

THE ARGONAUT

JOURNAL OF THE SAN FRANCISCO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Journal of the San Francisco Historical Society

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Cover photo: Andre La Forgia standing behind a meat counter at the Crystal Palace Market in 1959.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

by Lorri Ungaretti

The block on the eastern side of Eighth Street, between Market and Mission Streets, has a varied history that goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century. It has been the site for a Mechanics' Institute exhibition building; a football and baseball park; circus grounds; and, more recently, hotel and apartment buildings. But the most interesting use of that land was for the Crystal Palace Market, which catered to hundreds of thousands of San Franciscans and visitors from 1922 to 1959—almost thirty-seven years. Its presence influenced development in the Civic Center area during a great period of growth in San Francisco.

The Crystal Palace Market (CPM) was a cavernous, 71,000-square-foot building near Eighth Street, running from Market to Mission Streets. The CPM was open six days a week and had up to seventy-five vendors offering a wide variety of products for sale. But it was more than a market. In addition to multiple meat, poultry, fruit, vegetable, and other food stands, it offered what other “markets” didn't: unusual foods from around the world, as well as insurance, check cashing, greeting cards, phonograph records, and many services.

Studying the history of the Crystal Palace Market means also looking at the history of the land on which it was built.

ANDREW MCCREERY

The first known owner of the land at Eighth and Market Streets was Andrew McCreery, who was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1832 and came to California in 1849 to be part of the Gold Rush. He became wealthy, not as a gold miner, but by selling dry goods and investing his earnings in San Francisco real estate.

In 1858 McCreery bought part of the city block bordered by Market, Eighth, and Mission Streets. The lot extended 275 feet along Market and Mission Streets. For many years, McCreery did nothing with the land. It was described as having “a high hill of sand” with a cabin at the top. In 1870 the neighbors complained to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors that, due to the large “sand heap” on the block, “the sidewalk on the northwest side of Mission street, between Seventh and Ninth streets, is now impassable on account of the drifting sand.” The board of supervisors declined to do anything about this sand hill.¹

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE PAVILION

In 1873, the Mechanics Institute signed a six-year lease with McCreery and constructed a new exhibit pavilion on the Eighth and Market Street land. The Mechanics' Institute (MI), now operating at 57 Post Street, was founded in 1854 “to attract members, collect books, establish a library, collect minerals and scientific apparatus, and offer classes in mechanical arts.”² From 1857 to 1899 the organization hosted industrial exhibitions (fairs) in different San Francisco locations. The MI's pattern was to lease land, build a pavilion, sponsor a few fairs in that pavilion, and then move on to another San Francisco location.

The two-story pavilion building at Eighth and Market Streets had a main floor and a mezzanine. The MI fair report said the building had 175,000 square feet (4 acres) for exhibits, galleries, special events, and administration. Other newspaper articles reported that the building had 187,000 square feet.³ In either case, the building was very large.⁴

The Mechanics' Institute first placed its main entrance on Eighth Street; however, the entrance

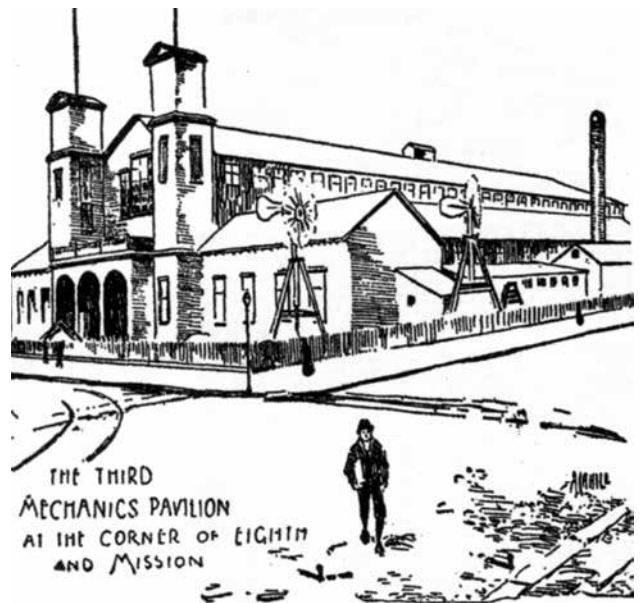


The Crystal Palace Market at Eighth and Market, shortly after it opened in 1922. Department of Public Works photo.

was changed to Mission Street, which was “better protected from the wind and dust, which sometimes sweep along the street at right angles with it” and because a streetcar line running on Mission would bring more visitors. Other entrances were on Market, Stevenson, and Jessie Streets.⁵

On August 18, 1874, Mechanics’ Institute president Andrew Smith Hallidie (inventor of the cable car, which had begun running the previous year) gave the opening speech at the first exhibition in the new building. He talked about MI’s progress and the success of the earlier exhibitions. His talk was followed by a performance of Rossini’s *Overture to William Tell*. A few more men spoke, and then the fair was off and running.⁶

From 1874 to 1881, the Mechanics’ Institute sponsored eight exhibitions in the building on

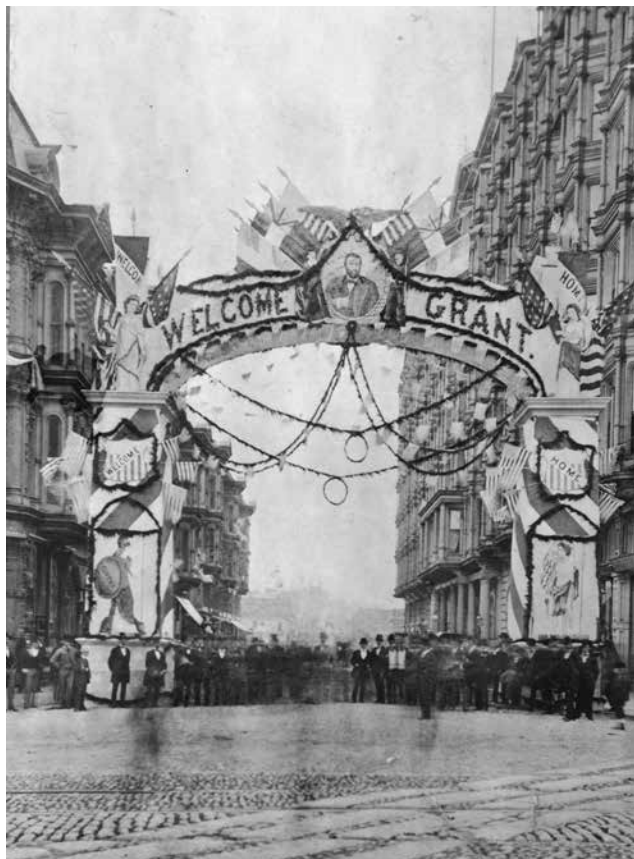


The first building to appear on McCreery land was a pavilion for the Mechanics’ Institute ninth exhibition in 1874. The San Francisco Chronicle published this drawing on February 16, 1896.



Interior view of the exhibit hall at the Mechanics' Institute ninth exhibition. Photo taken by Eadweard Muybridge, circa 1874.
 Courtesy of OpenSFHistory wnp71.1467.

McCreery land.⁷ The Mechanics' Institute also rented the building to other groups. When two-term U.S. president Ulysses S. Grant left the presidency in 1877, he and his family embarked on a two-year



This archway on Market Street was decked out to welcome President Grant. Library of Congress photo.

“tour around the world.” When they returned to the United States in September 1879, their first stop was San Francisco, where they were welcomed by the city in the Mechanics' pavilion. In 1880, another president, Rutherford B. Hayes (U.S. president, 1877–1881), was honored in the MI pavilion on his visit to California.⁸

The building also hosted music performances. The *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, “The greatest concert ever given on the Pacific Coast was the one given by the [Boston’s] Handel and Haydn Society, with over 500 voices and a stringed orchestra,” adding that “one of the finest series of instrumental concerts ever held in this city [was] by the famous Gilmore band in the pavilion on Eighth and Mission Streets.”⁹

In September 1881, the Mechanics Institute moved its pavilion to a new site between Hayes and Grove Streets in nearby Civic Center. The pavilion building at Market and Eighth was cut down in size and moved to the Civic Center site that now hosts the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium.¹⁰

CENTRAL PARK BALLPARK

Over the decades, San Francisco has had many ballparks. Locals still speak wistfully of the twentieth-century venues that no longer exist, including Seals Stadium, Kezar Stadium, and Candlestick Park. In the 1800s, the popular field was Recreation Grounds (known as “Old Rec”) and the Haight Street Grounds.

Daniel R. O’Neill took advantage of the vacant lot where the MI pavilion once stood and leased the property from McCreery for a new sports stadium called *Central Park*. Opening on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1884, Central Park was San Francisco’s main sports facility for thirteen years. It was the city’s first downtown ballpark, and it seated fifteen thousand spectators. The California League, the earliest professional baseball league in the state, called it home for its first season.

In baseball’s post-seasons of 1885 and 1887 major league teams played baseball at Central Park. Pigskin fanciers witnessed Cal and Stanford play two Big Games there: game five in 1895 and game six in 1896. O’Neill, the consummate promoter, did all that he could to bring spectators to his arena and cash



Central Park looking south in 1896. Eighth Street is on the right.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

to his tills, so he didn't limit himself to traditional sports. Occasionally, women's football teams daintily pummeled each other on the muddy field.

Author and activist Chris Carlsson describes one bicycle race in his book, *Hidden San Francisco*: "One of the biggest ever was during the 4th of July weekend in 1893 when an estimated twenty thousand spectators jammed a special track built at Central Park ... to watch the scorchers as they hurtled around the loop."¹¹

Central Park's dominance as a sporting venue ended when a new facility opened at Eighth and Harrison in October 1897. Nonetheless, O'Neill kept the turnstiles turning until April 1906. As fewer baseball and football games were held at Central Park, it became the venue for circuses and other special events.

The 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed most downtown structures, including Central Park and its surrounding buildings. City Hall was also destroyed, and good-citizen Andrew McCreery offered his nearby lot to San Francisco for a temporary city government building, but the city ultimately chose to move its offices temporarily to the nearby Hotel Whitcomb.

Another gift from Andrew McCreery was a donation of close to \$50,000 to build a branch library on 16th Street near Market, known as the *McCreery Library*.¹² The McCreery Library survived the 1906 earthquake but was badly damaged when the Daly City earthquake struck on March 22, 1957. The building was razed and replaced by the Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Memorial Library.

THE CIRCUS GROUNDS

After Central Park was destroyed in 1906, the McCreery lot became known as “the Circus Grounds,” because of its primary use by traveling circuses. The land was also used for church services, a sacred concert, furniture auctions, and more. The “Circus Grounds” hosted U.S. Senator Dolliver of Iowa addressing Republicans (October 1908), the San Francisco Labor Council’s “Labor Carnival” (October 1909), the California Land Show and Home Industry Exhibition (October 1913), and various soccer games (1920–1921). When Wild Bill Hickock retired from his “Wild West Show” he joined the Sells-Floto circus for its 1913–14 season. The circus performed regularly in the Circus Grounds.



William “Buffalo Bill” Cody traveled with the Sells-Floto Circus, which came to the circus grounds during the 1914–1915 season.

This ad for the circus appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle on April 25, 1915.

Andrew McCreery died in April 1913, and the land at Eighth and Market became part of the estate held by the McCreery family.¹³ The estate held the land until the early 1920s, renting it out for circuses and other entertainment.

FARMERS* MARKETS

BEFORE THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

Farmers markets are common now in San Francisco; almost every neighborhood has at least one each week. But in the early twentieth century, people usually bought from stores. As the prices went higher, customers began looking for ways to skip the “middleman.”

As early as June 1915, the McCreery heirs wanted to build a farmers market at Eighth and Market. First, there was an announcement in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of a building to be constructed of “reinforced concrete with white tile finish.”¹⁴ This market was never built.

A month later, the *Chronicle* described an agreement between the McCreery heirs and Steve Sanguinetti, owner of Sanguinetti’s, a popular restaurant on Davis Street, to open “one of the largest marketing places in the United States.” Architect William Beasley announced that the market would face Market Street and have two hundred retail stalls. Sanguinetti’s restaurant would sit on the corner of Eighth and Market.¹⁵ This market also was not built. In 1918, Steve Sanguinetti died of “chronic bronchitis.”

The idea of a market on McCreery land continued to attract attention. In early July 1919, the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced that David Pantoskey of Oakland would lease the McCreery land for twenty-five years and build a large market where the public could purchase fruits and vegetables directly from farmers.¹⁶ This plan was never realized.

Meanwhile, smaller farmers markets began to appear in San Francisco. Perhaps the most successful (but with a short run) was the Farmers’ Public Market, which opened at Tenth and Market Streets on July 8, 1921, managed by George Ricconi. Shortly after the market opened, popular *Examiner* columnist Annie Laurie devoted at least four of her columns to it.¹⁷ On July 9, she quoted Harry S. Maddox of the State Market Bureau: “This is the biggest thing we have had in San Francisco for years.”



This ad invited customers to the new home of the Farmers' Public Market. From the San Francisco Chronicle, October 29, 1921.

On October 27, 1921, three months after opening, the popular Farmers Public Market moved into a building at 56–72 12th Street, between Market & Mission Streets.¹⁸ In 1922 Manager George Riccomi opened three other sites—at 1810 Polk Street (July), 1215 Pacific Avenue (July), and 2712 Mission Street (September). He hoped to open new branches in the Sunset and Richmond Districts and in Westwood Park.¹⁹

While the Farmers' Public Market and its branches were popular, they all closed suddenly and permanently on October 10, 1922, only fifteen months after the first market opened, when manager George Riccomi filed for bankruptcy on behalf of the market. He later filed for personal bankruptcy.²⁰

About a month after Farmers' Public Market opened in 1921, another market, California Farmer's Free Market, opened on the McCreery lot at Eighth and Market. The McCreery Estate donated the land for the market: J. R. Cashman, manager of the McCreery Estate, said, "The property is given without cost, so the farmer will get a better price for his products and the consumers in San Francisco will pay less and get produce direct from the fields. No city producers or food speculators will be allowed to operate in the market."²¹

The market was to feature products from forty to seventy-five farmers who had leasing agreements with the McCreery Estate. The *San Francisco Examiner* wrote that the market organizers and the McCreery Estate planned to build a permanent

market building on the grounds.²² The Farmer's Free Market advertised in newspapers several times, but it "closed for the season" in early October 1921, set to open "in the spring on the same location, in a new building."²³ But by then, everything had changed, and the Farmer's Free Market never opened again.

A. F. ROUSSAU & ASSOCIATES

In 1922 Arthur "A. F." Rousseau decided to construct a building that would house one of the largest markets in the world on the site of the ill-fated Farmers Free Market.

Arthur Rousseau and his brother Oliver were architects known for building large hotels and apartment buildings in San Francisco. (They are also famous now for their 1930s "storybook houses" in the Sunset District.) Their father, Charles M. Rousseau, was born in Belgium in 1848. He studied at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and graduated as an architect. He trained Arthur and Oliver to be architects, and from 1901 to 1922 they worked with their father. In 1922 the brothers formed the Marian Realty Company (Marian was Oliver's middle name), with Arthur "A. F." as president and Oliver as vice president.

A. F. Rousseau & Associates was credited with completing the real estate purchase at Eighth and Market and later constructing and operating the Crystal Springs Market. The San Francisco city directory for 1925 listed A. F. Rousseau's brother Oliver as CPM's general manager.

EIGHTH AND MARKET STREETS: ALMOST OUTSIDE THE CITY

In 1922 the area around Eighth and Market Streets was considered the outskirts of San Francisco. The area was called *Upper Market Street* and was known as being "way out in the country."²⁴ Growth moved westward over the years, and now what we call *Upper Market* is about two miles west, just past Castro Street.

Why did A. F. Rousseau want to buy land and encourage real estate development so far from the activity of the city? He explained that "the number of people passing a given corner is one of the fundamental factors governing real estate values."²⁵



This photo looks east from Eighth and Market Streets in 1921. Courtesy of Open SF History, wnp27.4236.

A study conducted in 1922 indicated that 9.5 million people per month walked by Eighth and Market.²⁶

Despite the common perception that Eighth Street was far from the working city, Rousseau bought a great deal of land in Upper Market, seeing it as the next area in San Francisco to experience great growth. In March 1922 Rousseau bought the McCreery lot and made a prediction:

I believe that San Francisco is growing out Market street way. It is a logical development, and in time I believe you will see the business and theatrical section extending all the way to Valencia [Street]. ... A month ago, I first bought a parcel of land out there. As soon as I announced the construction of a first-class building, there was a demand for tenancy.²⁷

Rousseau may also have been influenced by the explosion of farmers markets of all kinds appearing in the area. When Rousseau and Associates bought the McCreery land, Arthur promised to build one of the

largest markets in the world. He also bought more land nearby, with plans to construct a total of ten buildings to help create an important sales district close to the city's Civic Center. Not all of those buildings were constructed, but many were—most notably, the amazing Crystal Palace Market.²⁸

On October 6, 1922, at the laying of the cornerstone for CPM, Rousseau repeated his belief that the market would “create a new business district” in San Francisco, adding, “Too long has this desert of sand blocked legitimate progress in our city.”²⁹

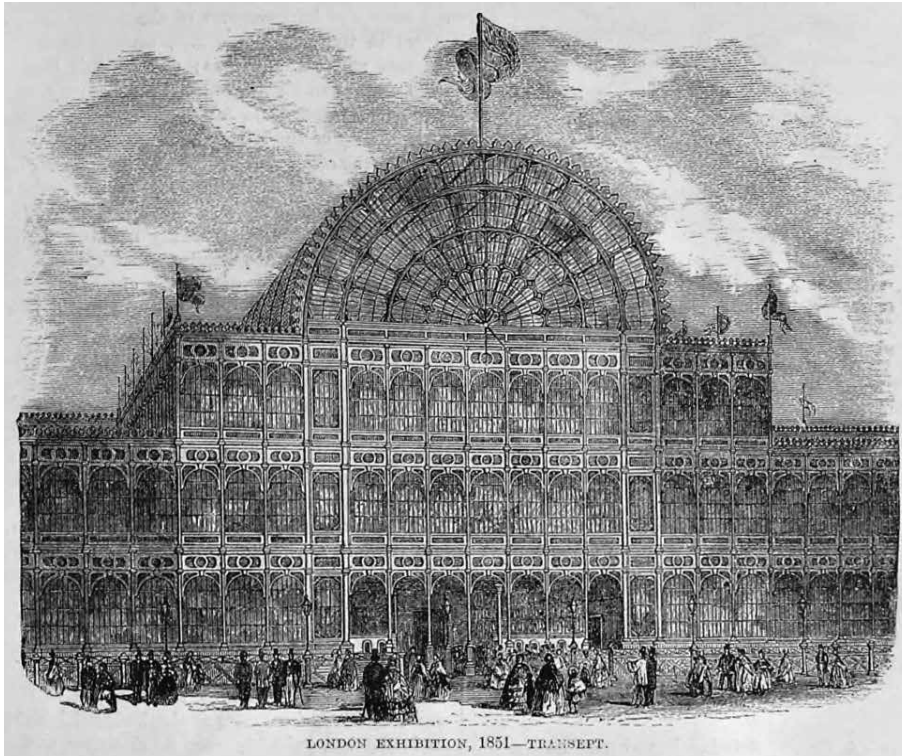
Arthur Rousseau's philosophy was that the best way to make money in real estate—and to help the community—was to buy land and build on it. After buying the McCreery land, Arthur said, “There is only one way to win with city real estate, and that is to build. To hold back means a drain of taxes and interest on your money. To build wisely—and the best is none too good for San Francisco—not only benefits yourself but helps others.”³⁰

Andrew McCreery would have been happy with the \$1.5 million sale. He had bought the land in 1858 for very little: his heirs said \$1,000, another source said \$4,000, and several sources said \$25,000.³¹ If any of these prices were correct, the appreciation of the property was extraordinary when, sixty-eight years later, A. F. Rousseau & Associates bought the land for \$1.5 million.³²

BUILDING THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

A. F. Rousseau hired architect David C. Coleman to design the Crystal Palace Market. Between 1907 and 1923 Coleman had designed one hotel and six apartment buildings that were later listed on the National Register of Historic Places.³³ Coleman later designed more buildings for A. F. Rousseau, including at least six buildings on the same block as the market.³⁴

San Francisco's Crystal Palace Market was named after the much larger Crystal Palace, a giant glass-and-iron exhibition hall that was built in London in the mid-1800s and burned down in 1936. London's Crystal Palace was built almost entirely with glass plates in a steel frame, like Golden Gate Park's Conservatory of Flowers. The building comprised about 990,000 square feet (almost 23 acres) and was not a collection of stores, but a building used



The CPM was named after London's Crystal Palace, considered the site of the first world's fair and shown here in an 1851 drawing. Wikimedia Commons photo.

primarily for exhibitions. San Francisco's Crystal Palace Market was about 71,000 square feet (1.6 acres) and used primarily for selling goods. Unlike London's Crystal Palace, San Francisco's CPM was a steel-framed, reinforced concrete building with plenty of glass and skylights for light. It was "L" shaped, with one story (plus mezzanine) and entrances on Market, Mission, Eighth (through the parking lot), Stevenson, and Jessie Streets.

and bloodshed into the plow-shares of peace, plenty and prosperity."³⁶

Construction of CPM required the removal of approximately 15,000 cubic yards of sand and earth.³⁷ The concrete work used 2,500 yards of sand, and the building required 450 tons of steel, 7,000 barrels of cement, and 4,500 cubic yards of rock.³⁸ People were using automobiles more and more; the Crystal Palace Market had parking spaces for more than 4,300 cars.



This wide-angle photograph shows the construction of the Crystal Palace Market in 1922. The street along the left bottom is Market; Eighth Street is along the right. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

Architectural historian James Russiello describes the building, especially the main entrance on Market Street (see photo on page 20):

The Crystal Palace Market was a two-story building designed by architect David C. Coleman in the Mediterranean/Medieval style similar to a Thomas W. Lamb movie palace. (Lamb designed the Fox theater on Market Street in 1929.) Such styles were popular in the 1920s. The façade features classical elements such as an oversized cornice, modillions (ornate brackets), and statuary niches (without statues). A large arched window and marquee dominated the façade. The entrance had a wide ticket-booth-like structure to reinforce the movie place impression. Perhaps Coleman wanted to convey the feeling that patrons would enjoy the same kind of excitement and fun of movie houses when they visited the Crystal Palace Market.³⁹

The rapid process of building the Crystal Palace Market could not be repeated today in San Francisco. No building of that size could now be built and opened in such a short time. Arthur Rousseau bought the land in March 1922; the architect drew up plans within a few months; construction began in July; and the market opened on December 14, 1922.

Newspaper advertising began months before the new market opened. The ads announced that the Crystal Palace Market would open in November, (it actually did not open until December 14), it would be larger than any market people had seen, and farmers could apply for a stall in the store. Interest in becoming a CPM vendor was immediate. Once the market opened, most advertising focused on great prices and special events.

