SF WEST HISTORY

OCT–DEC 2016
Newsletter of Western Neighborhoods Project VOLUME 12 NUMBER 4



Western Neighborhoods Project
outsidelands.org

SF West History

Newsletter of Western Neighborhoods Project

October-December 2016: Volume 12, Number 4

EDITOR: Woody LaBounty

CONTRIBUTORS: John Freeman, Ken Lewetzow, Arnold Woods

Board of Directors 2016

Woody LaBounty, President
Chelsea Sellin, Vice President
Nicole Meldahl, Secretary
David Gallagher, Treasurer
Cammy Blackstone, Richard Brandi, Jamie O'Keefe, Arnold Woods

Advisory Board

Al Harris, Gretchen Hilyard, Brady Lea, Felicity O'Meara, Paul Rosenberg, Nate Tico, and Lorri Ungaretti

Western Neighborhoods Project
4016 Geary Boulevard, Suite A
San Francisco, CA 94118
Tel: 415/661-1000
Email: woody@outsidelands.org
Website: www.outsidelands.org
facebook.com/outsidelands
twitter.com/outsidelandz
instagram.com/westernneighborhoods/

Cover:
Mass meeting on Geary Street, June 14, 1911. Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

Opposite:
Thomas Myron Hooker in Star of the Sea Church about 2010. Photograph courtesy of Liz Stalnaker.

© 2016 Western Neighborhoods Project. All rights reserved.

Inside

1 Inside the Outside Lands

2 Where in West S.F.?

3 OpenSFHistory Highlight
John Freeman shares another favorite image

4 Who's Who of the Outside Lands Committee
by Arnold Woods

8 Alma E. Keith: Suffragette Milliner of the Great Highway
by Woody LaBounty

12 Wing Lee and the Mayor
by Woody LaBounty

15 Memories: Street Hockey
by Ken Lewetzow

17 Got Milk?

18 The Last Word



If 2016 hasn't been a bad year, it certainly has offered a lot of be anxious about for many of us. At WNP we're mindful of the truly difficult times experienced in the world—from earthquakes in Italy to a vitriolic election year in the United States, to our own local tragedies. In the Richmond District, many of us knew **Thomas Myron Hooker,** a truly gentle and friendly man who spent most of his days smiling and chatting with folks on Clement Street, and spending his nights sleeping on the verge of Park-Presidio Boulevard. Thomas died in his sleep in October, and a memorial was held for him at Star of the Sea Church. Then, on the morning of election day, I lost one of my oldest friends to cancer.

Talking about organizational priorities, old photos, or fundraising drives feels trite in such times. I've tried to focus on each individual day and what can be done for those right around me; what work might make a difference to my friends, family, neighbors, and go from there.

WNP isn't about history for hobbyists or academics—at least not entirely. We want to improve the neighborhoods and the city by using the stories of our past. We all share the ground we walk on, not only with other cultures and age groups of today, but with a homeless man like Thomas, old friends, and with generations gone before our arrival. The more we know, the better we can work together and realize we have much for which to be thankful, even in hard times.

Thanksgiving is here and we have a full plate of good things, so let's get to them now.

Employee #1

With the very generous support of the **Bland Family Foundation** and help from a number of grants, we are able to hire a full-time employee for the organization. I will serve as Executive Director in 2017, charged with building WNP's capacity, impact, and reach, while administrating and growing a number of large projects we have launched in the past two years. I am excited to have more time to give to this nonprofit and work I love, and one of my top priorities is strengthening our partnerships with affinity organizations and the members and supporters who have been the foundation for our work. If you have ideas, or just want to brainstorm with me, the office number is 415-661-1000, and my email is woody@outsidelands.org.



OpenSFHistory Gets a Boost

We just received word that San Francisco's Historic Preservation Fund will provide a grant that will not only allow us to scan and post 15,000 historical images in 2017, but also to create programming to share and interpret our marvelous collection. Part of that will include a series of events that I have nicknamed "Picture AND 1,000 Words," in which we can tell the stories and connections between some of these photographs that may not be immediately apparent. Because the image collection covers the entire city, we'll be stepping outside of the outside lands a few times, but there will be plenty of west side events all year.

We're almost at 10,000 digital images up on opensfhistory.org, with thousands more scanned and being prepared for upload. Chief technologist and photo wrangler **David Gallagher** is trying to add batches of new images every week or so. We couldn't have gotten this far without the help of our scan technician **Lia Jimenez-Robbins,** who is moving back home. Thanks for being such a powerhouse, Lia. We'll miss you!



Lia Jimenez-Robbins

Most days we have a full house in the office with volunteers working on various aspects of processing, cataloging, scanning, and interpreting the collection, and pitching in on other efforts as well: from logging our collection of *Richmond Banner* newspapers to editing the video for our movie night. Great thanks to our talented and dedicated coterie: Jaime Borschuk, Jo Brownold, Barbara Cannella, David Chang, Rory Coyne, Emiliano Echeverria, John Freeman, Carol Gould, Ian Hadley, Judy Hitzeman, Eoin Hobden, Laura Isaeff, Paul Judge, Wendy King, Gabrielle Kojder, Miranda LaBounty, Andy Lee, Judi Leff, Dave Lucas, Pierre Maris, John A. Martini, Annie McGeady Beth McLaughlin, Greer Montgomery, Jef Poskanzer, Alex Prime, Tom Purcell, Grace Sargent, Eric Schaefer, Art Siegel, James R. Smith, Vicky Walker, Kyrie Whitsett, Leslie Woodhouse, and Christine Yeager.

San Francisco History Days

The great come-together of local history at the Old Mint is returning! Mark your calendars for Saturday and Sunday, **March 4–5, 2017.** We are deep in planning (and ahead of the game for once). The City of San Francisco, Mint tenant Non Plus Ultra, and history organizations and professionals from all over town are producing the event. We are trying to find ways of using the great granite lady better; trying to add more amenities (convenient food and drink would be nice!), improve

continued on page 14

Where in West S. F.?



Monterey Boulevard and Yerba Buena Avenue, January 20, 1932.

Our congratulations to winners Jeanne Harvey Shore, Norman Stahl (guess sent in from DeKalb, Illinois), Tim Van Raam, David Volansky, and Loren Wilson (guess delivered at the office by bicycle) for identifying our mystery photo from last issue. David gives the answer:

"The photo appears to be taken from the elevated entrance of the house at the northwest corner of Yerba Buena Avenue and Monterey Boulevard looking southeast to the gates of Westwood Park at the end of Miramar Avenue. Not only can you still see many of the same homes in the picture today, but they have changed very little except for being hidden now behind larger trees. The *when* question is a bit harder to figure. The two most prominently pictured homes at 975 and 985 Monterey were both build in 1924, so we know the view is later than that. Then there is the open space in the distance, but I have a little trouble judging just how far away it is. Is that the future site of City College or something further away? I believe the little hillside could be the future home of the Science Building built in 1940, but I'm not sure of the distance. I just have to say, given the lack of ANY cars in the scene that this is maybe the late 1920s or early '30s. I think by the late '30s it would have been more difficult to get such a shot with NO car in sight.

"I'll add to my *when* guess that this photo was not taken in summer. There are clearly shadows on the road and we all know that you NEVER see the sun during the summer in this part of SF."

David knows his west side weather. The photograph dates from January 20, 1932.

Ready for more? A slight bit of work should help you figure out where and when these Atlas Mortar employees are. Email guesses to woody@outsidelands.org or send by post to our office at the address on the inside cover. Good luck!



The Unique History of 499–11th Avenue

by John Freeman

The OpenSFHistory project contains a wide variety of images. Some are iconic views of parts of San Francisco many would be familiar with, but others are more obscure, waiting to be identified, and their history uncovered. Recently a photo with the address 499 was processed by the Western Neighborhood Project staff, and recognized as being on 11th Avenue and Anza Street. When it was shared with me, I was thrilled to have a personal mystery solved. I have lived a block and a half away from this location for over 40 years, passed it frequently, and knew the Art Deco exterior was a makeover of an older structure. The round corner windows are a sure giveaway to an early era.

