors. Through celebrations of the dignified Argonaut, and his farmer progeny, and the state's "golden" grains and fruits, encased in glass, the BSHC and the Board of Trade sought to mask the underlying fragility of the agricultural economy and manifest a new, commercial dominance for the state.

While farmers' associations, the BSHC, the Board of Trade, and the traveling public all negotiated and navigated the many uses of the waterfront, the city's fruit dealers had, at least for the time being, secured their place as the linchpin of the Golden Gate. The Free Public Market—little more than wharves overrun with produce—remained ineffectual. The commission merchants oversaw and orchestrated the movement of produce and nuts from California, as well as the west coast farmlands more generally, to South America and Europe.¹²⁹ It was a profitable business. Much like William Ralston, who had begun the Bank of California in 1864, with silver pulled from the Comstock lode, Amadeo P. Giannini parlayed his success as commission merchant and lender into the Bank of Italy. He opened the bank, which would later become the Bank of America, in October 17, 1904.¹³⁰ For Giannini, and a few other commission merchants, "golden grains" and "golden fruits" was much more than simply an evocative metaphor.

Photographer and San Franciscan Edward Mitchell, meanwhile, reiterated the trope, finding his own new novel way of circulating "California's Golden Product." He

¹²⁸ From 1888-1890, the Board of Trade partnered with Southern Pacific for two "California on Wheels" lecture tours to promote California and its produce. Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 324.

¹²⁹ Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco*, 101-103.

¹³⁰ For more on Giannini and his bank, see Gerald D. Nash, *A.P. Giannini and the Bank of America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

designed and printed postcards, first fairly straight-forward pictures of the state's bountiful oranges.¹³¹ Then, starting in 1909, he produced his "Mammoth" fruits and vegetables series, with oversize fruit loaded atop Southern Pacific freight beds. Across the top, he included a blank for the sender to fill in, giving the writer a chance to personalize the card. "I'm sending you a lemon from *Berkeley*," or, "A mammoth pear from *Sebestapol*," they might say.¹³² With his "Mammoth" fruit series, then, Mitchell seemed to reconcile and harmonize the many players in California's fruit trade, affirming boosters big claims, while celebrating local farmers and Southern Pacific role as shippers. Even the fruit-eating customer could take part, by sending the card and telling of California's bounty. The loathed commission merchant, meanwhile, found no place in Mitchell's depiction.

¹³¹ Edward H. Mitchell, *California's Golden Product*, Cardstock Printed, 5.5 in high x 3.5 in wide, Oakland Museum of California.

¹³² Edward H. Mitchell, *I'm Sending you a Lemon*, Cardstock Printed, 3.375 in high x 5.5 in wide, Oakland Museum of California; Edward H. Mitchell, *A Mammoth Pear From*, Cardstock Printed, 3.375 in high x 5.5 in wide, Oakland Museum of California; Edward H. Mitchell, *A Carload of Cabbage*, Cardstock Printed, 3.375 in high x 5.5 in wide, Oakland Museum of California; Edward H. Mitchell, *A Carload of Blackberries*, Cardstock Printed, 3.375 in high x 5.5 in wide, Oakland Museum of California.

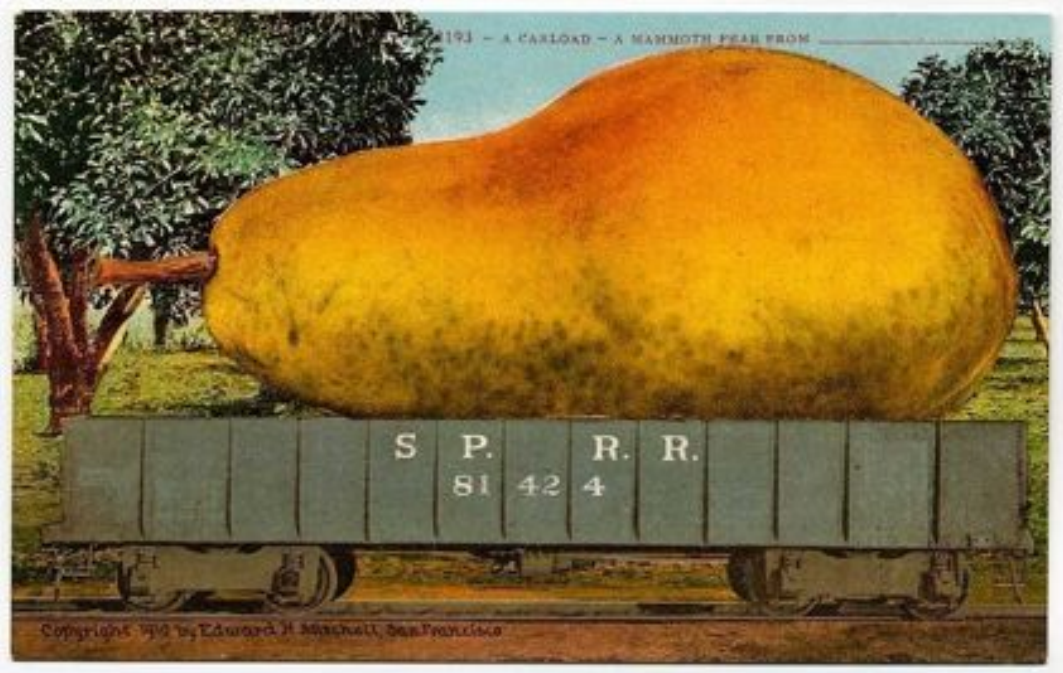


Figure 23. Edward H. Mitchell, *A Carload - A Mammoth Pear from _____*, Postcard, 1910.

Finally, in April, 1908, over ten years after farmers began their campaign, the BSHC designated a portion of the seawall lot at Drumm and East Street for a free public market and constructed the necessary sheds.¹³³ The election of a new board finally broke the standstill. “Goods will be freer and cheaper for the masses of the people,” the *Chronicle* celebrated.¹³⁴ Sebastopol farmers, located about fifty miles north of the city, cheered too and made arrangements to ship large quantities of produce to the San Francisco market.¹³⁵ Growers from the East Bay, Sonoma, Santa Cruz, and Monterey all sent goods to the new market.¹³⁶ Finding that some customers, especially San Francisco

¹³³ BSHC, “Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Fiscal Years Commencing July 1, 1906, and ending June 30, 1908,” (Sacramento: W.W. Shannon, Superintendent of State Printing, 1908), 26.

¹³⁴ “Free Market to Relieve the Consumers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 September 1907.

¹³⁵ “Farmers Pleased with Free Market Scheme,” *San Francisco Call*, 16 June 1908.

¹³⁶ “Shipments to Free Market are Increasing in Quantity,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 June 1908.

women, did not want to trek down to the waterfront for their goods, a group of Sonoma farmers even expanded their operations. They turned the Free Market at Drumm and East Street into a distribution center for a new retail market space they established in the residential Western Addition neighborhood.¹³⁷ As of June, the Market seemed to be a success, with both happy customers and enthusiastic farmers.

By the end of the season, however, the fruit dealers had successfully reasserted their place in the city's food supply lines. Both the *Chronicle* and *Call* accused the commission merchants of sabotaging the Free Market by buying up the best goods, leaving only bruised and overripe produce behind in an effort to undermine consumers' trust that they would be able to find quality goods at the Free Market. Others suggested that producers simply grew lazy and started sending low quality produce to the market.¹³⁸ San Franciscans also complained about the limited selection at the Free Market, though this was part of the agreement made between farmers and the BSHC. The Harbor Commissioners demanded that all of the goods at the Public Market be direct from farmers and not supplemented with wholesale purchases from more distant farmers. This rule limited the selection to whatever nearby farmers' had recently harvested.¹³⁹ Either way, the customer base had apparently dwindled, and when, in anticipation of the 1909 season, the BSHC raised the cost of retail space at the Free Market, rental fees set by the

¹³⁷ "Branch of Free Market Opened," *San Francisco Call*, 26 August 1908; "The State Free Market" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 July 1908; "To Com From Farm to Table," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 June 1908.

¹³⁸ "Shipments to Free Market are Increasing in Quantity," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 June 1908; "Farmers Pleased with Free Market Scheme," *San Francisco Call*, 16 June 1908; "Has to Abolish the Free Market" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 February 1909.

¹³⁹ "The State Free Market," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 September 1908.

BSHC to cover their operating costs, several farmers pulled out.¹⁴⁰ By February 1909, BSHC declared the Free Market a failed experiment; they immediately began soliciting plans to turn the market space into office space.¹⁴¹

Free Trade Under the Rule of Exclusion

“With the dawning of the 20th century there are but two great questions confronting the people of the American Union,” the Board of Trade proclaimed. “These are,” they declared, “the acquisition of new territory and the extension of our commerce.”¹⁴² San Franciscans had long debated what type of town San Francisco should be, seeking, through those debates, to carve a particular place of importance for their city. With, as the Board of Trade saw it, the national agenda set—the acquisition of new territories and markets—the business association next asked: “what has San Francisco to expect of the future?” Of course, they had an answer. San Francisco, they proclaimed, “is not only the commercial center of California, but is the metropolis of the Pacific Coast with no rival on ten thousand miles of coast line. The terminus of four transcontinental lines of railroads connecting her with the States east of the Rockies, and having through the

¹⁴⁰ “Experts Employed by Harbor Board,” *San Francisco Call*, 29 January 1909; “Free Market is not a Success,” *San Francisco Call*, 30 January 1909; Voget, “The Waterfront of San Francisco,” 106.

¹⁴¹ “Has to Abolish the Free Market” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 February 1909. The tension between the city’s wholesale fruit dealers and Bay Area farmers over distribution networks continued. When what is often called the city’s first farmer’s market opened at Alemany in August, 1943 (spurred in part by the challenges of canning fruits due to aluminum restrictions brought about by WWII), wholesalers again sought to shut down the free market. For a history of the Alemany Market, as well as a discussion about the relationship between farmers and commission merchants, see John G. Brucato, *The Farmer Goes to Town: The Story of San Francisco’s Farmer’s Market* (San Francisco: Burke Pub. Co., 1948); W. T. Calhoun, H. E. Erdman, and G. I. Mehren, *Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market*, United States Department of Agriculture: Bureau of Agricultural Economics in cooperation with University of California College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station (Berkeley, 1943). “Box 425: Farmer’s Market of San Francisco materials, 1948-1965,” William Jackson Losh Collection, California State Library.

¹⁴² California State Board of Trade, *The City of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Mysell-Rollins Company, 1900), 19.

Golden Gate direct communication with all the principal ports of the world.”¹⁴³ San Francisco's advantages and bright future were, as they saw it, self-evident. A year earlier, one of the city's leading political-satire magazines, *The Wasp*, had drawn on and distorted the popular 1870s trope of the city as a site of equal exchange. They instead portrayed San Francisco as “Queen of the Pacific,” proudly looking upon diminutive representatives from other countries, who bore gifts to submissively lay at her feet.¹⁴⁴ With a slightly more measured tone, the Board of Trade made similar claims. They insisted that foreign trade with China, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and other Pacific Islands made San Francisco an ideal city for imports.¹⁴⁵ According to these municipal boosters, from Board of Trade members to promotional magazine writers, San Francisco presided over a commercial empire, at the center of which lay the Golden Gate, becoming both the evidence of and justification for increasingly bold proclamations about San Francisco as an Imperial City.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴⁴ “San Francisco sits by the Golden Gate Receives the Tribute of the Orient,” *The Wasp*, 1899.

¹⁴⁵ California State Board of Trade, *The City of San Francisco*, 21.



Figure 24. “San Francisco sits by the Golden Gate Receives the Tribute of the Orient.” *The Wasp*, 1899. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

Despite their limited purview, the Board of Trade members saw their organization as integrally involved in realizing the national agenda. They could, they believed, set about extending San Francisco's commercial purview. In this way, they advanced a municipally-particular register of imperial ambition—ridiculous, grandiose, and unfeasible—but nevertheless powerful rhetoric. San Francisco's imperial designs far exceeded U.S. geopolitical boundaries, pulling the Philippines (even before U.S. occupation), other Pacific Islands, Japan and China within the city's grasp.¹⁴⁶ Writers pontificated about the “unrivalled advantages” of “modern metropolis of the Western empire,” with a “magnificent bay” at her feet, in which “all nations may ride at

¹⁴⁶ Chen, “In Their Own Words,” 119. According to Richard Walker, “San Francisco capitalists especially coveted the Philippines.” Walker, “At the Crossroads,” 79.

anchor.”¹⁴⁷ They rambled on about San Francisco's command over the “riches of Alaska, the commerce of China and Japan, the wealth of the Sandwich Islands and of the Philippine Archipelago as well as the products of the South Seas.”¹⁴⁸ Through the promise of the Golden Gate, the Board of Trade made bold proclamations about the city's supposed unique advantages, its “direct communication with all the principal ports of the world.”¹⁴⁹ The municipal imperial metaphors mixed and mingled, reaching a crescendo at the turn of the century.

The very purpose of creating a showcase waterfront was to assert and affirm San Francisco's position as the preeminent harbor, the commercial entrepôt, and, above all, the gateway to the Pacific. It was the concrete expression of the city's gateway-standing. Yet, even as they worked to strengthen the city's commercial importance, San Francisco's political and merchant elite simultaneously worked to uphold and extend the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which had been renewed by the Geary Act in 1892. Chinese officials and merchants, meanwhile, argued that Chinese Exclusion profoundly disrupted trade relationships with China. Though both acts included a provision for Chinese merchants, the limited and self-interested nature of the merchant's clause could hardly assuage the affront it posed to Chinese officials in San Francisco, who sought to secure greater rights for Chinese nationals living in the city.

In 1901, in anticipation of the Geary Act's 1902 expiration-date, San Francisco mayor, James D. Phelan and the Chinese Consul Ho Yow met to publicly debate the

¹⁴⁷ William Doxey, *Doxey's Guide to San Francisco and the Pleasure Resorts of California* (San Francisco: W. Doxey, 1897), 14; California State Board of Trade, *The City of San Francisco*, 21.

¹⁴⁸ Carey, *By the Golden Gate*, 290.

¹⁴⁹ California State Board of Trade, *The City of San Francisco*, 20.