According to interviews with Rousseau and others, only about one out of every three applicants for stores was accepted.⁴⁰ The CPM accepted applicants only after they convinced management that they would “fit in with the market’s policy as to strictly high quality of foods, absolute truthfulness in advertising and lowest possible prices.”⁴¹

Before the Crystal Palace Market opened, one newspaper writer described some of the delights to be experienced by customers:

Peanut butter will be made in view of the customer ... bread and cakes will be baked daily on the premises ... Horseradish will be prepared in a special plant. ... peanuts will be roasted in the building. All kinds of special condiments and cheese will be on exhibit ... special coffee will be roasted in presence of the patron. ... Shoes will be quickly repaired and hats speedily cleaned and mended. ... [There will be] dehydrated [dried] California fruits and vegetables ... Italian food products ... first-class candies at popular prices.⁴²

MARKET OPENS ABOUT NOV. 15, 1922

175 Departments in this New San Francisco Market

THE size of the Crystal Palace Market, now being rushed to completion at Market Street, between Seventh and Eighth, is amazing—

- One mile of Counters.
- 65,000 feet of floor space.
- 175 different departments.

This market is ten times larger than any existing San Francisco Market. It is estimated that over 50,000 people per day will trade here.

Over ten applications a day are being received for space. Many prominent merchants have made application. Many have been accepted.

It is not too late for you to apply for space. See Mr. Marshall today on the Premises.

CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET
Market Street
Between 7th and 8th Sts.
PHONE MARKET 9247

Second. Of a series of Advertisements on the Fine Market in the World

Your Market Opens Dec. 14th

Market on 8th

THE Crystal Palace Market is YOUR Market. It is dedicated to serve YOU, the public, in all food commodities at prices that will positively reduce the cost of living in San Francisco. The tenants of this great food center pledge to the public "To sell merchandise of taste and quality at lowest-in-the-city-prices." Our aim is not to sell low-priced merchandise, but to sell good merchandise at low prices.

Crystal Palace Market
Market St. at 8th.

San Francisco Chronicle ads in August (left) encouraged vendors to apply to sell at the Crystal Palace Market and in December (right) told people about the opening of the market.

FACTS!

San Francisco Knows How—These Are Proven Facts

When a Merchant Leases Space in the Crystal Palace Market He Wants **FACTS**—facts about the organization, facts about the management, facts about the building—facts about the traffic expected—facts about the size, location, etc. **BUT ONE OUTSTANDING FACT IS—WHO HAVE LEASED? WHAT TYPE OF MERCHANTS ARE THEY? WHO WILL BE MY NEIGHBOR?** And then another important question:

What Concessions Are CLOSED?

NO MORE APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED ON THE FOLLOWING CONCESSIONS:

MEATS	BUTTER AND EGGS	COARS	TEA ROOM	ITALIAN PROVISIONS
HAMS	BAKERY, CAKES AND	DRUGS	FLOUR	SHOES
BACONS	PASTES	SEAFOOD	CEREALS	FACTORY GAGES
FISH	SALICATED MEATS	LUNCH ROOM	PAPER BAGS	PAINTS, WALL PAPER
GENERAL GROCERIES	CONDIMENT	RESTAURANT	ROTTENBLACK	DOUGHNUT MACHINE
DRYED FRUITS	CANDY	SHORT ORDERS	NEWSSTAND	

What Concessions Are OPEN?

IF YOUR BUSINESS FALLS IN THIS LIST—SEE US AT ONCE FOR SPACE

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	PEANUT BUTTER	SPECIALTY CONCESSIONS	HARDWARE	RADIO APPLIANCES
SALAD OILS	MUSIC, Phonographs	Women's Wearing Apparel	TOOLS ACCESSORIES	HOUSEHOLD GOODS
JAMS AND JELLIES		Men's Wearing Apparel	ELECTRIC APPLIANCES	NOTIONS

Very Limited Space Still Open!

Will You Be **IN** or **OUT**?

Crystal Palace Market
Market St., Bet. 7th and 8th
San Francisco's New Food Shopping Center
Phone Park 8048

In 2018 Reed Bunzel wrote a biography of Joseph Koret, who was one of the original vendors at the CPM. He sold hosiery (socks and stockings). Bunzel later founded Koret of California, which specialized in women's clothes. He wrote:

Realizing that Market Street was exploding as a central commerce district, the [Rousseau] brothers erected a seventy-one-thousand-square-foot marketplace designed to sell goods from every corner of the United States and around the world. ... The Crystal Palace Market ... offered silk stockings, socks, garters, and other hosiery goods in a small stand owned and operated by a young entrepreneur named Joe Koret. ... Joe signed on as one of the original merchants when the Crystal Palace Market opened in 1922.⁴³

NOT JUST A MARKET

On the exciting opening day, Thursday, December 14, 1922, 125,000 people walked through the Crystal Palace Market doors at 1175 Market Street. Approximately 1,000 clerks and 175 establishments were ready to sell their wares. The *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote:

The animated scene, aisles over a mile in length thronged with visitors and buyers massed eight abreast, the novelty of advertising and spectacle [sic] “stunts.” ... Then came the more dignified formal opening,

with the presentation of the Mayor and other public officials ... and the popular and classical program by the San Francisco Municipal Band. ... there was everything to buy, from silk stockings to automobiles; fruits, vegetables and meats to package [sic] groceries, and from novelties to drugs.⁴⁴

Within a month of opening in December 1922, the Crystal Palace Market was the place to be—whether you were a vendor or a customer.

For most people, going to the CPM became an event, not just a shopping trip. First, it was the largest—or one of the largest—markets in the United States with products of all kinds. As one journalist wrote, “... it is as large as ten of the leading markets of San Francisco, the biggest of which would just about comfortably fit into the Market-street entrance, which is the smallest part of the Crystal Palace.”⁴⁵ Second, the prices were lower than what people were accustomed to paying. Third, the experience of being there was unlike any other shopping experience.

CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET SECTION **San Francisco Chronicle** CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET SECTION

DECEMBER 14, 1922

Your Market

The Food Market in the world

San Francisco's FOOD CENTER

Announces its **FORMAL OPENING**
THURSDAY DECEMBER 14, 1922

The Crystal Palace Public Market is a marvelous Christmas Gift to San Francisco's housewives.

Start saving today. Food prices are enabled High cost of living reduced below San Francisco's lowest price level. The Crystal Palace Public Market is your every day food shopping center. It saves dollars and cents for the pocketbooks of the housewives, the working man, the business man and for every man, woman and child.

Visit our fresh food center when you visit the Crystal Palace Public Market. You have that satisfied feeling of actually saving the purchasing power of your dollar.

Startly saving, six days in the week, is offered you by the continued manufacturing of 150 San Francisco's live new classes. Bring your bags, baskets and arms and fill them up. Start right on every morning.

No more waste. No more leakage for and leaks. No more high prices. No more loss of the housewife's money. From that business time on we will be clear under the big roof of the Crystal Palace Public Market, where thousands of people will find the highest quality of a higher saving than ever thought possible.

The Crystal Palace Public Market is your market where you will find all that you ever need will be saved on.

START SAVING TODAY

Crystal Palace Public Market
Market Street, Between Seventh and Eighth

Opening day, December 14, 1922.
From the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



*The corner of Market Street and Eighth in 1926. Crystal Palace Market's main entrance is at the far left. The tall Marian Building stands just west of CPM and the two Clarion buildings are west of the Marian. (See page 19.)
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.*

The CPM sold meat (up to 6 stands), fish (3), dairy products (4), poultry (4), fruits and vegetables (7), and much more. In addition to seeing and sampling a wide variety of food and other products from various countries, customers were exposed to scores of vendors hawking their wares, enthusiastically inviting customers to stop at their booths. Writers began describing the unusual foods people could find at the CPM: cashews from south America, horn nuts from China, duck eggs, glacéd (candied) fruits, dried beans sold in bulk, “health” foods, and more. Customers could also buy non-food items, such as holiday cards, flowers, phonograph records, old coins, incense, and holiday decorations. They could have their hats blocked (shaped), shoes repaired, knives sharpened, hair styled, and more.

People today still remember the unusual food smells, the crowds of shoppers, and the cacophony

of vendors’ voices hawking their wares as people wandered by.

Customers frequently visited the Crystal Palace Market just to experience the unusual. Many items that are commonplace today were unknown in the 1920s. A person could buy butter in a regular market, but at the CPM one vendor made butter every day, “in full view of the public, who can stop and watch the white liquid milk turn solid.”⁴⁶ Today, supermarkets have huge yogurt sections, but yogurt was a new, unusual food at the Crystal Palace Market. A “Health Food” counter served people yogurt, calling it “cultured milk from Bulgaria” and touting its great medicinal and healthful qualities.

When banks began closing on Saturdays, a check cashing booth immediately opened at the CPM so people could get cash to complete their weekend shopping.

Many ordinary San Franciscans remembered work they did at the CPM. For example, Jeanette Bemis's mother worked on Saturdays for Schwab & Spitz, a poultry shop at the Crystal Palace, when she was in high school (Girls High School, class of 1926). Her daughter Jeanette remembers:

Thanksgiving was a busy time, and my mother earned five dollars, plus a free turkey. I love her impression of selling chickens: "We sold very fresh chickens. When someone wanted a chicken, the man would cut off the head and pluck the chicken really quick and wrap it up. Sometimes the chickens would still be twitching when they were wrapped. They told me to hold the chickens under the counter until they stopped twitching. I don't think chickens have any brains. They're so stupid they don't know when they're dead."⁴⁷



Tony Zanca with his son and partner, Tony Jr., display a 35-pound turkey in their stand, one of four poultry stands. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Local historian John Freeman has a Thanksgiving story about the CPM, one that shows how vendors valued good customer service: "One Thanksgiving, my mother bought the family's Thanksgiving turkey from a poultry stand at Crystal Palace Market. When she opened the refrigerator on Thanksgiving morning, it was obvious to all of us from the smell that the turkey was spoiled. She was somehow able to get in touch with the vendor by telephone. He quickly drove to our house in the Richmond District with a fresh turkey."⁴⁸



People lined up in front of stores east of the CPM to buy New Zealand beef from Roy's Meats. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

In addition to buying products to take home, customers could sit down and enjoy coffee, juice drinks, ice cream, "health foods" (a new term), steam beer, sandwiches, salads, and more. Tracey Elmore shared with us a photograph of the CPM location of Manning's, a popular coffee and cafeteria chain in the western United States. The photo appeared in a booklet Manning's distributed in the 1950s to advertise its coffee locations.⁴⁹

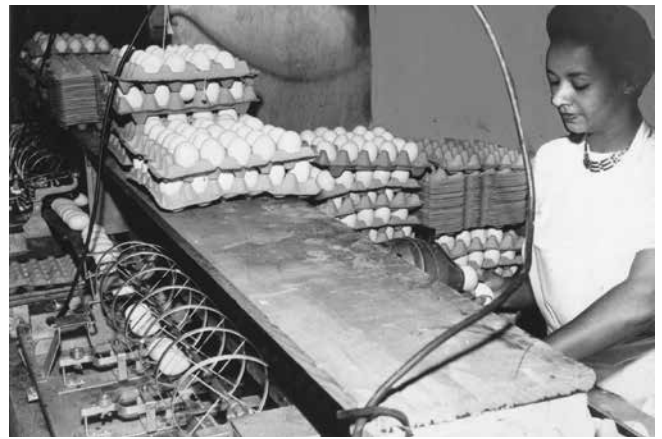


The owners of Manning's Coffee Stores published a booklet promoting their cafes to employees. This was the cover of one of the company's brochures. Courtesy of Tracey Pemberton.

CRYSTAL MARKET VENDORS



A cheese counter. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



An egg packaging machine, September 1954. One source said that the CPM sold 987,000 dozen eggs in its first six months. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Andre La Forgia at one of six meat counters. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



A "tropical" juice and fruit salad bar. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



A dried fruit stand, 1938. Courtesy of Glenn Koch.

BUILDING AND OPERATING CPM

In 1923, shortly after the Crystal Palace Market opened, A. F. Rousseau constructed three buildings next to the market on land that had been part of the parking lot. (See photo on page 16.) The first building, just west of CPM's entrance, was the Marian Building at 1179 Market Street, designed by David C. Coleman. Before long, the Rousseau brothers moved their Marian Company offices from Sutter Street to 1179 Market. Coleman also designed two more buildings next to each other (1181 and 1183 Market Street), just west of the Marian Building. They were originally called "the Clarion buildings" and leased to a store called "The Clarion." Later, these buildings were renovated into one store that held a clothing store run by the Emporium department store.⁵⁰ The Marian Company continued to expand its real estate holdings and construct more buildings that were leased or sold to other individuals or companies.



The Path of Gold, city landmark #200, consists of 22-foot-tall streetlights designed to provide a striking gold line along Market Street. Photo by ClairJour, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Path of Gold was a collection of bright streetlights that ran on Market Street from the Ferry Building to 7th street. Arthur Rousseau joined the Central Market Street Association, and in 1923 he convinced the association to extend Market Street's Path of Gold to Ninth Street.⁵¹ (It now runs to Castro Street.) Clearly, Rousseau wanted



The "Path of Gold" along Market Street was extended to Ninth Street in 1923. Photo by Madeline R., courtesy of Yelp.

to highlight the Crystal Palace Market however he could; extending the Path of Gold made the market easier to see as part of the well-lighted portion of San Francisco's main street.

CPM celebrated six months in business in June 1923. Statistics for the first half year indicated that 6 million shoppers had entered the market. Huge amounts of food were sold over that time: 1,272,400 pounds of sugar in eight-pound packages, 883,000 pounds of beef, 324,955 pounds of lamb, 182,910 pounds of fish, 987,000 dozen eggs, 150,000 pounds of dressed poultry, 169 carloads of apples, 350 carloads of potatoes, 325 carloads of mixed fruit and green vegetables, 112 carloads of oranges, and 135,000 pounds of candy.⁵²



An overhead view of some of the Crystal Palace Market vendors. Courtesy of Tom Gille.

CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET IS SOLD

On July 21, 1925, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the Crystal Palace Market land, along with two buildings just west of the CPM on Market Street (Marian and Clarion buildings), had been sold for \$3,500,000 in the “biggest cash realty deal involving one piece of property in the history of San Francisco.”⁵³

But who was the buyer? Speculation included the Southern Pacific Company (for a new train station), May Company (a department store), and a New York hotel company (for a large, new hotel). Another possible buyer was the Emporium, a local department store; but A.B.C. Dohrmann, president of the Emporium, “denied the report.”⁵⁴

One week after the sale, the secret was still not revealed, and the *San Francisco Examiner* reported:

San Francisco, as far as Market street property is concerned, is in the throes of one of the biggest real estate booms ever known in the history of the city.

In this boom, the biggest deal was the sale last week of Arthur F. Rousseau of the site and land adjoining the Crystal Palace Market [sic] to unnamed, mysterious parties.⁵⁵

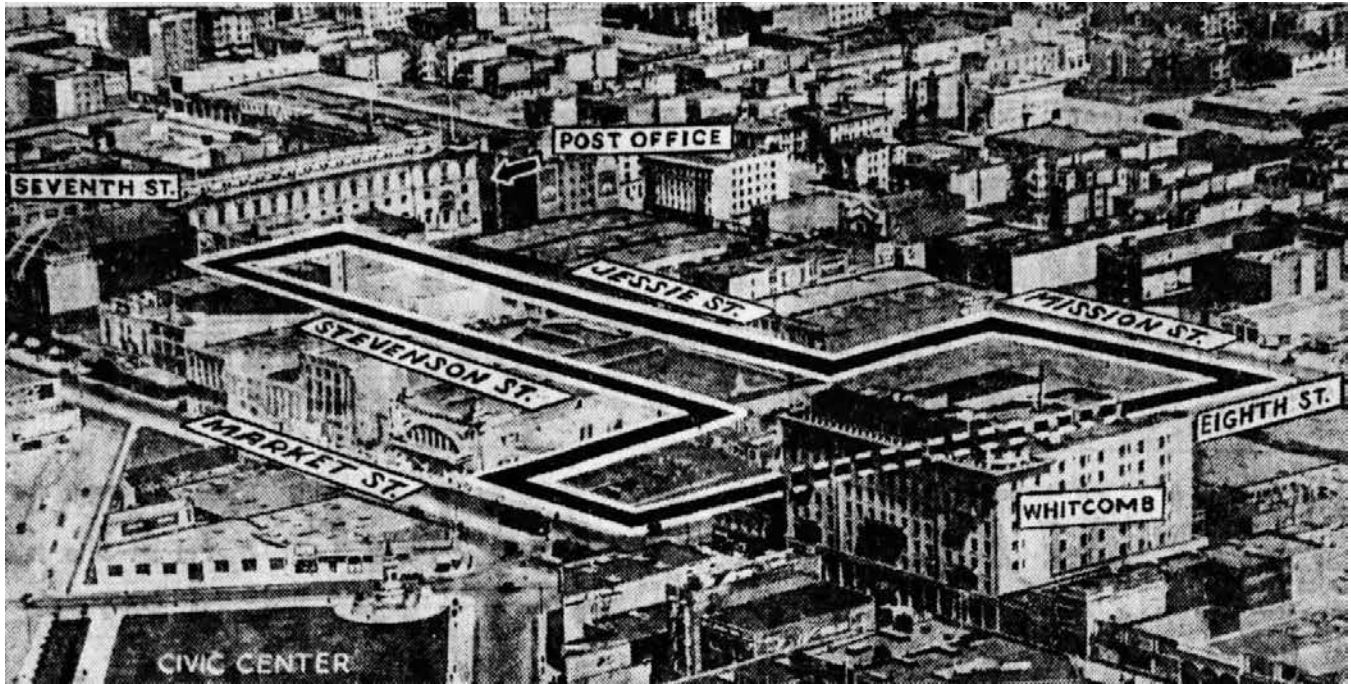
The secret was kept for almost three months. On October 19, both the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* published stories identifying the Emporium as the buyer of the Crystal Palace Market. There were also reports of how popular the “Upper Market” area had become. One article claimed that foot traffic was an average of 2,500 to 3,000 per hour, much more than the 500 to 700 people in 1922.⁵⁶

Nine days earlier, the Marian Realty Company placed an ad in the *Chronicle*, announcing the company’s move from the Marian Building (back) to 110 Sutter Street. The company had been in the Marian Building for less than a year.

After selling the Crystal Palace Market, the Rousseau brothers continued their earlier pattern of building apartment and office buildings, until the



After the Emporium bought CPM in 1925, the store added its name to the main entrance. Photo taken May 6, 1929.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



This diagram shows the “T” shape of the planned new 284,000-square-foot Emporium. One aisle would run from Eighth Street to Seventh Street, and another from Market to Mission. From the *San Francisco Examiner*, October 19, 1925.

Depression in the 1930s. Then they turned to smaller building projects, including a few blocks in the Sunset District, where they built “storybook” houses.

THE EMPORIUM’S PLANS

In late 1925 Emporium president Dohrmann unveiled a design for a new store at Eighth and Market. He explained that it would have a ground floor area of 284,000 square feet, more than twice that of the large Emporium store on Market Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets. It would also be twice the size of the Crystal Palace Market, but the market would continue to operate. The new Emporium would have an aisle 825 feet long (“the longest department store aisle in the world”), extending from Seventh Street to Eighth, and another aisle 550 feet long, extending from Market Street to Mission.⁵⁷ The *San Francisco Examiner* explained:

In order to obtain title to the desired land [for the new store], the Emporium purchased the five buildings on Stevenson street occu-

pied by *The Recorder* Printing and Publishing Company, the four-story Marian building, the three-story Clarion building† on Market street and the Postoffice [sic] Garage, fronting Stevenson and Jessie streets [sic]; the five-story Hotel Odeon at Seventh and Stevenson, and four-story St. Raphael Hotel at Seventh and Jessie, and several smaller buildings.⁵⁸

In the meantime, the Emporium was working on the 8th Street Store, in the Clarion building. The 8th Street Store opened on July 31, 1926. It ran regular ads in the San Francisco newspapers and even established an employee basketball team to play against other store teams in the city. In 1927 the company publicly announced that it expected to build a new store in Oakland by 1929 and the new store in San Francisco by 1933.

Emporium’s Oakland flagship store did open at 20th and Broadway in August 1929.⁵⁹ In 1927 Emporium ads were looking to the future, when the new San Francisco store would be “an architectural monument to the Shopping center.”⁶⁰

21 † By this time, the two Clarion buildings were referred to as one building, so some construction must have been completed.



Market Street on January 27, 1927. By this time, the Emporium's 8th Street Store operated in the Clarion Building near Eighth and Market. The building that the Rousseaus constructed is to the right of the CPM's main entrance.
 Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

THE EMPORIUM PLANS FALL THROUGH

The Emporium never built the new store in San Francisco. Instead, in 1930, five years after buying the CPM, the store renewed its lease on the old building on Market Street near Fifth for another thirty years. The store also announced that most of the land they had bought around the CPM would at some point be sold.⁶¹

By this time, the Emporium had closed the 8th Street Store and begun offering its fixtures for sale.⁶² We do not know why the store was open for only three and a half years. A downturn in sales? "Black Friday" in 1929? The Great Depression? The reason for the retrenchment is not known. But the CPM soldiered on under the ownership of The Emporium for another fourteen years.

MEMORIES OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

One of author William Saroyan's first jobs was during the Great Depression, working for a produce stall at CPM. He later wrote:

Anybody that was lucky enough to get a Saturday job at the Crystal Palace, was eager to keep the job. ... I would have kept the job had the owner of that stand reduced the wage. ...

For that matter, I might not have been unwilling to hold the job for only one dollar. ... the whole place and every working hour was pure theater. ... Every stand had its lore, and its comedians and tragedians, its clowns and cut-ups, and generally, in spite of the desperation of the time, we felt pretty good about being at work. ... The whole Crystal Palace Market was a theater, with the audience swarming all over the stage. The play had no stars. Everybody was a star for his moment. ... Give them laughter and they'll hang on. Give them a joke and they'll put off writing farewell notes.⁶³

Don Gibbs remembers being a child during the Depression and going with his parents to CPM:

The Crystal Palace Market was overpoweringly huge to a youngster—so far as I know the largest structure one could visit in that era, as big as or bigger than a circus tent. ... I remember the sellers passed out free samples and the enthusiasm and human warmth of the sellers in the Crystal Palace. The butcher never failed to offer a slice of salami to the skinny kid accompanied by decidedly unprosperous parents. ... Any kid who ever visited the Crystal Palace will never forget it.⁶⁴



Brothers Thomas and Joseph Long founded the Longs Drug Company. At CPM Joseph Long operated a Longs store selling large appliances. Courtesy of the Thomas J. Long Foundation.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET IS SOLD AGAIN

Brothers Joseph and Thomas Long founded the Longs drugstore chain in 1938. The brothers opened their first store, *Long's Self-Service Drugs*, in 1938 on Piedmont Avenue in Oakland. (They dropped the apostrophe in *Long's* in the early 1940s.) *Longs Stores* incorporated in 1946 and again as Longs Drug Stores in 1985. There were approximately five hundred stores in six western states when the company was sold to CVS in 2008.⁶⁵

In the 1930s Joseph Long opened a large-appliance store in the Crystal Palace Market. His father-in-law was O. P. Skaggs, founder of Skaggs Markets and co-founder of Safeway; at one point, Long was a director of Safeway Stores. (An ad in the June 24, 1959, *San Francisco Examiner* celebrated the newly built Marina Safeway, saying, "In many ways, San Francisco seems little changed since opening our first store at the Crystal Palace Market in 1924.")

On August 1, 1944, J. M. Long Co. purchased the Crystal Palace Market, as well as the Marian and Clarion buildings, from the Emporium. The price was \$2.4 million, quite a reduction from the \$3.5 million the Emporium had paid in 1925. After buying the CPM, Long closed some of the spaces in the market and opened "one of his pharmacies in a visible corner location."⁶⁶



Looking down Market from Eighth Street, 1946. By this time, Market Street was busier than in 1922. Photograph by the Department of Public Works.