This house was built in 1905 for John R. Billington, one of the two renowned photographer brothers of Cliff House and Sutro Heights. William C. and his younger brother John R. came to California from the north shore of Lake Erie, in Ontario Province, Canada, in 1885. They both found employment in 1888 as conductors on the steam street railway that terminated near the Cliff House. William would leave the railway in 1894, to start a photography concession of the striking scenery at Lands End that captivated his attention while employed as a conductor. His younger brother, John, continued his railway employment until William's business became profitably established, and joined him six years later, adding a while-you-wait tintype skill.

John Billington was married and as the father of three daughters, he built a four-bedroom home in the fall of 1905 at the corner of 11th Avenue and A (later Anza) Street. His fourth daughter would join her sisters in this home when she was born in 1910.

William never married and while on a family visit to his hometown in Canada, died August 29, 1907, nine days before the iconic turreted Cliff House he immortalized in photos burned down.

John continued at his shop near the Cliff House, converting to a photo postcard format by 1909 for both studio-prop settings and the visiting tourist buses. In 1925, he sold the house at 499 11th Avenue and bought a new home two blocks away. When he died on February 23, 1925, his wake was held in the new house he must have only lived in briefly.

New owners of 499 11th Avenue would "modernize" the building to the Art Deco style, during a period when Victorian styles were considered passé. I am delighted that this photo has been found, so we can all see the transitional change the structure has gone through, as well as learn its connection to the great photographic family that immortalized the majesty of our Lands End.

Visit **opensfhistory.org** *to learn more about our collection of historical San Francisco images.*





499 11th Avenue, circa 1910 (WNP Collection, wnp27.0589.jpg) and 499 11th Avenue, 2016 (John Freeman photograph).

Who's Who of the Outside Lands Committee

by Arnold Woods

2016 marks the 150th anniversary of a Congressional bill called "An Act to Quiet the Title to Certain Lands within the Corporate Limit of the City of San Francisco." Better known as the Outside Lands Act of 1866, it was the means by which the City of San Francisco took ownership of all lands west of Divisidero Street on the upper peninsula. This is the final of four installments.

After the Outside Lands were incorporated into San Francisco 150 years ago, the Outside Lands Committee was instrumental in shaping what the lands west and south of the original charter area of San Francisco would look like. Who were these people that were fundamentally responsible for creating the city we have today? While you may not have known much about them before, many of the names you will surely recognize from driving around San Francisco.

The Outside Lands Committee was originally elected in October 1866, and was comprised of three members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors: R. P. Clement, Frank McCoppin, and Charles H. Stanyan. In December 1867, after McCoppin became mayor, a new Outside Lands Committee was elected, which was now made up of Supervisor Stanyan, the lone holdover, A. J. Shrader, and R. Beverly Cole. Within a few months, because of the amount of work involved, Supervisors Monroe Ashbury and Charles Clayton were added to the Outside Lands Committee. When Clayton was preparing to leave the Board, Supervisor J. B. E. Cavallier was placed on the Committee to replace Clayton in December 1868. After elections in 1869, a new committee was elected, adding Supervisors M. J. Kelly, T. McCarthy, and Henry Winkle to join prior members Shrader and Ashbury.

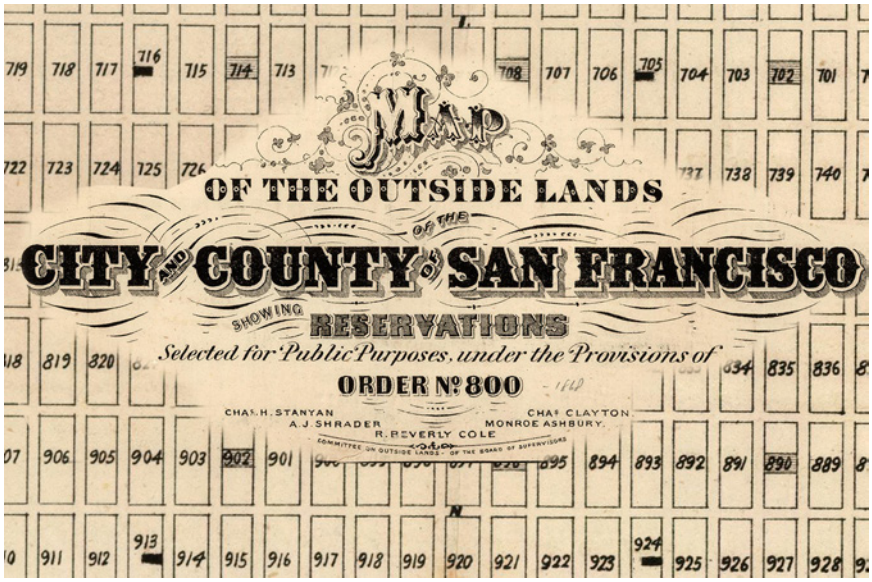


Image excerpted from the "Order 800" map by Humphreys-Potter. (Courtesy of David Rumsey.)

R. P. Clement

Supervisor Roswell Percival (R. P.) Clement was an original member and leader of the Outside Lands Committee. Clement was born in January 1826 in Stockbridge, New York, the third of eight children. When he was 10 years old, Clement's family moved to Wisconsin, where later, Clement studied law. While engaged in his studies, he was three times elected as the clerk of the local court. After he was admitted to the bar, he secured a clerkship in the Wisconsin Senate.

Clement was married in 1853, but later that year fell victim to what was then diagnosed as consumption, which is now called tuberculosis. Believing he needed to find a milder climate to live in to save his life, Clement and his wife joined his brother in California, spending a year each in Watsonville and San Jose before moving to San Francisco. There Clement practiced law, becoming, among other things, a strong anti-slavery advocate, even winning a case freeing a slave from his master because the slave had been brought to California where slavery was not permitted (this decision was effectively overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court's shameful *Dred Scott* decision in 1857). Clement was also an early advocate of the new Republican party that got Abraham Lincoln elected in 1860.

In 1865, Clement was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors from the 2nd Ward. The following year, he was elected to the Outside Lands Committee and was a principal author of the rules by which property claims in the Outside Lands would be made and which San Francisco would use to create Golden Gate Park. Although these rules would later be largely adopted by the California legislature, Clement's advocation for them engendered much opposition in the San Francisco newspapers. As a result, he lost re-election to John Harrold in 1867.

Following his defeat, Clement returned to the practice of law until his death. Despite his short two years of service on the Board of Supervisors and one year on the Outside Lands Committee, contemporary historians described Clement as being principally responsible for bringing the Outside Lands plan and Golden Gate Park to San Francisco.

Frank McCoppin

Another original member of the Outside Lands Committee was Supervisor Frank McCoppin. McCoppin was born in Ireland on July 4, 1834. He joined the Royal Irish Constabulary when he was 17, but emigrated to the United States

when he was 19 toward the end of the Irish potato blight. Like many other Irish immigrants, McCoppin made his way to San Francisco.

In 1857, McCoppin obtained employment as a district engineer in San Francisco. He became a manager and a part-owner of the Market Street Railway. In 1860, he jumped into politics and was elected to the Board of Supervisors from the 11th Ward. His interest in politics may have been motivated by his relationship with Elizabeth Bird Van Ness, the daughter of former mayor James Van Ness. McCoppin married her in 1862.

In 1867, McCoppin took the next political step and was elected mayor of San Francisco, probably as a result of the large Irish population in the city. He was the first Irish-born mayor of a major American city and his election broke a string of mayors endorsed by the People's Party, which was an off-shoot of San Francisco's 2nd Committee of Vigilance. McCoppin was the first Democratic Party mayor since his father-in-law had been elected in 1856.

During the campaign, McCoppin was asked what qualified him to be mayor and he replied that he had been an Irish policeman. The follow-up question naturally was why his Irish cop background would help him be mayor, to which he retorted that the job required that he have a fine physique. Thereafter, he was sometimes jocularly referred to as "Fine Physique McCoppin."

