



Historical Context Statement Mid-Market Historical Survey

Conducted for
The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
June 30, 2011

By

Tim Kelley Consulting, LLC
2912 Diamond Street #330, San Francisco, CA 94131
(415) 337-5824 // www.timkelleyconsulting.com

Historical Context Statement Mid-Market Historical Survey

PRIMARY AUTHORS:

Tim Kelley
Caitlin Paige Harvey
Kara Fortuna

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH:

Karin Sidwell

CONDUCTED FOR

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
June 30, 2011

BY

Tim Kelley Consulting, LLC
2912 Diamond Street #330, San Francisco, CA 94131
(415) 337-5824 // www.timkelleyconsulting.com

Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Purpose	2
B. Definition of Geographical Area.....	2
C. Identification of Historic Contexts and Periods of Significance	4
II. HISTORIC CONTEXTS	5
A. Physical Development of the Area (1847-1930 & 1965-1974).....	5
Spanish Exploration 1769-1847	5
Founding of Yerba Buena: 1835	5
American Conquest.....	6
Gold Rush and American Urban Development, 1848-1906	7
Expansion Out Market Street	8
Disaster and Re-Construction: 1906-1919	14
1920s Movie Palaces.....	17
Depression and World War II: 1930-1945	17
Post War: 1946-1974.....	17
B. Social and Cultural Development; Creating the New Middle Class (1870-1930).....	19
C. Department Stores; Outfitting the Middle Class (1892-1962)	21
D. Department Store Employment; Enabling the Middle Class (1892-1962).....	35
Gender.....	35
Race.....	37
Union Organization	38
E. Popular Entertainment; Captivating the Middle Class (1880-1963).....	41
Stage & Vaudeville.....	41
Panoramas.....	43
Sports & Recreation.....	45
Nickelodeons.....	48
Act Two 1906-1946	51
Fade to Black; 1946-1974	61
F. Social Space of Market Street (1880-1974)	64
G. Socio-Economic Decline of Mid-Market (1950-1974)	69
III. METHODOLOGY	71
IV. IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS	72
A. Here Today.....	72
B. 1976 Citywide Architectural Survey.....	72
C. San Francisco Architectural Heritage	73
D. Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code.....	73
E. Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Survey.....	73
F. National Register of Historic Places	74
G. California Register of Historical Resources	75
H. Other Surveys and Technical Reports	76

V. DEFINITION OF PROPERTY TYPES	77
A. Identification of Property Types Associated with Historic Contexts	77
Commercial	78
Theaters	78
Department Stores	79
Loft Buildings	80
Small Commercial	81
Residential	82
Assembly/Fraternal	84
Civic/Fraternal	85
B. Distribution of Representative Building Types	86
C. Condition of Resource Types	86
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS	87
A. Significance and Registration Requirements	87
B. Other Preservation Goals and Strategies	88
Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits	88
Façade Easements	88
Mills Act	89
State Historic Building Code	89
Redevelopment Area	90
C. Areas Requiring Future Work	90
Historic Structure Reports	90
District Expansion	90
VII. CONCLUSION	91
VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	92
APPENDICES	95
APPENDIX A: Buildings Rated in 1976 Citywide Architectural Survey	95
APPENDIX B: Heritage Rated Buildings	96
APPENDIX C: Buildings in Umb Survey	99
APPENDIX D: National Register Rated Buildings	101

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Market area as defined for this Context Statement is a corridor along Market Street from 5th Street to 10th Street on the south side and Powell Street to Polk Street on the north, as well as most of the corresponding blocks on Mission Street and the connecting side streets and alleys. Along Market, it consists mainly of mid-rise masonry buildings designed as offices, lofts, hotels, department stores, theaters, and general commercial structures. Most date from circa 1907 to the late 1920s. Between Market and Mission are hotels, commercial structures, light industrial or small warehouse buildings (many former “back of the house” structures for Market Street buildings), and small apartment buildings. The scale here is smaller than on Market, and masonry construction predominates. Mission Street is a secondary commercial corridor, with masonry mid-rise commercial buildings and hotels. Their period and architectural style are somewhat later than the Market Street corridor, and they are smaller and less grand.