“Chinese Question.” Consul Ho had previously stated his position, declaring, “In all, the situation and prospects of California’s trade with China are encouraging. It needs only a kindly and generous spirit manifested toward the Chinese people, a disposition to trade on broad grounds and not to stigmatize our people by harsh laws violently administered.”¹⁵⁰ As historian Yong Chen has explored, social, cultural, and political ties connected Chinese nationals living in San Francisco and those in China, and many in China regarded the mistreatment of Chinese immigrants in San Francisco as a sign of disrespect to the nation of China.¹⁵¹ Phelan, who had made Chinese exclusion his hallmark issue, remained, nevertheless, unyielding. “We would exceedingly regret that our domestic policy of exclusion should interfere with the freedom of our trade. But if it comes to be a matter of choice between trade and the free admission of coolies, we would certainly sacrifice our trade,” Phelan insisted.¹⁵² Though, by 1901, Phelan’s popularity was slipping, he had been elected mayor three times by the city’s white, working-class Democrats.¹⁵³ As with the Sandlottery twenty years earlier, the anti-Chinese stance carried with it a critique of monopolistic power too; it was within this framework that San

¹⁵⁰ California State Board of Trade and Ho Yow, Chinese Consul General, “Commercial Prospects of the United States and China,” in *The City of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Mysell-Rollins Company, 1900), 49.

¹⁵¹ When the Geary Act was upheld, many in China responded by boycotting U.S.-made goods. Though the boycott was economically ineffective, it strengthened cultural ties between China and Chinese Americans. More than anything, it offered hope for Chinese San Franciscans that conditions might eventually improve; some began to think that working for a politically stronger China might be an effective strategy for making conditions better in San Francisco too. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943*, chap. 6.

¹⁵² James D. Phelan, “Debate on the Chinese Question-With Imperial Chinese Consul Ho Yow, at the Unitarian Club, San Francisco, Cal., November 25, 1901,” in *Addresses by Mayor James D. Phelan, San Francisco, 1901*. (San Francisco: Cubery, 1901), 60. While Phelan’s anti-Chinese stance had always been popular, anti-Chinese feelings among white San Franciscans had been reignited in the previous several months, when a Chinese San Franciscan died of the bubonic plague. Municipal public health officials responded by issuing a quarantine, and, as Nayan Shah and Susan Craddock have discussed, the racialization and medicalization of Chinese San Franciscans reinforced one another. See Craddock, *City of Plagues*, chapter 4 and Shah, *Contagious Divides*, chapter 5.

¹⁵³ Kazin, *Barons of Labor*, 45; Ethington, *The Public City*, 403; Brechin, *Imperial City*, 188.

San Francisco Democrats, like Phelan, fit together their vehement anti-Chinese politics with demands for free trade, both at home and abroad.

At the turn of the twentieth century, declared by so many as the Pacific century, the Ferry Building created a grand welcome for those coming to San Francisco from the Bay Area and beyond. Meanwhile, a dirty, shabby shed at the Pacific Mail Docks continued to greet some of the furthest visitors and immigrants—those arriving from China. “The existing shed,” according to the *Call*, “was built down to the suppose a level of Asiatic coolies” and now “shames our civilization.” They advocated for an immigration depot to replace the shed, proposing it be built on Angel Island, a small, federally-owned island in the Bay. Once the home of Miwok Indians, Angel Island had long been a site of empire building. Christened *Isla de los Angeles* by Spanish, it served as a military training site for U.S. military men engaged in campaigns against Indians and then as a hospital for troops returning from the Spanish-American war.¹⁵⁴ The *Call* especially liked the island as a location for the new immigration station, since it allowed no means of escape. Clearing the “noisome detention shed” from San Francisco’s piers and relocating it on Angel Island, they insisted, would “better represent the civilization which is the boast of our people.”¹⁵⁵ Phelan, meanwhile, embraced the idea. A dedicated Immigration Station, he argued, made the Chinese Exclusion Act all the more palatable. Still a detention center, the Immigration Station would, nevertheless, cleaned-up and sanitize the

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion of Angel Island’s contested and imperial history, especially the ways more recent iterations of the island have served to erase its violent past, see Haley Michaels Pollack, “Angel Island Remembered: Place and Memory in the San Francisco Bay,” Western Historical Association Conference, Oakland, California, 15 October 2011.

¹⁵⁵ “An Immigrant Depot.”

distasteful aspects of Chinese Exclusion, by bringing Station into accordance with the Progressive-Era preoccupations with doctors in lab coats and bunk beds in tidy rows.

In keeping with the same desire to contain, order, and regulate, order, relocating the shed in an effort to perfect and reify the Golden Gate, seemed to be an ideal solution. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Golden Gate had become a highly regulated opening. Even as the city's economic elite hoped that goods would flow out freely, finding an "Open Door" in China, they tightly regulated the people and commodities welcomed through San Francisco's Golden Gate.

*"Earthquake Love"*¹⁵⁶

Just before dawn on April 18th, 1906, movement along the San Andreas fault shook the city, growing in intensity and lasting for almost a minute. The earthquake ruptured gas and water lines, starting fires throughout the city while cutting off the water supply needed to put out the blaze. Smaller fires converged, creating a massive blaze that engulfed much of the city. Carrying what they could, many San Franciscans made their way to gatherings in parks and public squares or to the Ferry Building to escape the city. With little water to squelch the fire, city firefighters, aided by soldiers stationed at the Presidio, battled the flames. In an effort to create a firebreak and contain the flames, city, military, and fire department leaders leveled several buildings with dynamite. Not surprisingly, this had the adverse effect of spreading the destruction. Three days later, fire

¹⁵⁶ Gertrude Atherton, "San Francisco and Her Foes," *Harper's Weekly*, 2 November 1907, 1590.

fighters finally arrested the conflagration. The city lay in ruins: “four square miles of ashes and mortar-cruled bricks.”¹⁵⁷

Immediately following the quake, those who could left the city. The Ferry Building became a gathering place for refugees, eager to catch the next ferry out. On the night of the temblor, dime novelist Charles Morris described, Chinese men and women sleeping on pallets next to exhausted white women at the Ferry Building.¹⁵⁸ Only under the most extreme circumstances, he suggested, could such a scene occur. Couching the disaster’s disruption of social and racial hierarchies instead as a city-wide sense of good feeling, Gertrude Atherton described the same phenomenon as “earthquake love.”¹⁵⁹ Descriptions of “earthquake love” and the blurring of social, racial, and gender boundaries became a common trope among writers describing the aftermath of the disaster. The “white man of California forgot his antipathy to the Asiatic race,” according to one chronicler, while another maintained that “native sons” worked “side by side with 'greasers' and Chinamen” to subdue the flames.¹⁶⁰

Amidst many proclamations of “earthquake love,” city leaders began immediately to restore the city’s racial and class divides. The relief committee, called to action by Mayor Eugene Schmitz, established refugee camps throughout the city, where they provided shelter, food, and clothing for the newly homeless. Rather than providing aid to

¹⁵⁷ Frederick Palmer, “San Francisco Rising Again,” *Collier’s: The National Weekly*, 19 May 1906, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Morris, *The San Francisco Calamity*, 89.

¹⁵⁹ Gertrude Atherton, “San Francisco and Her Foes,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 2 November 1907, 1590. For more stories of “earthquake love,” see Simpson, “Delights of Cooking When your Kitchen the Street Curb, your Stove is an Armful of Bricks, Your Larder Holds one days Supply”; “Jerome Hart Interviewed on the Future of San Francisco,” *The Argonaut*, 28 April 1906, 4; Miriam Michelson, “The Destruction of San Francisco,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 5 May 1906, 624.

¹⁶⁰ Charles Morris, *The San Francisco Calamity by Earthquake and Fire: A Complete and Accurate* (Philadelphia: W.E. Scull, 1906), 101; Edwin Emerson Jr., “Handling a Crisis: How Affairs in San Francisco Were Controlled by Men Who Knew Just What to Do,” *Sunset*, July 1906, 24.

all former San Francisco residents, however, they deemed caring for Chinese and Japanese American refugees to be the responsibility of the Chinese and Japanese governments. Conversely, the relief committee considered Italian, Spanish, and Mexican nationals, to be within the city's purview for aid.¹⁶¹ While chroniclers, like Charles Aiken, liked to declare that “in this one day all class distinctions were leveled,” the leveling, to the extent that it existed at all, was only momentary.¹⁶² In the hours after the quake, wealthy San Franciscans had many more opportunities to flee the city.¹⁶³ Furthermore, within two weeks of the disaster, relief organizations sought to “eliminate able-bodied males from consideration.”¹⁶⁴ “For,” as commentator Frederick Palmer wrote, “any one with a practical knowledge of humanity will understand that you will not urge some types of workmen toward employment when you feed them free.”¹⁶⁵ Relief organizations, meanwhile, directed their efforts towards the more affluent neighborhoods north of Market street, even though the poorest population, and those who had incurred the greatest losses, lived south of Market and in the Mission district. The relief organizations

¹⁶¹ For stories discussing the treatment of Japanese and Chinese San Franciscans, see “Japanese Care for Refugees,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 May 1906; “Plan for New Chinatown,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 April 1906; “Chinese Colony at Foot of Van Ness,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 April 1906; “New Chinatown Near Fort Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 April 1906; Jerome Hart, “San Francisco’s Chinatown,” *The Argonaut*, 12 May 1906. See also Andrea Davies Henderson’s discussion, in “Reconstructing Home: Gender, Disaster relief, and Social Life After the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1915” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2005), 169-175.

¹⁶² Aiken, “Greetings from the Publishers,” 5; Searight, *The Doomed City: A Thrilling Tale*, 19; “Editorial,” *The Pacific Unitarian*, May 1906, 234; Morris, *The San Francisco Calamity by Earthquake and Fire*, 98; Gertrude Atherton, “San Francisco’s Tragic Dawn,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 12 May 1906, 660; E. E. Bowles, “Incidents of the Earthquake and Fire which Impressed Me Most,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 May 1906.

¹⁶³ As Andrea Henderson has noted, the stories of social leveling were more a product of the press than the relief lines. She, for example, has recounted the story of one woman who escaped to the Presidio in her limousine and was immediately greeted by someone offering help. Henderson, “Reconstructing home,” 59.

¹⁶⁴ “Japanese Care for Refugees.”

¹⁶⁵ Palmer, “San Francisco Rising Again,” 19. See also W. D. Sohler and Jacob Furth, *Report to the Massachusetts Association for the Relief of California* (San Francisco, 1906), 5.

sought, undoubtedly, to return everyone to their pre-earthquake station.¹⁶⁶ Though a poignant and favorite description, “earthquake love” was no doubt fleeting.

Not only was “earthquake love” fragile, temporary, and often nonexistent, but, in more profound ways, the stories of “earthquake love” reinforced the already circulating stories of a meritocratic, mythic West, even as provisions and relief were meted out in ways that reinforced and entrenched the city’s social and racial hierarchies. The earthquake and fire as a leveling event harkened back to stories of the city’s early days, when, at least according to legend, men of all nations gathered to try their luck at the gold mines or gambling tables. This miner, who during the 1850s, had antithetical to the city’s stability and future, had been, over the course of the 1880s and 90s sanitized and remade. He was now the hope and future of the city. As the city lay in ruins, many argued that San Franciscans still possessed and could draw upon the spirit and skills of '49, evoking the Argonaut as a “a strong, self-reliant, generous body of men.”¹⁶⁷ Though two generations had passed, authors insisted that the the pioneer bloodlines remained strong

¹⁶⁶ Philip L. Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 211.

¹⁶⁷ David Starr Jordan, “California and the Californians,” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1898, 797; Anna Pratt Simpson, “Delights of Cooking When Your Kitchen the Street Curb, Your Stove is an Armful of Bricks, Your Larder Holds one days Supply,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 May 1906; Palmer, “San Francisco Rising Again,” 20; Morris, *The San Francisco Calamity by Earthquake and Fire*, 93; Frank W. Aitken and Edward Hilton, *A History of the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco: An Account of the Disaster on April 18, 1906 and its Immediate Results* (San Francisco: The Edward Hilton Co, 1906), 4; Eugene E. Schmitz, “San Francisco,” *For California: San Francisco Number*, September 1906, 4; John A. Gray, “San Francisco and the ‘spirit of the West’,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 12 May 1906, 665; Mary Austin, “The Temblor: A Personal Narration,” *Out West: A Magazine of the Old Pacific and the New*, June 1906, 499; Louis Whitcomb, “Incidents of the Earthquake and Fire which Impressed Me Most,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 May 1906.

and pure, connecting the “old pioneers of the Golden Days” with “the sons of the Reconstruction.”¹⁶⁸



Figure 25. “With the Might and the Faith of their Fathers.,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 May 1906.

¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth Haight Strong, “San Francisco’s Upbuilding,” *Sunset*, December 1906, 115; Bradford Leavitt, “What San Francisco Stands for To-day,” *Sunset*, April 1907, 546; Paul Pickney, “Lessons Learned from the Charleston Quake,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 May 1906; Charles Sedgwick Aiken, “San Francisco’s Upraising,” *Sunset*, October 1906, 309.

In this way, the earthquake and fire, a seemingly dramatic moment, functioned more as a continuity than a rupture. As the relief committee worked to return the city to normal, they also worked to restore the pre-quake social hierarchies. Boosters, likewise, used the disaster to reaffirm the city's links to its Argonaut past. In a surprising twist, at the moment of the quake, the board of supervisors had been considering a new plan for the city, prepared by Daniel Burnham, the architect behind Chicago's White City.¹⁶⁹ He had proposed expanding park and public spaces, building new thoroughfares, widening boulevards, and designating a civic center. One month after the fire, with the city leveled, the *New San Francisco Magazine* happily proclaimed, "Now the way is clear for Mr. Burnham and the New San Francisco!"¹⁷⁰ Michael de Young, speaking as one of the city's largest real estate holders, sought to thwart large-scale, tax-supported redesign of the city, recognizing that municipal projects would require individual landowners to turn over portions of their property to the city as well as pay higher taxes. He instead supported a straightforward and speedy reconstruction of the city's downtown district, championing the "plain, common-sense of our best business men" over a municipally-orchestrated design.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Daniel H. Burnham, assisted by Edward H. Bennett. *Report on a Plan for San Francisco*. Presented to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors by the Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco (San Francisco: Sunset Press, 1905).

¹⁷⁰ "San Francisco Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *The New San Francisco Magazine*, May 1906, 22. See also, Moffett and Gould, "An Ideal San Francisco: Some Preliminary Sketches of the Burnham Civic Plan," 13; Atherton, "San Francisco's Tragic Dawn," 660; Howard, "The Rebuilding of the City," 534; Irvin, "The Reconstruction of San Francisco," 742; "Predicts very Beautiful City," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 May 1906.

¹⁷¹ "Proposed Street Changes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 April 1906 as quoted by Kevin Rozario, in "What Comes Down Must Go Up: Why Disasters Have Been Good for American Capitalism," in *American Disasters*, ed. Steven Biel (New York University Press, 2001), 87. See also Jerome Hart, "Will San Francisco be remodelled?," *The Argonaut*, 12 May 1906; French Strother, "The Rebound of San Francisco," *The World's Work*, July 1906, 7788.