New signs almost completely covered the original design of the main entrance on Market Street. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



View of the Crystal Palace Market from Eighth Street, showing the rear entrance and part of the 55,000-square-foot parking lot. Taken June 1958. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR CPM

Times had changed. After World War II, people were moving to the suburbs of San Francisco and not flocking to the CPM as they once had. Even locals were not driving their cars to buy groceries at in what by then was considered downtown. Television had taken over, causing attendance at the many theatres close to the CPM to close. People were no longer going to a movie and then stopping at Crystal Palace Market on their way home. Instead, people preferred to stay in their own neighborhoods and shop at supermarkets. However, the CPM held on for another fifteen years.

CHANGES IN THE 1950S

By the 1950s, various people and companies were eyeing the large Crystal Palace Market site for other uses. In 1950 San Francisco was trying to attract large conventions. Ben Swig, president

of the Fairmont Hotel, and Walter Swanson, the city's Convention and Tourist Bureau manager, wanted to buy the CPM, tear it down, and build a large convention auditorium. (This was long before Moscone Center was planned.) Nothing came of this idea, but it opened the door to others.

In the mid-1950s, the Federal Government was looking for land on which to build a large Federal Building in San Francisco. There were only two bids on the project. One was from Joseph Long, who offered to sell the Crystal Palace Market and the surrounding property to the government for \$3.8 million. Arguments for and against each site were made for months, and the government eventually settled on the block bounded by Polk Street, Golden Gate Avenue, Larkin Street, and Turk Street, and the Federal Building was erected at 450 Golden Gate Avenue.

By the late 1950s, Joseph Long and Del Webb had become business partners planning to build a luxury "motor hotel" on the CPM site.

Born in Fresno, California, Delbert Eugene “Del” Webb (1899–1974) moved to Phoenix in 1928 and later founded the Del E. Webb Construction Company. Over time, Webb became nationally known for building retirement communities and for being a co-owner of the New York Yankees baseball team.

Overall, the Del E. Webb Construction Company built fifty retirement communities in fifteen states. Webb was proud of the contributions he made to retirement living. He once said, “When I see what we’ve built, it’s the most satisfying thing that’s ever happened to me.”⁶⁷ In 1960, when the Del Webb Townhouse hotel was being built, his company was also in Arizona building the Sun City retirement community, which became the “the Webb development that overshadows all others.”⁶⁸



*Del Webb eyed the site at Market and Eighth for a new hotel.
From the Del E. Webb website.*

THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET CLOSES

In 1959 J. M. Long Co. sold the Crystal Palace Market and adjoining land to the partnership of Del Webb and Joseph Long. In April 1959 Joseph Long gave vendors ninety days’ notice that the Crystal Palace Market would close on August 2.

People were surprised—many were upset. One newspaper writer called the new building project “Del Webb’s Crystal Palace motel.”

THE LAST DAY AT CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

August 2, 1959, was a day of sadness for many CPM customers and vendors. One reporter wrote, “The final hours of the drafty market building were marked by goodbyes between customers and countermen, between counterwomen and counterwomen, and customers and customers.”⁶⁹ The next day, Donovan McClure of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, “More tears were shed yesterday over lettuce and bologna than over the death-bed scene in ‘Camille.’”⁷⁰

To some vendors, the last day was more an informal party than a funeral. Many were celebrating



A press notice, dated July 2, 1959, read, “San Francisco will lose a colorful and historic landmark in a few months when the carnival-like Crystal Palace Market, shown in a general view, closes its doors. . . . The grocers and tradesmen who have sold foodstuffs there for years in a maze of family-operated concession will disband.”

Courtesy of Tom Gille.



Another press release on July 2, 1959, read, “This is the interior of the carnival-like Crystal Palace Market in San Francisco, soon to close its doors to make way for [a] luxury motor hotel. The “test your blood pressure” sign at right marks one of the maze of concessions inside the colorful market.” *Courtesy of Glenn Koch.*



After 36 years at Crystal Palace Market, Tony Zanca (far right) closed his poultry stand with a toast on the last day of business at Crystal Palace Market. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

the Crystal Palace Market's 37 years. Others were more nostalgic. One seller said, "This is a place of romance and tragedy. I met my first two wives here, and saw a cop shot." He added, "If you stay long enough, you'll see everything."⁷¹

"People won't pay the price here for good candy anymore," said candy-maker Anna Gerbino. "But the Crystal Palace has been good to us. We put six children through school. We have a nice home in Woodacre, where we'll go when we have to leave the market."⁷²

Nate Narin started with a produce stand at Crystal Palace Market when it first opened in 1922; by 1959 he owned sixteen supermarkets. About the closing of Crystal Palace Market, he said, "Don't ask me how I feel. Losing this place is like losing a friend."⁷³

Abe Maloff, another vendor who worked from the CPM's inception to its closing, said, "People used

to come here from as far away as Salinas and San Jose. Everything was sold in bulk. That was before supermarkets and fancy packaging." He added:

... It is still a wonderful place, even in its death throes. ... Here you buy anything from rare gourmet cheeses to parakeets; from flowers to enchiladas; from rolled oats and long grained rice—measured out of huge wooden barrels—to frilly pink panties and picture frames; from fresh fish, poultry, meat, fruit and vegetables to hardware, health foods, garbanzos, matzos and linguice [sic].⁷⁴

A *San Francisco Examiner* reporter wrote, "Just a few moments before closing, twelve-year-old Tyrone Wells of 1124 Fillmore St., dropped into the market to buy fifteen cents worth of cheese. He was proclaimed the 'last' customer and was awarded a ham."⁷⁵

San Francisco Chronicle writer Mel Wax (later a newsman on KQED television), wrote,

Last week, part of San Francisco died—some of the special quality that makes San Francisco different from Dubuque or Chicago or New York. The bells tolled for the Crystal Palace Market, the sprawling, pungent, cheap and exotic carnival of delicatessen and delicacy at Eighth and Market streets. A glittering \$8 million, 400-room luxury motel with garden courts and swimming pools will go up where once you could buy piroshki, bac-cala, schmaltz herring, sun-flower seeds, pinto beans and steam beer. . . . Now the show is ending.⁷⁶

WHAT PEOPLE SAY TODAY ABOUT CPM

Few people alive today still remember the Crystal Palace Market. But others give us an idea of how the market was unique.

SFSU Professor Bill Issel says,

We lived on Baker Street near McAllister until I was eleven years old, and my mom shopped at the Crystal Palace Market every week. I have vivid memories of taking the 5 McAllister iron monster streetcar down to shop there with my mom and sometimes with my dad. . . . The Crystal Palace Market makes an appearance in my *Coit Tower* novel. My character Flora Bosco has a favorite CPM vendor from whom she buys the mak-ings for her *Trippa Busecca alla Milanese*.⁷⁷

Lenore Long remembers that as a child she was often at the Crystal Palace Market with her mother. “It was to me a fantasy land of all combination of goodies,” she says. “The market was so vast with so many different concessions! The hum of so many people made it exciting to be there.”⁷⁸



Crystal Palace Market closed on August 2, 1959. This photo was taken on August 25. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Author Gus Lee wrote about CPM in his book, *China Boy*: “The Palace was an emporium dedicated to the palates of the cosmos. It probably had food from Saturn. It was the FAO Schwarz of the stomach. It was so big and so full of edibles that I recognized it as the true cathedral to human existence.”⁷⁹

A FINAL GOODBYE: CONTINUING THE CPM TRADITION

Many CPM vendors wanted to continue to sell in a similar environment. According to Thomas Giannini, his father, David, had leased the produce stands in the Crystal Palace Market for several years during and after World War II. Each holiday season, he also sold Christmas trees in the back parking lot of CPM. “When the Crystal Palace was closing in 1959 my father organized several of the other tenants and opened the Giannini Food Fair on the same block” [at 1145 Market Street].⁸⁰

Other plans included buying the Acme brewing plant on Buchanan Street “for a modern version of the Crystal Palace Market.”⁸¹ Most of these other plans never materialized, and CPM went quickly into the past history of the city.

AFTER THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET CLOSED

After the CPM closed, the building was quickly razed and replaced by the Del Webb Townhouse a five-story, \$8 million hotel/motel with four hundred luxury rooms and air conditioning throughout. The hotel opened in 1961 but was not a great success. By the 1970s the hotel rooms had been converted to apartments. San Francisco landlord Angelo Sangiacomo bought the property in 1987. In 2013 the Townhouse (then called *Trinity Plaza*) was razed to build Trinity Place, a group of modern buildings featuring 1,900 luxury apartments. The luxury apartments began accepting tenants in 2021.

In photographs, the one-story “World’s Largest Public Market,” built in 1922, looks small against Del Webb’s Townhouse and is dwarfed by the new seventeen-story Trinity Place.



Del Webb razed CPM soon after it closed. The Del Webb Townhouse opened in 1961. Courtesy of John Freeman.



Trinity Properties tore down the Del Webb building in 1987 and began building Trinity Place, which has 1,900 luxury apartments. Trinity Place opened in 2021. Image by Architectonica.



The Heart of the City Farmers Market was established in 1981, across Market Street from where the Crystal Palace Market once stood. Yelp photo.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET’S LEGACY

In 1979 Robert F. Begley wrote a *San Francisco Examiner* column recalling the Crystal Palace Market. He suggested that a farmers market be set up in U.N. Plaza, across Market Street from where the Crystal Palace Market once stood.⁸² Just two years later, in 1981 the “Heart of the City Farmers’ Market” began operating two days a week in U.N. Plaza. It has operated for forty-one years.

* * * * *

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lorri Ungaretti has published five books about San Francisco’s Richmond and Sunset Districts, including *Stories in the Sand: San Francisco’s Sunset District, 1847–1964*. She has written various articles and given many presentations about San Francisco history. As a City Guide, she leads walking tours of areas in the Sunset District. She worked for a time at the San Francisco Historical Society and still volunteers. She is also the managing editor (and photo editor) of *The Argonaut*.

AUTHOR'S PERSONAL NOTE

Many people and nearby businesses were affected by the Crystal Palace Market. One was my grandfather, Giuseppe “Joe” Calvetti, who was born in Italy and immigrated to the United States as a child. Throughout the 1930s, he operated the tiny “Calvetti’s Service Station” at Mission and 8th Streets. (See the circled building at the bottom of this aerial view of the Crystal Palace Market.) The smaller photos show the gas station and Joe Calvetti. He periodically brought home fish for his family’s dinner from the Crystal Palace Market.



An aerial view looking northeast from Mission Street shows the Crystal Palace Market, parking lots, and surrounding buildings. The bottom of the photo is Eighth and Mission Street. The author's grandfather's service station was in the tiny, circled building at the bottom. From the Bennett Hall/San Francisco images collection.



In the 1930s, Italian immigrant Giuseppe (Joseph) Calvetti operated a gas/service station, “Calvetti’s Service Station” on the southeast corner of Eighth and Mission Streets, across from the Crystal Palace Market parking lot. From the author’s collection.



Joe Calvetti (the author's grandfather) operated the Calvetti Service Station. From the author's collection.



CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

by James Laughlin (1914–1997)

Saw a girl in a food store that looked like	giant food market full of things to eat every
you gave me the shakes in my poor old heart	thing to eat that a person could desire
darling darling sings the voice on the radio	but I guess that I'll go hungry hungry hungry
darling why did we ever drift apart big	darling says the radio why did we ever part

This poem was written by James Laughlin, probably in the 1930s or 1940s. It was published in an anthology in 1999 and put to music in 2004.

“Crystal Palace Market” by James Laughlin, from *The Collected Poems of James Laughlin*, copyright ©1945 by James Laughlin. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp. Special thanks to Roger Parodi for providing information about the poem being put to music by John Musto in 2004.

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The Crystal Palace Market at Eighth and Market, shortly after it opened in 1922. Department of Public Works photo.

DAYS OF INFAMY:

What happened in San Francisco on December 7, 1941, as well as the months before and after the bombing of Pearl Harbor

by Rose Marie Cleese

December 7, 2021, marked the eightieth anniversary of the bombing of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Navy. Another infamous date—9/11—has largely supplanted December 7, 1941, in the country’s consciousness; for decades after the surprise attack on Oahu, that December date was etched indelibly in Americans’—and San Franciscans’—minds. The bombing changed the course of the nation’s history. One day later, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his famous “Day of Infamy” speech before a joint session of Congress, after which it declared war on Japan. Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy declared war on the United States four days later. In the space of just a couple of years, the event turned a small, slumbering military into what would become the greatest fighting force the world had ever seen. It sent millions of American men and women into the fray. It turned San Francisco into a tumultuous wartime city. It upended the lives of thousands of people of Italian and German descent and resulted in the internment of the entire Japanese population living on the West Coast, numbering approximately 120,000 people—two-thirds of them American citizens. December 7, 1941, is still a date to be remembered.

The first Sunday in December 1941 began as a mild, sunny day in San Francisco. Residents of the city were going about their usual Sunday routines. The day would turn out to be anything but routine. Shortly after 11 a.m., twenty-two-year-old medical student John Kerner, who was home taking a break from his studies at UC Berkeley, was walking down the hill from his parents’ Clay Street apartment. Suddenly, a man ran out of a store on Van Ness Avenue shouting that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. “I headed right back to my parents’ and we turned on the radio,” Kerner recalled. “The Japanese had been meeting with FDR; the bombing was a total surprise. We were afraid that day that the Japanese would bomb San Francisco.” Three years later, right after D-Day, Kerner would find himself serving as a combat medic on the front lines in France.

Bill Del Monte, whose father, Angelo Del Monte, had opened the city’s popular Fior d’Italia restaurant in San Francisco in 1886, was at the family flat at

902 Union Street and heard the news of the attack late that morning when he turned on the radio. The forty-four-year-old went to the roof to look out at San Francisco Bay and saw numerous U.S. naval vessels heading toward the Golden Gate. “We thought we were gonna be attacked too,” he related. “I remember that night looking over at the Alameda and Oakland shipyards; they were ablaze in lights. I thought, ‘What targets they would make!’”

Noted San Francisco historian Alessandro Baccari, then fourteen years old, recalled that he was having an early Sunday dinner at the Gold Spike restaurant in North Beach with his parents when a cook came out from the kitchen and announced the startling news that he had just heard on the kitchen radio. “Everybody was stunned,” Baccari said. “We didn’t expect anything like this. There was dead silence—like we were suspended. Or course, people were thinking that if they could hit the Hawaiian Islands, they could hit us. [The war years] turned out to be a very hard time for the Italian community.”



In June 1937, Mayor Angelo Rossi watches Golden Gate Park superintendent John McLaren plant one of several cherry trees given to the city by Kanzo Shizaki, Japanese Consul-General in San Francisco from August 1936 to January 1939. The city had many dealings with Japanese officials and naval officers in the decades leading up to December 7, 1941. Courtesy of the author.

Angelo J. Rossi, who was nearing his twelfth year as San Francisco's mayor; his wife, Grace; and their fifteen-year-old granddaughter, Eleanor Rossi, were at Father James Long's 11 a.m. High Mass at St. Vincent de Paul, two blocks from their Cow Hollow home. Bill McCarthy, one of Rossi's city-appointed chauffeurs, had driven them to church. When the Rossis went into the church to attend mass, McCarthy stayed by the city car. About a half-hour into his wait, he turned on the car radio and immediately heard the alarming news. "I debated back and forth about whether I should go into the church and get Angelo," he recalled. "But then I thought I'd better tell the boss right away."

Eleanor Rossi Bailey vividly remembers McCarthy walking up the main aisle to the Rossis' usual pew, four rows from the front, and whispering in Angelo's ear. Angelo immediately got up and left the church, instructing McCarthy to drive him to City Hall as fast as possible. "We got there so fast, no one else was there yet," McCarthy says. "We had to unlock the front door." Rossi's grandson, Hank Morris, who lived next door to his grandparents, just missed the mayor and his chauffeur as he ran to the church to tell his grandfather the shocking news.

Rossi's two married daughters, Rosamond Cleese and Eleanor Morris, and Rosamond's eleven-year-old daughter, Barbara, were at the Marines Memorial



Angelo J. Rossi, thirty-first mayor of San Francisco, served in that office from January 1931 to January 1944. He was the first mayor of a major U.S. city (i.e., top ten cities in population from 1776 to 1944) who was of 100% Italian descent. Courtesy of the author.

Building on Sutter Street for a rehearsal of a women's club's annual Christmas pageant. As soon as they heard of the attack, they sped back to the mayor's home on Union Street where Barbara and her family lived in a top-floor apartment. Barbara will never forget that ride home. "On our way back to the house, I remember passing the Japanese consulate [a graceful mansion at 2622 Jackson Street], and on the grounds out in front, consulate employees were frantically throwing files onto a couple of big bonfires." (Later that day the fire department was called to the consulate to put out a fire that had gotten out of control in the building's fireplace; too many documents had been thrown into it.)

Shortly after Rossi unlocked City Hall, representatives of the armed forces, city department heads, and some fifty members of the Civilian Defense Council began to arrive to implement emergency measures to defend the city and the surrounding counties. Just twelve days earlier, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors had approved the creation

of the Civil Defense Council as a permanent city department "for the duration of the national emergency"—an emergency proclaimed by Roosevelt on May 27 to counter Hitler's threats of world domination. The creation of the permanent council had warranted only one paragraph in the local newspapers. In the weeks leading up to December 7, 1941, the news filling the papers concerned a rash of local strikes (department store clerks, hotel employees, café workers, and others), traffic studies, the "communist" murals of Coit Tower, the annual Cow Palace livestock show, and ongoing debates about Hetch Hetchy bonds and the Raker Act (which allowed public ownership of the water and power generated in Yosemite National Park).

In the months before the Pearl Harbor attack by the Japanese, war talk or activities among San Francisco authorities and citizens were focused on the war in Europe. Although Mayor Rossi had formed a committee in March 1941 to study London's civil defense plan and come up with recommendations for a similar plan for San Francisco, a local authority on defense said that there was probably only a 5 percent chance that the plan would ever be needed due to war. Nonetheless, on April 1, 1941, the Navy took over San Francisco's Treasure Island to use the artificial island as a military base. Mayor Rossi had been hoping to use the island as a second airport to accommodate the seaborne Pan Am Clippers and to supplement the existing municipal airport at Mills Field in Millbrae.*

In July, Lord Halifax, Great Britain's ambassador to the United States, visited San Francisco with his wife to inspect Bay Area shipyards that were building ships for Britain, to thank the local industries for the work they were doing to support Britain's war efforts, and to try to convince San Franciscans of the global threat Hitler presented. The following week Wendell Willkie, who had been the Republican challenger in the presidential election of 1940, arrived for the National Unity Mass Meeting at Civic Auditorium at the behest of FDR and Americans United of Northern California to urge citizens to fully support the president's foreign policies and to argue that now was the time to take the fight to the

* The Navy did not close the base until 1997, at which point local redevelopment authority was transferred to a state agency staffed by the San Francisco mayor's office. The first conveyance of property back to the City of San Francisco didn't occur until 2015—some 74 years after the Navy commandeered the island. As of December 2020, the agency had received 866 acres of Treasure Island and Yerba Buena, with the remaining 129 acres awaiting completion of environmental cleanup by the Navy.



In 1941 the Japanese consulate was located at 2622 Jackson Street, near Scott Street. Courtesy of Bill Yenne.

Nazis. That same week Rossi was presented with a “dud” incendiary bomb by a Dominican priest from Britain. The thirty-inch-long deactivated bomb was a gift from Sir George Henry Wilkinson, the Lord Mayor of London, in appreciation for San Francisco’s war aid. He wrote, “We offer this fine memento with the gratitude of Londoners for aid given to the British people.” July ended with an “Enlist for Defense Week.”

That August, as an expression of goodwill and to counter tensions in the Pacific, the Japanese American Citizenship League renamed Beniamino Bufano’s thirty-four-foot-high, granite-and-stainless-steel Peace statue *Tolerance* and gave it to the city on behalf of local Japanese residents. In September, a benefit was held on Treasure Island for British War Relief.

In October, civil defense activities intensified as Mayor Rossi called for twenty-five thousand police, fire, and air raid warden volunteers. Three days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a state assembly fact-finding committee on un-American activities grilled Ettore Patrizi, editor of two San Francisco Italian-language newspapers, *l’Italia* and *Il Vocce del Popolo*, who denied that any Fascist activity existed in the city, and Ottorino Ronchi, president of the San Francisco Art Commission, who countered that Fascism was rampant.



In July 1941, Mayor Angelo Rossi inspects a German incendiary bomb that was dropped on London several months prior and had failed to detonate. The deactivated “dud” bomb was a gift from the Lord Mayor of London. San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

In City Hall on that afternoon of December 7, 1941, all thoughts of the previous months were swept aside by those assembled in the mayor's office; their only concern was the safety of the city and what might happen next. The nascent civil defense plan was activated immediately. Guards were ordered for all strategic locations (dams, bridges, airports, power plants, etc.). Police were posted in Japanese neighborhoods to quell any conflicts. And six thousand American Legionnaires were put on alert. That evening, Mayor Rossi declared a state of emergency and issued a proclamation to the citizens of San Francisco:

Whereas the Japanese government has attacked the city of Honolulu and adjacent military and naval bases of the United States, and

Whereas, it is reported that submarine boats are in the Pacific Ocean between San Francisco and the Hawaiian Islands, and

Whereas, it is necessary to take immediate steps to protect the lives and property of the

people of the City and County of San Francisco, as well as the property of said City and County;

Now, therefore, I, Angelo J. Rossi, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by Section 25 of the Charter, do hereby declare that a public emergency exists which involves and threatens the lives of the citizens . . .

After listing details in the proclamation of the civil defense plan and demanding that employers and employees terminate their differences, he concluded:

I appeal to all the citizens of San Francisco to remain calm and resolute in this emergency. I again urge them to enroll for civil defense. Go to your nearest police or fire department for enrollment now. Enrollment will be received at any hour of the day or night . . .

Given under my hand at San Francisco this 7th day of December, 1941.



At police headquarters in the San Francisco Hall of Justice in December 1941, Captain Al Munn instructs aides on air raid procedures. Gunnybags are piled high in front of the windows of the newly nicknamed "Fort Gunnybags." San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Andrew Lazzarini, a member of Company 44, Battalion 10, Advanced Radar Warning System, leads a civilian defense class held for a group of San Francisco citizens. San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

The next day, State Senator John Shelley, president of the AFL San Francisco Labor Council, called a meeting of union leaders urging that all strikes be called off. A nationwide strike of 125,000 welders that was to begin on December 9 was canceled. On the evening of December 8, Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, commanding general of the Fourth Army, ordered the city's first air raid alert when it appeared that Japanese planes were headed for San Francisco. The first blackout did not go smoothly; many lights remained on, and DeWitt was livid. Fortunately, no planes materialized.