Market Street is the principal thoroughfare of the city, as well as the most prominent feature of the Context area. The survey area itself is an important portion of downtown San Francisco. East of the area are larger high-rise office buildings and more frequent modern intrusions, while to the west, the architectural scale and massing diminish. Immediately north of the area is the Tenderloin neighborhood containing dense residential development, small retail establishments, and many bars, night clubs, and restaurants. The South of Market area (SOMA) was historically a dense residential neighborhood that was destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906. It was rebuilt as a primarily industrial area and is now becoming a more mixed zone of residential, light industrial, and entertainment uses.

The area has been studied extensively in various historical surveys, beginning with the Splendid Survivors survey in 1977. Subsequently, the Market Street Theatre and Loft District, a National Register listed district which is contained within the present survey area, was documented in 1986. In 1997, historian Anne Bloomfield conducted a survey of Mid-Market with boundaries somewhat larger than the present area. Pertinent findings of these previous surveys have been updated and incorporated into the current survey.

A. Purpose

The Mid-Market Historical Context Statement has been prepared by Tim Kelley Consulting, LLC (TKC) as part of the Mid-Market Redevelopment Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR and Plan relate to the establishment of a Mid-Market Redevelopment area by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA). TKC is a subconsultant to Environmental Science Associates (ESA), the primary Environmental consultant for the project. The major purpose for establishment of the Mid-Market Redevelopment Area is to facilitate creation of an Arts and Entertainment District in order to revive the area, which has fallen into social and economic decay.

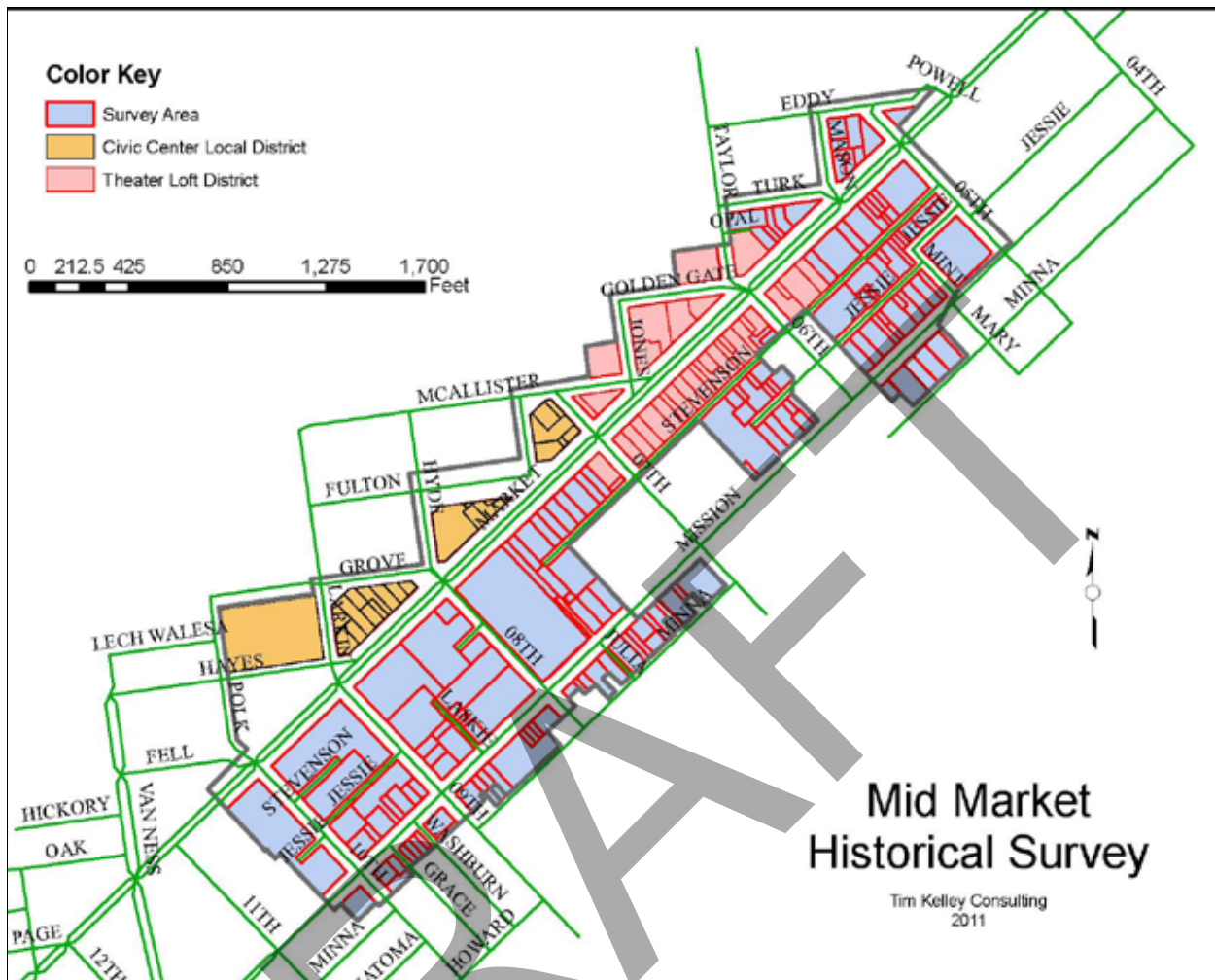
SFRA also envisions sponsoring major rehabilitation projects on a number of important buildings in the area, as well as façade restorations. The area is well suited to this plan since it contains a stock of theaters built in the early 20th century. This document will begin the process of determining important historic contexts that will aid in understanding the history of the area, as well as identifying historical resources within it. Eventually, the process will also be helpful in guiding the rehabilitations and restorations envisioned. Historic Contexts are defined in Standard 1 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, which states:

Decisions about the identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic properties are most reliably made when the relationship of individual properties to other similar properties is understood. Information about historic properties representing aspects of history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture must be collected and organized to define these relationships. This organizational framework is called a "historic context." The historic context organizes information based on a cultural theme and its geographical and chronological limits. Contexts describe the significant broad patterns of development in an area that may be represented by historic properties. The development of historic contexts is the foundation for decisions about identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic properties.¹

B. Definition of Geographical Area

The survey area consists of slightly more than 91 acres of dense urban fabric extending southwest along Market Street from 5th Street to beyond 10th Street, including all buildings on both sides of Market Street, as well as most of the corresponding blocks between Market and Mission streets and three and a half blocks on the south side of Mission. On the north side of Market, the area extends from Powell Street to Polk Street. There is a total of approximately 167 buildings in the area.

¹ National Park Service, Standards for Preservation Planning; http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_1.htm



Market Street is the principal thoroughfare of San Francisco. It is 120 feet wide and runs in a straight line due southwest from the waterfront at the Ferry Building slightly over three miles to the intersection of Castro Street. Historically, it terminated at Castro. Since the 1920s, it has continued on a more meandering route up the eastern slope of the central hills. In the survey area and as far west as Castro Street, it forms the axis along which two different street grids meet. The streets to the north are 68.75 feet wide and meet Market at angles approximately 9 degrees off the cardinal compass points, creating a series of irregular blocks with varying frontage of up to 480 feet on Market. The survey area includes those blocks with Market Street frontage as well as the Hibernia Bank and the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, both located on blocks immediately to the north, but visible from Market Street due to the open viewsheds created by the complex intersections.

The streets on the south form a grid parallel to Market Street, intersecting it perpendicularly at 900 foot intervals. They are 82.5 feet wide. Mission Street runs parallel to Market within the survey area. Some of the 650 foot blocks between Market and Mission are divided by two narrow intermediate streets, Stevenson and Jessie. Other minor alleys in the area include Mint Plaza, Laskie Street, and Angelo's Alley.

C. Identification of Historic Contexts and Periods of Significance

The overall Period of Significance for Mid-Market is 1847-1976, an era bracketed by the creation of the distinctive street pattern that is a primary characteristic of the area and the completion of BART and street improvements in the Market Street Improvement Area. Conventionally Periods of Significance terminate 50 years prior to the date of writing a Context Statement. In this case, that time has been extended due to changes in the area that appear to be “of exceptional importance,” thus meeting the requirements of National Register Criteria Consideration G: Properties that have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years.