The port also played an important role in the city's return to its pre-quake state. Though fires had leveled much of the city, the port remained largely intact, though improvements and repairs were needed. Merchants and promotion associations began even to talk about improvements, as they rushed to rebuild everywhere else along pre-quake lines.¹⁷² The Golden Gate played an important symbolic role in the city's recovery as well. On the first anniversary of the disaster, California's Governor James Gillett lauded the efforts by the city's commercial elite, praising them for "building upon the ruins of the old a greater, a grander, a more magnificent city--a city such as should guard the Golden Gate and be the metropolis of this Western Empire."¹⁷³ The city's laborers held their own celebratory event, in which they too lionized San Francisco as "the throbbing heart of this vast empire."¹⁷⁴ While San Franciscans largely agreed on the city's imperial ambitions, questions of how to manifest the city's gateway standing along the waterfront continued. Many major fights were, in fact, still to come.

¹⁷² Crobett, *Port City*, 59-60.

¹⁷³ "Governor Gillett Presented to the Assembly," *Merchants' Association Review*, May 1907, 5.

¹⁷⁴ "Union Men Laud Pluck," *The Call*, 19 April 1907.

Epilogue

Echoes and Aftershocks: Remaking Old Tropes for New Futures

In a building that was itself conceived of as a concrete expression of the city's gateway ambitions, a new exhibition opened in the second floor of the Ferry Building in 1924. "Paradise in Panorama," an 18-by-600-foot map, ran nearly the entire length of the building. Proclaimed the "largest relief map in the world," it showcased the state in all of its bounty and splendor.¹ Drawing on U.S. Geological Survey maps, sculptors, geographers, engineers, carpenters, and electricians worked for a year and a half, designing and building the map. They constructed it from cloth, wire, plaster, paint, rocks, and sand, and even set the lighting to match the time of day.² Whereas tourists to the 1870s city had trekked to the Cliff House to get their bearings, the Ferry Building now offered new arrivals an immediate overview of the state. Already considered the city's most universally recognized landmark, with a 70-ton map of the state filling its second floor, for visitors the Ferry Building's symbolism and significance must have been inescapable.³

¹ "Paradise in Panorama," *The Los Angeles Times*, 3 January 1928.

² "Paradise in Panorama"; Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 269.

³ Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 268.

Though the Ferry Building continued to hold a symbolic place of importance in the cityscape, its heyday as the center of Bay Area transit networks had passed. In 1936 the Bay Bridge opened, followed by the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937. With the bridges in operation, cars and trains replaced ferry and streetcar traffic and the Ferry Building, as an all-important hub, fell into disuse. During the 1940s and 1950s, officials at the Port of San Francisco sought new uses for the grand terminal.⁴ When they went to turn the second floor into office space, they found themselves confronting a 70-ton, 600-foot map. “We know of no place to put it or anyone who wants it,” one city administrator concluded.⁵ They finally resorted to cutting the map into pieces and storing it in boxes, where it remains today.⁶

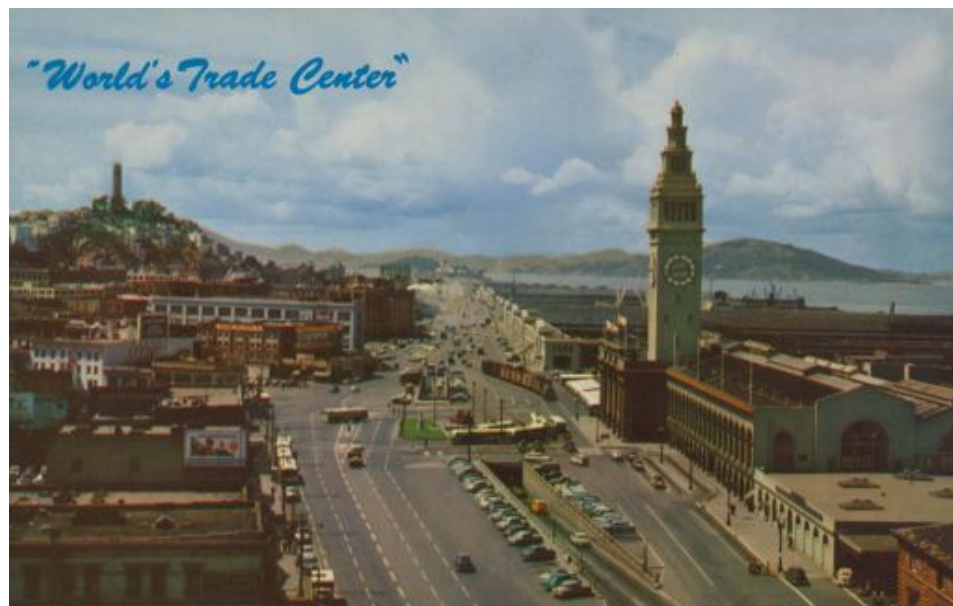


Figure 26. “*World’s Trade Center*,” Postcard, circa early 1950s. Even as ferry traffic proved less central to Bay Area transit networks, many still regarded the Ferry Building as a symbolically

⁴ San Francisco Port Commission, *Union Depot and Ferry House, San Francisco* (Charles Hall Page & Associates, 1978); Olmsted, *The Ferry Building*, 170.

⁵ Sherman Duckle, as quoted by Carl Nolte, “‘Paradise’ found: 70-ton elephant at S.F. Port,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 October 2010.

⁶ Nolte, “‘Paradise’ found: 70-ton elephant at S.F. Port,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 October 2010.

important hub and center for trade. In late 1940s, the state created a World Trade Center, seeking once again to assert San Francisco's importance to global trade networks. They designated the Ferry Building as its headquarters.⁷

Even as the bridges radically changed Bay Area transit networks, business remained robust at the nearby wholesale produce district, which, dating back to its Colombo market beginnings, was still just “a stone's throw from the waterfront.”⁸ The produce, however, no longer arrived via steamer and was instead trucked over the new bridges. According to one estimate, 21,000 carloads per year (about 85 percent of the city's supply of produce), was received and redistributed through the commission district each year.⁹ It continued to show evidence of its piecemeal beginnings as well. Lacking a clear nucleus, the district was instead comprised of low, brick buildings, crowded along narrow streets and alleyways. As a 1947 survey of the city described it:

Long before daybreak—in the summer, as early as one o'clock—trucks large and small begin to arrive from the country with fruits and vegetables. ... The clatter of hand-trucking and a babel of dialects arise. About six o'clock the light delivery trucks of local markets beginning to arrive. By this time a pedestrian can barely squeeze past the crates, hampers, boxes, and bags along the sidewalks.¹⁰

In a 1943 report, three professors from the nearby University of California at Berkeley concluded that it was more than just chaotic and crowded. They described the conditions as deplorable, citing both health violations and major traffic disruptions. They proposed relocating the produce district away from the precious waterfront real estate and financial and commercial heart of the city.¹¹

⁷ Rubin, *A Negotiated Landscape*, 99-101.

⁸ Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 262. As Gumina has noted, the wholesale district was relocated slightly after the 1906 earthquake to Washington and Front, between Davis and Drumm. Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco*, 101.

⁹ W. T. Calhoun, H. E. Erdman, and G. I. Mehren, *Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market*, United States Department of Agriculture: Bureau of Agricultural Economics in cooperation with University of California College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station (Berkeley, 1943), 2.

¹⁰ Federal Writers' Project, *San Francisco*, 262.

¹¹ Calhoun, Erdman, and Mehren, *Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market*.

The fruit dealers, many of whom belonged to the same Italian American families who had founded the Colombo market, resisted any plans for relocation. They wanted to hold onto the land and businesses that, for some, had been in the family for seventy years. They clung too to the symbolic meanings of their waterfront, gateway location. For fruit dealers and farmers' collectives both, the Golden Gate remained central to their branding and advertising. With the growing recognition of the Golden Gate Bridge as a San Francisco landmark, it became a centerpiece of their brand names, crate labels, and advertising campaigns. Wholesalers and cooperatives continued to champion the city as the linchpin between interior farmland and exterior shipping networks, linking the state's agricultural bounty with visions of the Golden Gate. Those who proposed relocating the market, however, also evoked the city's gateway location, arguing that the city's role as an national supplier necessitated a larger and more sanitary distribution center.¹²



Figure 27. "Pacific Pride," Crate label.

¹² Ibid.

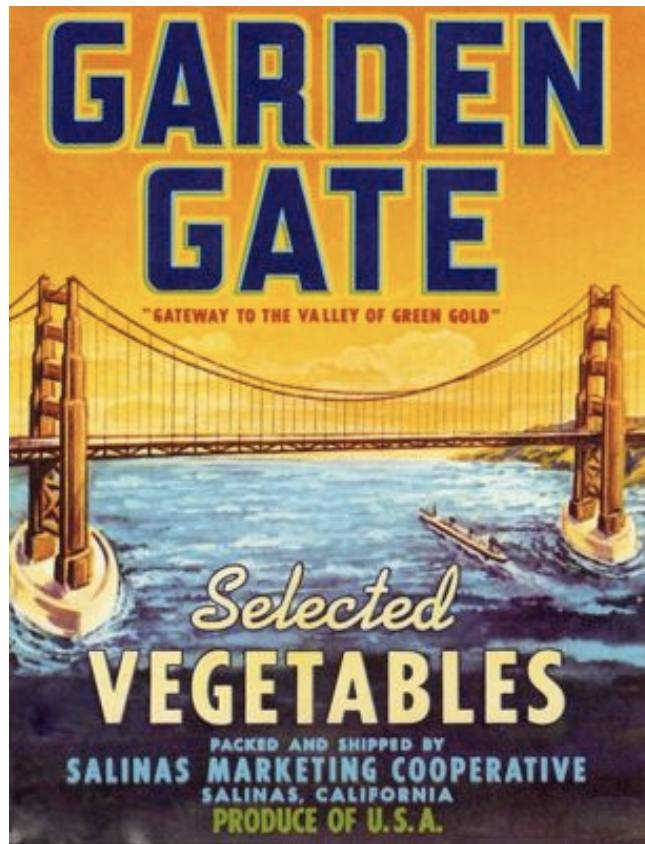


Figure 28. “Garden Gate,” Crate label, circa 1950s.

City developers, meanwhile, eyed the fruit dealers’ waterfront real estate, envisioning a new iteration of the Golden Gate. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, created in 1948 to oversee the “elimination” and “redevelopment” of “blighted areas,” contemplated new uses for the district.¹³ They held a nation-wide competition, soliciting plans for a new “Gateway.” The resulting proposal included a complex of high-rise buildings that blended office space, retail outlets, residential housing, and park

¹³ *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency: Official Statement Relating to \$13,150,000 Golden Gateway Project Tax Allocation Bonds, Series of 1968*, 1968, 9. The Commission district was one of seven neighborhoods the Redevelopment Agency identified as “blighted” and slated for redevelopment during the 1950s. For a discussion of another “condemned” and “redeveloped” neighborhood, told from the perspective of a San Franciscan, who took part in community organizing against the renewal project, see Chester W. Hartman, *Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco* (San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1974).

blocks. In several neighborhoods, in fact, the Redevelopment Agency pursued joint public-private ventures that consisted of corporate headquarters, convention facilities, and upscale retail, with the aim of attracting investors and business owners and bolstering the value of the surrounding real estate. In their designs, the urban planners spoke of the need to create a “protected environment,” a “powerful urban fortress,” where office workers, and especially secretaries (i.e. women), would feel safe. Their claims, in many ways, echoed the mid-1850s discussions of public good and public space.¹⁴ Once again, the city’s commercial elite sought to advance their vision for the city by evoking anxieties about women in public. In so doing, they elided a richer discussion about the meanings of public good, instead presenting their vision as singular and definitive. Who, after all, would argue against safety for secretaries? The Redevelopment Agency’s conception of the public good, meanwhile, was deeply rooted in Frémont’s economic promise. The project’s very name—the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project—evoked Frémont’s declarations of the city’s bright commercial future. “What is good for business is good for San Francisco,” seemed to be the agency’s mantra.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Examiner*, 15 September 1971, as quoted by Hartman, *Yerba Buena*, 89-90.

¹⁵ Hartman, *Yerba Buena*, 172.



Figure 29. “Sydney G. Walton Square,” *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*. Sydney G. Walton Square is a part of the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project. The park occupies a portion of what used to be the produce market (the Colombo Market arch still stands as an entry-way to the park). The desire to create an “urban fortress” is evident in its design. Trees and an iron fence line the perimeter, while six defined entrances provide access to the public-private space.

With plans for the Golden Gateway project in place, the city’s Redevelopment Agency was determined to seize the produce blocks. The fruit wholesalers, however, refused to go quietly. City officials sent health inspectors and police officers to the district to issue citations for health and traffic violations. Finally successful in their campaign, city and state government officials declared the commission district “blighted” and relocated the produce wholesale market to the south-eastern corner of the city, along the

industrial waterfront at Islais Creek.¹⁶ Whereas once the commission merchants had dominated the waterfront and the major houses had captured the Harbor Commissioners' ear, the fruit dealers now found themselves relegated to the industrial waterfront. Corporate developers now had the attention of port authorities.¹⁷ The city's Chamber of Commerce eagerly anticipated the "dynamic new gateways for San Francisco."¹⁸ In 1963, construction of the Golden Gateway high-rises began.¹⁹

Back at the Ferry Building, the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) was in the midst of remaking the water-ways and rail-lines of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into midcentury roadways. The last steamer left the Ferry terminal in 1958. CalTrans had, meanwhile, nearly completed construction of a double-decker freeway along the Embarcadero. It was part of a larger plan to ring the Bay Area with a freeway; the Embarcadero section linked the Bay and Golden Gate bridges. As an added benefit, some hoped that the freeway would finally and definitively eliminate the "rundown, seedy" waterfront businesses that lined Embarcadero.²⁰ Though, once the

¹⁶ "Redevelopment Goals of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce," 21 March 1957; Sidney Leiken Enterprises, *Redevelopment Agency of the City and County of San Francisco: Proposal for the Development of the Golden Gateway* (San Francisco, 1960); *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency: Official Statement Relating to \$13,150,000 Golden Gateway Project Tax Allocation Bonds, Series of 1968*, 1968. In addition to moving the wholesale district, the "relocation" effort also included "600 single transients." Where they were relocated to, the report did not say; it seems likely that they were displaced more than relocated. The Redevelopment Agency members, as community organizer Chester Hartman has discussed, strategically used terms such as "transients," "bums," "drifters," and "alcoholics" to describe residents, characterize neighborhoods, and win public support for their projects. Hartman, *Yerba Buena*, 97.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the San Francisco Port since 1950, and especially the intertwined public and private ventures, see Brown, *America's Waterfront Revival*, chapter 3 and Rubin, *A Negotiated Landscape*.