Also on December 8, Fiorello LaGuardia, mayor of New York City and Franklin Roosevelt's head of national civil defense, and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, assistant defense director, flew to Los Angeles to meet with the governor of California and other state officials to discuss civilian defense preparations and to calm the fears of the public about a possible Japanese invasion. Two days later, LaGuardia flew to San Francisco to meet with Mayor Rossi at City Hall in a closed-door meeting. Also at the meeting were all Bay Area police and fire chiefs,



An official civil defense photo depicts one of the precautions people should take when an air raid siren sounds: fill all available containers, including one's bathtub, with water to use in the event of a fire or a bomb-caused water main break. San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Eleanor Roosevelt speaks fervently to a gathering of Bay Area civilian defense workers and civic leaders during a day-long meeting at San Francisco City Hall on December 10, 1941 (Mayor Rossi and an aide listen in). San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

State Attorney General Earl Warren, and William Ord Ryan, commanding general of the Fourth Interceptor Command. During the gathering, it was agreed that the Bay Area region blackout zone would extend fifty miles from San Francisco in every direction. By 1 p.m., LaGuardia, called “the nation’s one-man cyclone” by one local newspaper, was at San Francisco Airport, heading for Seattle. Before

taking off, he told members of the press that he was “distressed to come to San Francisco—a beautiful, happy town—under such circumstances.” He added, “For those people [in the nation] who sneered and jeered at our preparations, I want to say we will protect them too.”

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt followed LaGuardia to San Francisco, traveling by train (the Lark)

from Los Angeles and arriving in San Francisco on Thursday, December 11. Referring to San Francisco's rapidly developing defense program upon her arrival, she commented, "I think you have made great strides in the last two days." She headed immediately to City Hall, where she received an official welcome from the mayor and stated, "I am not here to give you any message. I am here to get down to work." She and city officials from San Francisco and fifteen other Bay Area communities then met with civilian defense heads and local volunteer organizations for the rest of the day. During the meetings, she urged the city to increase the number of volunteers ("Enroll three times as many as you think you need") and to train air raid wardens to know about all the families' needs in their individual jurisdictions, calling the wardens the most important links in the defense chain. When she asked how the central office for volunteers was functioning, she was told there was no such office. Within five hours of her query, one had been created, and Mrs. Roosevelt had found the time to attend its formal opening! By the time she departed for Portland that evening, her eight-hour visit to San Francisco had had far-reaching results. Her forceful speech helped civic leaders cut through red tape and speed up the rollout of a more robust local civil defense plan. She had insisted on specific and immediate measures that could speed coordination and implementation of the emergency planning demanded by the crisis. "The more I see around here," she said, "the more I realize how closely organizations must work together. There is a big piece of work to be done."

Indeed, in subsequent weeks, San Francisco's civil defense operations were running efficiently and effectively. Living in a city at war became a daily reality—food and gas rationing, civil defense wardens for every block, frequent air raid alerts, occasional blackouts, volunteer shipyard work, and Victory Gardens all became a part of city life. In addition to the tens of thousands of male civil defense wardens, the San Francisco Civilian Defense Council hoped that up to ten thousand women in San Francisco would heed the call to join the ranks of daytime air wardens.

In the decade before "the day which will live in infamy," Mayor Rossi had steered the city through the worst of the Depression, Prohibition,



Three women from the Sunset District who volunteered to be women air raid wardens check out their steel civil defense helmets after completing their training. San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

the end of Prohibition, a general strike, ongoing labor strife, and numerous municipal issues. He had arrived in San Francisco from the Gold Country in 1890 with his widowed mother and six siblings. San Francisco must have been a teeming, thrilling city to the twelve-year-old Angelo Rossi. Sixteen years later, as a young married man and father, he saw most of that city destroyed in three days by a devastating earthquake and fire, and he immediately joined city fathers to help rebuild it. As a florist and a public office holder, he honed his talents in finance, arbitration, consensus building, and creative problem-solving. The self-made businessman was elected a San Francisco supervisor in 1922 and again in 1930 before being chosen to fill out the rest of James Rolph's mayoral term when "Sunny Jim" was elected governor. Rossi was returned to office as mayor in three subsequent elections before being defeated by Roger Lapham in November 1943. As

mayor, he was an avid pursuer of New Deal funds for the city, the driving force behind “the city that knows how,” and the promoter of the city’s assets at every opportunity. In spite of the Depression and other civic challenges, he managed to keep the city in the black throughout his tenure.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the San Francisco Rossi knew changed rapidly and irreversibly. The halcyon days of the 1939–40 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island, with the theme “Pageant of the Pacific,” were quickly replaced by harassment, imprisonment, and relocation of unnaturalized Japanese, Italians, and Germans. General DeWitt convinced Roosevelt that all Japanese living in sensitive West Coast locations had to be relocated, citizens or not. Unlike the Japanese, who were sent to internment camps, there was more select hand-picking of detainees when it came to “questionable” Italians and Germans who were often relocated rather than placed into camps. People in these ethnic groups were imprisoned, relocated, or deported.

At one point, Angelo Rossi himself was accused of having Fascist leanings. Throughout the 1930s, as mayor of the city, he had had numerous interactions with prominent Italian and German visitors. He attended events held at the consulates. As with any visiting dignitaries from foreign countries with whom the United States had full diplomatic relations, he played host to Japanese Prince and Princess Takamatsu in 1931 and to many Japanese admirals when their ships frequently visited San Francisco.

It wasn’t difficult for his political foes to take advantage of his official appearances and duties. Having taken an anti-communist stance during the General Strike in 1934 (he was concerned that unions were being taken over by communists), he was even more of a target. Political adversaries such as union leader Harry Bridges and Italian newspaper editor Carmelo Zito were poised to pounce. Rossi, unquestionably a proud and loyal American, was about to have his own day of infamy.

Six months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, in May 1942, Charles Dullea, the chief of police that Mayor Rossi had appointed just one year earlier, found himself having to subpoena the man who had appointed him. Rossi was summoned to appear before the State Senate’s Committee on

Un-American Activities (more commonly referred to as the Tenney Committee after its chair, State Senator Jack Tenney) on May 26, 1942, to answer allegations that he was a Fascist.

On that day, in the Borgia Room of the St. Francis Hotel, the Tenney Committee hearing was packed with journalists, government officials, committee members, and numerous San Franciscans who had also been subpoenaed to testify about their alleged Fascist sympathies. Rossi arrived with his daughter, Eleanor Morris, who had been subpoenaed as well for her membership in the Mothers of America. Although the committee wouldn’t reveal the names of the accusers, it was likely that the mayor had been accused of being a Fascist sympathizer by Carmelo Zito and other political foes, including Harry Bridges.

Rossi, as always, was nattily dressed in a formal suit with vest and watch chain and his ever-present signature white carnation in his lapel. Missing, however, was his affable smile and the twinkle in his eye. When it was his turn to testify, Rossi leaned heavily on his elbows and, with a grim expression on his face, requested that he be allowed to read a prepared statement before the committee’s questioning.

In a strong voice, he began, “In order that no unjust inference be drawn from the fact that I have been subpoenaed before this committee, I desire to emphasize the following facts. I was born in the town of Volcano, Amador County, California. Both of my parents were patriotic American citizens of Italian origin, pioneers of the early [18]50s. My earliest recollections are those lessons of love and affection for the United States that I learned at my mother’s knee.” He further stated that he found it reprehensible that those who were accusing him of being a Fascist were to remain anonymous. He also pointed out that he was the chief executive of a city that was at war, and that it was important for him to be able to concentrate on all the challenges and decisions that this threatened status entailed. In the end, nothing came of the accusations, but they illustrated the extent to which fear, mistrust, and prejudice had permeated every corner of the city.

Although Rossi was the mayor of San Francisco, several other figures loomed much larger and more powerful during these perilous times: John DeWitt, Earl Warren, and Karl Bendetsen.



General John DeWitt castigates civic leaders at a meeting at City Hall two days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. (Mayor Rossi is seated beside him.) San Francisco Call Bulletin photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

When most of the U.S. fleet was destroyed at Pearl Harbor, the entire West Coast suddenly became the front line of the war on the continental United States. Heading up the military in the region was the aforementioned Lieutenant General John Lesesne DeWitt, commanding general of the Fourth Army, the Ninth Corps Area, and the Western Defense Command, which included the three coastal states plus Nevada, Utah, Montana, Idaho, and the Alaska Territory. Headquartered at the Presidio in San Francisco, DeWitt had assumed his three commands in 1939 after rising through the ranks and serving as a quartermaster (overseer of equipment and supplies) during World War I. He had seen very little combat during his military career and was more of a bureaucrat than a soldier. He was scheduled for retirement and was looking forward to going happily into the sunset.

Bill Yenne, author of the book, *Panic on the Pacific: How America Prepared for a West Coast Invasion*, says:

DeWitt was utterly ill-equipped for a military command during wartime. He didn't really want to be there, and he wasn't qualified to be there. He was in over his head. And he operated from a place of fear. The thing he feared most was suffering the same fate as Walter Short. [Short was one of the two high-ranking military officials relieved of their commands in Hawaii shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; the other was Admiral Husband E. Kimmel. Short commanded the Army forces in Hawaii, while Kimmel commanded the Navy, and thus the Pacific Fleet—both were

caught flat-footed.] This fear of a humiliating defeat motivated his actions.

Yenne continues, “DeWitt’s was a trembling hand, in contrast to the steely determination of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his steady voice: ‘I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. . . . We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds. . . . we shall never surrender.’”

On the night of December 8, one day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, several blackouts were ordered up and down the West Coast. The blackouts did not go smoothly. On the one hand, there were car accidents where darkness prevailed, and on the other hand, many lights remained on. In the end, the blackout orders hardly mattered, as there was a bright moon. At 1:45 a.m., Brigadier General William Ryan, who was manning the Aircraft Warning Service office at the Presidio, got word of some thirty-five to fifty planes being detected, but it was never quite clear who authenticated the report or how accurate the plane count was. The next morning Ryan confirmed to the media that it “was an actual attack. . . it was the real thing.” He maintained that the planes came from the sea, probably from a carrier, and that they had gotten past the Golden Gate and flown southwest over the city. He had no other information and bristled when asked why the planes hadn’t been intercepted.

Later that day, DeWitt made everything worse. He met with Bay Area civic leaders, a meeting that had to be moved from the mayor’s office to the supervisors’ chambers, since more than two hundred people showed up. With Mayor Rossi seated beside him, the general minced no words, saying, “Last night there were planes over the community! They were enemy planes and I mean Japanese planes! . . . Why bombs were not dropped, I don’t know.” Commenting on the poorly executed blackout, he said, “I never saw such apathy as you people displayed. It was criminal. It was shameful. . . . Last night proved there are more damn fools in San Francisco than I ever believed existed.” What was never proven was the appearance of Japanese planes over the city that night. DeWitt continued to berate his audience, accusing them of “criminal apathy” and vowing that “death and destruction are

likely to come” if people didn’t listen to him. When asked why no bombs had been dropped or why the planes weren’t shot down, he barked, “I say it’s none of [your] business.”

At that time radar was in its infancy. (None of the SCR-270 early warning radar systems that were in the process of being installed on the West Coast were operational; the one up and running on Oahu was turned on for only a few hours every day.) Therefore, it was not always easy to track and verify enemy planes. But there were definitely Japanese submarines prowling the West Coast from December 1941 to July 1942. The nine Japanese subs attacked sixteen ships (sinking five) and they shelled Fort Stevens in Oregon and the petroleum facilities at Goleta, north of Santa Barbara, resulting in \$500 worth of minor damage. Fortunately, the Tiburon Naval Net Depot had already deployed an anti-submarine/anti-torpedo net across San Francisco Bay east of the Golden Gate Bridge before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Navy ships would open the net for friendly vessels. The seven miles and six thousand tons of iron netting stretched from the Marina in San Francisco to Sausalito and were removed after the war.

When it came to the treatment of and restrictions on perceived enemy aliens, the leading military figures in California were divided on the issue of internment and relocation. But there were two individuals who turned the tide—Earl Warren and Karl Bendetsen—and, along with DeWitt, they convinced Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. The order left those determinations in the hands of the Secretary of War or “the appropriate military commander” rather than the president.

Although the issuing of internment and relocation orders was out of the hands of state and city leaders, they did have an opportunity to voice their opinions during a series of hearings chaired by U.S. Representative John Tolan (D-Oakland, CA) in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Los Angeles between February 21 and March 7, 1942. Tolan explained that the purpose of the meetings was to assess the economic impact the evacuations were having on communities and to discuss what exceptions should be made regarding the *en masse* evacuations, among other topics. All the mayors along the West Coast fell in line with the Federal



The first wave of Japanese ordered to leave San Francisco line up with the few belongings they were allowed to take. They are waiting near the Civil Control Station at 2020 Van Ness Avenue to board busses that will take them to their places of confinement. A Dorothea Lange photo, courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

actions and supported the evacuation of all Japanese, regardless of their citizenship status, with the exception of the mayors of Berkeley, California and Tacoma, Washington.

When Mayor Rossi spoke at the committee hearing held on February 22 in San Francisco, he first pointed out that the alien problem was “one that is definitely under Federal jurisdiction.” Rossi then spoke sympathetically about the plight of Japanese aliens and Japanese Americans:

It is true that the recent drastic measures against enemy aliens have caused great anxiety and distress among this group of people. . . . Many families will have to abandon their homes, their businesses, and their occupa-

tions; parents will have to abandon their children and go elsewhere. The great majority of noncitizens in this area is made up of elderly men and women whom I believe for the most part to be industrious, peaceful, and law-abiding residents of this community. Most of them have native-born children. Many of them have sons in the armed forces and both sons and daughters engaged in defense industries and civilian defense activities. It is the well-considered opinion of many that most of these people are loyal to this nation. . . and that under no circumstances would they engage in any subversive activities or conduct.



The notice on the right, Exclusion Order #5, was posted at First and Front Streets on April 1, 1942, by the Western Defense Command and the Fourth Army. It informed all people of Japanese ancestry, both citizens and non-citizens, that they would be evacuated from a large, designated portion of San Francisco by 12 noon on April 7. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Regardless, Rossi believed that “the Japanese situation should be given immediate attention. It admits of no delay. The activities of the Japanese saboteurs and fifth columnists [members of clandestine groups attempting to undermine a nation’s solidarity to the benefit of the enemy] in Honolulu and on the battlefronts in the Pacific have forced me to the conclusion that every Japanese alien should be removed from the community.” But he felt that Japanese Americans should be treated differently. He concluded, “I am also strongly of the conviction that Japanese who are American citizens should be subjected to a more detailed and all-encompassing investigation.” He suggested that only if it were found that they were not loyal to the country would they be removed from the community.

Speaking next about aliens in the Italian and German communities, Rossi reiterated much of what he said about Japanese aliens being loyal to the country. He cited such essential workers as fishermen, garbage collectors, and produce workers, then stated that it was “absolutely necessary” that each case of German and Italian aliens be investigated individually through a system of appeals in special tribunals.

As previously mentioned, the two strongest proponents for the internment of all Japanese on the West Coast were Earl Warren and Karl Bendetsen. Warren, who was California’s attorney general, was running for governor of the state in 1942 against the incumbent, Culbert Levy Olson. He campaigned strongly against subversive Japanese organizations and fomented fears of enemy aliens among the electorate. Attorney and Army reservist Major Karl Bendetsen was serving a stint of active duty as an attorney in the office of Major General Allen Gullion in the Presidio and as an assistant to General DeWitt. Bendetsen was a huge advocate of internment and had captured DeWitt’s ear. Together with DeWitt and special assistant to Francis Biddle, Tom Campbell Clark, Bendetsen helped to map out the details for the Japanese internment. By June, some 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans had been forcibly moved to internment camps across the West (including more than 5,000 from San Francisco). The order to allow them to return home would not be issued until January 2, 1945.

Many of the Japanese who returned to San Francisco after internment found that the homes they had left behind in the Western Addition were now occupied by Black workers from the southern



Members of the Mochida family awaiting evacuation bus. Identification tags are used to aid in keeping the family unit intact during all phases of evacuation. Mochida operated a nursery and five greenhouses. A Dorothea Lange photo, courtesy of Wikipedia.



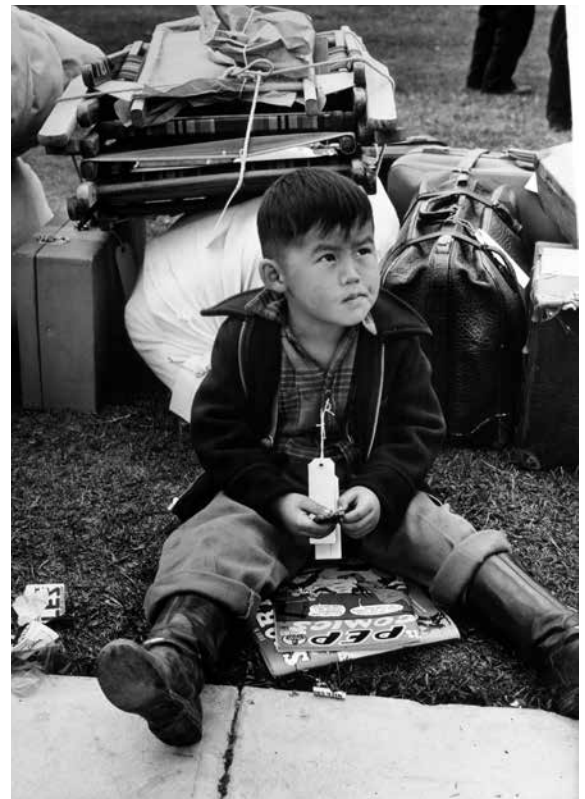
A man and young boy from San Francisco's Japanese community wait for their departure information from the Wartime Civil Control Administration at its Van Ness location. A Dorothea Lange photo, courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



The San Francisco Examiner, February 1942. Courtesy of Wikipedia.



Flag of allegiance pledge at Raphael Weill Public School, Geary and Buchanan Streets, San Francisco, April 20, 1942. A Dorothea Lange photo, courtesy of Wikipedia.



A child is "Tagged for evacuation," Salinas, California, May 1942. Photo by Russell Lee. Courtesy of Wikipedia.



The 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, which was composed primarily of Japanese Americans, served with uncommon distinction in the European Theatre of World War II. Many of the soldiers from the continental United States serving in the units had families that were held in U.S. concentration camps while they fought abroad. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

states who had been recruited to work in the shipyards and other defense plants in the Bay Area. San Francisco's Japanese population had settled in the Western Addition after the 1906 earthquake. When the relocations began, Japanese Americans who owned property in the Western Addition and elsewhere had the option of having the Federal Reserve Bank take care of their property until their return. Although many Japanese chose to move elsewhere after returning from the camps, the Japanese footprint still exists in the neighborhood: a six-block area that includes the Japan Center, which opened in 1968, and the San Francisco Peace Pagoda.

Eighty years after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, its aftermath is still visible throughout the city. In the Presidio, the World War II Memorial to the Missing is on Washington Boulevard near Immigrant Point Overlook. Also in the Presidio, an exhibit at

the Military Intelligence Service Historic Learning Center chronicles the establishment of a secret training school for military linguists in 1941, prior to the bombing at Pearl Harbor and as tensions were escalating between the United State and Japan. Some fifty-eight Japanese American soldiers were recruited and trained there before the school was relocated. Currently on display at the Presidio Officers' Club is the exhibition "Exclusion," which explores the role the Presidio played in the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. At Lands End near the Fort Miley parking lot there is a poignant memorial to the men who perished on the USS *San Francisco* battleship during the Battle of Guadalcanal; the memorial includes part of the salvaged ship's bridge, pockmarked by shrapnel. In Lincoln Park, on El Camino del Mar just north of the Palace of the Legion of Honor, is the black granite Peace Memorial by Bundo Shunkai, a gift of Mike Iasaki to commemorate peace and amity between the United States and Japan. The new, smaller Japantown is close to where the original Japantown stood. And San Francisco residents still include the descendants of those thousands of servicemen and servicewomen who sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge on their way to the Pacific war zone—and ended up coming back to the city to live when the war was over. Although more recent events may occupy our thoughts today, the bombing of Pearl Harbor eighty years ago and its aftermath is still very much with us.

* * * * *

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rose Marie Cleese, a third-generation San Franciscan, is a freelance writer, book editor, and proud mother of a multi-faceted filmmaker. In the coming months, she is looking forward to completing a decades-long project: a biography about her maternal grandfather, Mayor Angelo J. Rossi. During her career in marketing, she worked for several Bay Area corporations and publishers as a copy director and advertising manager. Cleese was also once on the editorial staff of *Skiing Magazine* in Manhattan and covered the 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck for the *San Francisco Examiner*, where she was the weekly winter-sports columnist. She is hopeful that San Francisco will get back to being “the city that knows how,” a favorite slogan of her grandfather’s back in the 1930s and ’40s. (The family marketing gene runs deep!)

SOURCES

In addition to the one-on-one, firsthand accounts by San Franciscans about the morning of December 7, 1941, given to the author over a period of years, she is also indebted to San Francisco Public Library Branch Manager Elizabeth Thacker-Estrada and historians Bill Yenne, Bob Cherney, and Bill Issel for their guidance and input concerning this article. The author also relied on the seventeen-volume set of newspaper clippings kept by her grandfather, Angelo J. Rossi, during his tenure as mayor of San Francisco from 1931 to 1943. The newspapers cited include the *Examiner*, the *Chronicle*, the *Call Bulletin*, and the *News*—San Francisco’s four major dailies at the time. The author is also grateful to archivist Katherine Ets-Hokin and photo curator Christina Moretta at the San Francisco Public Library’s San Francisco History Center for helping her dig through the undigitized *Call Bulletin* photo archives. Another invaluable source was Bill Yenne’s *Panic on the Pacific: How America Prepared for a West Coast Invasion* (Regency Publishing, 2016).

The author also recommends William Issel’s *For Both Cross and Flag: Catholic Action, Anti-Catholicism, and National Security Politics in World War II San Francisco* (Temple University Press, 2010); Yoshiko Uchida’s *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family* (University of Washington Press, 2015); and Lawrence DiStasi’s *Una Storia Segreta: The Secret History of Italian American Evacuation and Internment during World War II* (Heyday Press, 2001).

PART II: PUTTING THE MAPS ON SAN FRANCISCO - 1847

by Angus Macfarlane

Part I of this article, “Putting San Francisco on the Map,” appeared in the Summer 2021 (Vol. 32, No. 1) issue of *The Argonaut*.

As written in Part I of this article, at the end of 1846, Mariano Vallejo and Robert Semple were partners in the creation of Francisca. At the same time, Thomas Larkin and Jasper O’Farrell had established a tenuous business relationship. For the next year and more they were the drivers of history, shaping and defining two cities, each with two names —Francisca (now Benicia) and Yerba Buena (now San Francisco). By the end of 1847, neither “partnership” would be intact and only one of our four main characters would be standing on solid footing.

The discovery of gold on January 24, 1848, brought Argonauts by the thousands who sought wealth in “them-thar hills,” and others (fewer in number) who, like Thomas Larkin, saw riches in “this-here land.” By the end of 1848, Larkin would be partners with one of the latter-type Argonauts, directly leading to the creation of the mysterious Marlette map and, subsequently, the Bridgens map at the San Francisco Public Library. Beginning in 1849 a new group of men will complete the Bridgens map quest.