During his term as mayor, there were rumors that McCoppin was not yet an American citizen. Although this rumor was refuted, it may have contributed to McCoppin losing a close re-election bid to Thomas Selby in 1869. However, San Francisco local historian Paul Rosenberg states that it was the resurgent People's Party, now absorbed into the Republican Party, which resulted in McCoppin being voted out. McCoppin was later appointed Postmaster General for San Francisco by President Grover Cleveland. He held that position until his death in May 1897.

Charles H. Stanyan

The third and final original member of the Outside Lands Committee was Supervisor Charles H. Stanyan. Stanyan was born in New Hampshire in 1831 and moved to San Francisco at the age of 22. He engaged in what the newspapers then called the profession of "teaming," which appears to be a business that provided horses and wagons for hire. The teaming business, which operated under the name Stanyan & Co., was run as a partnership with William H. Staniels and was located on Sacramento Street between Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue.

A year after coming to San Francisco, Stanyan purchased land on Bush Street near Buchanan Street. He had a pre-fabricated house shipped around the horn from New England and erected on this property. The house, at 2006 Bush Street, would remain in Stanyan's family for over 100 years and is now designated as San Francisco Landmark #66.

In 1865, Stanyan ran for supervisor from the 12th Ward on the People's ticket. In a three-way race, he easily won the election by 103 votes (only 641 votes were cast in the ward). In October 1866, Stanyan was elected to the Outside Lands Committee, which he would remain on for the rest of his tenure as supervisor. In 1869, in another three-way race for 12th Ward supervisor, Stanyan lost re-election to M. J. Kelly by 28 votes out of 1,618 votes cast.

A month after losing re-election, but while he was still on the Board of Supervisors, Stanyan was named in a *Daily Times* editorial entitled "The Two Million Swindle," in which allegations of corruption were made with regard to street grading contracts in the Outside Lands. It is unclear what the outcome of these allegations was, but the following year, Stanyan sued the *Daily Times* and the *San Francisco Bulletin* for libel, which suggests that he was cleared of the allegations.

A few months after filing the lawsuit, Stanyan and Staniels dissolved their partnership in September 1870 and sold their horses and wagons at a private sale. Stanyan died in 1889, and is interred in a family mausoleum at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland.

A. J. Shrader

After McCoppin took office as mayor in December 1867, a new Outside Lands committee was elected. One of the new members was Andrew J. Shrader, who had been elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1864 from the 9th Ward. Shrader was a wholesale butcher and the owner of a company called Storm & Shrader that provided fuel and animal feed, among other things. Shrader was also on the Board of Directors for the California Real Estate Association.

Shrader served on the Board of Supervisors for nine years until 1873, and was the longest serving San Francisco supervisor in the nineteenth century. Shrader had a close call in the December 1868 election, after which his opponent sought to invalidate his election in court because of a suspicious looking package of returns. The court ruled in Shrader's favor.

While on the Board, Shrader exercised a great deal of power. A small group of supervisors, known as the "Ring," acted in concert to control board committees. Shrader was known as "King of the Ring." On the Outside Lands Committee, Shrader was a prime decision-maker on the petitions for land. *The San Francisco Chronicle* declared the ring to be broken after new members were elected to the board in December 1870, though Shrader maintained his seat.

In September 1870, Shrader was indicted by a grand jury on a corruption charge. It was alleged that in his duties on the Board, he approved of a fuel contract with A. N. Bandy for the Fire Department and public buildings, while his firm

Storm & Shrader entered into a contract with Bandy to fulfill the contract with the city. Shrader was re-elected after the indictment, causing his supporters in the 9th Ward to assault "Fortress de Shrader" with a brass band, until Shrader appeared with a white flag and allowed the "besiegers" in for a victory party.

In November 1871, the U.S. government sued Storm & Shrader, alleging that they failed to deliver on part of a contract for animal feed for the U.S. Army quartermaster. The case proceeded through the federal courts all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled against Storm & Shrader. After losing re-election to the Board of Supervisors in 1873, Shrader was heavily involved with the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War until his death.

R. Beverly Cole

The other new member of the Outside Lands Committee in December 1867 was Dr. Richard Beverly Cole. Cole was born in Manchester, Virginia in 1829, but grew up in the Philadelphia area. He graduated from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1849 and chose the specialty of obstetrics. He was one of the first doctors in perform Caesarean sections in Philadelphia.

As with Supervisor Clement, Cole was advised to move to California for his health. He arrived in San Francisco in 1852, and became the city's first practitioner of obstetrics. Cole was also a *bon vivant* man about town in San Francisco and considered one of the city's leading after-dinner speakers.

After the shooting death of crusading *Daily Evening Bulletin* newspaper editor James King of William in May 1856, Cole, who was one of King's attending physicians, was openly critical of the other members of the surgical team, stating that King died because of a sponge that was not removed after the surgery. King's death led to the establishment of the 2nd Committee of Vigilance, which held political power in San Francisco for a number of years thereafter.

Cole was appointed Surgeon General of the State of California in the late 1850s and was dean of the University of the Pacific's medical department from 1858 to 1864. After some time spent studying medicine in Europe, Cole returned to San Francisco. His interest in public health led him to seek election to the Board of Supervisors in 1867. He won election from the 4th Ward and was soon thereafter added to the Outside Lands Committee.

Cole only served two years on the Board of Supervisors. Thereafter, he was named dean of Toland Medical College in 1870 and stayed in that position for 10 years. There, he helped merge Toland with the state university system in 1873. The college then became known as the Medical Department of the University of California and later, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF).

In 1880, Cole became the first vice president of the American Medical Association, but presided over much of the organization's activities that year because of an illness of the president. Cole died in San Francisco in 1901. At the time he was serving as San Francisco coroner, then an elected position. Cole Hall on the UCSF Parnassus Street campus is named for him.

Monroe Ashbury

A few months after the election of the new Outside Lands Committee, the large number of petitions for land in the Outside Lands led to two more supervisors being added to the Committee. One was Supervisor Monroe Ashbury of the 5th Ward. Ashbury was born in Virginia, but orphaned at a young age. He was adopted by a family friend, General Ringgold, and grew up in Virginia.

At the height of the gold rush, Ashbury came to San Francisco in 1849. He was a builder by trade and also did work as an appraiser. He became involved with the Mercantile Library and was named to its board of directors. From there, Ashbury became involved in politics, handily winning election to the Board of Supervisors from the 5th Ward in 1864 on the People's ticket.

Ashbury was re-elected several times and was on the board until 1870. While on the board, he was a vocal opponent of the "Ring" led by Supervisor Shrader. It was the view of some that Ashbury and Charles Clayton were added to the Outside Lands Committee so that the Committee would better serve the public interest when deciding on petitions for land and compensation for land taken for public purposes.

In 1870, Ashbury ran and easily won election as city auditor, which he also held for two more terms. After three terms as auditor, Ashbury ran for mayor in 1877 against Mayor A. J. Bryant, but lost by about 1,650 votes out of over 32,000 votes cast. Ashbury died in May 1880.

Charles Clayton

The other addition to the Outside Lands Committee in early 1868, raising the number of committee members to five, was Supervisor Charles Clayton. Clayton was born in Derbyshire, England in 1825, but came to the United States in 1842. He moved to Oregon in 1846 before coming to California in 1848. That year, Clayton was named alcalde for Santa Clara by the U.S. military after Mexico ceded California to the United States.

In 1852, Clayton, a miller by trade, established the Santa Clara Flouring Mills, reportedly the first steam flour mill in California. In 1853, Clayton moved to San Francisco and continued in the flour business there.

Clayton entered politics and was elected to the California State Assembly in 1863 from a San Francisco district and served in that capacity until 1867. While serving as an assemblyman, he also sought and won election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors from the 7th Ward in 1864. Clayton remained on the board until 1869.

After spending much of the 1860s serving in local and state positions, Clayton was named Surveyor of Customs of the Port of San Francisco in 1870 by President Grant. He remained in that position until winning election to Congress as a Representative from California in 1873. After one term, he declined to run for re-election.