Events both prior to and following the Period of Significance are noted briefly to enhance understanding of the main historic contexts. These contexts, listed below with their Periods of Significance, will be treated at greater length in subsequent sections:

- Physical Development of the Area (1847-1930; O’Farrell survey to full build out; and 1965-1974; BART construction and beautification project)
- Social and Cultural Development (1870-1930) growth of white collar middle class)
- Department Stores (1892-1962; advent and departure of Hale Bros. on Mid-Market)
- Department Store Employment (1892-1962; presence of department stores on Mid-Market)
- Popular Entertainment (1880-1963); first Panoramas to demolition of Fox Theater)
- Social Space of Market Street (1880-1974; promenades to end of overall Period of Significance)
- Socio-Economic Decline of Mid-Market (1950-1974)

II. HISTORIC CONTEXTS

A. Physical Development of the Area (1847-1930 & 1965-1974)

Spanish Exploration 1769-1847

First European Discovery: Portolá Expedition: 1769

The first known European explorers to view San Francisco Bay, a Spanish party led by Don Gaspar de Portolá, arrived accidentally in 1769, having marched from Mexico in search of Monterey Bay. They made their discovery from the top of a ridge in what is now Pacifica. The party explored the San Francisco Peninsula before returning but made no permanent settlement.

In 1775, San Francisco Bay was surveyed by Juan Bautista Aguirre under the direction of Lieutenant Ayála of the ship San Carlos. Aguirre gave names to many of the prominent natural features of the bay. The shallow cove that was to receive the first civil settlement in the area, and which now underlies the financial district, was called Yerba Buena, a name that later attached to the settlement that arose on its shores.

In 1776, the first permanent Spanish settlements were made in what is now San Francisco. These were the Presidio, a military fort intended to protect the bay from Russian and other foreign intrusions, and Mission Dolores, one of a string of missions established throughout California for the purpose of converting native populations to Christianity.

The natural setting was primarily sand dunes and chaparral over most of the area of the present city. Several large estuaries and bays were located on the eastern shore, almost all gone now. Yerba Buena cove, Mission Bay, Mission Creek, and Islais Creek were the largest. Mission Bay came inland to about Mission Street, while Yerba Buena cove came up to the present day Montgomery Street.

Founding of Yerba Buena: 1835

According to one authority, a small civil settlement was also established around the time the Presidio and Mission were opened, known as Yerba Buena. No remains of this early settlement are extant, and its location is unknown. However, it is not to be confused with the later pueblo of the same name that ultimately became San Francisco.

The *pueblo* of Yerba Buena was created in 1835 by decree of Jose Figueroa, Mexican governor of what is now California, as part of a plan to stabilize the northern frontier. The Mexican government, which had broken away from its Spanish rulers in 1821, sought to attract larger more prosperous populations to the area. The new settlement was on the shoreline of Yerba Buena cove, which then ran along the approximate line of today's Montgomery Street. Its *plaza* eventually became Portsmouth Square.

From its founding to the advent of American rule, the pueblo gradually gained population and economic life as a remote trading post serving the hide and tallow industry that was California's

main trade. In 1839, the first official survey of the settlement was conducted by Jean Jacques Vioget, a multi-lingual Swiss born ship's captain and surveyor, typical of the adventurers who were attracted to the place. Vioget's survey covered the area that is now the financial district and laid out a street grid defining blocks 50 varas on a side. The vara, a Spanish and Mexican unit of measurement, is approximately 33 1/3 inches, or just under a yard.



Vioget map, 1839, north to the right, Pacific Avenue far right, Montgomery Street bottom

Yerba Buena became a regular provisioning place for whaling ships during the heyday of that worldwide trade. Prior to annexation by the United States in 1846, the population of the village was about 200. It was made up of native Californios, many sailors who had deserted their ships, and entrepreneurial vagabonds—a small, but diverse gathering in a very remote provincial setting. The pueblo they occupied had four streets—Montgomery, Kearny, Clay, and Washington—and two primitive roads connecting it with the Mission and the Presidio—corresponding approximately to Mission and Green streets.