Thomas Larkin was a man of unimpeachable character and integrity who never used the influence and prestige of his unpaid consular position for personal gain. He wrote in November 1846: “I was careful to do nothing that should give people hereafter cause to say I improved my consular knowledge to better my pocket.”¹

In fact, he lamented that his prosperous business suffered greatly while he served his country. As the official representative of the American government in Alta California, he often was forced to advance payments for goods and services on behalf of Washington, D.C., just as his relative, Mariano Vallejo, was obliged to do for Mexico a decade earlier. Unlike Vallejo, though, Larkin wasn’t compensated with large grants of land in lieu of payment.²

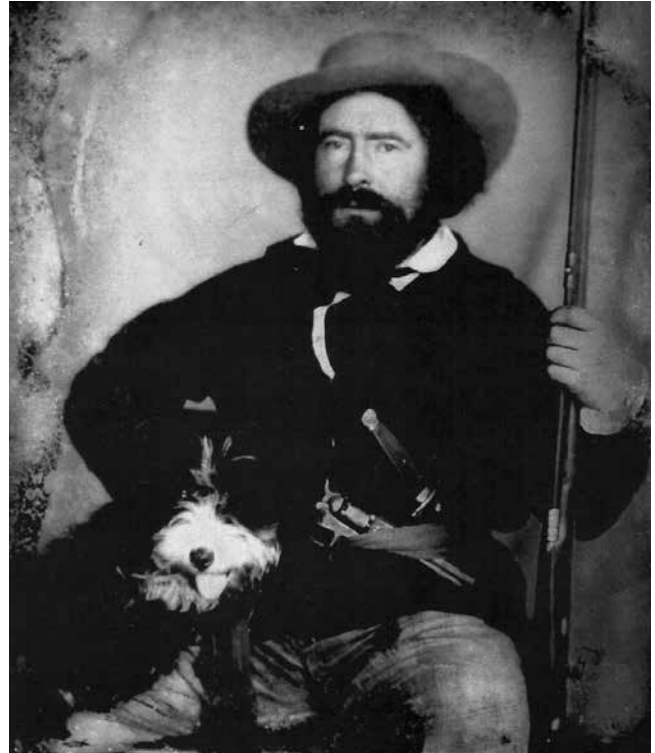
Larkin’s official duties ended when Commodore John Sloat proclaimed that Alta California was part of the United States. No longer in government service,

Larkin returned to the pursuit of the riches that had brought him to California. As early as 1842, he foresaw the increase in the value of land as California became an immigrant destination. By January 1847, Larkin owned 132,278 acres of land (206 square miles), making him the largest American land owner in pre-statehood California and perhaps one of the wealthiest men in America at the time.³ Thus, it was inevitable that the largest land owner would turn to the best surveyor for his surveying needs.

Although his American citizenship prevented him from receiving Mexican land grants, Larkin’s California-born children were eligible to benefit. In 1844 he obtained a ten-league grant (44,280 acres) on their behalf on the western bank of the Sacramento River in Colusa County. Mexican law allowed purchases by non-citizens, and the next year he bought the adjoining eleven-league (48,708 acres) Boga Ranch. He continued to speculate in



Thomas Oliver Larkin (1802–1858) was the United States' first and only consul to Alta California Mexico before California became a state. Courtesy of Wikipedia.



Jasper O'Farrell (1817–1875) was an Irish-American politician who served as the first surveyor for San Francisco. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

farms and house lots in Monterey and Carmel, in larger tracts in the Santa Clara Valley, in quicksilver mines in Santa Clara and San Benito Counties, in various partnerships, as well as in real estate in San Francisco.

In the same week of September 1846 he bought the four-league (17,712 acres) Cotati Rancho in Sonoma County for \$1,500 and the two-league (8,856 acres or 13.8 square miles) Rancho *Punta de Lobos* in San Francisco for \$1,000. This was the same time that Vallejo was ostensibly offering Larkin a partnership in his vision of a “large and mercantile city on the Carquinez.” Perhaps this involvement in other real estate affairs explains why Larkin didn’t respond to Vallejo’s offer.

The earliest reference of a Larkin-O’Farrell connection appears in a letter Larkin wrote on March 13, 1847,⁴ in which he states that the previous October, Alcalde Washington Bartlett had ordered O’Farrell to survey Larkin’s recent purchase of Rancho Punta de Lobos. In June 1846 Mexican Governor Pio Pico had granted this land in the extreme northwest

corner of the San Francisco peninsula to Benito Diaz. Larkin bought the land on September 19, 1846, at about the same time he hired O’Farrell to survey his Sonoma purchase between Petaluma and Santa Rosa—Rancho Cotati.

As time went by, Larkin could not get O’Farrell to do the job. O’Farrell delayed on the Cotati survey, claiming it would cost \$20 per mile to survey because of “the great quantity of under and brushwood.”⁵

On October 29, 1847, a frustrated Larkin wrote to O’Farrell reminding him that it had been a year since Alcalde Bartlett had ordered him to survey Punta de Lobos. Larkin ended the terse letter: “Further disappointment in this business will injure me more than the value of the survey.”⁶

O’Farrell might be forgiven for not prioritizing Larkin’s survey demands. On March 8, 1847, his San Francisco surveying tasks were finally clarified. For the next five and a half months, O’Farrell and his anonymous and unheralded field crew would stretch survey chains and pound survey markers where none had gone before. This was four years

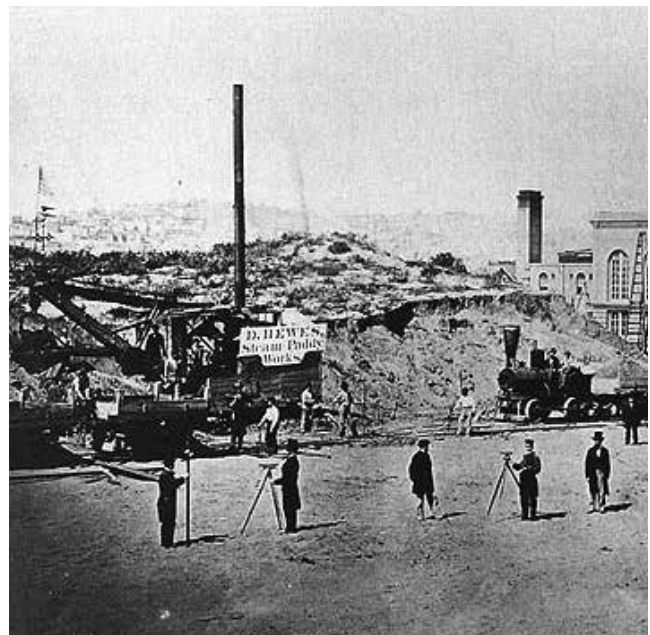


San Francisco, 1847. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

before David Hewes introduced his “steam paddy,” a steam-powered mechanical shovel that leveled and filled the development-stopping sand hills and hollows “like the concentrated essence of a thousand Irishmen scooping up cart loads of sand at a dash, as if it were a pinch of snuff, a huge mastodon mole boring its way through the earth.”⁷

After confirming Buckelew’s survey, which officially put San Francisco on the map, O’Farrell commenced to put the map on San Francisco. His first assignment was to re-survey the five hundred 50-vara lots that he and Bartlett had originally agreed upon, but now with the added task of realigning the streets and blocks of Vioget’s survey to be at right angles and parallel with one another. Then he would survey the bay water line from Rincon Point to Montgomery and Vallejo Streets, roughly two miles.

When Yerba Buena passed into American hands in July 1846, the population was “upwards of 200 and the buildings of all kinds had increased to nearly 50.”⁸ A year later, as O’Farrell was getting underway, San Francisco counted 459 men, women,



The “Hewes Steam Paddy Works” at left side of photo shows how the sand dunes that once dominated the South of Market were leveled, filling in the once ubiquitous fresh water ponds. ‘Paddy’ refers derogatorily to the Irish laborers who were replaced by the steam shovel. This is at 8th and Harrison. Courtesy of foundsf.org.

and children, as well as 79 buildings.⁹ Growing? Yes, but hardly a boom town.

There was an increasing demand for lots east of Portsmouth Plaza. Speculators argued that the sale of beach and water lots along Yerba Buena Cove would attract investors and increase municipal revenues. However, the Mexican government had never granted public ownership of the cove to the pueblo and had actually restricted settlement to within 200 varas of it. Prospective purchasers could not obtain legal title. This obstacle was removed by California's military governor Stephen Kearny's pronouncement of March 10, 1847, whereby he "granted, conveyed, and released to the people or corporate authority of the town of San Francisco all rights, title, and interest in the beach and water lots."

The announcement of a public sale of beach and water lots on June 29 appeared in the *California Star* on March 20 with the assurance that they would be "surveyed, and divided into convenient building lots for warehouses and stores." Proceeds from the sale would go to the treasury of the growing, cash-strapped town.

Suddenly, O'Farrell's life became monumentally more complicated with this new burden.

O'Farrell realigned the streets and blocks of Vioget's 1839 survey by making a 2½ degree northeast pivot centered at Washington and Kearny Streets—the famous O'Farrell swing. This survey was completed by the end of March.

With the exception of the *Calle de la Fundación* on Richardson's 1835 *diseño*, there was no known practice or convention of naming "streets" before Buckelew plotted twenty streets, sixteen named and four unnamed, in 1847 to 1848. The clearly defined streets represented on paper bore little resemblance to the vague rights-of-way, paths, trails, and shortcuts between rail-and-picket fences, hedges, and buildings in real life.¹⁰

The northern boundary of Buckelew's survey was today's Green Street, though unnamed on the map. On the west, Mason Street, also unnamed, was the western line. Sutter Street on the south and Montgomery with a smidge of Sansome Street on the east completed the map's boundaries.

After correcting Vioget's survey, O'Farrell did a preliminary survey of what turned out to be 444 submerged or partially submerged water lots in the cove.¹¹

By the end of April, O'Farrell had extended Buckelew's survey three blocks north of Green Street to today's Greenwich. Today's Taylor Street, one block beyond unnamed Mason Street, was the new western boundary. This satisfied the terms of his March 8 contract to survey five hundred 50-vara lots. During May, though, the indefatigable O'Farrell and crew extended this survey another three blocks north to Francisco, one block south to Post, and two blocks west to Leavenworth Street.

The April 24 edition of Robert Semple's *The Californian* announced **A GREAT SALE OF CITY LOTS IN THE CITY OF FRANCISCA*** to be held on June 24, proclaiming that the site offered advantages to traders, merchants, and mechanics that they would not find elsewhere west of the Rockies. The site was superior to San Francisco's location because it had a commodious bay capable of handling 200 ships at anchor safe from any wind, it had a deep harbor—18 feet as opposed to San Francisco's mud flats, which extended up to one-half mile from shore, it was surrounded by the best agricultural land in California, and it was situated at the gateway to the great central valley. Prospective buyers could view a complete map of Francisca as surveyed by Jasper O'Farrell at his San Francisco office or at Francisca. Clearly, while conducting his extensive surveys in San Francisco (while avoiding Larkin), O'Farrell found the time to survey Francisca.

Ads for the sale appeared weekly in Semple's Monterey-based *The Californian* until May 29, when the paper's masthead proclaimed that it was now published in San Francisco. Semple explained that he left Monterey to be closer to Francisca.

The relocation of *The Californian* was not the only change in Semple's affairs. The week before he moved to San Francisco, ownership of Francisca underwent a seismic upheaval. On May 18 Semple returned his half interest in Francisca, which Vallejo

* Robert Semple wrote a letter that included this description of Francisca: "[It is] on the North side of the Bay of San Francisco at the Straits of Carquinez, about 30 miles from the mouth of the Bay, is in progress of being laid out. Francisca is situated far enough from the seaboard to make the climates as pleasant as any part of California."

had granted to him on December 22, 1846. Vallejo was now the sole owner.

The next day, Vallejo transferred his entire Francisca interest to Semple and Thomas Larkin. Now Vallejo, who had been the first to envision the **LARGE AND MERCANTILE CITY ON THE CARQUINEZ**, was no longer involved in the speculative enterprise, leaving everything to Larkin and Semple. The only explanation for this transaction is in Vallejo's letter to his son, Platon, dated January 25, 1874:

The City of Benicia [originally named *Francisca*] was founded by me and Dr. Robert Semple. . . . At the start there were no other persons. . . . In the course of time Don Thomas O. Larkin, an American gentleman who in addition to being very influential, rich, a great friend of all my family, and principally because he had done some very important services for me at the time of my imprisonment when the Bear Flag was raised on the 14th of June, 1846, asked me very diplomatically to allow him to enter as a partner in the founding and in the speculation of the City of Benicia. Not being able to refuse, we met together. Dr. Semple, Larkin, and I to discuss the matter . . . I made a title in favor of the two men.¹²

Vallejo subsequently retired to his home in Sonoma, even trying to persuade Larkin to join him in the most comfortable place in California.¹³

The Californian's first San Francisco-published edition continued to print the weekly ad for the June 24 O'Farrell-surveyed Francisca land sale, but on this date it ran alongside an ad for the sale of the O'Farrell-surveyed water lots set for June 29.

The water lot ad touted:

The site of the town of San Francisco is known by all navigators and mercantile men acquainted with the subject to be the most **COMMANDING COMMERCIAL POSITION** on the entire western [*sic*] coast of the Pacific Ocean, and the Town itself is no doubt, destined to become the **COMMERCIAL EMPORIUM** of the western side of the North American continent.

Another earth-shaking development in the Francisca saga occurred on June 19 when Semple surrendered in the battle of city names, writing in his paper that he was changing the name of Francisca to Benicia:

At the request of my partner, Mr. Larkin, and several other persons, I have consented to this change . . . [because] . . . this town of Yerba Buena, is, by order of an Alcalde, called San Francisco and it was thought that the names being so much alike, might create confusion. If I had called the new city San Francisco, I should have had a right to the name so far as this place is concerned. . . . The little settlement in Yerba Buena Cove came to be known by everyone in California as the Town of Yerba Buena. No one ever dreamed of changing the name until I handed in my deeds to be recorded for the present site of Benicia with the name of The City Of Francisca. The Alcalde's eyes were opened at once . . . and the next day he issued an order that the town of Yerba Buena be hereafter called San Francisco.

The inspiration for the City of Francisca's name was Vallejo's wife's first name—Francisca. Although at this point Vallejo was no longer involved in the venture, Francisca's new name also honored his wife; her middle name was Benicia.

No information was provided for the Benicia land sale, leading one to infer that it was embarrassingly disappointing.



Cartouche of City of Benicia Map, 1847, noting Founders Mariano G. Vallejo, Thomas O. Larkin, and Robert Semple. Courtesy of Barry Lawrence Ruderman, Antique Maps, Inc.

On July 17 Robert Semple abruptly sold *The Californian* to Benjamin Buckelew of Buckelew map fame and retired to a simple shack in Benicia, where he was the city's most ardent advocate and its only resident.

On June 12, O'Farrell began his final surveying project. This would be for one hundred 100-vara lots south of his 50-vara survey. He immediately ran into trouble. There were overlapping lots from his water lots and 50-vara lots between First and Second Streets. He needed to resurvey the area, thus delaying the water lot sales from June 20 to July 19.

His solution involved creating a wide street at a 35-degree angle to the 50-vara survey, Market Street, which became the divider between the 50-vara survey to its north and the 100-vara survey to its south. The resurvey was completed just in time for the water lot auction, which lasted three days. About half the lots sold for \$40–\$600 apiece.

Legend has O'Farrell naming Market Street for Philadelphia's Market Street. However, O'Farrell had never been to Philadelphia. More likely Market Street was named by Alcalde George Hyde, who was born in Philadelphia.

The 100-vara survey encompassed about half a square mile in today's South of Market area. Each block had six 100-vara lots, making them four times larger than the 50-vara blocks. It was believed that

the new area was less desirable and that the larger lots would lure more investors. Four blocks faced Market Street from First to Fifth Streets (0.7 mile) and an equal distance of five to six blocks south.

When O'Farrell completed his surveys in August 1847, his final product (minus the water lots) totaled about two square miles, with fifty streets stretching thirty-five miles and defining 256 full and partial blocks.

This was the template that would determine San Francisco's future growth and development forever.

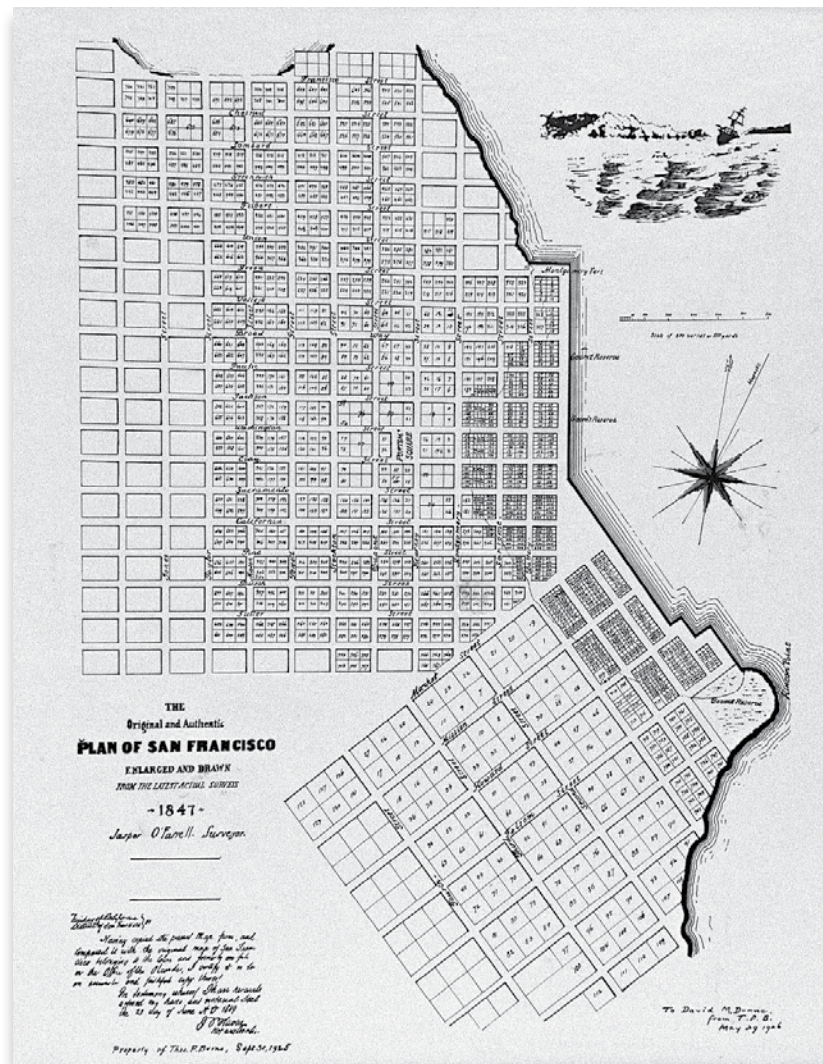
But O'Farrell's contribution was not a portrait of development. Rather, it was a blueprint for development. It would be years before the vast area he mapped would be occupied, developed, or even accessible.

The epilogue to O'Farrell's Herculean work appeared in the *California Star* on December 4, 1847:

Many of the stakes defining the boundaries of lots in this place have been trampled down or removed, and it is with difficulty property holders can trace out with preciseness their possessions. Unless the numbered posts are placed, as intended to

designate property, the town may find a resurvey necessary.

Unfortunately, O'Farrell's map was lost in the 1906 disaster, although copies survive.



O'Farrell Survey, 1847. Courtesy of the California Historical Society.

On the opposite side of the bay, at the site of Jasper O'Farrell's other municipal survey, the Larkin/Semple relationship was quickly becoming toxic. Larkin clearly had divided priorities between San Francisco and Benicia. He wasn't blind to Benicia's potential, but he was acutely focused on San Francisco's realities.¹⁴ While O'Farrell was surveying San Francisco, Larkin was buying San Francisco. On March 19 he bought a 100-vara lot at the northeast corner of Second and Howard Street, and later bought six water lots. His practice of making large investments in San Francisco involving tens of thousands of dollars infuriated Semple, who wrote:

While you are making money in Monterey by tens, you are losing here by hundreds. There are almost daily 20 or 30 men here looking at the place and taking lots. I have raised the price of lots from \$20 to \$50. You have dozens of lots in Monterey; you have thousands here. You have a few lots in San Francisco; you have a hundred times as many here.¹⁵

By mid-November 1847 sixteen houses had been built at Benicia. In San Francisco lots were selling fast, including some "that were covered by six feet of water and ten feet of mud," i.e., water lots. This validated Larkin's belief and inflamed Semple's frustration.

A year into their partnership, Semple bemoaned Larkin's dead weight: "When I exchanged General Vallejo for you, I thought I was swapping for a Yankee who at least knew his own interest, but I was sadly disappointed."¹⁶ Semple challenged Larkin that if he wasn't committed to Benicia, Semple was willing to buy Larkin's share for \$15,000.¹⁷

On December 1, 1848, Larkin concluded a \$30,000 San Francisco real estate deal with Bethuel Phelps, a recent arrival from Connecticut. The twenty-eight-year-old Phelps would prove to be "the Yankee who knew his own interest" that Semple had wished Larkin had been. Larkin introduced Phelps to Semple, proposing that they give Phelps a one-third interest in Benicia "at a specified price to be agreed upon" in return for Phelps building \$150,000 worth of houses in Benicia with his own money.¹⁸ An ecstatic Semple wrote to Larkin "If we give him one-third, and he can make it worth a *million or two*, we can make a mammoth fortune."¹⁹

Phelps would be the catalyst to jump start both Benicia and Larkin's San Francisco Rancho Punta de Lobos—the subject of the mysterious Marlette Map of 1850.

1849 – ACROSS THE BAY AND A NEW METHODOLOGY

Up to now, our historic sleuthing to learn the secrets of the mysterious Marlette map—the progenitor of the Bridgens map at the San Francisco library—has been to place four people of interest under historic surveillance. Three of our four had a key role in literally and figuratively putting San Francisco on the map: Robert Semple, the visionary, and Mariano Vallejo, the pioneer landowner, whose plan for Francisca triggered Alcalde Washington Bartlett's knee-jerk reaction to rename Yerba Buena San Francisco; and Jasper O'Farrell, who had surveyed the streets of both Benicia and San Francisco. Along with Thomas Larkin, they all had Benicia in common.

Our investigative method so far has been to follow the broad trail of clues left by the four. But by this point in our investigation, 1849, O'Farrell and Vallejo are out of the picture. Although Larkin and Semple will continue to feud over Benicia, and history will have amazing things in store for the town, our investigation shifts to San Francisco where our up-to-now, easy-to-follow trail becomes a cold case. The trail is so faint that we have to seek new clues and look at old clues in new ways. Larkin still has one very important scene to play in Benicia. Then a new cast of characters will enter.

We are now prepared to address the four tasks laid out in Part 1 of this essay: reconstruct Marlette's lost 1850 map; explain its purpose; connect it to the 1854 Bridgens map; and solve the cartographic conundrum of the origin and fate of the West-of-Larkin-Street dream.