Clayton served as California's state prison director from 1881 to 1882. He passed away in 1885 on the day before his 60th birthday.

The Outside Lands Map

The Humphreys-Potter map that was created after their Outside Lands survey was published in 1868 (see "Shaping the Outside Lands" in *SF West History*, April-June 2016). At that time, the Outside Lands Committee consisted of Supervisors Stanyan, Shrader, Cole, Clayton, and Ashbury. If that order of names seems familiar, then you likely have some familiarity with the Haight-Ashbury district. Perhaps to curry favor with the members of the Outside Lands Committee, Humphreys and Potter had named the first five streets on the map to the east of Golden Gate Park surrounding the panhandle after the then current members of the Outside Lands Committee.

Humphreys and Potter did not forget former supervisor Clement, who had been primarily responsible for writing the rules for petitions for land and led the Committee at the time Humphreys and Potter were hired. They placed Clement's name on a street in what would become known as the Richmond District. It is not known why they did not name a street for then Mayor McCoppin, the other original member of the Outside Lands Committee. However, it was around this time that the rumor of Mayor McCoppin's lack of American citizenship came out, perhaps leading to his omission. San Francisco later honored him by naming McCoppin Square in the Sunset District and McCoppin Street, just south of Market, between Valencia and Gough Streets, after him.

There were several more members of the Outside Lands Committee before it finished its work and was disbanded. Supervisors J. B. E. Cavallier (8th Ward), M. J. Kelly (12th Ward), Timothy McCarthy (4th Ward), and Henry Winkle (1st Ward) performed much of the work ruling on petitions for land in the Outside Lands, but they joined the Committee after the map was created and, as such, did not get streets named after them.

So if you find yourself driving through the Haight-Ashbury or the Richmond District and you see these streets named after the members of the Outside Lands Committee, pause and reflect on the monumental task to add the open sand dunes and wilderness to a still-young city. These men initiated and guided the process after the passage of the Outside Lands Act of 1866. Now, 150 years later, the western neighborhoods, steeped in this history, are a vital part of the City of San Francisco.

Arnold Woods is a Bay Area attorney, and a Western Neighborhoods Project Board Member, who has resided in the Outer Richmond District since 1996.

Sources:

— Alonzo Phelps, *Contemporary Biography of California's Representative Men: With Contributions by Distinguished Scholars and Scientists* (Bancroft 1881)

— Pop Up Archive, "The Irish Roots of San Francisco." Accessed at https://www.popuparchive.com/collections/2064/items/14064

— Seamus Moran, *Great Irish People* (Liberties Press)

— Phin Upham, *Frank McCoppin, the 12th Mayor of San Francisco.* Accessed at http://www.jedwards.us/frank-mccoppin-the-12th-mayor-of-san-francisco/

— SFMTA, *Transit in San Francisco, A Selected Chronology, 1850-1995,* Accessed at http://archives.sfmta.com/cms/rhome/documents/TransitinSanFrancisco-CallwellChronologyweb.pdf

— *San Francisco Bulletin,* Volume XX, Issues 31, 35; Volume XXVII, Issues 40, 74; Volume XXIX, Issue 129; Volume XXX, Issues 78, 128; Volume XLII, Issue 78.

— *San Francisco Chronicle,* September 12, 1869, December 7, 1869, September 11, 1870, September 21, 1870, December 6, 1870.

— "San Francisco Landmarks," Accessed at http://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf066.asp.

— *Storm v. United States* (1876) 94 U.S. 76.

— *Weekly Alta California,* November 11, 1871.

— "A History of UCSF – People," Accessed at http://history.library.ucsf.edu/cole.html

— *San Francisco News Letter and California Advertiser,* May 8, 1880.

— *Stockton Daily Evening Herald,* December 20, 1867.

— "Santa Clara Township history," Accessed at http://www.mariposaresearch.net/santaclararesearch/SCBIOS/sclaratownshp.html

— Michael Colbruno, "Lives of the Dead: Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland" (2009), Accessed at http://mountainviewpeople.blogspot.com/2009/01/charles-clayton-1825-1885-alcalde.html

Alma E. Keith: Suffragette Milliner of the Great Highway

by Woody LaBounty

One of the more notable buildings along San Francisco's Ocean Beach in the Sunset District is the handsome Classical Revival house at 1648 Great Highway. Three stories tall, with three flared dormer windows in its hipped roof, pilasters around all the windows, and a projecting entry bay, the 3,300-square-foot house gives off both an ambitious majesty and a humble affinity with nearby beachside bungalows constructed in the early twentieth century.

As part of a survey of Outer Sunset houses conducted about ten years ago, 1648 Great Highway was unofficially dubbed the "Joseph Keith House" after one of its first owners.[1] While Joseph may have had his name on the deed, the better known resident was the watchmaker's wife, Alma E. Keith, a woman who stood out as an outspoken and successful business owner of nineteenth century San Francisco.

In an era when woman's first names were often hidden behind those of their husbands, Alma was no "Mrs. Joseph Keith." Her father, a prominent man in fraternal and political circles in Massachusetts and Nebraska, was a jeweler, and it was likely through his business that she met and married Joseph Harding Keith in 1873. In the early 1880s, Alma started a hair goods and millinery shop in Omaha, Nebraska, prominently listing herself as the owner. She traveled to Chicago and other locations to stock up on fine materials and scout the latest fashions to bring back to Omaha. As the store became more successful, she hosted events for charities and local groups fighting for the voting rights of women. In 1889, she sold her business and stock to R. H. Davies and made the jump with her husband to the West Coast and the fashionable customers of San Francisco.[2]

Alma E. Keith opened her millinery shop at 24 Kearny Street with a "spring reception" on March 20–22, 1890, just in time for shoppers in the market for new Easter bonnets to promenade three weeks later. By the next year, her business was well enough known that newspaper reporters were asking her opinion on the protectionist Tariff Act of 1890. (Imported velvets and ostrich feathers cost 2 to 3 percent more, she reported).[3]

A smart promoter of her craft, Alma donated hats for charity raffles, baby shows, and even donated the draping of fire stations. She enticed stories about her business with hooks such as her pet tabby getting loose among the paper mache birds she used to decorate hats. Her creations won awards at local fairs and expositions. She had her personal style and bold fashions remarked on in the society pages for opera openings and Mardi Gras balls, at the same time announcing the arrival of French and New York bonnets to her store.[4]



1648 Great Highway in 2007, photographed as part of an Oceanside survey.

Leading Milliner

Just a few years after arriving in the city, the Keiths purchased 2624 California Street, one of a row of handsome Italianate Victorians that still stand between Pierce and Scott Streets in the Western Addition. In November 1895, Alma bought out rival milliner P. F. Butler's place at 808 Market Street (complete with a carriage entrance on O'Farrell Street) in the old Phelan Building. Alma also cannily invested in a photographic studio with her son-in-law H. G. Vaughan at 14 Grant Avenue, giving customers an opportunity to show off their purchases with a cabinet card portrait. She began to advertise herself as "leading milliner" in the

city, sometimes calling her business "Keith's," but always adding her full name, usually with "Madame" in front. She truly had made it in local fashion when her photograph made the cover of the society magazine *Town Talk* in 1899, and in business when Bradstreet's agency rated Keith's as one of the top three mercantile businesses over the previous twenty years.[5]

Where was Joseph H. Keith in all this? Mostly absent, at least from public view. He was rarely mentioned, and, perhaps notably, one year Alma's Mardi Gras costume was as "The Devil's Wife." She filed a complaint for divorce from Joseph in 1893, which was withdrawn, and would do so again a decade later.[6]

Think!