American Conquest

On July 7, 1846, shortly after the start of the Mexican-American War, US Navy Commodore John D. Sloat claimed Alta California for the United States. Two days later, US Navy Captain John Berrien Montgomery and US Marine Second Lieutenant Henry Bulls Watson of the

USS Portsmouth arrived to claim Yerba Buena. They soon raised the American flag over the town plaza, which was subsequently christened Portsmouth Square in honor of the ship. Navy Lieutenant Washington Bartlett, who spoke fluent Spanish, was named alcalde of Yerba Buena, equivalent to mayor. He was elected to the office later that year. On January 30, 1847, Bartlett proclaimed a change of name for the town from Yerba Buena to San Francisco, an early and prescient example of “branding.” Bartlett and the business leaders of the time saw the new name as much more memorable and marketable than the old.

In the same year, Bartlett also commissioned a new survey to be done in anticipation of the settlement’s expansion under American rule. Jasper O’Farrell, the chosen surveyor, was Irish born and educated. He had come to California in 1843 and had already conducted several surveys for the Mexican government in Sonoma and Napa counties. O’Farrell extended the Vioget grid west to Taylor Street, while correcting an error in Vioget’s calculation of the cardinal directions. But it was felt that the size of the 50 vara parcels was too small to facilitate growth, so at the same time he also laid out a new grid consisting of 100 vara blocks.

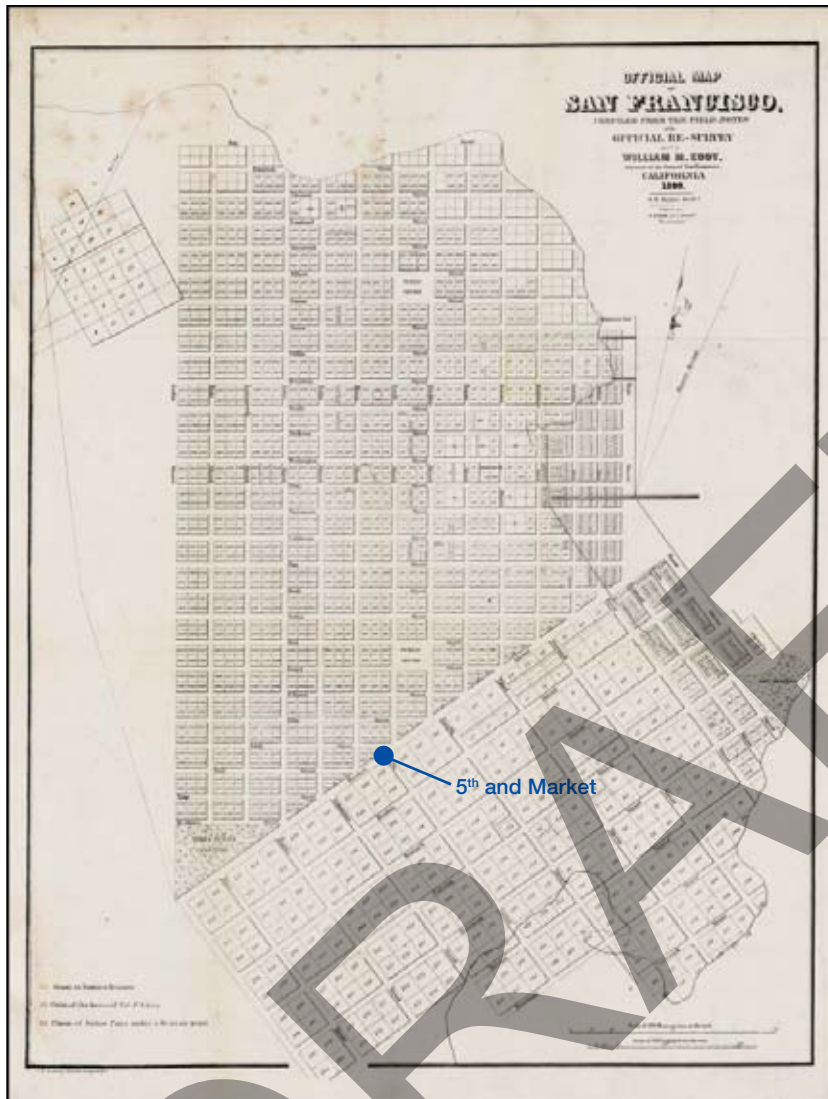
The two different grids were separated by a grand new thoroughfare named Market Street, running due southwest from the waterfront to the base of Twin Peaks. Market was laid out parallel to the existing rudimentary road that is now Mission Street. The new 100 vara grid, south of Market, was designed to intersect Market at right angles. The new street existed only on paper for several years, a phantom presence stretching over sand dunes towering as high as ninety feet. That did not cause great inconvenience though, since the center of settlement and business was still around the *plaza* or Portsmouth Square and there was little demand for access to the southwestern part of the vast sand dunes.