On June 13, 1849, William M. Eddy, a thirty-year-old New York native and engineer on the state's canals, disembarked from the steamer *Oregon* into a boom town and onto the fast track. Within a month, Governor Riley appointed Eddy land surveyor for the District of San Joaquin,²⁰ and San Francisco Alcalde Thaddeus Leavenworth granted him ten

50-vara lots.²¹ The following month the *ayuntamiento* chose Eddy to be city surveyor.²²

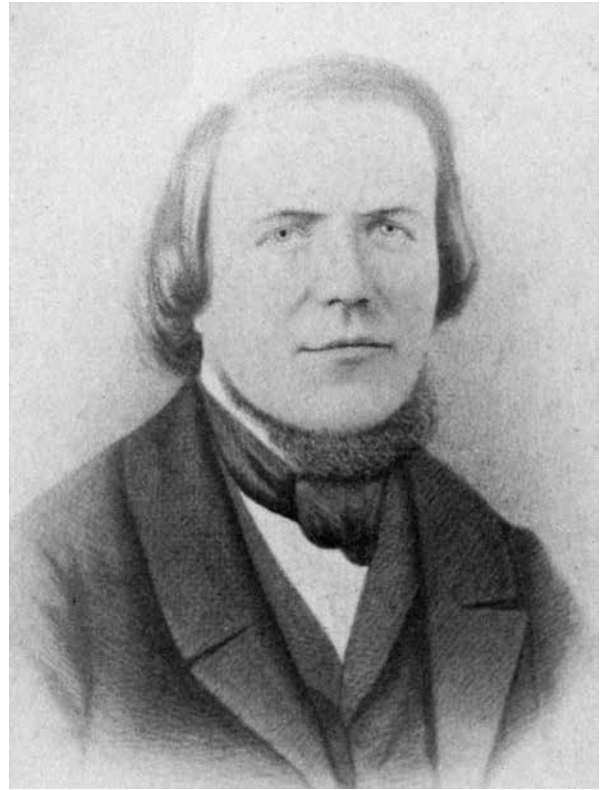
At the start of 1849, San Francisco's population was about 2,000. It had grown to 5,000 when Eddy came ashore.²³ The relentless tide of Argonauts passing through San Francisco was straining the city's coffers. As had been the case with the water lots in 1847, the unsurveyed land beyond the limits of O'Farrell's survey would provide the city badly needed money. The land just needed to be surveyed and divided into saleable lots.

The purchasers would be speculators, not settlers. Tens of millions of cubic yards of sand that redistributed itself with each wind gust and rain drop prevented westward expansion. The technology for reshaping San Francisco's sandscape in 1849 was the same as the Egyptians had 4,500 years earlier when they built the pyramids—man- and beast power. The steam paddy was still two years away. For now, San Francisco's growing population was squeezed into the area around the Yerba Buena Cove and Portsmouth Square.

Eddy's mandate was to resurvey O'Farrell's 1847 survey (ostensibly to replace lost markers) and to fill in the blanks of O'Farrell's 50-vara survey west to Larkin Street and south to Market. The south of Market 100-vara survey was to extend south to Mission Bay and to Ninth Street (known as Johnston Street) on the west. Work began on September 13, 1849.

At its November 5, 1849, meeting, the *ayuntamiento* called for a public auction of Eddy's newly surveyed lots two weeks later, on November 19. There were two subsequent auctions on November 28 and December 12. The survey created 540 lots, of which 514 were sold. In all, 393 50-vara lots were sold for \$118,397 and 121 100-vara lots brought \$58,560 for a total of \$176,957. Eddy himself purchased a 50-vara lot at the northeast junction of Eddy, Market, and Powell Streets and another 50-vara lot at the southwest corner of Powell and O'Farrell.²⁴

Eddy's official map was filed on February 1, 1850, in Oregon City, Oregon, the site of the nearest U. S. Federal District Court.²⁵ That map did not show Yerba Buena Cemetery. The idea of creating a cemetery did not occur to the City Fathers until December 6, when council member G. B. Post proposed that a graded wagon road be opened to



William M. Eddy. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

the ground designated as a cemetery. By then the map was on its way to Oregon.

The Daily Alta California reported on March 21, 1850, that Eddy had staked out the 20-acre cemetery site "upon the Mission Road and not difficult of access." He confidently stated that the site was "sufficient to accommodate the dead of the city for the next half century." Today it is bounded by Market, Larkin, and McAllister Streets.

Now there was a new map in town. Upon receipt, the *Alta* commented "It is well executed and may be relied upon as accurate."²⁶ But there is a major misconception regarding what Eddy's map represents. It does NOT show the boundaries of the city of San Francisco in 1849, because there was no city of San Francisco until the city charter was passed on April 12, 1850. In fact, at the *ayuntamiento* meeting of December 24, 1849, a committee was formed to *examine and define the extent of the territory to be embraced within the limits of the city* in preparation for drafting a city charter.²⁷

On April 12, 1850, San Francisco was incorporated as a city.²⁸ Article 1 of the charter established the western boundary as "a line 1½ miles from the

SAN FRANCISCO,

COMPILED FROM THE FIELD NOTES

of the

OFFICIAL RE-SURVEY

made by

WILLIAM M. EDDY,

Surveyor of the Town of San Francisco,

CALIFORNIA

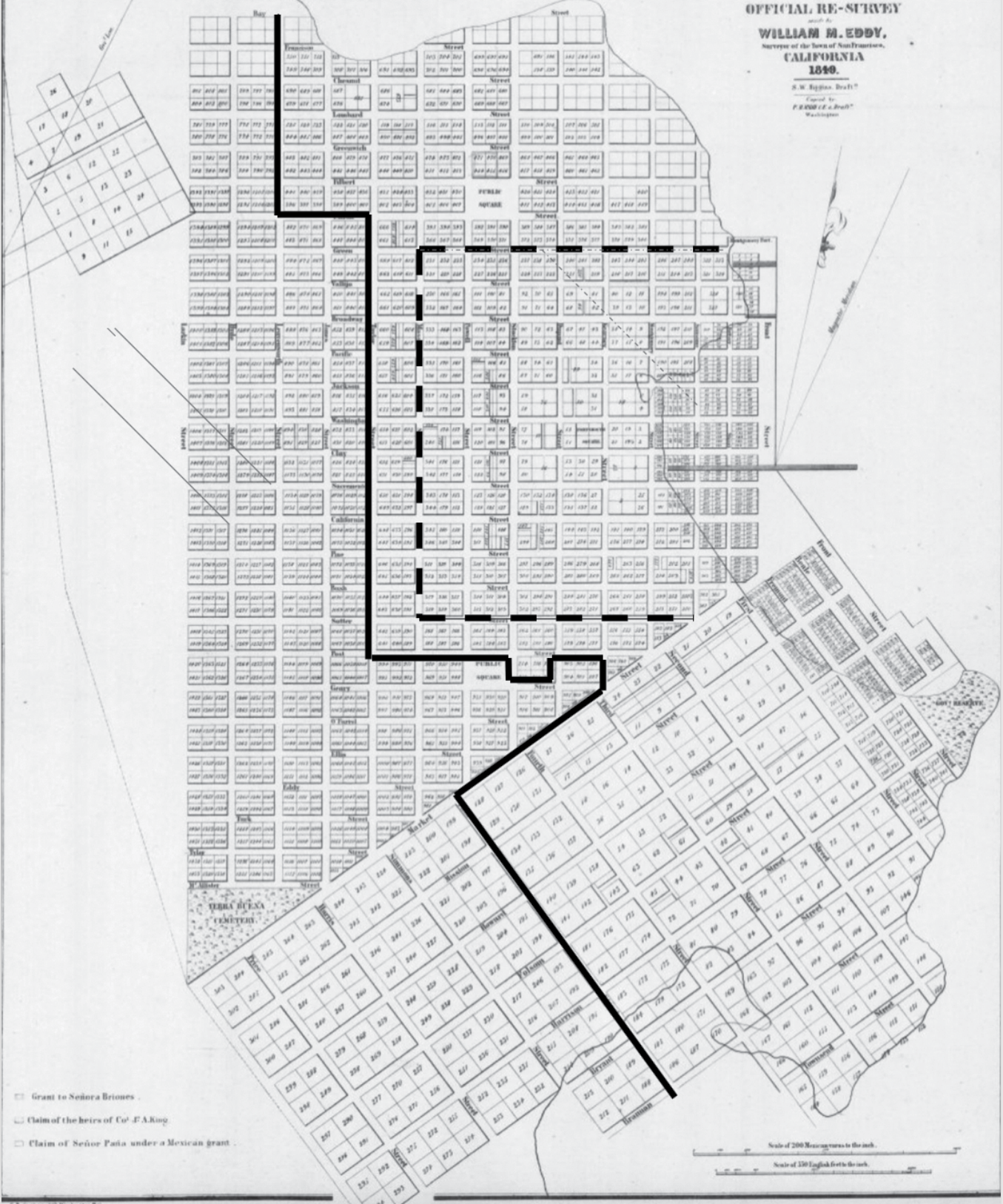
1849.

S. W. Eggleston Drafted

Checked by

F. K. M. C. A. Drafted

Washington



Comparisons of 1847 Buckelew Survey (dashed lines) and 1847 O'Farrell Survey (solid line) overlaid on Eddy survey 1849.
Courtesy of the author.

center of Portsmouth Square and parallel to Kearny street” (approximately today’s Webster Street). The southern boundary was “a line two miles south of the center of Portsmouth Square and parallel to Clay Street” (17th Street). The 1851 charter set the western boundary two miles from Kearny Street (Divisadero Street) and the southern boundary 2½ miles south of Portsmouth Square (21st Street).²⁹

Eddy’s map not only defined blocks and lots west to Larkin Street, but, most importantly, it showed lots that were guaranteed by San Francisco as having legitimate title. Beyond Larkin Street to the city limits, however, there were no guarantees.

O’Farrell’s survey (minus the water lots) totaled about 2 square miles, with fifty streets stretching 35 miles and defining 256 full and partial 50- and 100-vara blocks.

Eddy added 132 more 50- and 100-vara blocks, and twenty-four additional miles of streets. Of the thirty-five new streets on Eddy’s portion of the map, only twelve were his own “creation,” the others being extensions of streets previously surveyed by O’Farrell. Clearly, O’Farrell had done the bulk of the field work.

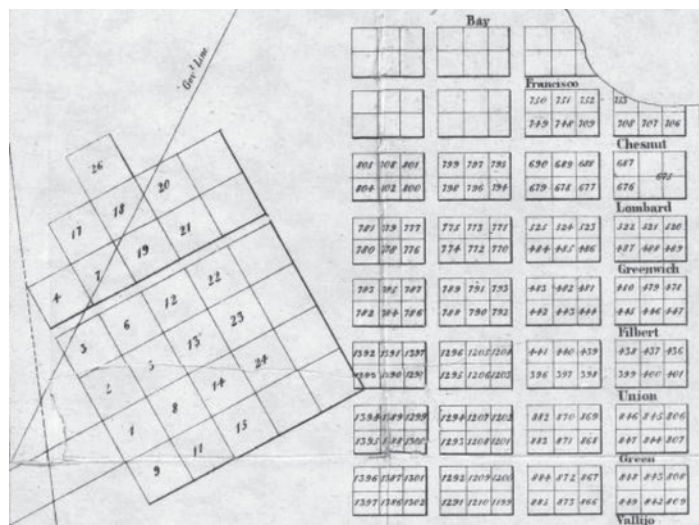
The total combined area was about 3.3 square miles, eight times larger than Buckelew’s 1847 survey.

Two of Eddy’s “new” streets bore the names O’Farrell and Eddy.

When Eddy concluded his survey, San Francisco’s population had grown to over 20,000.³⁰ As with O’Farrell’s survey, Eddy’s work was merely a blueprint for development, not a portrait of development.

Eddy gave us another historic riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Just west of Larkin Street, lying at a thirty-degree angle to the grid of the east of Larkin streets, is a feature that was not on O’Farrell’s 1847 survey. What is known as the *Laguna Survey* appears as an alien outsider—a tract of thirty 100-vara lots between Larkin on the east, Washerwoman’s Lagoon on the west, Chestnut Street on the north, and Vallejo Street on the south.³¹ Although first appearing on Eddy’s map, it is not Eddy’s work. Some attribute it to O’Farrell after he completed his 1847 survey.

There are a number of theories and much speculation about how this tract became part of the survey.



Laguna Survey west of Larkin Street. Courtesy of the author.

THE LAND

On November 11, 1850, *the Daily Alta California* published a notice of a real estate auction in the area of today’s Fort Mason. The 100-acre tract comprised fifteen streets with both familiar and unfamiliar street names, forming thirty-two blocks with 199 saleable 37½ by-50-vara lots. This area was west of Larkin Street—beyond the “safety zone” for legal land titles. However, prospective buyers were assured that the titles for this land were *indisputable, being the property of Hervey Sparks, Esq.* (Emphasis added.) Many San Francisco maps of the early 1850s (including Bridgens) show this tract, and some identify it as *Spark’s Claim*.

One of the tract’s unfamiliar streets was Sparks, clearly named after the tract’s owner. But that doesn’t explain how Mr. Sparks could make the titles *indisputable*. The origin and history of *Sparks’ Claim* is not known. Hervey Sparks was a self-described real estate dealer whom historian H. H. Bancroft refers to as a real estate dealer as well as a banker. Conceivably, Mr. Sparks may have manipulated the Preemption Act of 1841 to his own ends. The Act permitted “squatters” who were living on federal-government-owned land, and who met certain conditions, to purchase up to 160 acres for \$1.25 per acre before the land was to be offered for sale to the general public.

In 1849, there was no City of San Francisco yet, so the territory was federal land. However, Sparks,

the real estate dealer and banker, certainly did not meet the definition of a “squatter.”

Indisputable titles? Buyer beware.

Little is known of Hervey Sparks’ pre-San Francisco background—only that he was born in New York in 1819 and arrived in San Francisco on June 13, 1849, on the *Oregon*, coincidentally, the same vessel that brought William Eddy to town.

On June 7, 1851, a land auction west of Sparks’ Claim took place. Much larger than the November 1850 auction of Sparks’ property, this one offered 426 lots (100-by-125 feet) on ninety-four blocks in the area bounded by a “*Division*” Street on the east, Lombard on the north, a “*Hays*” Street on the south, and “*the western boundary*.”

The *San Francisco Herald*’s announcement provides a valuable chronology of ownership of this west-of-Larkin-Street land:

The property to be sold is at present owned by Messrs. Peachy and Billings and is part of the *Rancho de los Lobos* (emphasis added), granted June 26, 1846 to Benito Diaz by Gov. Pio Pico and transferred by Benito Diaz and wife on September 16 to *Thomas O. Larkin* (emphasis added) of Monterey. By T. O. Larkin and wife it was transferred to Dexter Wright on September 19, 1849, and from Wright it came into the ownership of the present possessors.

THE DEAL

In June 1846, when California was still a part of Mexico, Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of Alta California, granted Benito Diaz (the Mexican custom house officer in Yerba Buena) two leagues of land—about fourteen square miles—known as . . . Diaz sold the land to Thomas Larkin for \$1,000 on September 19, 1846, and it became known as *Larkin’s Grant* or *Larkin’s Ranch*. It was bounded on the north by the Golden Gate, on the west the ocean, on the south by the line of today’s Noriega and 21st Streets, and on the east by the line of Gough and Valencia Streets.

On September 19, 1849, Larkin sold the Larkin Grant/*Rancho Punta de Lobos*. However, it is not clear to whom he sold the tract. In his papers he records that he sold it to Bethuel Phelps on September 19,

1846, for \$20,000.³² However, in another related file there is a deed from Thomas O. Larkin & Wife, also dated September 19, 1849, selling *Punta de Lobos* to Dexter Wright for \$50,000.³³

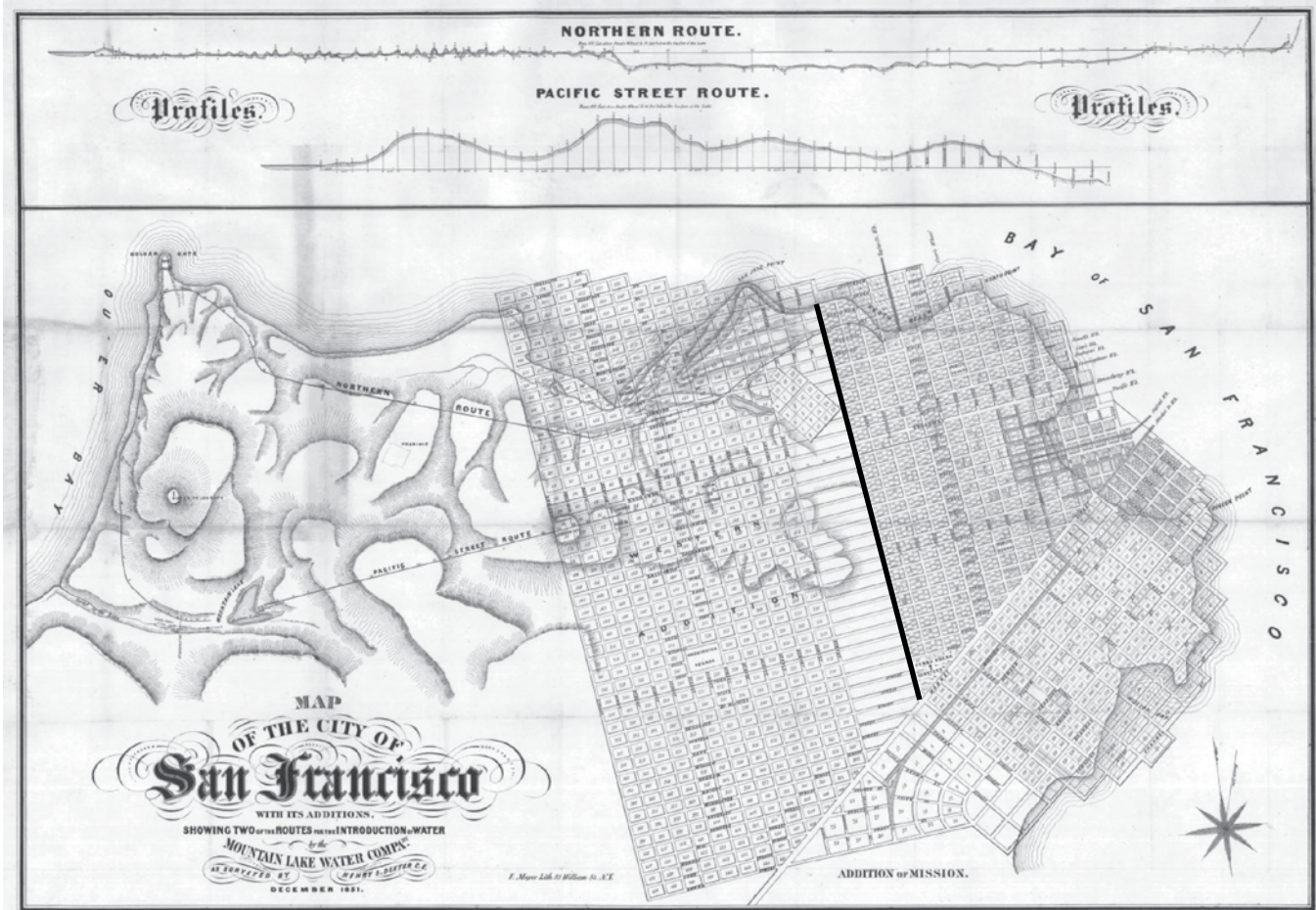
Larkin is now out of the picture entirely. Although problematic, the sequence of ownership is really unimportant and *Punta de Lobos*, the subject of the Marlette Map, now becomes our focus. As a condition of the sale of *Punta de Lobos*, Phelps agreed to Larkin’s condition: “to have surveyed [*Punta de Lobos*] and arranged for the site of a town, into lots and squares, with streets and alleys, that the same may be introduced into market for sale.”³⁴

Larkin clearly envisioned a city taking form west of San Francisco. To that end a survey would be completed and a map would be created showing the details of a new town that would then go on the real estate market. As part of the deal, Larkin purchased fifty lots of the as-yet-unsurveyed town and unnamed town.

THE MAP

In January 1852 the banking house of Page, Bacon & Co. (PB&Co.) at 149 Montgomery Street was selling bonds to raise \$800,000 to build a pipeline from Mountain Lake in the Presidio to water-starved San Francisco.³⁵ On March 31, 1851, the city council had granted Azro Merrifield permission to begin the project. To help potential investors understand the scale of this undertaking, a two-by-three-foot map adorned the PB&Co. office in the Montgomery Block building, showing the two pipeline routes under consideration: one running east along Pacific Street to Broadway and Mason, and the other going circuitously around Fort Point and then east to Chestnut and Hyde.

The map was not overly large in its dimensions, but the area of San Francisco that it showed was unprecedented. Just two years after the publication of Eddy’s official 1849 map, this finely detailed map charted the greatest cartographic leap westward in San Francisco history. Eddy’s western boundary was Larkin Street. The map at PB&Co., surveyed by Henry Dexter, printed in New York City, and published in December 1851, stretched as far west as the outlet of Lobos Creek in the Presidio (the equivalent of today’s 25th Avenue) and as far south



Dexter Map, 1851. Black line shows Larkin Street. Courtesy of Barry Lawrence Ruderman, Antique Maps, Inc.

as the east-west line of today's Kirkham Street and 17th Avenue. Terrain features were shown as far south as the line of O'Farrell-Anza Streets and east to approximately Gough Street.

The map's most riveting feature, however, was a block-by-block survey that pushed the western edge of San Francisco a whopping 1.5 miles beyond Larkin Street. This westward surge was greater than the distance from Larkin Street to the city's eastern boundary at the waterfront—1.4 miles.

Dexter's 1851 map, which included the Eddy's east-of-Larkin-Street survey and Sparks' claim, defined blocks as far west as today's Central Avenue, an additional quarter mile beyond the 1851 Charter Line.

The surveyed west-of-Larkin area covered about 3 square miles compared with approximately 3.3 square miles for Eddy's and O'Farrell's 50- and 100-vara surveys. Its sixty-three streets were more than

100 miles long and formed more than 600 separate blocks, (which maintained the east-of-Larkin-Street 50-vara dimensions) compared with 388 blocks and about sixty miles of streets east of Larkin.

The forty-nine east-west and fourteen north-south streets were clearly named on Dexter's map. Of the total, thirty east-west streets between McAllister and Jefferson Streets had names we recognize today on the same rights-of-way, merely extended farther west from the east-of-Larkin-Street survey. The remaining nineteen east-west streets and all of the north-south streets had unfamiliar-sounding names such as Holkins, Keyes, Benton, and Murray.

If Dexter's intent was to show the pipeline routes, why did his survey extend more than 1.5 miles south of Pacific Street (the line of the southern pipeline route) to Grand Street, the southern-most street on this west-of-Larkin survey? And why terrain features? It seems like a lot of unnecessary work.

And why name streets and provide block numbers as though this were a plat map?

The cartouche of Dexter's map notes that it was surveyed by Henry S. Dexter CE, but there is overwhelmingly clear and convincing evidence that an earlier map of the west-of-Larkin-Street territory was Dexter's template.

Significantly, sixteen streets listed in the June 7, 1851, auction corresponded to streets on Dexter's *not-yet published map of December 1851*.

Additionally, Dexter's map not only showed streets named in the June 7, 1851, auction west of Sparks' Claim, but it also showed the same block numbers *that preceded the map's publication by six months*. (The dots in the map section from Dexter's map below indicate a small portion of the blocks auctioned, which correspond to blocks in the real estate ad.)

This was no coincidence or accident.