¹⁸ San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, Press Release, March 21, 1957, San Francisco Public Library.

¹⁹ Fittingly enough, during construction of the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project, they un-earthed gold-rush era ships. Delgado, *Gold Rush Port*, 119-120 and Allen Pastron, "Maritime and Gold Rush: Archeology in Downtown San Francisco," *San Francisco Museum and Historical Society Lecture*, 11 July 2011. For a discussion of the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project, see Rubin, *A Negotiated Landscape*, 70-83.

²⁰ 13 July 1954, as quoted by Olmsted, *The Ferry Building*, 152.

freeway opened, rundown businesses were among the only ones that persisted in the fume-filled shadows of the freeway.

Even as the seediness of the waterfront remained, the new double-decker freeway changed the landscape in profound ways. It divided the city and the bay, plunging the Ferry Building further into obscurity. Reviled and railed against by many before construction even began, protestors organized a “freeway revolt” and succeeded in halting construction, at least temporarily.²¹ After it opened, several groups continued to campaign for its removal. CalTrans, nevertheless, insisted that the Embarcadero freeway served as a vital route for the city. When, in 1986, a proposal to replace the freeway with a boulevard went before voters, they feared the congestion that might result and voted it down. Just a few years later, however, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake caused significant structural damage to the raised roadway and forced CalTrans to find alternate routes. This created an opening for anti-freeway groups to demonstrate that the city could get along without the freeway. The question of tearing down the double-decker again went before voters; this time, they elected to dismantle, rather than repair, the eye-sore. Those who had long-sought to rejoin the city-front and waterfront celebrated.²² Yet, the over-thirty-year separation, as urban planner Mark Hinshaw has noted, had a lasting affect on the cityscape. During the years that the freeway stood, architects, proposing what would have otherwise been bay-front buildings, turned their designs inward, towards the city, in an effort to minimize the fumes, noise, and compromised view. When

²¹ In response of the “freeway revolt,” the Board of Supervisors did cancel seven of the ten proposed freeway sections, though they did resume construction of the Embarcadero section in front of the Ferry Building.

²² Olmsted, *The Ferry Building*; Rubin, *A Negotiated Landscape*, 251; Carl Nolte, “Nobody’s nostalgic for the freeway to nowhere,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 March 2011.

demolition of the freeway finally began in 1991, reconnecting the city and waterfront proved to be less self-evident than so many had hoped it would be.²³



Figure 34. The Embarcadero and Ferry Building, circa 1960. This photograph highlights the degree to which the Embarcadero Freeway separated the Ferry Building from the rest of the city.

A community-based organization of restauranteurs, farmers, vendors, and city planners, known as the San Francisco Public Farmers Market Collaborative, had their own plan for reconnecting the Ferry Building and the city. Organized in 1992, they sought to establish a permanent farmer’s market in the city. “San Francisco,” they argued “needs a public market to showcase our region’s extraordinary agricultural bounty.” They, furthermore argued that the Ferry Building location, “at the hub of city-wide

²³ Mark Hinshaw, “Free from the freeway - but does the new Embarcadero really connect San Francisco to its waterfront?,” *Landscape Architecture* 92, no. 5 (May 2002): 132; *NorthEastern Waterfront Area Plan*, San Francisco General Plan, 2003.

transportation systems” would be ideal.²⁴ They underscored the importance of the market as a community space, in which thousands of San Franciscans could gather to enjoy an open market and spectacular views. Ultimately, they were successful in their campaign. The next year, they opened a weekly market in the plaza in front of the terminal.

Their efforts were further reinforced by the 2003 multi-million dollar joint venture between the Port of San Francisco and corporate developers to renovate and reopen the Ferry Building as a festival marketplace. The newly restored Ferry Building now holds some of the city’s most expensive office space in its upper floors, while retail outlets showcase “local, seasonal, and sustainable” foods in the airy nave below.²⁵ With displays of specialty chocolates, Marin cheeses, and Sacramento valley produce, vendors celebrate Californian products and the Slow Foods movement. Three days a week, a farmers’ market takes over the plaza in front of and a pier behind the Ferry Building. Once again, it is a central site for the construction and projection of a municipal identity.²⁶ While first described by the Farmers Market Collaborative as a public space, it instead functions very much as the hybrid public-private space that it is. The crowd at the Ferry Building is

²⁴ “San Francisco: Public Market,” 1995.

²⁵ Jasper Rubin identified it as the city’s most expensive office space per square foot at a public lecture, “Jasper Rubin in conversation with John King. A Negotiated Landscape: The Transformation of the San Francisco Waterfront since 1950” (University Press Books, Berkeley, 18 January 2012).

²⁶ Chris Sensenig, *The Ferry Building - San Francisco, CA*, Places 19.3 (SMWM; Baldauf Catton von Eckartsberg; Page & Turnbull, 2007); “Ferry Building Marketplace,” *Ferry Building*, www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com, accessed 17 May 2010; Alice W., “Alice Waters’ Favorite Places in San Francisco and Berkeley,” *Google Maps: Favorite Places*, 18 December 2009, <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&gl=us&ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=212608468556297660901.00046a49d63feb7d43afd>; Michael Bauer, “Ferry Building dominates area’s food scene,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 November 2011.

overwhelmingly white and affluent; it is a public space predicated on buying and selling.²⁷

In response to the high cost of selling at certified farmers' markets, such as the Ferry Plaza, some San Franciscans have recently begun pursuing new types of marketplaces and hyper-local food distribution networks. One such project, the Underground Market celebrates DIY culture and bills itself as a "homemade community." Without a permanent location, the market has moved from site to site. It began in a private home in the Mission district and more recently took place at a SoMa warehouse. At the market, "makers and eaters" gather together, with as many as 50 vendors selling to thousands of attendees. The founder started the Underground Market as a way for small entrepreneurs to launch new businesses, without the prohibitive costs of a commercial kitchen and licensing fees. In this way, even as it began as a reaction against the festival marketplace of the Ferry Building, the Underground Market is also a part of a larger story of gentrification and urban renewal. In crafting a community for a particular group of San Franciscans, it contributes to the city's vitality while also taking part in displacing and pricing out some SoMa and Mission residents.²⁸

²⁷ Whereas, according to the 2010 census, the median income in the U.S. is \$51,914, the median for San Francisco residents is nearly twenty-thousand dollars a year higher at \$71,304. "San Francisco (city) QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau," *QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau*, quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0667000.html; "USA QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau," *QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau*, quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html.

²⁸ "SF Underground Market: a Homemade Community." *forageSF*, 28 March 2012. <http://foragesf.com/market/>; "Renegade San Francisco Underground Market: Heads Up," *New York Times*, 8 April 2011.



Figure 31. “SF Underground Market,” 2010. This poster, advertising the first Underground Market, depicts a groundswell tipping over the Ferry Building, suggesting its relationship to the expensive and established market at the Ferry Building.

So, the story continues. I have taken up the muddy cove of Yerba Buena and the reclaimed land that became San Francisco’s waterfront to consider the process of place-making—the “many hands” and “many minds” who made the San Francisco landscape as a physical materiality and as an imagined conception.²⁹ I highlighted the on-going and always intertwined nature of this process, as San Franciscans mapped ideas onto water, mud, and sand, ideas that later became evident in the infrastructure they layered upon the

²⁹ Stradling, *Making Mountains*, 15

landscape. The infrastructure carried with it its own messages about space and place, shaping, in turn, people's understandings and world-views. I took up this intersection of the material and metaphorical construction of a place as a way of thinking about how the discursive realm becomes rooted in everyday surroundings and, in turn, shapes, organizes, and affects people's daily, lived experiences—what Edward Soja has called “consequential geography.”³⁰ I wanted to investigate how seemingly mundane ideas and surroundings gain power and to explore the power that lies simply in their being mundane.

In focusing on place, I sought to contemplate the aspirations of many groups of people, all seeking to make a mark on the landscape, all seeking access to and control over the precious, limited, and multi-use waterfront. I considered the many historical actors who took part in making San Francisco, exploring how they drew on similar circulating tropes about space and place, but deployed them in different ways, to serve their own purposes. The Golden Gate, as my project demonstrates, proved to be an elastic, multi-use trope, across both time and space.

Ultimately, I sought to explore the relationship between place and community—how place-making has served as a tool of inclusion and exclusion, and of resistance, negotiation, and accommodation. At early moments in the city's history, constitution-makers embedded racism and exclusion into the legal fabric of the city, yet as an early boom-town, the city still held, and black San Franciscans seized and created, at least limited economic, social, political opportunities. City directory authors, photographers,

³⁰ Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 1.

magazine writers, and artists, also took part in defining and describing the early city, deciding who and what to include, as they both reflected the city as it stood and sought to shape its future iterations. Discussions of community turned next to family and fireside, with 1850s vigilantes deploying violence in the name of virtue. The gateway became a weapon against Chinese immigrants as well, as white San Franciscans envisioned their city as an open door to China, even as they rioted to close American borders to Asian immigrants. The gateway, then, was a place, a promise, a symbol, and a strategy. As San Franciscans debated the makings and meanings of the Golden Gate, they were more importantly, defining, justifying, and even embedding into the landscape who would reap its rewards.

Bibliography

Archival and Manuscript Collections

The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

De Young Family Business Papers

Graupner Family Papers

Hart-Clark Correspondence and Family Papers

Henry D. Cogswell Papers

Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks

Milton D. Eisner Papers

William Hammond Hall Papers

California Historical Society

Amelia Neville Scrapbooks

Jerome A. Hart Papers

Willis Polk scrapbooks

California State Archives

Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco Harbor Records

California State Library

William Jackson Losh Collection

Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Willis Polk Collection

The Huntington Library

Mitchell Family Papers

San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

Eugene Schmitz and Abe Ruef Trials, Scrapbook 84

Helen Holdredge Collection
Lillie Hitchcock Coit Collection
Old San Francisco, Scrapbook 83
Reconstruction: San Francisco After the Fire, Scrapbook 82
S.F. Farmer's Market Collection
San Francisco Ferry Building, Scrapbook 48
Scenes of the San Francisco Fire and Earthquake, April 18, 1906, Scrapbook 75
Small Manuscript Collections

San Francisco Maritime Museum

San Francisco Performing Arts Library
Adah Isaacs Menken Collection
Bella Union Theatre Collection
Chronological Collection

Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University
California and Western Manuscript Collection
Pacific Slope Manuscript Collection
Pacific Slope Scrapbooks

Alice Phelan Sullivan Library, The Society of California Pioneers
Charles P. Kimball Papers
Collection of Autobiographies and Reminiscences of Early Pioneers
Samuel Tetlow, Biographical File Collection

Newspapers and Periodicals

Appletons' Journal of Literature, Science, and Art
The Argonaut
Atlantic Monthly
Coast Seamen's Journal
Collier's: The National Weekly
Daily Alta California
Everybody's Magazine
Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly
Gazlay's Pacific Monthly
Harper's Weekly
Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine
Lippincott's Magazine
The Los Angeles Times
McClure's Magazine

Merchants' Association Review
New York Times
Out West
Outing
Overland Monthly
Pacific Monthly
Pacific Rural Press
The Popular Science Monthly
The San Franciscan
San Francisco Bulletin
San Francisco Call
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco Evening Globe
San Francisco Evening Post
San Francisco Examiner
San Francisco Hotel Gazette
San Francisco Journal of Commerce
San Francisco News Letter and California Advertiser
Sanoma Index-Tribune
Scribner's Monthly
Sunset
The Wasp
The Wave

Maps

Arnold, Thomas Jefferson. *Map exhibiting the salt marsh ... lands adjacent to the bays of San Francisco and San Pablo* [map]. 1:50,000. San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1874. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

Britton & Rey, *Map of San Francisco* [map]. 1:18,100. San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1852. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

Britton, Joseph. *Bird's eye view of San Francisco: Drawn from Meriam's model & nature July 1852* [map]. San Francisco: Cooke & Le Count, 1852. Harvard Map Collection digital maps.

Chart, containing the coasts of California, New Albion, and Russian discoveries to the north [map]. 1:21,000,000. In: Thomas Jefferys. *The American Atlas*. London: R. Sayer & J. Bennett, 1776, Plate 4. National Library of Australia.

- Eddy, William M. *Official Map of San Francisco* [map]. 1:6,600. *Land titles in California. Wm. Carey Jones. 1850.* Washington, D.C.: C.B. Graham, S.W. Higgins, P.M. McGill, 1851. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
- Font, Pedro. *Plan de la Boca del Puerto de San Francisco, situado en 37. 49'* [map]. Tubutama, Mexico, 1776. John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.
- Frémont, J. C. *Map Of Oregon And Upper California From the Surveys of John Charles Frémont and other Authorities. Drawn By Charles Preuss Under the Order of the Senate of the United States, Washington City 1848* [map]. 1:3,000,000. Washington, D.C.: Wendell and Van Benthuisen, 1848. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
- Humphreys, William P. *Map of the City and County of San Francisco* [map]. *Atlas of the city and county of San Francisco from actual surveys and official records.* San Francisco: W. Humphreys, 1876, 6-7. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
- Lange, Henry. *Bai San Francisco und Vereinigung des Sacramento mit dem San Joaquin* [map]. 1:760,000. In: Henry Lange. *Atlas Von Nord-Amerika. Nach den neuesten Materialien.* Braunschweig: George Westermann, 1854, p. xviii. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
- Langley, Henry G. *Guide Map Of The City Of San Francisco Compiled From The Official Surveys & Engraved Expressly For Langley's San Francisco Directory 1890* [map]. 1:24,000. New York: Henry G. Langley, 1890. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
- United States Coast Survey. *City Of San Francisco And Its Vicinity, California* [map]. 1:10,000. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Coast Survey, 1859. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.
- Waters, Alice, "Alice Waters' Favorite Places in San Francisco and Berkeley," *Google Maps: Favorite Places*. 18 December 2009. <<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&gl=us&ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=212608468556297660901.00046a49d63feb7d43afd>> (accessed 24 March 2012).

Primary Sources

- 1870 United States Federal Census.* Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Database on-line.
- A Californian. Mysteries and Miseries of San Francisco.* New York: Garrett & Co. Publishers, 1853.