Outside of business and parties, Alma made her opinion known. She spoke out at Board of Supervisor and Police Commission meetings on street improvement proposals and business permitting—often the only woman listed as doing so. Judging from just one newspaper editorial, she wasn't the type to shy away from grand language. During the mobilization of troops to the Philippines for the Spanish-American War in 1898, she wrote a long letter to the editor of the *San Francisco Call* reminding readers that the dedication of women to the support of the country's soldiers should not be questioned:

"We, the mothers. Do you think we, who gave of our bodies to your life; we, who nursed you in childhood; we, who noted the first growth of your soul; we, who stand ready in sickness and in health; we, who take you for better or for worse; […] who minister to you in failing health, until at last parted by death still strew flowers upon your grave. Did you think now again, in this coming struggle, we are not with you in word and deed? Think!"[7]

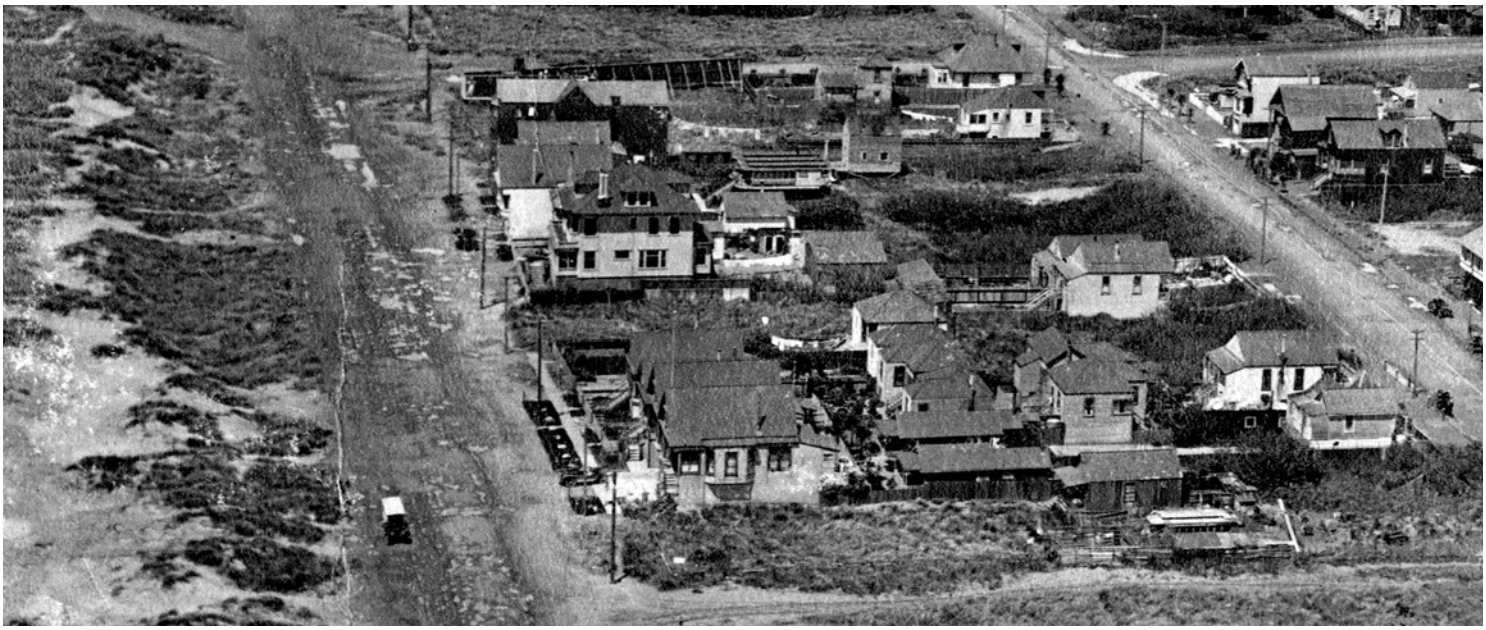
She certainly did her part, throwing open her house on California Street to entertain soldiers traveling from the Midwest, and wrote a patriotic song to the nation's servicemen that she had her daughter play.[8]



Advertisement essay on Keith's expansion to the Phelan Building at 808 Market Street in 1896. (*Sutro Baths, Heights, and Cliff House,* courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Early on, Alma must have had the same childcare issues that working women face today. When her two daughters were older and business was doing well in San Francisco, she advertised for a "French nursemaid" to cover the hours of 8:30 in the morning until 6 at night. Perhaps for a female employee or her daughter, who may have been helping in the business?[9]

In 1899, with her portrait featured in an elaborate ostrich feather hat on the cover of *Town Talk* and captioned



On the block between today's Lawton and Moraga Streets, 1648 Great Highway stands out among small beach cottages and cable car houses in this aerial view from the 1910s. (Detail of view courtesy of Christofferson Family Scrapbook, Hiller Aviation Museum.)

"a successful business woman," Alma E. Keith had capped an extraordinarily successful decade in San Francisco. The new century seemed to offer just as much promise.

"Some Mental Affliction"

In the summer of 1900, Alma and her daughter were traveling across the country on their way to Europe for an "extended business and pleasure trip." They stopped in Omaha, where the Keith millinery success had started and where Alma still owned rental property. While at the hotel in Omaha, Alma took ill and was removed to the Presbyterian hospital there. Joseph was telegraphed for immediately. Local newspapers described her case as critical, and that she was "suffering from some metal affliction." Joseph Keith arrived and took his wife and daughter back to San Francisco.[10]

Alma spent almost four months in a private sanitarium specializing in mental and nervous diseases at 1815 Sutter Street (another extant Victorian building). Late in 1901, public complaints about noise from the sanitarium led to a nuisance trial. Alma E. Keith took the stand for the prosecution and offered a shocking account of being put there against her will, restrained, beaten, and made witness to abuses of other patients. She reported that her husband, very deaf, was tricked by a malign physician and the sanitarium owner to trap her in the place, and that she was definitely not insane. Neighbors backed up some of Alma's testimony, while others said that most of the screaming that precipitated the trial came from Alma while she was there as a patient. (The judge ruled that while the sanitarium probably was run ethically, the noises did make it a public nuisance for the neighborhood it was in.)[11]

Alma had a slightly different story about her duped husband when she filed for divorce again in 1903. She now claimed cruelty, saying that Joseph had sent her to the sanitarium when all she needed was some "medical advice and kind treatment," and he conspired with the managers to have her whipped. She said that he later imprisoned her in their home at other periods following her release, falsely claiming she was insane. She asked for custody of their daughter still at home and division of their community property, including the millinery business, which she estimated to be worth $15,000 ($387,000 in 2016 dollars).[12]

Less than two weeks later, Alma was arrested in the early morning wandering the halls of a hotel in San Jose, "running from room to room in scanty attire and loudly calling for imaginary persons." She was carrying a satchel with $2,000 in diamonds and jewels that the police held for her. Another trip to a sanitarium followed, and in October, she reportedly had recovered her health and dropped the divorce complaint.[13]

In July 1904, the Keiths bought property in the Oceanside District, the new name for what had been the rustic "Carville" community of streetcar domiciles and clubhouses at Ocean Beach. Now conventional houses and cottages were being built on new streets paved into the sand dunes. The Keiths may have been seeking a healthier environment for Alma when they purchased a large lot on what was then called 49th Avenue between L and M Streets. Ocean air and seaside living was considered therapeutic at the time. They first built a cottage at today's 1644 Great Highway, and soon bought neighboring lots and constructed the

grander 1648 Great Highway.[14]

Whatever mental illness issues Alma may have had, they were not evident in her appearances in the newspapers as part of the local improvement club. Or perhaps the sea breezes really did help. Her speeches protesting the issuing of roadhouse liquor licenses without resident input garnered applause at public meetings, and she was chosen as part of a delegation of neighbors to address the Police Commission. Club meetings were held at the couple's beachside residence.[15]

Alma also hosted and attended events in support of women's suffrage, as she had since the 1880s. In 1911, when women got the right to vote in state elections in California, she registered as a Republican.[16]

The grand millinery shop downtown burned when the old Phelan Building was gutted in the 1906 earthquake and fire. During the post-disaster housing crunch, the couple tried renting the California Street residence they still owned as a boarding house, but with the business gone, in 1912, the Keiths sold their Great Highway home and retreated to the house in the Western Addition.[17]

Alma's mental health apparently deteriorated over time. When Joseph died in February 1920, his wife was in residence as a patient at the Agnews State Hospital for the Insane in Santa Clara County. She would be there for the rest of her life before she died on July 28, 1942. She is buried with her husband in Cypress Lawn Memorial Park in Colma, California.[18]

While as a society, we still wrestle with sexism and a proper understanding of mental health, there have been improvements over the last century. The Victorian era certainly had cases where depressed, marginalized, or merely outspoken women were labeled as insane or "hysterical." And some were unjustly institutionalized. Was Alma Keith a victim of a repressive society or did she suffer from some real illness, if only periodically? We can't diagnose from a distance, especially through sensation-seeking newspaper accounts, but her decades-long profession as a milliner makes one wonder if mercury poisoning could have been a contributing factor. In the nineteenth century, long-term use of the heavy metal in the hat-making trades led to debilitating afflictions in workers, including hallucinations.