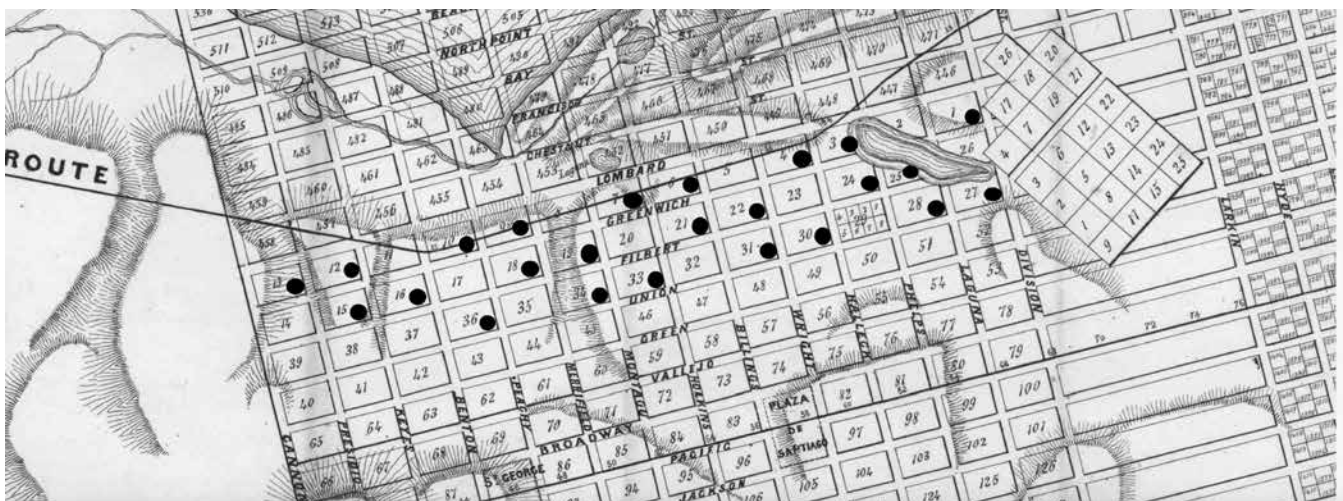
On February 13, 1853, forty of the lots that were part of Sparks' 1850 auction came on the market again. The auction ad provides this background and chronology.

This property is situated on the western addition of the city *as surveyed and laid out in lots by J. [sic] H. Marlette, Esq. in April, eighteen hundred and forty-nine [sic]*, (emphasis added) and the same as formerly owned by Hervey Sparks, Esq. under whose direction it was surveyed and improved.³⁶

Extensive Sale of Real Estate—430 Lots.
 On SATURDAY, June 7,
 Will hold an extensive Sale of Real Estate at their old stand, No 276 Montgomery street.
 This property is located in the Western addition of this city, and offers inducements to purchasers rarely met with. The land is of the best quality, and susceptible of high cultivation, and abundance of water can be obtained at any place required, at a very trifling expense. The attention of speculators and settlers is particularly called to the following schedule:
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 1, bounded by Division, Greenwich, Laguna and Lombard sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 3, bounded by Phelps, Halleck, Greenwich and Lombard sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 4, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard, Halleck and Wright sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 6, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard, Billings and Hoikins sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 7, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard, Hoikins and Montague sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 9, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard, Merrifield and Peachy sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 10, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard, Peachy and Benton sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 12, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard, Keyes and Presidio sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 13, bounded by Greenwich, Lombard and Presidio sts and the western boundary.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 15, bounded by Filbert, Greenwich, Montagu and Merrifield sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block Nr. 16, bounded by Filbert, Greenwich, Benton and Keyes sts.
 2 lots 100 by 125 feet, in block No. 18, bounded by Filbert, Greenwich, Peachy and Merrifield sts.

Auction ad in Daily Alta California, June 7, 1851.

Seneca Marlette, according to his biography, was born in New York on January 18, 1824. He graduated from the Rensselaer Institute at Troy, NY, with a degree in civil engineering. He arrived in San Francisco in September 1849 after sailing around the horn. He went to Calaveras County, but upon returning to San Francisco for provisions, he secured a surveyor's position with the city at \$20 per day. Later, he bought his own surveying instruments and went into business for himself.



Dexter map with circles on blocks correspond to the auction blocks.

In late 1849 or early 1850 he was hired by Halleck, Peachy, Billings, and Wright to survey blocks and lots on a part of the Larkin Grant. He and his crew encountered hostile squatters who pulled up their survey stakes and threatened them with axes for trespassing.

Next, he surveyed a subdivision between the Larkin Grant and “the city” for Hervey Sparks. [Sparks’ claim]

Later Mr. Marlette made arrangements for the publication of a map of San Francisco, including the Western Addition.³⁷

The following items appeared in the *Daily Alta California* and *California Daily Courier* on December 25, 1850:

MAP OF SAN FRANCISCO.—We have received from the publisher, S. H. Marlette, a complete map of San Francisco, compiled from the original map, the recent surveys of W. M. Eddy, County Surveyor, the western addition surveyed by S. H. Marlette, civil engineer. The map seems an excellent one, and is from the lithography of Zakreski and Hartman, and confers great credit upon all those who have been engaged in its production. It may be had of S. H. Marlette and of Alex. Zakreski & Hartman, Clay street, above the plaza.

Daily Alta California, December 25, 1850.
Acknowledgment of receipt of Marlette Map.

MAP OF SAN FRANCISCO.—We have been presented by S. H. Marlette, Esq., civil engineer, with a map he has published of this city, according to the survey of Mr. Eddy. It is said to be very correct. It ought to have a very ready sale. Every Merchant and business man will need it. It is for sale by the publisher, and by Messrs. Zabriskie & Hartman, Clay street.

California Daily Courier, December 25, 1850.
Acknowledgment of receipt of Marlette Map.

Note that the *Alta* article refers to the western addition surveyed by S. H. Marlette.

All the facts point to Marlette’s lost 1850 map as being the template for Dexter’s 1851 map. Although it is lost, the details of Marlette’s map are preserved in Dexter’s map, the first in the line of derivatives leading to the Bridgens map at the San Francisco library.

This satisfies two of our four tasks: to reconstruct the lost Marlette map and to connect it to the Bridgens map. What is not known is precisely how far west the Marlette map extended. The Dexter map’s western boundary is about today’s Central Avenue. Larkin’s claim extended to the ocean. Might the survey that Larkin placed as a condition of sale have extend farther west? We will never know.

From November 26, 1850, through January 1, 1851, Dexter Wright and Palmer, Cook & Co. published notice of their intent to sell *Punta de Lobos*.³⁸

NOTICE.—MILTON NELSON is authorised to negotiate sales of lands belonging to us in the western addition of this city and “Puenta de los lobos” Rancho, D. R. WRIGHT, PALMER, COOK & CO. nov27

This notice appeared in the *Daily Alta California*, Nov. 26, 1850.

From March 23 through April 26, 1851, the following notice appeared in the papers.

RANCHO PUNTA DE LOS LOBOS, OR WOLF’S POINT AND WESTERN ADDITION.—All persons having cattle running on this ranch, or other personal property thereon, are notified to remove the same within fifteen days from this date, or they will be proceeded against according to law. The subscriber has been appointed the agent of the owners, and is prepared to sell or lease on reasonable terms. He has a shepherd in his employment to take care of any cattle which may be entrusted to his care for grazing. MILTON NELSON, Broadway, near Stockton st. mar21-im

This notice appeared in the *Daily Alta California*, Mar. 23, 1850.

At the time of Marlette’s survey (approximately late-1849 to mid-1850), Peachy and Billings was a law firm specializing in land cases in post-Gold Rush California. (Henry W. Halleck would join the firm on December 31, 1849.) Five streets on Dexter’s map bear the names of men closely associated with *Punta de Lobos*: Peachy, Billings, Halleck, Wright, and Phelps.

On June 7, 1851, the big auction of Western Addition real estate was held. However, no information regarding the results of the sale was reported.

The year 1854 was a bumper year for Marlette-map derivatives. Beginning on January 15, Benjamin Butler published his first derivative map of the year; it was certified as San Francisco’s official map.

On March 23, 1854, the *Alta* printed this announcement of receipt of the Bridgens map, crediting Mr. Bixby, the publisher, while overlooking Mr. R. P. Bridgens, the compiler of the survey data. This, of course, is the map in the San Francisco Public Library that started us on our quest.

A LARGE MAP—We have received from the publisher, M. Bixby, Esq., a large and beautiful lithographic map of the city, compiled from the best and most recent surveys, and embracing the Western addition and the Mission of Dolores. The map is about seven feet square, intended to be, and we believe is, strictly correct, and is without exception, the largest, handsomest and most complete map of the city we have seen. The work is beautifully executed, and the border is made up of views of some of our principal buildings. The map would be an ornament to any office or counting house. Mr. Bixby has received but a few copies, which are to be furnished to subscribers, but will soon have a sufficient number on hand to supply the public generally.

Butler published a second derivative map in 1854.

Attesting to Butler's derivative map's official status, at the common council meeting of May 31, 1855, three assessment districts for the lands west of Larkin Street were established referring to streets from Marlette's Map: west of Larkin and east of *Division*, west of *Division* and east of *Halleck*, and west of *Halleck* to the Charter Line of 1851. *Division* and *Halleck* Streets appeared on the Dexter Map as well as on Butler's and Bridgens' maps (emphasis added).

Further, the 1856–1857 city directory published in October 1856 listed the west-of-Larkin streets of the Dexter/Marlette Map. These listings continued in the 1858 directory.

By 1855 time was running out for both Marlette's map and for *Punta de los Lobos*. The land's fate would be determined in the federal judicial arena, while the map's existence would be in the hands of San Francisco legislators.

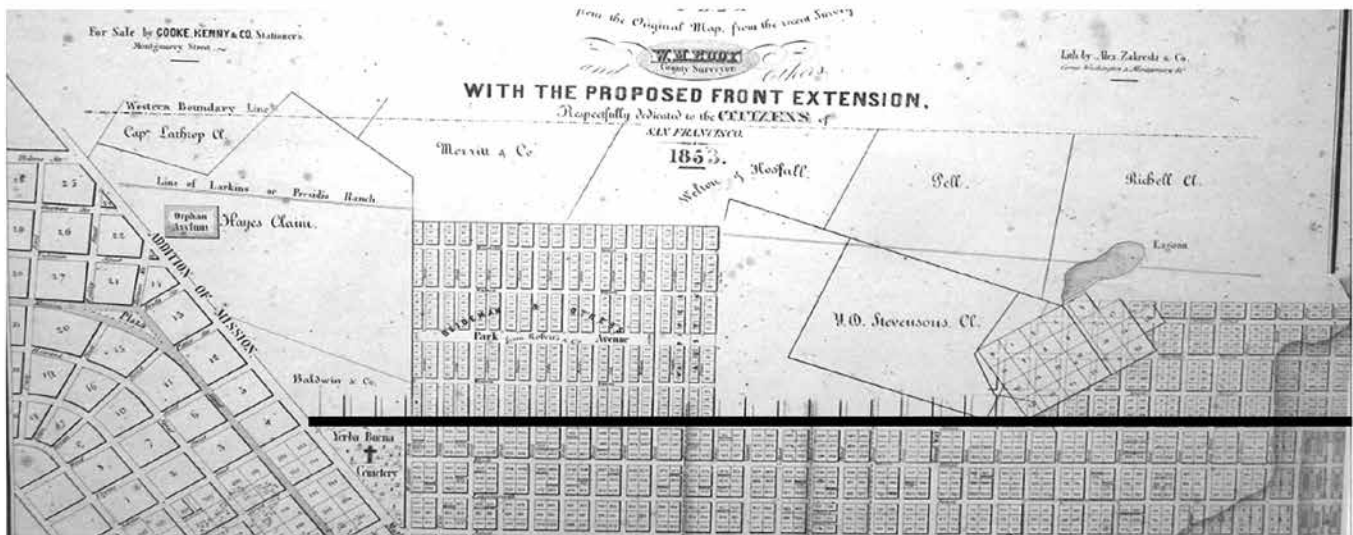
THE TRIAL

On September 19, 1846, Benito Diaz sold *Punta de Lobos* to Thomas Larkin for \$1,000. Following proper procedure, Larkin registered his purchase with Alcalde Washington Bartlett on October 16, 1846.³⁹ On September 19, 1849, Larkin sold the two leagues to either Bethuel Phelps for \$20,000 or to Dexter Wright for \$50,000.

In 1851 a public land commission was created to establish the validity of Spanish and Mexican land grants in California with the burden of proof resting on the claimant. The case of *Punta de Lobos/Larkin's Grant/Larkin's Ranch* came before the Commission on February 16, 1855. The unsavory reputation of the grantee, Benito Diaz, preceded this case. Prior cases before the commission involving grants claimed by Diaz turned out to be forgeries. The *Alta* reported “[Diaz] has made himself somewhat notorious in selling off claims which he afterwards declares to be forgeries.”⁴⁰ Even Larkin had suspicions regarding the validity of Diaz's claim. “This may prove not right, if it's good its value cannot be named.”⁴¹ The case centered on the legitimacy of Diaz's contention of having received the grant from Governor Pio Pico on June 25, 1846.

When the commission heard the case, the owners were Joseph C. Palmer, Charles W. Cook, Bethuel Phelps, and Dexter Wright. Palmer and Cook formed Palmer, Cook & Co., a banking establishment. Phelps and Wright were brothers-in-law. The commission rejected their claim on August 14, 1855, but it was appealed to the U.S. District Court. The appeal was denied on December 4, 1857, after which the matter was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in December 1860.⁴² The Supreme Court found that there was no evidence of a June 25, 1846, grant on record or in the public archives, only papers in Diaz's possession “which raised more questions than they answered.”

The judgment of the District Court was affirmed, the grant was denied, and *Punta de Lobos* was no more.



1853 Eddy Map showing claims and proposed “suburban” development west of Larkin Street (thick black line).
 Courtesy of the California Historical Society.

THE LAND, PART II VAN NESS ORDINANCE

While *Punta de Lobos*’ fate was being litigated in court, the days were numbered for the map associated with the land. As mentioned previously, the unsurveyed region of San Francisco from Larkin Street to the city’s western boundary at Divisadero Street was an area of uncertainty regarding property rights. Years of civic neglect resulted in a Gordian Knot of competing, overlapping, conflicting, uncertain, and illegal land claims and counter claims. Some disputes were settled by rule of law and others by rule of force.

When the city finally took notice of its Western Addition, it beheld a five-square-mile litigatory nightmare. Establishing its right of ownership through the courts on a case-by-case basis would be an expensive, time-consuming process with no guarantee of success.

Easily one third of the city’s jurisdiction was not generating any tax revenue for the bankrupt and insolvent corporation—the unsurveyed Western Addition beyond Larkin Street. For the third time in less than a decade, the city looked to its land to save it from fiscal disaster. Impeding direct action in reclaiming the land were large swaths covered by claims that were held and controlled by men who possessed the determination, energy, and means to use any and every legal means at their disposal to preserve their holdings—including the Diaz/Larkin grant.

On June 20, 1855, the city council exercised the equivalent of the nuclear option by relinquishing San Francisco’s claim to all land within the city limits “to the parties in the actual possession thereof, by themselves or tenants,” who lived there on or before January 1, 1855. This was the Van Ness Ordinance, San Francisco’s first great leap westward. The city would not benefit from auction sales in this land give-away, but now it was assured of tax revenue, whereas before there was no benefit.

On November 2, 1855, the city council authorized a survey of the Western Addition. Ten days later a committee of three council members (Charles Gough, M. Hayes, and Horace Hawes) was chosen to oversee the laying out of streets and choosing sites for city reservations such as schools, squares, and fire engine lots, as required by the Van Ness Ordinance.

City surveyor John J. Hoff submitted his report on April 19, 1856, describing his survey methodology. The east-west streets west of Larkin were extended to the city’s western boundary (Divisadero Street), just as had been done on Marlette’s map, using the same rights of way. The blocks kept the same 50-by-100-vara dimensions, with the exception of the north-south strip on Dexter’s map bounded on the east by then-Webster Street (today’s Franklin Street) and on the west by then-Division Street. These blocks were 100-by-100 varas. To maintain block-size uniformity, Hoff added 50 varas to the western side of these blocks to make them 100-by-150 varas.

The first three north-south streets west of Larkin used the same rights of way as previously mapped, but farther west the streets were offset 50 varas (137.5 feet) to the west from the mapped rights of way. It fell to the city council to name the new streets. Seventeen north-south streets west of Larkin were renamed and eighteen east-west streets south of McAllister received the names that we recognize today.

Hoff's report was approved on June 19, 1856. It included a map and plan of the streets west of Larkin and became known as the Van Ness Map. This would replace Butler's January 15, 1854, official map of San Francisco, a derivative of the Marlette Map.

Now San Francisco was whole all the way to the Charter Line at Divisadero Street. On October 9, 1856, the first real estate transaction after the Van Ness Ordinance took place in Hayes' Tract. Interestingly, John Middleton, the auctioneer of the Hayes' Tract sale, had an eponymous street on the Marlette Map which occupied the right of way of today's Haight Street.



Notice of auction in Hayes Valley, October 9, 1856.

EPILOG: THE PEOPLE

For six weeks in September and October 1849, Larkin, Semple, and Vallejo were delegates to the California Constitutional Convention in Monterey. Larkin represented the Monterey District, and Semple and Vallejo represented the Sonoma District. The delegates had elected Semple president of the convention.

O'Farrell campaigned to represent Sonoma but fell short. He ran for the State Assembly that year but lost. In 1858 he succeeded in his quest for public office, being elected to the State Senate from Sonoma. But he failed in his reelection effort.

Semple died from a horse fall in 1854. He is memorialized with a school in Benicia.

Larkin died of typhoid fever in 1858. Among his many honors, a street in San Francisco bears his name.

O'Farrell died in 1875. A street in San Francisco honors his memory.

Mariano Vallejo died in 1890. A San Francisco street and a California city are among his tributes.

THE PLACES

Benicia, the rallying point for our Big Four, experienced a strange series of events. It was incorporated as a city on March 27, 1850, two weeks before San Francisco. By then it had a population of about 1,000 compared with San Francisco's 25,000. From 1850 to 1858 it was the Solano County Seat. Larkin and Semple continued to feud, but in the end Larkin prevailed, and Semple moved to Colusa on the Sacramento River. From February 11, 1853 to February 25, 1854 Benicia was California's fourth capital following Monterey, San Jose, and Vallejo. Ironically, Thomas Larkin was instrumental in making that happen.

As with all Spanish and Mexican land grants, Vallejo's Rancho Soscol Grant from Governor Micheltorena (the 84,000 acres on San Pablo and Suisun Bays on which Benicia was situated) came before the U.S. Land Commission (in 1855) where it was validated. Perhaps because it occupied so much choice land, the Federal Government appealed the decision to the District Court where the commission's decision was upheld. The Government's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court was successful (March 24, 1862), and the grant of 84,000 acres that Vallejo had received in 1843 was invalidated. The court reasoned

that Governor Micheltorena lacked the authority to make such an award. He could give the land away, but since the grant was made to Vallejo in lieu of payment for services and out-of-pocket payments by Vallejo on behalf of the Mexican Government in the service of the Mexican Government, the court defined the transaction as a sale.

Since Vallejo's grant was invalidated, the land titles of Larkin, Semple, and their heirs and assigns were null and void; the land reverted to the public domain and became available at \$1.25 per acre according to the provisions of the Preemption Act of 1841.

An appeal to Congress for legislative relief on March 3, 1863, was successful.⁴³

THE THINGS

It seems that the fate of Marlette's map was to be destroyed in the many fires of early San Francisco. No known copies exist.

Born of Thomas Larkin's dream, progenitor of San Francisco's official map, a victim of progress, and forgotten by history, Marlette's map now comprises the current neighborhoods of Haight Ashbury, Marina, Cow Hollow, Pacific Heights, Hayes Valley, and the Western Addition.

* * * * *

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Angus Macfarlane's passions are historic San Francisco maps and nineteenth-century San Francisco baseball. He has written many articles for *The Argonaut* (but this is the first about maps). His previous articles in *The Argonaut* were: "San Francisco Racetracks"—"Part 1: Pioneer and Pavilion Racetracks of the 1850s" and "Part 2: The Racetracks of the 1860s" (Vol. 19, No. 1, Summer 2008); "San Francisco Racetracks"—"Part 3: Bay District and Golden Gate Racetracks of the 1870s and 1880s" and "Part 4: Ingleside, Oakland, and Tanforan Racetracks of the 1890s and 1900s" (Vol. 19, No. 2, Winter 2008); and "The Byfield Tract" (Vol. 21, No. 2, Winter 2010). Part I of this article, "Putting San Francisco on the Map" was published in the last issue of *The Argonaut* (Vol. 32, No. 1, Summer 2021). He is currently working on the "pre-hippie history" of the Haight-Ashbury.

If you have any questions, comments, corrections or criticisms regarding this or the Part I article, feel free to contact the author at aamacfarlane@earthlink.net

NOTES

1. Thomas Oliver Larkin, George P. Hammond, ed., *The Larkin Papers*, Vol. 5, 279.
2. In fact, Larkin's expenses were regularly rejected by Washington, DC, including his claim for \$31.34 that he paid for a United States flag and staff. (See Inskeep, Steve; *Imperfect Union*, 125.)
3. Paul W. Gates, "The Land Business of Thomas O. Larkin," *California Historical Quarterly*, 54:5 (Winter 1975), 324.
4. Larkin, Vol. 6, 50.
5. *Ibid.*, 146.
6. Larkin, Vol. 7, 46.
7. *Daily Alta California*, April 21, 1851, 2.
8. Soule, Frank Soule et al., *The Annals of San Francisco*, 173.
9. Soule, 176; *California Star* August 28, 1847, 1.
10. Robert Semple's *Californian* (October 24, 1846, 1) reported on the grand public reception for Commodore Stockton in Yerba Buena on October 5: "the procession moved in fine style down *Portsmouth Street* to the landing and formed a line at *Water Street*."
11. Rather than being the usual 50 varas square, the water lots were 1/3 the size: 50 varas by 16-2/3 varas or 135.5 feet by 45 feet 10 inches.
12. Benicia Historical Museum Online Archival Collection <https://benicia.pastperfectonline.com/archive/A6FCCBFA-FC25-447C-AAE6-631346590884>
13. Larkin, Vol. 6, 261.
14. Larkin, Vol. 8, 102.
15. Larkin, Vol. 7, 31.
16. *Ibid.*, 325.
17. Larkin, Vol. 8, 64.
18. *Ibid.*, 81.
19. *Ibid.*, 111.
20. This region covered the area south of Sacramento and between the Coast Range Mountains and the Sierra Nevada.
21. Alcalde District Records, original, 67. These lots were bounded by Larkin, Leavenworth, Greenwich, and Lombard Streets.
22. *Alta California*, August 16, 1849, 2.
23. Soule, et. al., 226.

24. Certified Grants, Vol. 3, 131 (lot # 940), Certified Grants Vol. 3, 133 (lot # 945).
25. The original is owned by the Oregon City's Recorder's Office but is on permanent loan to the Museum of the Oregon Territory.
26. *Daily Alta California*, February 26, 1850, 2.
27. The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco; *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Ayuntamiento or Town Council of San Francisco August 6, 1849, to May 3, 1850*, 104.
28. *Daily Alta California*, April 17, 1850, 4.
29. *Daily Alta California*, March 23, 1851, 2.
30. Soule, et al., 244.
31. Subsequent Eddy maps showed thirty Laguna Survey lots until 1852, then showed twenty-four. This practice was adopted by other map makers.
32. Larkin, Vol. 8, 295–297.
33. University of California Berkeley Bancroft Library, Banc Mss Land Case file 394ND.
34. Larkin, Vol. 8, 297.
35. *Daily Alta California*, January 24, 1852, 2.
36. Marlette could not have conducted the survey in April 1849, since he did not arrive in San Francisco till September. Nonetheless, this does not invalidate the fact that he did conduct a survey for Hervey Sparks at a later date. Additionally, Mr. Marlette's first initial was "S" not "J."
37. J. M. Guinn, *A History of California and an Extended History of Its Southern Coast Counties; Also Containing Biographies of Well-Known Citizens of the Past and Present*, Vol. II, (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1907), 1213.
38. This is the earliest reference to "Western Addition" in San Francisco newspapers.
39. Larkin, Vol. 6, 50.
40. *Daily Alta California*, February 17, 1855, 2.
41. Harlan Hague and David Langum, *Thomas O. Larkin: A Life of Patriotism and Profit in Old California* (Norman, OH and London), 180.
42. U.S. Reports: Palmer, et al. vs. United States; 65 U.S. (24 How), 125 (1861).
43. *Daily Alta California*, June 17, 1866, 1; Richard Dillon, *Great Expectations: The Story of Benicia*, (Benecia, CA: Benecia Heritage Book Inc.), 133.