- Aiken, Charles Sedgwick. *California Today, San Francisco, Its Metropolis*. San Francisco: California Promotion Committee of San Francisco, 1903.
- Amendments to the Codes of California. Passed at the Twentieth Session of the Legislature, 1873-4*. San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1874.
- Arnold, Bion J. *Report on the Improvement and Development of the Transportation Facilities of San Francisco*. San Francisco: B.J. Arnold, 1913.
- Articles of Incorporation and By-laws of the San Francisco Produce Exchange Mutual Benefit Association*. San Francisco: C.A. Murdock & Co., 1880.
- Atwell, H. Wallace. *Great Trans-continental Railroad Guide*. Chicago: G. A. Crofutt & Co., 1869.
- Ball, Mary Faulkner. "The Journal of Mary Ball: A California Gold Rush Woman." Translated by Norma B. Morris, 1993.
- Bancroft's Tourist's Guide. Yosemite. San Francisco and Around the Bay*. San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1871.
- Barry, Theodore Augustus, and Benjamin Adam Patten. *Men and Memories of San Francisco: In the "Spring of '50"*. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1873.
- Blake, E. M., C. E. Grunsky, Charles A. Kofoid, and G. M. Hunt, and C. L. Hill, *Report on the San Francisco Bay Marine Piling Survey*. San Francisco: The Committee, 1921.
- Board of State Harbor Commissioners. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Commencing July 1, 1884, and Ending June 30, 1886*. Sacramento: James J. Ayers, Supt. State Printing, 1886.
- _____. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Commencing July 1, 1896, and Ending June 30, 1898*. Sacramento: A. J. Johnston, Supt. State Printing, 1899.
- _____. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Commencing July 1, 1898, and Ending June 30, 1900*. Sacramento: A. J. Johnston, Supt. State Printing, 1900.
- _____. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Commencing July 1, 1906, and Ending June 30, 1908*. Sacramento: W. W. Shannon, Supt. State Printing, 1908.

- _____. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Ending July 1, 1873*. Sacramento: A. T. Springer, State Printer, 1873.
- _____. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 1875*. Sacramento: G. H. Springer, State Printer, 1875.
- _____. *Biennial Report of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for the Two Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 1877*. San Francisco: Joseph Winterburn & Company, 1877.
- _____. *Harbor Rules, Regulations and Rates. Adopted by the Board of State Harbor Commissioners*. San Francisco: P.J. Thomas, 1885.
- Board of Supervisors. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1862-'63*. San Francisco: Charles F. Robbins & Company, 1863.
- _____. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Year 1868-9, Ending June 30, 1869*, San Francisco: Cosmopolitan Printing Company, 1869.
- _____. *San Francisco Municipal Reports for the Fiscal Years 1873-4, Ending June 30, 1874*. San Francisco: Spaulding & Barto, Printers, 1874.
- Bowles, Samuel. *Our New West: Records of Travel between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean*. Hartford: Hartford Publishing Co., 1869.
- _____. *The Pacific Railroad--Open: How to Go: What to See*. Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869.
- Brown, John Henry. *Reminiscences and Incidents of Early Days of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1933.
- Brucato, John G. *A Sicilian in America: An Autobiography*. Millbrae: Green Hills Pub Co., 1992.
- _____. *The Farmer Goes to Town: The Story of San Francisco's Farmer's Market*. San Francisco: Burke Pub. Co., 1948.
- Bryce, James. *The American Commonwealth: The Party System. Public Opinion, Illustrations and Reflections, Social Institutions*. Vol. II. New York: Macmillan Co., 1894.
- Burnham, Daniel H., assisted by Edward H. Bennett. *Report on a Plan for San Francisco*. Presented to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors by the Association for the

- Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco. San Francisco: Sunset Press, 1905.
- Calhoun, W. T., H. E. Erdman, and G. I. Mehren. *Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market*. United States Department of Agriculture: Bureau of Agricultural Economics in cooperation with University of California College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station. Berkeley, 1943.
- California Midwinter International Exposition Information for Intending Exhibitors*. 1894.
- California Midwinter International Exposition. *The Official Guide to the California Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco*. San Francisco: G. Spaulding & Co., 1894.
- California Promotion Committee. *San Francisco and Its Environs*. San Francisco: California Promotion Committee, 1903.
- California State Board of Trade and Chinese Consul General Hoyow. "Commercial Prospects of the United States and China." In *The City of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Mysell-Rollins Co., 1900.
- California State Board of Trade, *The City of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Mysell-Rollins Company, 1900.
- California State Census, 1852*. Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Database on-line.
- Carey, Joseph. *By the Golden Gate, Or, San Francisco, the Queen City of the Pacific Coast: With Scenes and Incidents Characteristic of Its Life*. Albany: The Albany Diocesan Press, 1902.
- Colville, Samuel. *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October, 1856*. San Francisco: Commercial Steam Presses, Monson, Valentine & Co., 1856.
- Commonwealth Club of California. "Control of San Francisco Harbor." *Transactions of the Commonwealth Club of California* 7, no. 1 (March 1912): 1-68.
- Cone, Mary. *Two Years in California*. Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1876.
- Croftutt, George A. *Croftutt's New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide*. Omaha: Overland Pub. Co., 1879.

- Cronise, Titus. *The Natural Wealth of California: Comprising Early History; Geography.* San Francisco: H. H. Bancroft & Company, 1868.
- Dana, Richard Henry. *Two Years Before the Mast, and Twenty-four Years After: a Personal Narrative.* London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1869.
- Davis, Sam Post. *The History of Nevada.* Elms Publishing Co., 1913.
- Davis, William Heath. *Sixty Years in California: A History of Events and Life in California; Personal, Political and Military, Under the Mexican Regime; During the Quasi-military Government of the Territory by the United States, and After the Admission of the State into the Union, Being a Compilation by a Witness of the Events Described.* San Francisco: A.J. Leary, 1889.
- De Quille, Dan. *History of the Big Bonanza: An Authentic Account of the Discovery, History, and Working of the World Renowned Comstock Silver Lode of Nevada: Including the Present Condition of the Various Mines Situated Thereon; Sketches of the Most Prominent Men Interested in Them.* San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Co., 1876.
- Deering, F. P. *The Codes and Statutes of California, as Amended and in Force at the Close of the Twenty-sixth Session of the Legislature, 1885.* Vol. 1. 4 vols. San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney Co., 1886.
- Dellenbaugh, Frederick Samuel. *Frémont and '49: The Story of a Remarkable Career and Its Relation to the Exploration and Development of Our Western Territory, Especially of California.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914.
- DeWitt, Frederic M. *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir and Guide to San Francisco: A New Handbook for Strangers and Tourists.* San Francisco: F.M. De Witt, 1900.
- Dickie, George W. *The Commerce of San Francisco: What is Required to Revive and Stimulate the Trade of this Port with the Outside World.* San Francisco: Industrial Publishing Co., 1891.
- Doxey, William. *Doxey's Guide to San Francisco and the Pleasure Resorts of California.* San Francisco: W. Doxey, 1897.
- Eldredge, Zoeth Skinner. *History of California.* New York: Century History Company, 1915.
- _____. *The Beginnings of San Francisco: From the Expedition of Anza, 1774, to the City Charter of April 15, 1850 With Biographical and Other Notes.* San Francisco: Z.S. Eldredge, 1912.

- Evans, Albert S. *A La California. Sketch of Life in the Golden State*. San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1873.
- Evans, Taliesin. *All About the Midwinter Fair, San Francisco, and Interesting Facts Concerning California*. San Francisco: W.B. Bancroft & Co., 1894.
- Farnham, Eliza. *California In-Doors and Out; or How We Farm, Mine and Live Generally in the Golden State*. New York: Dix, Edwards, 1856.
- Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration of Northern California. *San Francisco: The Bay and Its Cities*. New York: Hastings House, 1947.
- Figari, William. "San Francisco Bay and Waterfront, 1900-1965: And Related Material." Interview. Berkeley, 1969.
- Frémont, John C. *California Guide Book: Comprising Colonel Fremont's Geographical Account of Upper California*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1849.
- _____. *Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California: Addressed to the Senate of the United States in 1848*. Philadelphia: William McCarty, 1849.
- _____. *Memoirs of My Life*. Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Company, 1887.
- Frost, Jennett Blakeslee. *California's Greatest Curse*. San Francisco: J. Winterburn & Co., 1879.
- Gibbs, Mifflin Wistar. *Shadow and Light: An Autobiography with Reminiscences of the Last and Present Century*. Edited by Booker T. Washington. Washington D.C.: M.W. Gibbs, 1902.
- Great Trans-continental Railroad Guide*. Chicago: Crofutt & Eaton, Publishers, 1870.
- Hackett, Frederick H. ed., *The Industries of San Francisco: Her Rank, Resources, Advantages, Trade*. San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Co., 1884.
- Hartman, Chester W. *Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco*. San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1974.
- Higgins, Charles A. *To California and Back*. Chicago: Passenger Department Santa Fé, 1899.
- Hittell, John S. and California Immigrant Union, *All About California and Inducements to Settle There*. San Francisco: California Immigrant Union, 1873.

- Hittell, John Shertzer, and Eadweard Muybridge. *Yosemite, Its Wonders and Its Beauties: With Information Adapted to the Wants of Tourists About to Visit the Valley*. San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft & Co., 1868.
- Hittell, John Shertzer. *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California*. San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, 1878.
- _____. *The Resources of California: Comprising Agriculture, Mining, Geography, Climate, Commerce, &c., and the Past and Future Development of the State*. San Francisco: A. Roman, 1863.
- Hittell, Theodore Henry. *History of California*. San Francisco: N.J. Stone & Co., 1898.
- _____. *The General Laws of the State of California, from 1850 to 1864, Inclusive: Being a Compilation of All Acts of a General Nature Now in Force, with Full References to Repealed Acts, Special and Local Legislation, and Statutory Constructions of the Supreme Court: To Which Are Prefixed Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Proclamations to the People of California, Constitution of the State of California, Act of Admission, and United States Naturalization Laws, with Notes of California Decisions Thereon*. Vol. 1. 2 vols., San Francisco: H.H. Bancroft and Co., 1865.
- _____. *The General Laws of the State of California, from 1864 to 1871 Inclusive, Being a Compilation of All Acts of a General Nature, with Full References to Repealed Acts, Special and Local Legislation, and Statutory Construction of the Supreme Court, to Which are Prefixed Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, Passed by Congress During that Period, and Ratified by the Constitutional Number of States*. San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1871.
- Holton, Edward Dwight. *Travels with Jottings. From Midland to the Pacific*. Milwaukee: Trayser Brothers, 1880.
- Hopkins, Casper Thomas. *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question: Showing Why the 'California Immigrant Union' was Founded, and What it Expects to do*. San Francisco: Turnbull & Smith, 1869.
- Hutchings, James Mason. *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California*. San Francisco: J.M. Hutchings & Co., 1862.
- Jackson, Helen Hunt. *Bits of Travel at Home*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878.
- _____. *Ramona*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1884.

- Keeler, Charles Augustus. *San Francisco and Thereabout*. San Francisco: California Promotion Committee, 1902.
- Kenderdine, Thaddeus S. *A California Tramp and Later Footprints: Or, Life on the Plains and in the Golden State Thirty Years Ago, with Miscellaneous Sketches in Prose and Verse*. Philadelphia: Press of Globe Printing House, 1888.
- Kimball, Charles. *The San Francisco City Directory*. San Francisco: Journal of Commerce Press, 1850.
- King, Thomas Starr. *Christianity and Humanity: A Series of Sermons*. Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1877.
- Knox, Thomas W. *Underground or Life Below the Surface*. Hartford: J. B. Burr Publishing Co., 1874.
- Langley, Henry G. *San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing March, 1872*. San Francisco: Henry G. Langley Publisher, 1872.
- _____. *The San Francisco Directory for the Year 1858*. San Francisco: Commercial Steam Presses, S.D. Valentine & Son, 1858.
- _____. *The San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing July, 1860*. San Francisco: Valentine & Co., Commercial Steam Press, 1860.
- LeCount & Strong's San Francisco City Directory for the Year 1854*. San Francisco: Herald Office, 1854.
- Leslie, Mrs. Frank [Miriam]. *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate (April, May, June, 1877)*. New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1877.
- Lick House, San Francisco. *Tourists' Guide, Giving Principal Routes from Chicago and Saint Louis to San Francisco. Also, Information for Reaching All Points of Note in California ... the Hotels at Various Places, and Much Other Valuable Information ...* (San Francisco, 1871).
- MacGregor, William. *San Francisco, California, in 1876. For private circulation only*. Edinburgh: T. Laurie, 1876.
- Manson, Marsden. *A Brief in the Matter of Reservoir Rights of Way for a Domestic and Municipal Water Supply for the City and County of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1907.

- _____. *Report to the Mayor and Committee on Reconstruction on those portions of the Burnham Plans Which Meet Our Commercial Necessities and an Estimate of the Cost of the Same ... Water Front Improvements*, 1906.
- Marryat, Francis Samuel. *Mountains and Molehills, or Recollections of a Burnt Journal*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855.
- Marshall, W. G. *Through America; or, Nine months in the United States*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881.
- Milani, Michael. *It Happens Every Morning: A Chronicle of the Bay Area Produce Industry*. San Mateo: Papa's Publishing, 1996.
- Mogan, A. W. *A. W. Morgan & Co.'s San Francisco City Directory*. San Francisco: F. A. Bonnard, at the Dispatch Printing Office, 1852.
- Morphy, Edward. *The Port of San Francisco*. Sacramento: Board of State Harbor Commissioners, California State Printing Office, 1923.
- Neville, Amelia Ransome. *The Fantastic City: Memoirs of the Social and Romantic Life of Old San Francisco*. Edited by Virginia Brastow. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932.
- Nordhoff, Charles. *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873.
- Norris, Frank. *The Octopus: A Story of California*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1901.
- NorthEastern Waterfront Area Plan*, San Francisco General Plan, 2003.
- Official Catalogue Fine Arts California Midwinter International Exposition 1894*. San Francisco: Harvey, Whitcher & Allen, 1894.
- Pacific Coast Travelers' Guide and San Francisco Business Directory*. San Francisco: Guide Publishing Co., 1869.
- Parker, James M. *The San Francisco Directory, for the Year 1852-53*. San Francisco: James M. Parker, 1852.
- Phelan, James D. "Debate on the Chinese Question - With Imperial Chinese Consul Ho Yow, at the Unitarian Club, San Francisco, Cal., November 25, 1901." In *Addresses by Mayor James D. Phelan, San Francisco, 1901*. San Francisco: Cubery, 1901.
- Player-Frowd, J.G. *Six Months in California*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1872.