Despite the sad story of her decline, Alma E. Keith's energy, entrepreneurship, progressive example and actions for the rights of women in the workplace and civic society all shine through. The Keith house at 1648 Great Highway, original, intact, and notable, is an appropriate symbol of her spirit.

Notes:

1. The Oceanside Historic Resource Survey was commissioned by the Sunset Parkside Education and Action Committee (SPEAK) in 2008. More information can be found on the San Francisco Planning Department website: http://sf-planning.org/oceanside-historic-resource-survey

2. *Omaha Daily Bee,* January 19, 1883; *Omaha World-Herald,* March 23, 1888 and May 24, 1889; *San Francisco Bulletin,* November 1, 1889.

3. *San Francisco Chronicle,* March 16, 1890, August 15, 1891.

4. *San Francisco Chronicle,* February 9, 1893; *San Francisco Call,* March 1, 1896; March 16, 1896; September 27, 1896; June 12, 1897; May 13, 1898; September 10, 1899.

5. *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 30, 1895; *San Francisco Call,* July 31, 1898; *Town Talk,* January 23, 1899; *Omaha World-Herald,* July 8, 1900.

6. *San Francisco Call,* July 8, 1893, February 15, 1899; *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 28, 1903.

7. *San Francisco Call,* May 8, 1898.

8. *San Francisco Call,* May 27, 1898, March 27, 1899.

9. *San Francisco Call,* May 20, 1898.

10. *Omaha World-Herald,* June 24 and July 8, 1900.

11. *San Francisco Call,* December 21, 1901.

12. *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 28, 1903.

13. *San Francisco Call,* August 6, 1903, October 10, 1903.

14. "Anticipating a Revival in Real Estate Market," *San Francisco Call,* July 17, 1904; *San Francisco Chronicle,* December 2, 1905.

15. *San Francisco Chronicle,* February 15, 1905; *San Francisco Call,* March 16, 1905 and June 1, 1908.

16. *San Francisco Call,* July 12, 1908 and February 16, 1910. State of California, United States. *Great Register of Voters.* Sacramento, California: California State Library.

17. *San Francisco Call,* July 27, 1912: "Joseph H. and Alma E. Keith to E. S. and Annie Johnston."

18. *United States Census,* 1920 and 1940. Death information at http://www.findagrave.com.



Wing Lee and the Mayor

by Woody LaBounty

On June 14, 1911, San Francisco mayor P. H. McCarthy came to today's Geary Boulevard and Presidio Avenue to dedicate the start of work on the country's first publicly-owned transit system. The journey to take over the expiring franchise of the Geary Street, Park and Ocean Railway cable car line had been a long one. The idea of a transit line operated as a public utility faced understandable opposition by those fearing government corruption, undermining of private enterprise, and such an important service subject to political parties and bureaucratic incompetence. The day marked a triumph for McCarthy, but as he prepared to shovel wet cement into a hole around the first electric trolley pole of the new streetcar line, the setting chosen may have struck him as less than august.

For decades, the intersection marked the end of Geary Street, terminating at the summit leading up from the Western Addition. At that point, beginning in the 1860s, the Point Lobos toll road took over, charging a fee to gigs, wagons, and omnibuses using the road to continue on through the Richmond District. (Another toll gate stood at the far end, just below the Cliff House at Ocean Beach.) The road dipped through a ridgeline around Lone Mountain that was covered with cemeteries. The massive monument to U.S. Senator David Broderick, killed in a duel in 1859, stood stark on the hill just a couple of hundred yards away to the west, and the speakers on the rough dais set up for the ceremony faced the jumble of graves of the Masonic Cemetery to the south. Straddling the Geary line's first trolley pole was a refugee



Above and next page: Mass meeting on Geary Street, June 14, 1911. Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California. (fc917.9461 A3, Vol. II, Album of San Francisco, page 61.)



cottage from the 1906 earthquake and the slightly tilted, two-story Wing Lee Laundry, a Chinese-run business needing a paint job.

McCarthy was running for reelection and in a tough battle. James Rolph Jr., his primary opponent, stood in the crowd and played no part in the ceremonies, which had speakers from the Board of Public Works, the Public Utilities Commission, and Board of Supervisors.

McCarthy, part of the Union Labor party, actually pulled out his union card to show he was eligible to dump the shovelful of concrete. All the speakers, well aware of the election, gave praise to the Union Labor administration. The journey of fighting back injunctions and objections to taking over the franchise of the Geary line, issuing bonds that were not immediately purchased by banks, and braving the calumnies of special interests were all recounted to the crowd.

The setting for the event was the location of the new power and car house for the Municipal Railway's Geary electric line. When the Geary Street Park and Ocean Railway (GSP&O) cable car/steam train line had been established in 1880, the car house was built on the northwest corner of today's Arguello Boulevard and Geary Boulevard. The city had taken over the franchise from the privately-run GSP&O and chose the point where Geary Street connected with the Point Lobos Road for the new faciity, a peak where today rivers of traffic flow around the corners of Masonic, Geary, and Presidio Avenues. For decades, this ridgeline was the city's "Boot Hill," the site where major cemeteries came together.

While the Broderick Monument in the distance could have provided inspiration for McCarthy's remarks, the prominent backdrop for the event was the Wing Lee laundry building and a Chinese laundry worker leaning out of the second floor window to take in the speech.

Most certainly the man in the window was not Wing Lee. Likely no one affiliated with the laundry, which had stood on the site since the early 1880s, was named Wing Lee. There were laundries of the same name on Haight and Folsom Streets, had been many Wing Lee laundries in San Francisco

continued from page 1

since the 1850s. The name had brand recognition, and if a Mr. Chung or a Mr. Yu wanted to open a laundry, he often called it Wing Lee. Today, you can still find Wing Lee laundries across the country.

McCarthy, trying to take a strong, fiery tone in a tough election, made use of the Chinese man watching his performance from such an elevated position. Falling into long-established tropes that dated from the 1870s sandlot speeches of Denis Kearny, who mixed working class populism with anti-Chinese racism—vitriol that led to anti-Chinese mobs burning and destroying 25 Chinese laundries in the city in 1877—McCarthy promised to take a hard line that would play to union members. He called out his observer:

"No effort will be lost on the part of the administration in putting this road in operation within the shortest possible time. While we are thus engaged no 'scabs' will work on the construction or operation of the road. I don't care whether the bankers like it or whether the Chinese who had been looking out of his laundry window watching us cares."

The reporters duly noted the points, and had some fun with the tableau. McCarthy lost to Mayor James Rolph, who would ride a successful two-decade run as city mayor on to the state's governorship. The cemeteries would be removed in the 1920s and 1930s, with Senator Broderick's massive monument one of the last cleared out. Wing Lee laundry came down for the new Municipal Railway building, which features friezes of angels bringing electric power and progress to the world.

the flow and wayfinding for the ever-growing crowds (6,500 attendees last year!), and of expanding the whole experience to a wider audience. Most of all, we want to ensure San Francisco History Days continues year to year and stays free to the people of the Bay Area to learn about local history. If you have ideas, suggestions, or would like to help volunteer that weekend, drop an email to me (woody@outsidelands.org) or our good friend and event manager for the weekend, **LisaRuth Elliott** at Shaping San Francisco (participate@sfhistorydays.org)



WNP Board Member and archivist Nicole Meldahl at 2016 San Francisco History Days, demonstrating our work to preserve the OpenSFHistory collection.