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ADDENDUM

West of Larkin Streets on Dexter and Bridgens Maps
And likely origins of street names.

EAST-WEST STREETS

1) **Shillaber Street** (Today's Fulton Street)
Named for Theodore Shillaber. Born: New York, 1820; died: Germany, 1883.

In the late 1840s he traded between Mexico, California, and Hawaii. On January 24, 1849, he was proclaimed a "Denizen of Hawaii" by the Kingdom of Hawaii. In 1849 he was an emissary of Hawaiian King Kamehameha to California. He settled in San Francisco sometime in 1849. In 1849–50 he was involved in the Central/Long Wharf (Commercial Street) project with Erasmus Keyes and others. He was a business partner of Sam Brannan in 1850 and an officer of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

2) **Parsons Street** (Today's Grove Street)
Named for Levi S. Parsons Born: New York, 1822; died, New York 1887.

Arrived in 1849. Founded the California Whig Party in February 1850. On March 30, 1850, he was appointed judge by the legislature. One of the first cases he heard was a suit brought by squatters against Capt. Keyes for illegally evicting them from Federal property leased to Theodore Shillaber. Judge Parsons threw the case out of court. (See KEYES and SHILLABER Streets below.)

3) **Hays Street** (Today's Hayes Street)
Named for John (Jack) Coffee Hays. Born: Tennessee, 1817; died: Piedmont, Ca., 1883.

Arrived in San Francisco January 1850 long after his reputation had preceded him. He was a legendary Indian fighter and Texas Ranger captain. He also fought in Mexican-American War. San Francisco's first Sheriff 1850–54. According to H. H. Bancroft: "The contest for Sheriff was one of the most exciting on record, with lavish generosity on one side, and enthusiastic display of bands and banners on the other. But the fame of John C. Hays as a Texan ranger, and his opportune exhibitions of dash and horsemanship, captured the populace."

4) **William Street** (Today's Fell Street)
Unknown.

5) **Graham Street** (Today's Oak Street)

Named for James Sutton Graham. Born: Kentucky, 1824; died: Arkansas, 1862.

Arrived in San Francisco September 1849. Elected Alderman January 8, 1850, with most votes. He was the owner of the Graham House Hotel, a building prefabricated in Baltimore and shipped to San Francisco on April 19, 1849, by Graham. It arrived September 21 and was assembled on the corner of Kearny and Pacific Streets. H. H. Bancroft described it as: "a four-story wooden edifice lined on two sides by continuous balconies. It opened as a first class hotel—The Graham House—on December 25, 1849." While still an Alderman, Graham sold it to the city for a City Hall on April 2, 1850, for \$100,000. The city spent another \$50,000 on interior remodeling.

6) **Haight Street** (Today's Page Street)

Named for Samuel Welles Haight. Born: New York, 1822; died: San Francisco, 1856. Uncle of Henry Haight, California governor 1867–71.

Arrived in San Francisco March 1847, with Stevenson's regiment from New York.

7) **Middleton Street** (Today's Haight Street)

Named for John Middleton. Born: Pennsylvania, 1811; died San Francisco 1874.

Arrived in San Francisco September 1849. He was one of the leading real estate auctioneers of the day. He was a member of the first board of aldermen in June 1850.

8) **Beverley Street** (Today's Waller Street)

See below.

9) **Sanders Street** (Today's Herman Street)

Named for Beverly C. Sanders. Born: Virginia, 1807; died: New Jersey, 1883.

Came to San Francisco in 1850, becoming a commission merchant on the Central Wharf, then became involved in the real estate business with Peachy, Billings, and Halleck. Did well enough to buy land and a house worth \$14,000.

10) **Fell Street** (Roughly today's Duboce Street)

Unknown.

11) **Murray Street** (Roughly today's 14th Street)

Named for Hugh C. Murray. Born: Missouri, 1824; died: Sacramento, 1857.

Arrived in San Francisco Sept. 15, 1849. Fought in Mexican-American War. Attorney. Elected to *ayuntamiento* January 11, 1850.

12) **Lake Street** (Roughly between today's 14th and 15th Streets)

Unknown.

13) **Grand Street** (Roughly today's 15th Street)

Unknown.

NORTH-SOUTH STREETS

1) **Sparks Street** (Today's Polk Street)

Named for Hervey Sparks. Born: New York, 1819; died: San Francisco, 1889.

Arrived in San Francisco June 1849. A self-described real estate dealer. Owner/claimant of land bounded by Larkin Street on the east, Union Street on the south, the bay on the north and Division Street on the west as of 1849. He employed Seneca Marlette to survey his property in 1849. (See Marlette Street below.)

2) **Marlette Street** (Today's Van Ness Avenue)

Named for Seneca H. Marlette. Born: New York; 1824; died: Glendale, California, 1911.

Arrived in San Francisco September 23, 1849. West of Larkin Street surveyor of Hervey Sparks' and Archibald Peachy's property. (See PEACHY, HALLECK, AND WRIGHT STREETS below.)

3) **Webster Street** (Today's Franklin Street)

Most likely named after Daniel Webster, Massachusetts Whig Senator and strong advocate for the Compromise of 1850 that allowed California to enter the union as an undivided free state. (See BENTON STREET below)

4) **Division Street** (Between today's Franklin and Gough Streets)

This street was the dividing line between Hervey Sparks' property to the east and Thomas Larkin's property (and later Peachy, Billings and Wright's property) to the west. The distance between then-Division Street and then-Webster Street was not a full 150-vara block, rather 100 varas. West of Division, the full 150-vara block interval resumes, but because of this Division Street offset, the earlier streets to the west do not align relative to today's streets. The locations of the earlier streets are described by their mid-block locations relative to today's streets.

5) **Laguna Street** (Between today's Gough and Octavia Streets)

There was a lagoon (Washerwoman's Lagoon) at the northern end of this street.

6) **Phelps Street** (Between today's Octavia and Laguna Streets)

Named for Bethuel Phelps. Born: Massachusetts, 1820; died: c. 1888.

Arrived in San Francisco August 1848. Phelps was deeply involved in business and real estate ventures with Thomas Larkin. He was the brother-in-law of Dexter R. Wright. (See Wright Street below.)

7) **Halleck Street** (Between today's Laguna and Buchanan)

Named for Henry Wager Halleck. Born: New York, 1815; died: Kentucky, 1872.

He was an army officer assigned to California during the Mexican-American War. After the war he served as California's Military Secretary of State and was one of the principal authors and a signer of California's first constitution in 1849. He was nominated to be one of California's senators but came in third behind John C. Fremont and

William Gwin. On December 31, 1849 he became the third member of the pioneer San Francisco law firm of Peachy, Billings and Halleck, which specialized in land law. (See Peachy Street and Billings Street below.)

8) **Wright Street** (Between today's Buchanan and Webster Streets)

Named for Dexter Russell Wright. Born: Vermont, 1821; died: Connecticut, 1886.

Arrived 1848 or 1849. Attorney. Graduated from Yale Law School in 1848. On February 3, 1848, he married Maria Phelps, sister of Bethuel Phelps. (See Phelps Street above.)

9) **Billings Street** (Between today's Webster and Fillmore Streets)

Named for Frederick H. Billings. Born: Vermont, 1883; died: Vermont, 1890.

Arrived in San Francisco in 1848 at the age of 25. He formed a law partnership with Archibald Peachy in June, 1849, later to include Henry Haleck.

10) **Holkins Street** (Between today's Fillmore and Steiner Streets)

Unknown.

11) **Montagu Street** (Between today's Steiner and Pierce Streets)

Unknown.

12) **Merrifield Street** (Between today's Pierce and Scott Streets)

Named for Azro Merrifield. President of Mountain Lake Water Company.

Proposed building a water delivery system from Mountain Lake in the Presidio to San Francisco.

13) **Peachy Street** (Between today's Scott and Divisadero Streets)

Named for Archibald Carey Peachy. Born: Virginia, 1820; died: San Francisco, 1883.

Arrived in San Francisco April 1, 1849. Attorney. By May 3, he was practicing law. A month later he had partnered with Frederick Billings to establish Peachy and Billings. In August, 1849, he ran for delegate to the constitutional convention. (He ran against Samuel Haight.) On October 1, 1849, he was appointed city attorney by the city council. He did not run for reelection. His firm specialized in land cases and he owned much of the land west of Larkin Street known as Larkin's Grant or Rancho Punta de los Lobos.

14) **Benton Street** (Between today's Divisadero and Broderick Streets)

Most likely named for Thomas Hart Benton, Jacksonian Democratic Senator from Missouri, architect of Manifest Destiny and America's westward expansion. Advocate of Compromise of 1850, which allowed California into the union as an undivided free state. (See Webster Street above.)

15) **Keyes Street** (Between today's Broderick and Baker Streets)

Named for Erasmus Darwin Keyes. Born: Massachusetts, 1810; died: France, 1895.

Arrived in San Francisco April 1, 1849. Captain U.S. Army. First American commandant of the Presidio. Within a week of their arrival, 2/3 of Keyes' men had gone AWOL to the mines. With so few men under his command, and the cost of living so high, Keyes was allowed to supplement his meager military salary with outside employment. He used his surveying and civil engineering skills from West Point and submitted the best plan for a wharf extending from Commercial Street, winning \$500. In December 1849 he became the director and treasurer of the stock company overseeing construction of what was called Long Wharf or Central Wharf. He was involved with Theodore Shillaber in this enterprise. (See Shillaber Street below.) In early 1850 the government leased land at Rincon Point to Theodore Shillaber, but squatters prevented him from accessing his land. Keyes and twenty of his soldiers evicted the squatters without force or incident. However, the leader of the squatters cited Capt. Keyes to appear before the civil authorities for illegally evicting them and demanded \$6,000 in damages. The case was heard by Judge Levi Parsons and Keyes' attorney was Archibald Peachy. (See Parsons Street below, Peachy Street above.)

16) **Presidio Street** (Between today's Baker and Lyon Streets)

Probable reference to the street's proximity to the Presidio at its northern end.

Unknown.

17) **Cannon Street** (Between today's Lyon Street and Central Avenue)

Refers to Cannon Hill at Pacific Street between Presidio and Cannon Streets (today's Pacific and Lyon Streets). On April 3, 1850, on the crest of a high hill, Capt. Erasmus Keyes, Henry Halleck (at the time an Army Captain), and Azro Merrifield staked the southeast corner of the Presidio Military Reservation. In May the stake was replaced with a cannon set in the ground.

★ MEET THE 2021 FRACCHIA PRIZE WINNERS ★



The 2021 Fracchia Prize winner Adam Waller (first prize).



The 2021 Fracchia Prize winner Eloise Olivia So (second prize).



The 2021 Fracchia Prize winner Fion Zhen (third prize).

★★★★★ FRACCHIA PRIZE WINNERS ★★★★★

In fall 2018, San Francisco Historical Society announced a new educational opportunity for San Francisco’s high school students, the Fracchia Prize. Named for SFHS founder and President Emeritus Charles Fracchia, the Fracchia Prize is an annual event that invites students to research some aspect of the city’s history and share what they learn with us. The 2020–2021 Fracchia Prize asked students to write an essay about how we should view civic monuments in response to one of two prompts: (Prompt 1) How should we review civic monuments that are controversial? or (Prompt 2) Who has been left out of the city’s collection of civic monuments?

As in previous years, SFHS offered cash prizes to the top three essayists, as well as publication of their work. This year’s Fracchia Prize was co-sponsored by San Francisco City Guides. Students from all parts of the city submitted essays, and the winners of this year’s competition are:

- ★ FIRST PLACE: ““Cecilia Chiang: Her Influence on San Francisco Culture and Cuisine” by Adam Waller (San Francisco University High School) (Prompt 2)
- ★ SECOND PLACE: “A Woman of Unspoken Feats” by Eloise Olivia So (Lowell High School) (Prompt 2)
- ★ THIRD PLACE: “Coit Tower: How Should We View It?” by Fion Zhen (George Washington High School) (Prompt 1)

On September 17, Mayor London Breed graciously hosted the 2021 Fracchia Prize Award Ceremony via Zoom, acknowledging SFHS for its continued work in education. Board Vice President Tom Owens was the emcee. Eloise Olivia So’s essay was published in the fourth quarter 2021 issue of *Panorama*. Fion Zeng’s essay was published in the first quarter 2022 issue of *Panorama*. Adam Waller’s essay begins on the next page.

The 2022 Fracchia Prize contest will be announced soon.

CECILIA CHIANG:

Her Influence on San Francisco Culture and Cuisine

by Adam Waller

Adam Waller chose Prompt 2.

PROMPT 2: Civic Monuments—Who's Been Left Out?

San Francisco has hundreds of monuments honoring people who influenced our city's history. Think of a person who is important to San Francisco's history for whom a monument does not yet exist. Write an essay explaining why that person should be honored with a monument.

Answer these questions:

- *Why is this individual important in our city's history?*
- *Why should he or she be honored with a monument?*
- *Where might the monument be placed?*
- *What would the monument be like? What features does it have? What's special about it?*

When people think of San Francisco, what often comes to mind is the incredible cuisine and restaurants that can be found throughout the city and also the reputation of San Francisco's Chinese restaurants, which are regarded as some of the best in the nation. Many people have been responsible for building this great renown, but none more so than restaurateur and San Francisco cultural icon Cecilia Sun Yun Chiang. However, Chiang's personal connection with and ultimate destiny in San Francisco happened almost by chance.

In 1960 Cecilia Chiang, a new immigrant to the United States, had just put down a \$10,000 deposit to help two friends open a restaurant on Polk Street in San Francisco. Without warning, her friends pulled out of the arrangement, and Chiang was left with the difficult decision either to lose the \$10,000 deposit or try to run the restaurant herself. Chiang took on the formidable task of opening the restaurant herself. Not only was she attempting to start a new business, but she was also trying to do so in a market and language that were not her own and in a business that was predominantly run by

men.¹ While she faced what at many times seemed like insurmountable hurdles, her determination and passion to introduce her customers to high quality Chinese cuisine ensured that her restaurant, The Mandarin, would become one of the most influential Chinese restaurants in America.

Born in 1920, Chiang grew up in a large, privileged household in Beijing, China. The meals prepared for her family were made by cooks who were experts in the field of traditional Chinese cuisine.² While Chiang wasn't allowed to be in the kitchen, she would often try to get a few glimpses of the cooks at work. Every now and then, Chiang would peek at her father eating his meal; even though it was against tradition, her father would often allow her to join him. It was during these moments that Chiang developed her palate and discovered how really good food could taste.³

In the late 1930s, the Japanese invaded China. Chiang and her older sister fled from occupied Beijing and made the difficult journey to Chongqing in 1942. While in Chongqing, Chiang met the man who would become her husband. Together, they moved to Shanghai to escape the growing civil

war. From Shanghai they caught the last plane to Japan before the war reached the city in 1949. Chiang and her young family settled in Tokyo, and it was during this time that Chiang had her first experience running a restaurant. She and some partners opened a successful Chinese restaurant called *Forbidden City* in 1951. But just when there appeared to be some semblance of stability in her life, destiny would yet again intervene. In 1960, Chiang went to San Francisco to offer support to her recently widowed sister. San Francisco would turn out to be the place she would call home for the rest of her life.⁴

Prior to Chiang's arrival in San Francisco, much of the food served in Chinese restaurants in the United States was unsophisticated and often not even traditionally Chinese. Many of the early Chinese immigrants who opened restaurants were not chefs and did not have access to the same ingredients available in China. As a result, the food was usually low quality, inexpensive, and adapted to appeal to a "common" American palate with heavy sugary sauces and basic ingredients.⁵

In contrast, Chiang's aim for *The Mandarin* was to provide the opportunity for her customers to experience and understand higher-end Chinese cuisine and culture. As Chiang stated, "I wanted to introduce real Chinese food to America. I feel like



Cecilia Chiang serving customers in her Mandarin Restaurant in Ghirardelli Square. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

I did a great job, and now people know there's a big difference between chop suey and real Chinese food."⁶ Chiang worked closely with her chefs to make sure the food tasted exactly like the food she remembered growing up in Beijing. They tried again and again to make the skin of the Peking duck thin but crispy, to get the spices just right for the red-cooked pork, and to figure out the perfect amount of water to add to the wok to get the potstickers to a perfect shade of gold and brown.⁷

Chiang's instinct to do something different and serve her

customers traditional Chinese cuisine did not take long to get noticed. A well-known columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Herb Caen, wrote a good review, and *The Mandarin's* popularity took off. He wrote that it served, "some of the best Chinese food east of the Pacific," which caught the attention of so many people that Chiang was able to move *The Mandarin* to a larger location at Ghirardelli Square in 1968.⁸ At that location, she could seat 300 people and offer cooking classes to the community.⁹ Initially, the owners of Ghirardelli Square were hesitant to endorse a Chinese restaurant, but Chiang convinced them that Chinese food could be high quality by getting them to come by the restaurant to try *The*



Cecilia Chang. Photo courtesy of Siena Chiang.

Mandarin's signature dishes.¹⁰ It was at Ghirardelli Square that The Mandarin and Chiang gained their iconic status in San Francisco history.

Chiang believed that the purpose of The Mandarin was not only to feed people, but also to educate the San Francisco community about traditional Chinese food. One way she accomplished this was through her cooking classes at The Mandarin. Chiang wanted these classes to give people a deeper understanding of Chinese food and the culture it came from. As Alice Waters, founder of the groundbreaking restaurant Chez Panisse, put it, "Cecilia not only guided us through the cooking class, but she guided us through the whole menu and how we were to experience Chinese food. [It was] not like any other cuisine I had experienced before."¹¹

From the late 1960s onward, the popularity and influence of The Mandarin continued to spread. It became a gathering place for local artists, opinion

makers, and celebrities.¹² Eventually, Chiang became a local celebrity and a household name in her own right. She was known to dine out regularly at local San Francisco restaurants up to the day she passed away and was often recognized and revered by the restaurant staff and customers alike.¹³

After her retirement in 1991, Chiang mentored many upcoming restaurateurs in San Francisco who opened successful restaurants. Some examples are Corey Lee, the owner and head chef at Benu, Michelin three-star restaurant; Belinda Leong, a James-Beard-award-winning pastry chef and owner of B. Patisserie; George Chen, founder of award-winning restaurants Betelnut and China Live; and Phillip Chiang, Chiang's son, who started the P.F. Chiang's restaurant chain.¹⁴ Restaurateurs like these, who were mentored or inspired by Chiang, continue to make San Francisco an internationally renowned destination for dining.

In 2013, Chiang won the James Beard Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of the contributions she made to the culinary world.¹⁵ Her work changed the perception of Chinese food in San Francisco and beyond and helped people better appreciate the true depth of Chinese cuisine and culture.

Chiang passed away in 2020 at the age of 100.¹⁶ Creating a monument to her would be a fitting way to honor her work and legacy. San Francisco does not have enough monuments celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of its Asian population. Out of the 81 monuments in the city, a statue of Dr. Sun-Yat Sun is the only official monument of a Chinese person in San Francisco¹⁷—even though Chinese Americans make up more than 20 percent of the city’s inhabitants.¹⁸ A monument for Chiang would communicate that the achievements of an Asian American woman have just as much of a right to be celebrated as those of any other member of the San Francisco community. As a successful immigrant from China, Chiang is an inspiration to many in the Bay Area, and a monument to her would be a symbol of all the positive contributions that different cultures have brought to the city.

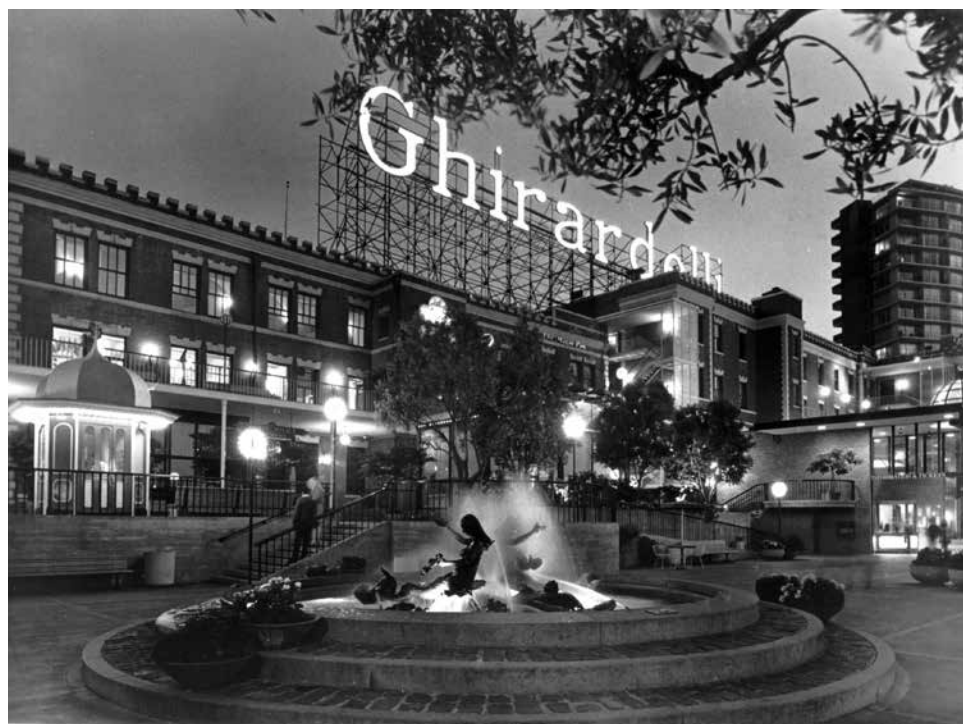
Chiang’s monument should be placed in Ghirardelli Square because it is the location where The Mandarin flourished. Additionally, Ghirardelli Square has an association with food and restaurants, originally as a chocolate factory and now as a specialty retail and dining complex. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, a monument to a Chinese woman in a part of the city not normally associated with the Chinese community would truly be a testament to what Chiang tried to accomplish: recognition that the greatness of San Francisco as a whole is due to the contributions of all the diverse cultures and peoples that call it home.

Chiang’s monument would include her smiling, wearing a traditional Chinese qipao, holding her left hand out in greeting and her right hand guiding people into Ghirardelli Square. The gestures with her hands would represent how Chiang welcomed her guests to The Mandarin and to San Francisco and how she introduced, guided, and influenced our appreciation of Chinese cuisine and culture. A plaque on Chiang’s monument would quote her words:

And if, in the restaurants I run, I am able to pass on to my children and my guests in the New World the great traditions of Chinese life and cuisine, I shall also feel that I am paying a debt to my parents, a memorial to what I learned from them of The Mandarin Way.¹⁹

Chiang was successful in passing on the beauty of her culture. A monument honoring her achievements will continue to inspire people passing by for generations to come.

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*Night view of the Mermaid fountain in Ghirardelli Square, Beach and Larkin Streets.
Courtesy of San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

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