- Polk, Willis. "Sunset City Discords," *The Wave*, December 2, 1893." In *A Matter of Taste: Willis Polk's Writings on Architecture in the Wave*, edited by Richard Longstreth. San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1979.
- Post, Louis Freeland. *The Prophet of San Francisco*. Chicago: L. S. Dickey, 1904.
- Rand, McNally and Co's *Western Railway Guide*. Chicago: Rand, McNally and Co., 1871.
- Rice, Harvey. *Letters from the Pacific Slope; or, First Impressions*. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1870.
- Royce, Josiah. *California, from the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco: A Study in American Character*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886.
- Royce, Sarah. *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.
- San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. *San Francisco, the Financial, Commercial and Industrial Metropolis of the Pacific Coast: Official Records, Statistics and Encyclopedia*. San Francisco: H.S. Crocker Co., 1915.
- San Francisco Port Commission. *Union Depot and Ferry House, San Francisco*. San Francisco: Charles Hall Page & Associates, 1978.
- San Francisco Redevelopment Agency: Official Statement Relating to \$13,150,000 Golden Gateway Project Tax Allocation Bonds*, 1968.
- San Francisco, the Metropolis of Western America: Her Phenomenal Progress, Incomparable Industries and Remarkable Resources*. San Francisco: Mercantile Illustrating Co., 1899.
- Sensenig, Chris. *The Ferry Building - San Francisco, CA*, Places 19.3 SMWM; Baldauf Catton von Eckartsberg; Page & Turnbull, 2007.
- Sidney Leiken Enterprises, *Redevelopment Agency of the City and County of San Francisco: Proposal for the Development of the Golden Gateway*. San Francisco, 1960.
- St. John, J. *The Californian Tourist's Guide Book*. San Francisco: California Tourist's Guide Publishing Co., 1886.
- Stevenson, Robert Louise. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Boston: Jefferson Press, 1910.

- Swasey, William F. *The Early Days and Men of California*. Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1891.
- Taylor, Bayard. *Eldorado, or, Adventures in the Path of the Empire*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1859.
- Taylor, Benjamin Franklin. *Between the Gates*. Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1883.
- The Builders of a Great City: San Francisco's Representative Men, the City, Its History and Commerce*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. San Francisco: San Francisco Journal of Commerce Publishing Co., 1891.
- Todd, Frank Morton, and San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. *The Chamber of Commerce Handbook for San Francisco, Historical and Descriptive; a Guide for Visitors ...* San Francisco: San Francisco Chamber of Commerce under the direction of the Publicity Committee, 1914.
- Todd, John. *The Sunset Land: Or, The Great Pacific Slope*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1870.
- Tracy, Joshua L. *Guide to the Great West: Being a Brief, but Carefully Written, Description of the Country Bordering Upon All the Principal Railroads of the West, with Maps and Illustrations*. St. Louis: Tracy & Eaton, 1870.
- Turrill, Charles B. *California Notes*. San Francisco: Edward Bosqui & Co., 1876.
- Twain, Mark. *The Works of Mark Twain: Early Tales and Sketches, 1864-1865*. Edited by Edgar Marquess Branch and Robert H. Hirst. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- U.S. Geological Survey. "San Francisco Bay Region Geology and Geologic Hazards." <http://geomaps.wr.usgs.gov/sfgeo/geologic/stories/marin_sedimentary.html> (accessed 1 December 2011).
- Wagoner, Luther and Col. W. H. Heuer. *San Francisco Harbor: Its Commerce and Docks with a Complete Plan for Development*. San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1908.
- Willard, Frances Elizabeth, and Mary Ashton Rice Livermore. *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-seventy Biographical Sketches Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life*. Buffalo: Moulton, 1893.
- Williams, Henry T. *The Pacific Tourist: Williams' Illustrated Trans-continental Guide of Travel*. New York: H.T. Williams, 1878.

Wood, Stanley. *Over the Range to the Golden Gate: A Complete Tourist's Guide to Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Puget Sound and the Great North-west*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, Publishers, 1891.

Woolley, Lell Hawley. *California, 1849-1913: Or, The Rambling Sketches and Experiences of Sixty-four Years' Residence in That State*. Oakland: De Witt & Snelling, 1913.

“Central Pacific Railroad Schedule, Monday, October 18, 1869.” Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum. 15 September 2002. <http://cpr.org/Museum/Ephemera/CPRR_Schedule_1869.html> (accessed 13 June 2011).

“San Francisco (city) QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau.” *QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau*. 31 January 2012. <quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0667000.html> (30 March 2012).

“USA QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau.” *QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau*. 17 January 2012. <quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html> (30 March 2012).

Secondary Sources

Abbott, Carl. *Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981.

_____. *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008.

_____. *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993.

Allen, Robert C. *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Allen, Walter C. “San Francisco’s First City Directory and Its Two Reprints.” *Publication of the Society of California Pioneers* (1943): 28–49.

Allgor, Catherine. *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000.

Almaguer, Tomás. *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

- Anbinder, Tyler. *Five Points: The 19th-century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Anderson, Ralph H. "Carleton E. Watkins Pioneer Photographer of the Pacific Coast." *Yosemite Nature Notes* 32, no. 4 (April 1953): 32–37.
- Aron, Stephen. "Lessons in Conquest: Towards a Greater Western History." *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (May 1994): 124-147.
- Asbury, Herbert. *The Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933.
- Avila, Eric. *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Bain, David Haward. *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad*. New York: Viking, 1999.
- Baldwin, Peter C. *Domesticating the Street: The Reform of Public Space in Hartford, 1850-1930*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999.
- Barker, Malcolm E. *More San Francisco Memoirs, 1852-1899: The Ripening Years*. San Francisco: Londonborn Publications, 1996.
- _____. *San Francisco Memoirs, 1835-1851: Eyewitness Accounts of the Birth of a City*. San Francisco: Londonborn Publications, 1994.
- Barkley Brown, Elsa. "Polyrhythms and Improvisation: Lessons for Women's History." *History Workshop Journal* 31 (Spring 1991): 85-91.
- _____. "'What Has Happened Here': The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics." *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 295–312.
- Barnhart, Jacqueline Baker. *The Fair But Frail: Prostitution in San Francisco, 1849-1900*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986.
- Barr, Juliana. "Beyond the 'Atlantic World': Early American History as Viewed from the West," *OAH Magazine of History* 25, no. 1 (2011): 13-18.
- Barreyre, Nicolas. "The Politics of Economic Crises: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 04 (October 2011): 403–423.

- Barth, Gunther Paul. *City People: The Culture of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- _____. *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Beasley, Delilah Leontium. *The Negro Trail Blazers of California: a Compilation of Records from the California Archives in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, in Berkeley; and from the Diaries, Old Papers, and Conversations of Old Pioneers in the State of California. It Is a True Record of Facts, as They Pertain to the History of the Pioneer and Present Day Negroes of California*. Los Angeles, 1919.
- Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in The United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Bellesiles, Michael A. *1877: America's Year of Living Violently*. New York: The New Press, 2010.
- Bender, Thomas. *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2006.
- _____. "History, Theory & the Metropolis." *CMS Working Paper Series*. no. 005-2006. Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technical University Berlin, 2006.
- Bennion, Sherilyn Cox. *Equal to the Occasion: Women Editors of the Nineteenth-century West*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1990.
- Berglund, Barbara. *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007.
- _____. "'The Days of Old, the Days of Gold, the Days of '49': Identity, History, and Memory at the California Midwinter International Exposition, 1894'." *The Public Historian* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 25-49.
- _____. "Western Living Sunset Style in the 1920s and 1930s: The Middlebrow, the Civilized, and the Modern." *Western Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 133-157.
- Berson, Misha. *The San Francisco Stage: From Gold Rush to Golden Spike, 1849-1869*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum Journal, 1992.

- Bibbs, Susheel. *Mary Ellen Pleasant 1817 to 1904: Mother of Human Rights in California*. San Francisco: MEP Publications, 1996.
- Blackford, Mansel G. *The Lost Dream: Businessmen and City Planning on the Pacific Coast, 1890-1920*. Columbus: Ohio State University, 1993.
- Blackford, Mansel G. *The Politics of Business in California, 1890-1920*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977.
- Blackhawk, Ned. *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Blackmar, Elizabeth. *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Blodgett, Peter J. "Yosemite 'The Realm of Wonder': Yosemite and the Business of Tourism, 1855-1916." In *Yosemite and Sequoia: A Century of California National Parks*, edited by Richard J. Orsi, Alfred Runte, and Marlene Smith-Baranzini. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Bloomfield, Anne. "The Real Estate Associates: A Land and Housing Developer of the 1870s in San Francisco." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 37, no. 1 (March 1978): 13–33.
- Blum, Joseph. "South San Francisco: The Making of an Industrial City." *California History* 63, no. 2 (1984): 114–134.
- Blumin, Stuart M. "Introduction: George G. Foster and the Emerging Metropolis." In *New York by Gas-Light and Other Urban Sketches*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Boag, Peter. *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Bold, Christine. *Selling the Wild West: Popular Western Fiction, 1860 to 1960*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Bolton, Herbert Eugene. *Outpost of Empire: The Story of the Founding of San Francisco*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931.
- Bolton, Marie. "Recovery for Whom? Social Conflict After the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1915." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1997.
- Bonnett, Wayne. *Victorian San Francisco*. Sausalito: Windgate Press, 1996.

- Bowden, Martyn John. "The Dynamics of City Growth: An Historical Geography of the San Francisco Central District, 1850-1931." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1967.
- Boyd, Nan Alamilla. *Wide-open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Boyer, M. Christine. *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style, 1850-1900*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
- _____. *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996.
- Boyer, Paul. *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Brandi, Richard. "Farms, Fire and Forest: Adolph Sutro and Development 'West of Twin Peaks'." *The Argonaut* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003), foundsf.org.
- Brechin, Gray A. "Sailing to Byzantium: The Architecture of the Panama Pacific International Exhibition." *California History* 62 (Summer 1983): 106–121.
- _____. *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- _____. "Populist Rhetoric, Private Gain." *WRCA News*, October 2000.
- _____. "San Francisco: The City Beautiful." In *Exhibition Catalog for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1990.
- Briggs, Harold E., and Ernestine Binnett Briggs. "The Early Theater on the Northern Plains." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (September 1950): 231–264.
- Broeze, Frank. *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989.
- Brook, James, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters, eds. *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998.
- Brookman, Philip, Marta Braun, Corey Keller, Rebecca Solnit, and Andy Grundberg. *Helios: Eadweard Muybridge in a Time of Change*. Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2010.
- Brooks, Charlotte. *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

- Brooks, Daphne. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Brooks, James. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Broussard, Albert S. *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993.
- Brown, Kathleen M. *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Brown, Peter Hendee. *America's Waterfront Revival: Port Authorities and Urban Redevelopment*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
- Buckley, Peter. "Culture, Class, and Place in Antebellum New York." In *Power, Culture, and Place: Essays on New York City*, edited by John H. Mollenkopf. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988.
- Bullough, William A. *The Blind Boss & His City: Christopher Augustine Buckley and Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- Burchell, R. A. *The San Francisco Irish, 1848-1880*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Burgess, Lauren Cook. *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, Alias Private Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Butsch, Richard. "Introduction: Leisure and Hegemony in America." In *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure Into Consumption*, edited by Richard Butsch. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.
- Calhoun, Craig J., ed. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.
- Carleton Watkins: Photographs from the J. Paul Getty Museum*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1997.
- Casey, Edward. "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Keith H. Basso and Steven Feld. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996.

- Casper, Scott E., Jeffery D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, eds. *A History of the Book in America: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*. Vol. 3. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Caughey, John Walton. *The California Gold Rush*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.
- Chan, Sucheng, ed. *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.
- Chan, Sucheng. *This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- _____. "A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush." In *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People, Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California*, edited by Kevin Starr and Richard J. Orsi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Chen, Yong. *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- _____. "In Their Own Words: The Significance of Chinese-language Sources for Studying Chinese American History." *Journal of Asian American History* 5, no. 3 (October 2002): 243–268.
- Cheng, Cindy I-Fen. "Identities and Places: On Writing the History of Filipinotown, Los Angeles." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 12, no. 1 (February 2009): 1–33.
- Cherny, Robert W., and William Issel. *San Francisco, Presidio, Port and Pacific Metropolis*. San Francisco: Boyd and Fraser, 1981.
- Cherny, Robert W. "City Commercial, City Beautiful, City Practical: The San Francisco Visions of William C. Ralston, James D. Phelan, and Michael M. O'Shaughnessy." *California History*, no. 4 (Winter 1994/1995): 296–307.
- Cockrell, Dale. *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Cocks, Catherine. *Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States, 1850-1915*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

- Cohen, Patricia Cline, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz. *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Cook, James W. *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- _____. "Master Juba, The King of All Dancers!," *Discourses in Dance* 3, no. 2 (2006): 6–20.
- _____. "The Kids Are All Right: On the Logics of Cultural Turn-Talk," *American Historical Review*, forthcoming.
- _____. "The Return of the Culture Industry." In *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, edited by James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O'Malley, 291–317. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Cook, James W., and Lawrence B. Glickman. "Twelve Propositions for a History of U.S. Cultural History." In *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, edited by James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O'Malley. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Cooper, Frederick, and Rogers Brubaker. "Identity." In *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Corbett, Michael R. *Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco, 1848–2010*. San Francisco: San Francisco Architectural Heritage, 2010.
- Courtwright, David T. *Violent Land: Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Craddock, Susan. *City of Plagues: Disease, Poverty, and Deviance in San Francisco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Cronon, William, George A. Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds. *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992.
- Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991.
- _____. "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative." *Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1347–1376.

- Cross, Ira Brown. *A History of the Labor Movement in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935.
- Cross, Ralph Herbert. *The Early Inns of California, 1844-1869*. San Francisco: Cross & Brandt, 1954.
- Curry, Jane Kathleen. *Nineteenth-century American Women Theatre Managers*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994.
- Daniels, Douglas Henry. *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.
- Davidson, Lance S. "Shanghaied! The Systematic Kidnapping of Sailors in Early San Francisco," *California Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 10-17.
- Davis, Janet M. *The Circus Age: Culture and Society Under the American Big Top*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Davis, Mike. *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998.
- Decker, Peter R. *Fortunes and Failures: White-collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Delay, Brian. *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Delgado, James P. *Gold Rush Port: The Maritime Archaeology of San Francisco's Waterfront*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Deloria, Philip J. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2004.
- _____. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Deutsch, Sarah. *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- _____. *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Deverell, William Francis. *Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- _____. *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

- _____. "‘Niagara Magnified’: Finding Emerson, Muir, and Adams in Yosemite." In *Yosemite: Art of an American Icon*, edited by Amy Scott. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998.
- Dickson, Samuel. *Tales of San Francisco*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1947.
- Domosh, Mona. *Invented Cities: The Creation of Landscape in Nineteenth-century New York*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Dow, Gerald Robert. "Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change." M.A. thesis, California State University, San Francisco, 1973.
- Dreyfus, Philip J. *Our Better Nature: Environment and the Making of San Francisco*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.
- DuBois, Ellen Carol. "Seneca Falls in Santa Cruz: Eliza W. Farnham and the Varieties of Women's Emancipation in Nineteenth-century California." *Common-place* 9, no. 2 (January 2009).
- Duniway, Clyde. "Slavery in California After 1848." In *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1905*. Washington, D.C., 1906.
- Edney, Matthew H. *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Egli, Ida Rae. *No Rooms of Their Own: Women Writers of Early California, 1849-1869*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1997.
- Eisenberg, Ari. "Life on the Margins: The Contested Space of Greenwich Village's Hudson River Waterfront, 1890-2001." M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2008.
- Eley, Geoff. *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Enstad, Nan. *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Erickson, Paul Joseph. "Welcome to Sodom: The Cultural Work of City-mysteries Fiction in Antebellum America." Ph.D. diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2005.