Lake Merced History Coming

Also on the way in 2017, thanks to a grant from the Schwemm Family Foundation, will be a four-month educational program featuring the history of San Francisco's largest lake. "Lake Merced: Guns, Golf, and Grebes" will consist of history walks, presentations, and a companion web page/online gallery sharing the natural and cultural history of the area.

Since the 1850s, Lake Merced and the land around it has been a site of roadhouses, a famous duel, agricultural use, and recreational activities, from skeet shooting to golf to dragon boat racing. Despite encroaching urbanization, watershed changes, fragmentation, and aquifer reduction, the lake remains a unique habitat supporting riparian, dune scrub, and woodland forest natural communities. Our archives hold more than 100 historical images of the lake over time, and while there's been some excellent research and history shared about the area, this project will be an opportunity to review and expand on the story of one of the few remaining natural bodies of water remaining on the San Francisco peninsula. More information to come!

50 Years After the Summer of Love

Another anniversary is upon is, and while many of our members might have been there, and wonder how their memories could be "history," 1967's Summer of Love is a seminal moment for San Francisco and the nation.

A full slate of concerts, programs, websites, and general appreciations are being planned. Online guides include 50thsummeroflove.com, as well as the city's sftravel.com/summer-love-2017. Of course, the Western Neighborhoods Project will be part of it all. Board member **Arnold Woods** is planning a walking tour of sites, and the creation of online galleries, magazine articles, signboards at the Outside Lands Music Festival, and other ways of giving a west side perspective on the year that defined a counter-culture and marked a generation.

Remember WNP at Year's End

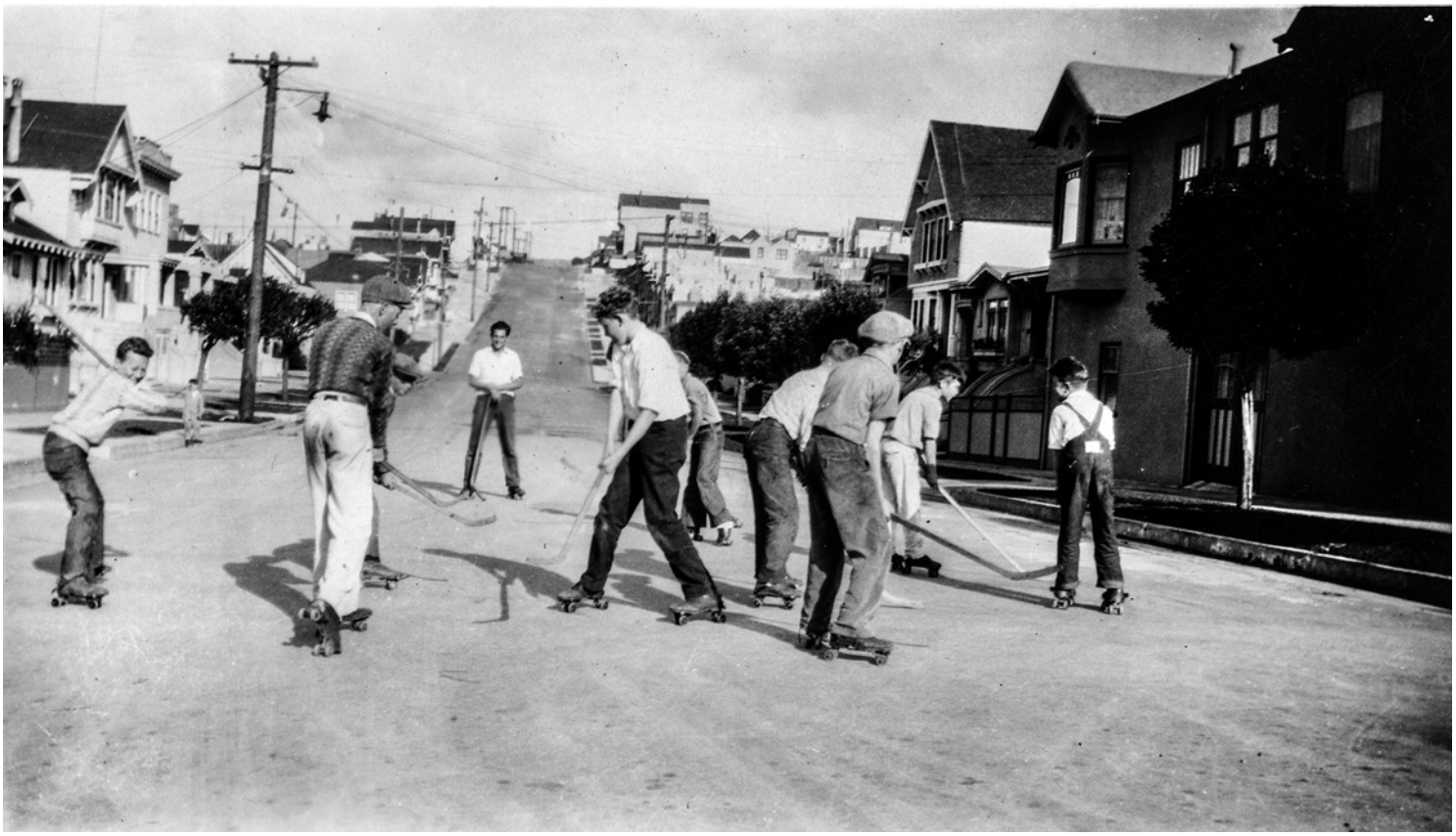
I still don't subscribe to there being "bad years," but if 2016 has been a tough one for you, I hope you're inspired to try and make your corner of the world a little better and give where you can to help others do the same.

Remember the agencies and organizations that feed the hungry, care for the sick, and clothe the needy.

If you have more to give after that, our envelope and year-end letter will soon be on its way. We appreciate your support, and as another close friend says, be well.

Memories: Street Hockey

by Ken Lewetzow



Street hockey players on Lisbon Street near Geneva Avenue in 1929. (WNP collection, wnp27.1237)

I've searched through the Western Neighborhood Project website message board discussions, and nowhere have I seen a mention of Street Hockey. There used to be a regular game over several years on roller skates.

Hockey sticks were not permitted on the Alamo School yard, apparently because of liability concerns.

So, in the period that I can attest to—1938 to 1941—there was a street hockey pick-up game on 23rd Avenue, in front of Alamo School. Recently repaved, the pavement was nicely smooth and ideal to skate on. Probably, there were three dozen kids totally involved over time, but on any one day 10 to 16 might show up. Mostly, these were Junior High schoolers from Presidio and Roosevelt schools.

No organized sports were available for kids of this age group, so this physical game evolved. As they later graduated to High School, football and basketball would prevail.

They used to congregate on Jimmy Norgrove's front steps, second house north of the school, until a quorum was there to play. My cousin Cliff Martin skated out from 6th Avenue and Anza Street. This was a tough-looking group during tough economic times. Most wore pants with no knees, as they were completely obliterated by falls to the pavement. Sweaters were dismissed after the game warmed up. Most wore a beanie created from the crown of a man's old felt hat (ala Huntz Hall and Leo Dorcey in "The Dead End Kids").

The "Rink"

Played curb-to-curb, and about 120 feet long, it would be adjusted up or down the street if a parked car was in the way. After school, there was never more than two or three cars parked in the entire block.

The Equipment

Hocking's Hardware Store (next to the Star Theatre) had it all! Step through the front door and the display case on the left had a complete array of nuts, bolts, skate keys, Union Hardware #5 roller skates, and, if so inclined, lambskin fur ankle-strap protectors (I believe only girls bought them). Beyond the display case was a slender barrel with hockey sticks projecting from the top (kinda looked like a palm tree made out of hockey sticks. They were expensive—about $2!)