- Ethington, Philip J. *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Fabian, Ann. *Card Sharps and Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Fahs, Alice. *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North & South, 1861-1865*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration of Northern California. *San Francisco: The Bay and Its Cities*. New York: Hastings House, 1947.
- Fiege, Mark. *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- _____. "The Nature of the West and the World," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 305–312.
- Findlay, John M. *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Foner, Eric. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Foner, Philip S. "The Colored Inhabitants of Vancouver Island." *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly*, no. 8 (1970): 29–33.
- _____. *The Formation of the Workingmen's Party of the United States*. New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1976.
- Foster, Michael, and Barbara Foster. *A Dangerous Woman: The Life, Loves, and Scandals of Adah Isaacs Menken, 1835-1868*. Guilford: Lyons Press, 2011.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.
- Fracchia, Charles A. *When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street: San Francisco During the Gold Rush*. Virginia: The Donning Company Publishers, 2009.
- Fradkin, Philip L. *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Freund, David M. P. *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

- Fritzsich, Bruno. "San Francisco 1846-1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator." *California Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 17–34.
- Frost, Linda. *Never One Nation: Freaks, Savages, and Whiteness in U.S. Popular Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Gagey, Edmond M. *The San Francisco Stage: A History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950.
- Galloway, R. Dean. "Rowena Granice." *Pacific Historian* 24 (Spring 1980): 105–124.
- Gandy, Matthew. *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.
- Garvey, Ellen Gruber. *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Gassan, Richard. "The First American Tourist Guidebooks: Authorship and the Print Culture of the 1820s." *Book History* 8 (2005): 51–74.
- Gates, Paul. *Land and Law in California: Essays on Land Policies*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991.
- Gendzel, Glen. "Pioneers and Padres: Competing Mythologies in Northern and Southern California, 1850-1930." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 55–79.
- Gentry, Curt. *The Madams of San Francisco: An Irreverent History of the City by the Golden Gate*. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
- Gilfoyle, Timothy J. *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- _____. *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992.
- _____. "Prostitutes in History: From Parables of Pornography to Metaphors of Modernity." *American Historical Review* 104 (February 1999): 117–141.
- _____. "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneylands: Recent Paradigms in Urban History." *Reviews in American History* 26 (March 1998).
- Gilje, Paul A. *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

_____. "Gangs, the Five Points, and the American Public." *Common-place* 3, no. 4 (July 2003).

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Ginzberg, Lori D. *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the 19th-century United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Goldman, Marion S. *Gold Diggers & Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981.

Gonzales-Day, Ken. *Lynching in the West, 1850-1935*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Griswold, Robert L. "Apart but Not Adrift: Wives, Divorce, and Independence in California, 1850-1890." *Pacific Historical Review* 49, no. 2 (May 1980): 265–283.

Groth, Paul Erling. "Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study." In *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, edited by Paul Erling Groth and Todd W. Bressi. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Gudde, Erwin G. *California Place Names: The Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*. Edited by William Bright. Fourth edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Gumina, Deanna Paoli. *The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1930*. New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978.

Gutiérrez, Ramón A., and Richard J. Orsi, eds. *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Haas, Lisbeth. *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Habal, Estella. *San Francisco's International Hotel Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007.

Hackel, Steven W. *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

- _____. "Land, Labor, and Production: The Colonial Economy of Spanish and Mexican California." In *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, edited by Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1998.
- Hales, Peter Bacon. *Silver Cities: Photographing American Urbanization, 1839-1939*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.
- Hall, Stuart. "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'." In *People's History and Socialist Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1981.
- Hansen, Gladys C. *San Francisco Almanac: Everything You Want to Know About Everyone's Favorite City*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1995.
- Hansen, Gladys C., and Emmet Condon. *Denial of Disaster: The Untold Story and Photographs of the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906*. San Francisco: Cameron and Co., 1989.
- Hansen, Lawrence Douglas Taylor. "The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants Across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930." *Journal of the Southwest* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2006).
- Harlow, Neal. "The Maps of San Francisco Bay and the Town of Yerba Buena to One Hundred Years Ago," *Pacific Historical Review* 16, no. 4 (Nov., 1947): 365-378.
- Harrison, Alfred C. "Albert Bierstadt and the Emerging San Francisco Art World of the 1860s and 1870s." *California History* 71, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 74-87.
- Harvey, David. *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997.
- Haydu, Jeffrey. *Citizen Employers: Business Communities and Labor in Cincinnati and San Francisco, 1870-1916*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Hayes, Derek, *Historical Atlas of California: With Original Maps*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Hämäläinen, Pekka. *The Comanche Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

- Heap, Chad. *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Hein, Carola. "Port Cityscapes: A Networked Analysis." In *Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks*, edited by Carola Hein. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Henderson, Andrea Davies. "Reconstructing Home: Gender, Disaster Relief, and Social Life After the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1915." Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2005.
- Henderson, Mary C. "Scenography, Stagecraft, and Architecture in the American Theatre." In *The Cambridge History of American Theatre: Beginnings to 1870*, edited by Don B. Wilmet and C. W. E. Bigsby. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Henkin, David M. *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Henn, Ralph. "Chinatown in Hunters Point? It Almost Happened After the '06 Earthquake." *San Francisco Magazine*, 1970.
- Hepp, John Henry. *The Middle-class City: Transforming Space and Time in Philadelphia, 1876-1926*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Hinshaw, Mark. "Free from the freeway - but does the new Embarcadero really connect San Francisco to its waterfront?," *Landscape Architecture* 92, no. 5 (May 2002): 131-132.
- Hjalmarson, Birgitta. *Artful Players: Artistic Life in Early San Francisco*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 1999.
- Hoganson, Kristin L. *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Hood, Mary V., and Robert Bartlett Haas. "Eadweard Muybridge's Yosemite Valley Photographs, 1867-1872." *California Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (March 1963): 5-26.
- Horowitz, Helen Lefkowitz. *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth*. New York: Knopf, 2002.
- Howard, June. *Publishing the Family*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

- Hsu, Madeline Y. *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Hubbard, Philip. *Sex and the City: Geographies of Prostitution in the Urban West*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Hudson, Lynn Maria. *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- Hunter, Tera W. *To 'joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Hyde, Anne Farrar. *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920*. New York: New York University Press, 1990.
- Igler, David, "Diseased Goods: Global Exchanges in the Eastern Pacific Basin, 1770-1850," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (June 2004): 693-719.
- _____. *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- _____. "Alta California, the Pacific, and International Commerce Before the Gold Rush." In *A Companion to California History*, edited by David Igler and William Francis Devereil. *A Companion to California History*. Malden: John Wiley and Sons, 2008.
- _____. "The Industrial Far West: Region and Nation in the Late Nineteenth Century." *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (2000): 159-192.
- _____. "Trading Places: The View of Colonial American History from the Pacific," *Huntington Frontiers* 3, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 17-21.
- Irwin, Mary Ann. "'Going About and Doing Good': The Politics of Benevolence, Welfare, and Gender in San Francisco, 1850-1880." In *Women and Gender and the American West*, edited by Mary Ann Irwin and James F. Brooks. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- Isenberg, Alison. *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Isenberg, Andrew C. *Mining California: An Ecological History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2005.

- _____. "Introduction: New Directions in Urban Environmental History," In *The Nature of Cities*, edited by Andrew C. Isenberg. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006.
- Issel, William, and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Issel, William. "Business Power and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1900-1940." *Journal of Urban History* 16 (November 1989): 52-77.
- Jackson, Brenda K. *Domesticating the West: The Re-creation of the Nineteenth-Century American*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1961.
- Jacobson, Pauline. *City of the Golden 'Fifties*. Edited by Harold A. Small. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941.
- James, Ronald M. *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998.
- Jameson, Elizabeth. "Toward a Multicultural History of Women in the Western United States." *Signs* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1988).
- Johnson, Paul C. *The Early Sunset Magazine, 1898-1928*. San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1973.
- Johnson, Susan Lee. *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.
- Johnson, Walter. *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Jolly, Michelle E. "Inventing the City: Gender and the Politics of Everyday Life in Gold-Rush San Francisco, 1848-1869." Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1998.
- _____. "Sex, Vigilantism, and San Francisco in 1856." *Common-place* 3, no. 4 (July 2003).
- _____. "The Prince of Vigilance: Gender, Politics, and the Press in Early San Francisco." *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 4 (November 2004): 541-579.
- Jones, Martha S. *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

- Jung, Moon-Ho. "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3, (September 2005): 677-701.
- Kaplan, Amy. "Manifest Domesticity." *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (September 1998): 581-606.
- Kaplan, Michael. "New York City Tavern Violence and the Creation of a Working-Class Male Identity." *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 591-617.
- Kasson, John F. *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1978.
- _____. *Rudeness & Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1990.
- Katz, William Loren. *Black Women of the Old West*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.
- _____. *The Black West: A Documentary and Pictorial History of the African American role in the Westward Expansion of the United States*. New York: Random House, Inc., 2005.
- Kazin, Michael. *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- _____. "Prelude to Kearneyism: The July Days in San Francisco, 1877." *New Labor Review* 3, no. 1 (Fall 1980): 5-47.
- Kelman, Ari. *A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918: With a New Preface*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Kittredge, William. *The Nature of Generosity*. New York: Knopf, 2000.
- Klein, Kerwin Lee. "Reclaiming the 'F' Word, or Being and Becoming Postwestern." *The Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 2 (May 1996): 179-215.
- Klinge, Matthew. *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Kropp, Phoebe S. *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

- Lai, Him Mark. "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System." *Chinese America, History and Perspectives* (1987): 3–51.
- Lapp, Rudolph M. *Archy Lee: A California Fugitive Slave Case*. San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1969.
- _____. *Blacks in Gold Rush California*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- _____. "Jeremiah B. Sanderson: Early California Negro Leader." *The Journal of Negro History* 53, no. 4 (October 1968): 321–333.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1991.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *Highbrow/lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Levy, Jo Ann. *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- _____. *Unsettling the West: Eliza Farnham and Georgiana Bruce Kirby in Frontier California*. Santa Clara: Santa Clara University, 2004.
- Lhamon Jr., W. T. *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Light, Ivan. "From Vice District to Tourist Attraction: The Moral Career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940." *The Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 3 (August 1974): 367–394.
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson, Clyde A. Milner, and Charles E. Rankin, eds. *Trails: Toward a New Western History*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991.
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.
- _____. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987.
- _____. "Going West and Ending up Global," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Spring, 2001), 5-23.
- Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

- Lockwood, Charles. "Tourists in Gold Rush San Francisco." *California History* 59, no. 4 (Winter 1980/1981): 314–333.
- Long, Alecia P. *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, And Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.
- Longstreet, Stephen. *The Wilder Shore: A Gala Social History of San Francisco's Sinners and Spenders, 1849-1906*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1968.
- Loomis, Noel M. *Wells Fargo*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1968.
- Lotchin, Roger W. *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Macallair, Daniel. "The San Francisco Industrial School and the Origins of Juvenile Justice in California: A Glance at the Great Reformation." *UC Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy* 7, no. 1 (2003): 1–60.
- MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- MacGowan, Gail. "Land's End in San Francisco." *Guidelines: Newsletter for San Francisco City Guides and Sponsors* <http://www.sfcityguides.org/public_guidelines.html> (accessed 10 July 2011).
- Madison, James. "Some Shadows of the San Francisco Stage." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 1925): 59–63.
- Makintosh, Will Beecher. "Expected Sights: The Origins of Tourism in the United States." Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2009.
- Marin, Craig Thomas. "Coercion, Cooperation, and Conflict along the Charleston Waterfront, 1739-1785: Navigating the Social Waters of an Atlantic Port City." Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2007.
- Martin, Louis. "Yank Sing Has the Details Down." *Coast News*. <http://www.coastnews.com/sf/yank_sing/yank_sing.htm> (accessed 6 December 2011).
- Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- Matthews, Glenna. *The Rise of Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States, 1630-1970*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

- McDonald, Terrence J. *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860-1906*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- McDowell, Linda. *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- McNamara, Brooks. *The New York Concert Saloon: The Devil's Own Nights*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Meinig, Donald W. ed. *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Melillo, Edward Dallam. "Strangers on Familiar Soil: Chile and the Making of California, 1848-1930." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006.
- Melosi, Martin V. "Humans, Cities, and Nature: How do Cities Fit in the Material World?," *Journal of Urban History* 36, no. 3 (2009): 3–21.
- Meyerowitz, Joanne J. *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Miller, David. "'Heroes' of American Empire: John C. Fremont, Kit Carson, and the Culture of Imperialism, 1842-1898." Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2007.
- Miller, Robert Ryal. *Captain Richardson: Mariner, Ranchero, and Founder of San Francisco*. Berkeley: La Loma Press, 1995.
- Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Viking, 1985.
- Mitchell, Lee. "Bierstadt's Settings, Harte's Plots." In *Reading the West: New Essays on the Literature of the American West*, edited by Michael Kowalewski. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Mitchell, Michele. *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Monroy, Douglas. "The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society." In *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, edited by Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

- Montoya, María E. *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict Over Land in the American West, 1840-1900*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005.
- _____. "From Homogeneity to Complexity: Understanding the Urban West." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 344-348.
- Mullen, Kevin J. *Dangerous Strangers: Minority Newcomers and Criminal Violence in the Urban West, 1850-2000*. New York: Macmillan, 2005.
- _____. *Let Justice Be Done: Crime and Politics in Early San Francisco*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989.
- Mumford, Kevin J. *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947.
- _____. "What Is a City? from Architectural Record (1937)." In *The City Reader*, edited by Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Naef, Weston J., and J. Paul Getty Museum. *Carleton Watkins in Yosemite*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2009.
- Nasaw, David. *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.
- Nash, Gerald D. *State Government and Economic Development*. New York: Arno Press, 1979.
- Nash, Linda. "The Agency of Nature or the Nature of Agency?" *Environmental History* 10 (January 2005), 67-69.
- Nead, Lynda. *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Nelson, Bruce. *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Newell, Quincy D. *Constructing Lives at Mission San Francisco: Native Californians and Hispanic Colonists, 1776-1821*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009.
- Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

- Noel, Jana. "Jeremiah B. Sanderson: Educator and Organizer for the Rights of 'Colored Citizens' in Early California." *The Journal of Negro Education* 74, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 151–158.
- Nunis, Jr., Doyce B. "Alta California's Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration." In *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, edited by Ramon A. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Ohmann, Richard Malin. *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century*. New York: Verso, 1996.
- Okihiro, Gary Y. *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Olmsted, Nancy. *The Ferry Building*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1998.
- Orsi, Richard J. *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- O'Neill, Colleen. "Commentaries on the Past and Future of Western History: Multiple Strands of Inquiry in a (Still) Contested Region." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 287–288.
- Page, Max. *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Palmer, Annette C., and Lawrence A. Peskin. "What in the World is 'America and the World'?" *Perspectives on History* (November 2011).
- Palmquist, Peter, and Thomas Kailbourn. *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840-1865*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Pascoe, Peggy. *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- _____. "Gender Systems in Conflict: The Marriages of Mission-Educated Chinese American Women, 1874-1939." *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1989): 631–652.
- Pastron, Allen G., and James P. Delgado. "Archaeological Investigations of a Mid-19th-Century Shipbreaking Yard, San Francisco, California." *Historical Archaeology* 25, no. 3 (1991): 61–77.

- Pastron, Allen. "The Hoff Store Site: An Introduction." In *The Hoff Store Site and Gold Rush Merchandise from San Francisco, California*, edited by Allen G. Pastron and Eugene M. Hattori. Ann Arbor: The Society for Historical Archaeology, 1990.
- Pegler-Gordon, Anna. "Chinese Exclusion, Photography, and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy." *American Quarterly* 58 (March 2006): 51-77.
- Peterson, Jon A. *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Peterson, Mark. "Naming the Pacific." *Common-place* 5, no. 2 (January 2005).
- Phelps, Robert. "'All Hands Have Gone Downtown': Urban Places in Gold Rush California." *California History* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 113-140.
- Phillips, Catherine Coffin. *Portsmouth Plaza: The Cradle of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Printed by J.H. Nash, 1932.
- Phillips, Kate. *Helen Hunt Jackson: A Literary Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Pickelhaupt, Bill. *Shanghaied in San Francisco*. San Francisco: Flyblister Press, 1996.
- Pitti, Stephen J. *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006.
- Pomeroy, Earl. *The American Far West in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Prude, Jonathan. "Engaging Urban Panoramas: City Views of the Antebellum North." *Common-place* 7, no. 3 (April 2007).
- Qin, Yucheng. *The Diplomacy of Nationalism The Six Companies and China's Policy Toward Exclusion*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.
- Rasmussen, Louis J. *San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists*. Vol. II. Colma: San Francisco Historic Record & Genealogy Bulletin, 1966.
- Rast, Raymond W. "The Cultural Politics of Tourism in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1882-1917." *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (2007): 29-60.
- _____. "Tourist Town: Tourism and the Emergence of Modern San Francisco, 1869-1915." Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2006.

- Reps, John W. *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Richards, Leonard L. *Gentlemen of Property and Standing: Anti-abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Richards, Sherman L. and George M. Blackburn. "The Sydney Ducks: A Demographic Analysis." *Pacific Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (February 1, 1973): 20–31.
- Rockman, Seth. *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Rocq, Margaret Miller, and California Library Association. *California Local History: A Bibliography and Union List of Library Holdings*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1970.
- Rodgers, Daniel T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Rohrbough, Malcolm J. *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Rome, Adam. "‘political hermaphrodites’: Gender and Environmental Reform in Progressive America." *Environmental History* 11, no. 3 (July 2006).
- Rourke, Constance. *Troupers of the Gold Coast; or, The Rise of Lotta Crabtree*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928.
- Rozario, Kevin. *The Culture of Calamity: Disaster and the Making of Modern America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- _____. "What Comes Down Must Go Up: Why Disasters Have Been Good for American Capitalism." In *American Disasters*, edited by Steven Biel. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Rubin, Jasper. *A Negotiated Landscape: The Transformation of San Francisco's Waterfront Since 1950*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Ryan, Mary P. *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City During the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- _____. *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

- Rydell, Robert W. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Sackman, Douglas Cazaux. *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Sandos, James A. *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Sandweiss, Martha A. *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Saxton, Alexander. *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- _____. *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-century America*. New York: Verso, 1990.
- Sánchez, Rosaura. *Telling Identities: The Californio Testimonios*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- Schafer, Judith Kelleher. *Brothels, Depravity, and Abandoned Women: Illegal Sex in Antebellum New Orleans*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009.
- Scharff, Virginia. "Else Surely We Shall All Hang Separately: The Politics of Western Women's History." *The Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 4, Western Women's History Revisited (November 1992): 535–555.
- Scherer, James Augustin Brown. *"The Lion of the Vigilantes" William T. Coleman and the Life of Old San Francisco*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1939.
- Scherini, Rose Doris. *The Italian American Community of San Francisco: A Descriptive Study*. New York: Arno Press, 1980.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Schultz, Stanley K. *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

- Schwantes, Carlos A. *Going Places: Transportation Redefines the Twentieth-century West*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Scobey, David M. *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.
- _____. "Nymphs and Satyrs: Sex and the Bourgeois Public Sphere in Victorian New York." *Winterthur Portfolio* 37 (Spring 2002): 43–66.
- Self, Robert. "City Lights: Urban History in the West." In *A Companion to the American West*, edited by William Devereell and David Igler. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- Senkewicz, Robert M. *Vigilantes in Gold Rush San Francisco*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- Sentilles, Renée M. *Performing Menken: Adah Isaacs Menken and the Birth of American Celebrity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Sewell, Jessica Ellen. *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- _____. "Gendering the Spaces of Modernity: Women and Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2000.
- _____. "Gender, Imagination, and Experience in the Early-Twentieth-Century American Downtown." In *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson*, edited by Paul Erling Groth and Chris Wilson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- _____. "Sidewalks and Store Windows as Political Landscapes." In *Building, Image, and Identity: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, Volume IX*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003.
- Sewell, William Hamilton. *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Shackelford, Ruth. "To Shield Them from Temptation: 'Child-saving' Institutions and the Children of the Underclass in San Francisco, 1850-1910." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990.
- Shah, Nayan. *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

- Sharpe, William C. *New York Nocturne: The City After Dark in Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Shumsky, Neil L. "Vice Responds to Reform: San Francisco, 1910-1914." *Journal of Urban History* 7, no. 1 (November 1980): 31-47.
- _____. *The Evolution of Political Protest and the Workingmen's Party of California*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991.
- Shumsky, Neil L., and Larry M. Springer. "San Francisco's Zone of Prostitution, 1880-1934." *Journal of Historical Geography* 7 (1981): 71-89.
- Sibley, David. *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Sides, Josh. *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Simon, Bryant. *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Sinclair, Mick. *San Francisco: A Cultural and Literary History*. Northampton: Signal Books, 2004.
- Sklansky, Jeffrey. *The Soul's Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820-1920*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Maxwell Macmillan, 1992.
- Smith, Carl. *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, The Haymarket Bomb and The Model Town of Pullman*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Smith, Grant H. *The History of the Comstock Lode 1850-1920*. Reno: Nevada State Bureau of Mines and the Mackay School of Mines, 1943.
- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Smith, James R. *San Francisco's Lost Landmarks*. Sanger: Word Dancer Press, 2005.
- Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984.

- Smith, Stacey L. "Remaking Slavery in a Free State: Masters and Slaves in Gold Rush California," *Pacific Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (February 2011): 28-63.
- Snorgrass, J. William. "The Black Press in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1856-1900." *California History* 60 (Winter 1981/1982): 306-317.
- Sobredo, James. "From Manila Bay to Daly City: Filipinos in San Francisco." In *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*, edited by James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998.
- Soja, Edward W. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Verso, 1989.
- _____. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- _____. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- _____. "History: Geography: Modernity." In *The Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by Simon During. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Solnit, Rebecca. *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- _____. *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West*. New York: Viking, 2003.
- Soluri, John. *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, And Environmental Change in Honduras And the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.
- Sorkin, Michael, ed. *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.
- Sotiropoulos, Karen. *Staging Race: Black Performers in Turn of the Century America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Sparks, Edith. *Capital Intentions: Female Proprietors in San Francisco, 1850-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Spears, Timothy B. *Chicago Dreaming: Midwesterners and the City, 1871-1919*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Spence, Mark. "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National Park Ideal, 1864-1930." *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (February 1996): 27-59.
- Spirn, Anne Whiston. *Language of Landscape*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

- Spoehr, Luther W. "Sambo and the Heathen Chinese: Californians' Racial Stereotypes in the Late 1870s." *The Pacific Historical Review* 42, no. 2 (May 1973): 185–204.
- Stanley, Amy Dru. *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Starr, Kevin, and Richard J. Orsi, eds. *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People, Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- _____. "Sunset Magazine and the Phenomenon of the Far West." In *Sunset Magazine: A Century of Western Living, 1898-1998*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Libraries, 1998.
- Steinberg, Ted. "Smoke and Mirrors: The San Francisco Earthquake and Seismic Denial." In *American Disasters*, edited by Steven Biel. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Stoll, Steven. *The Fruits of Natural Advantage: Making the Industrial Countryside in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Stott, Richard. *Jolly Fellows: Male Milieus in Nineteenth-Century America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.
- Stowell, David Omar, ed. *The Great Strikes of 1877*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
- Stradling, David. *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.
- Streeby, Shelley. *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Street, Richard Steven. *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769-1913*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Taniguchi, Nancy J. "Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush." *California History* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 141–168.

- Taylor, Quintard. *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.
- Tchen, John Kuo Wei. *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- _____. "Introduction: Tangrenbu--The Street Life of San Francisco's Chinatown, 1895-1906." In *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown*. New York: Dover Publications, 1984.
- Thrush, Coll. *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008.
- Toll, Robert C. *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Tong, Benson. *Unsubmissive Women: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- _____. "Images and Mental Maps." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65, no. 2 (1975): 205-212.
- _____. "Place: An Experiential Perspective," *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (April 1975): 151-165.
- _____. "The City: Its Distance from Nature," *Geographical Review* 68, no. 1 (January 1978): 1-12.
- Upton, Dell. *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Venit Shelton, Tamara. "'A More Loyal, Union Loving People Can Nowhere Be Found': Squatters' Rights, Secession Anxiety, and the 1861 'Settlers' War' in San Jose." *Western Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 473-494.
- Voget, Lamberta Margarete. "The Waterfront of San Francisco: 1863-1930: A History of Its Administration by the State of California." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1943.

- Wade, Richard C. *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Walker, Richard A. *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008.
- _____. "At the Crossroads: Defining California Through the Global Economy." In *A Companion to California History*, edited by David Igler and William Francis Deverell, eds. *A Companion to California History*. Malden: John Wiley and Sons, 2008.
- _____. "Industry Builds Out the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940." In *The Manufactured Metropolis*, edited by Robert Lewis. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Weber, David J. *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982.
- Welke, Barbara Y. "Rights of Passage: Gendered-rights Consciousness and the Quest for Freedom, San Francisco, California, 1850-1870." In *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000*, edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.
- Wells, Evelyn. *Champagne Days of San Francisco*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939.
- West, Elliott. *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, & the Rush to Colorado*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998.
- West, Richard Samuel. *The San Francisco Wasp: An Illustrated History*. Northampton: Periodyssey Press, 2004.
- Wheeler, B. Gordon. *Black California: The History of African-Americans in the Golden State*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1993.
- White, Richard, and John M. Findlay, eds. *Power and Place in the North American West*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.
- White, Richard. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.

- _____. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- _____. *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.
- Whitmer, John Dale. "Contesting the Golden Dream: The Shaping of San Francisco's Labor Landscape, 1847-1907." Ph.D. diss., University of Idaho, 2002.
- Wilford, John Noble. *The Mapmakers*. New York: Knopf, 1981.
- Williams, Mary Floyd. *History of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851: A Study of Social Control on the California Frontier in the Days of the Gold Rush*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1921.
- Wilson, Chris, and Paul Erling Groth. "The Polyphony of Cultural Landscape Study: An Introduction," *Everyday America Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson*, eds. Chris Wilson and Paul Erling Groth. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Wirt, Frederick M. *Power in the City: Decision Making in San Francisco*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.
- Wittmann, Matthew W. "Empire of Culture: U.S. Entertainers and the Making of the Pacific Circuit, 1850-1890." Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2010.
- Wollenberg, Charles. *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History*. Berkeley: University of California, 1985.
- Wong, K. Scott, and Sucheng Chan, eds. *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities During the Exclusion Era*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.
- Wood, Sharon E. *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Woolner, Cookie. "The Cultural Significance of Women at the Bella Union Theater, 1849-1906." unpublished paper in author's possession, 2004.
- Work Projects Administration. *Lotta Crabtree; John McCullough*. Edited by Lawrence Estavan. Vol. 6. San Francisco Theatre Research. San Francisco: Works Projects Administration, 1938.
- _____. *Minstrelsy*. Edited by Lawrence Estavan. Vol. 13. San Francisco Theatre Research. San Francisco: Works Projects Administration, 1939.

- _____. *Theatre Buildings*. Edited by Lawrence Estavan. Vol. 15. San Francisco Theatre Research. San Francisco: Works Projects Administration, 1940.
- Worster, Donald. *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- _____. *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Wrobel, David M. and Michael C. Steiner, eds., *Many Wests: Place, Culture & Regional Identity*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997.
- Wrobel, David M., and Patrick T. Long, eds., *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001.
- Wyatt, David. *Five Fires: Race, Catastrophe, and the Shaping of California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Wyckoff, William. "Understanding Western Places: The Historical Geographer's View." In *Western Places, Western Myths: How We Think About the West*, edited by Gary J. Hausladen. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006.
- Yip, Christopher. "San Francisco's Chinatown: An Architectural and Urban History." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985.
- Young, Terence. *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
- Yung, Judy, Gordon H. Chang, and Him Mark Lai. *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Yung, Judy. *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco*. Berkeley: University California Press, 1995.
- Zboray, Ronald J. *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Zipp, Samuel. *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Zukin, Sharon. *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Zurier, Rebecca. *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.