Garden gloves were a necessity, or hands were going to get dinged!

A puck made from a rubber boot-heel was tried. It was useless and could not be controlled. It tumbled wildly and would not slide properly. So a puck was made of a wooden disk.

Goals were made with two Hills Brothers coffee cans, placed two sticks apart at each rink end.

Once, a kid wore roller rink skates with wooden wheels (designed for wooden flooring). After an hour of skat-

ing on pavement, they completely disintegrated.

The Play

Play started at mid rink with a free-standing puck. Opposing captains would touch sticks over the puck and say "hockey one," ground the stick, then raise and touch sticks again, and say "hockey two." After "hockey three" furious play would start. Blocking and checking resulting in falls were common. A sneaky trip of an opponent with the stick was not unknown. The play was the thing, and regular interchanging of players to balance opposing teams was done. This resulted in fun play and a continuing turnout.

Once, a car was slowly approaching, and a player fell in behind it, and advanced the puck next to the curb. As he neared the opposing goal, he made a shot beneath the car and through the goal! The goalie never saw it coming. An outcry of "No fair" ensued. Thereafter, it was ruled that when someone called "car!" play was suspended until the car passed. Goals were momentarily picked up to prevent them from being flattened.

I was eight years old and wanted to play, but realistically I'd get smashed! So, they made me the official "car" caller (I thought, "Big deal—able to stop play!")

Constant scuffing/dragging of sticks on pavement surface caused them to wear thin at the bottom, resulting in breakage. This was a huge equipment cost! Continual tugging of clamp-on skates on shoe soles caused separation of soles from 'uppers'. This caused push-back by some parents: "We can't afford this."

Leather skate straps would wear out and be replaced by bailing wire or old electric extension cords. Black friction tape was employed to hold skates on if shoe-soles became loose. Also, if wearing soft "Keds" (no soles), tape was very handy. (This electrical tape was also used to repair cracked bat handles, and baseballs with separating seams).

Then

Nobody bothered to lock their front door, except if you went away for an extended period. Traffic was minimal—most families didn't have a car; either could not afford it, or had no need, as the streetcar was just a block away. Most of the above kids graduated from high school in 1943–44 and were drafted into the Army or Navy for the war effort. Cousin Cliff was drafted into the Army, shipped to Alaska—where the war was essentially done. So, he became a jock soldier, playing baseball in an airplane hangar.

Now

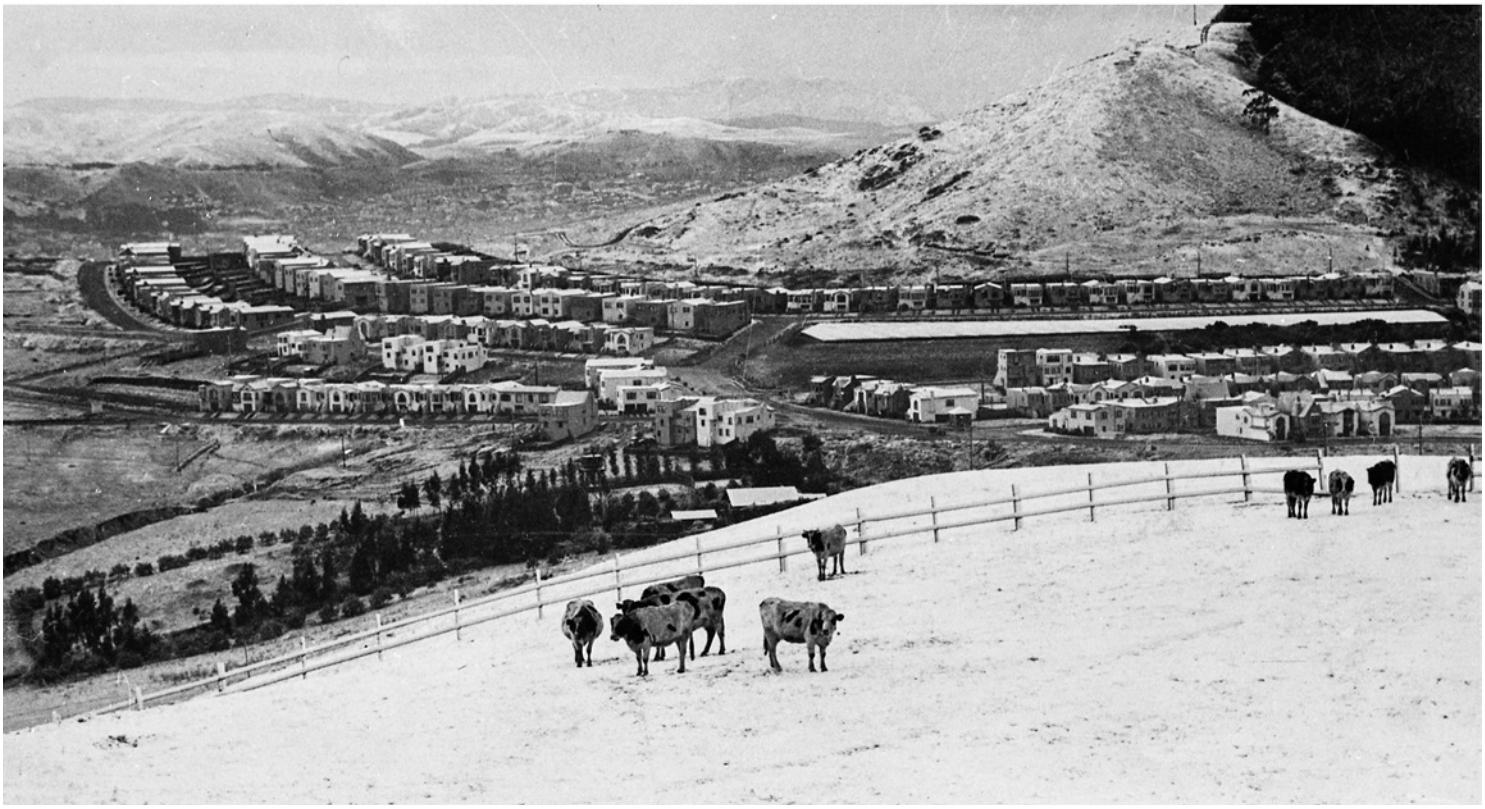
Has anyone tried to park on 23rd Avenue lately? Traffic is brutal, and life expectancy for a pedestrian must be very short.



A view from outside 3 Fish Studios and the first WNP Winter Symposium on November 5, 2016. Photo courtesy of Glenn Koch.

Got Milk?





We're actually ready for egg nog. Just because, here are a couple of views of dairy cows in the western neighborhoods. A view (WNP Collection image wnp27.0501) in Ocean View looking southwest on October 4, 1918, and a snowy day in Twin Peaks looking towards Mount Davidson and Miraloma Park homes in 1932 (wnp26temp.044).

The Last Word



Courtesy of John Freeman Collection

Above is a real-photo souvenir postcard taken in the Billington photo studio next to the Cliff House in the 1910s. The painted backdrop of Seal Rocks and the famous roadhouse/restaurant was used for thousands of souvenir photographs, but one had a choice of props to pose with: rustic bench, bicycle-built-for-two, biplane (!), or automobile. We love the boy tasked with turning the crank on the engine in this shot from John Freeman's collection.

As John writes on page 3, the Billington brothers worked and lived in the Richmond District. William Billington once owned the entire southeast corner of 8th Avenue and Clement. (The property at 308 8th Avenue was built in 1911, and was called The Billington Building, with eight apartments and commercial space on the ground floor. William served as treasure of the Richmond Improvement Club and they were active in organizations in their Star of the Sea parish.

Western Neighborhoods Project
outsidelands.org

Not a WNP Member?

SF West History is just one of the benefits of giving to Western Neighborhoods Project. Members receive special publications as well as exclusive invitations to history walks, talks, and other events. If you like what you've read, please join hundreds of other west side fans as a member. Visit our website at **outsidelands.org,** and click on the "Become a Member" link at the top of any page.