Thus, at the end of the Spanish-Mexican period, what was to become San Francisco consisted of three widely separated nodes, the Presidio, the Mission, and the pueblo of Yerba Buena, connected by long primitive roads, with a phantom grid of streets and blocks superimposed on immense wind-blown sand dunes.

Gold Rush and American Urban Development, 1848-1906

The newly christened city of San Francisco, along with the rest of Alta California, officially became a United States military territory in 1848 by the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War. In the meanwhile, when gold was discovered in January 1848, the historical development of the new territory and of the burgeoning San Francisco was altered dramatically. Thousands of gold seekers rushed in from around the world. Most of them passed through San Francisco, which became the main staging area for the Sierra gold country. Many either stayed in the city or eventually returned to it with whatever fortune they may have acquired. By 1850, the population of the city had leapt from under 1,000 to over 25,000.

In 1849, a new survey conducted by William H. Eddy extended the O’Farrell plan further west to 8th Street. This was done primarily to raise money for the new city government. 100 Vara lots were sold at auction and in private sales for \$500, while the 50 vara variety went for \$200.



Eddy Map, 1949

Provision was also made for the Yerba Buena Cemetery on a triangular parcel bordered by Jones, McAllister, Larkin, and Market streets.

Expansion Out Market Street

Gradually, in the frenzied atmosphere of the gold rush, San Francisco began to mature as a physical city. Portsmouth Square remained the center of commercial and political activity, home to new civic buildings including a customs house and courts. But vast portions of the native sand dunes were being leveled and used to fill in Yerba Buena cove and other smaller bodies of water. Streets were being graded and sometimes paved. By 1852, Market Street had been leveled between Battery and Kearny.²

Carried on a wooden wharf,

it also now extended well into Yerba Buena cove. Like many others, the wharf would eventually be transformed into a surface street as the cove was filled in.

2 Soule, Frank, John H. Gihon and James Nisbet. *The Annals of San Francisco*. (New York, Appleton & Co. 1854) p415



1853 Map. Black markings indicate buildings.

An 1853 map of the city created by the U. S. Coast Survey showed most development still concentrated in the North Beach-Portsmouth Square area. A few buildings were scattered out along Market Street west of 5th Street, an area still marked by 80 and 100 foot sand dunes. The U.S. Coast Survey map of 1859 showed some increased development in the area, most new buildings were sited well back from the line of Market and appeared to be more rural than urban in nature. West of 5th Street were gardens and orchards. These maps also showed sparse development along Mission Street in the survey area, while the connecting side streets were essentially vacant.

The 90-foot high sand hill on Market northeast of 4th Street still blocked the Market right of way, obviously limiting development beyond. Mission Street, a plank road since 1850, remained the only developed street. This is the first map to feature the Yerba Buena Cemetery, created in 1850 but little used at first, occupying the site that is now U. N. Plaza, then considered conveniently remote. One historian, writing in 1854, called the cemetery “an unenclosed waste...among miserable looking sand hills which are scantily covered with stunted trees, worthless shrubs, and tufted weeds”³ a description that no doubt applied to much of the surrounding area as well.

The sand dunes were still present in 1870, when the cemetery was closed, the bodies removed, and the site cleared for a new City Hall. In the thirty year interregnum before construction was finished, the “sand lots” on the vacated site became the setting for an early free speech movement that eventually gave birth to the California Workingmen’s Party, a short lived populist group known for virulent anti-Chinese immigrant rhetoric.

3 Ibid p594



1869 Map

In 1869, a new U.S. Coast Survey map showed development increasing in the Mid-Market area, but still sparse on the ground. However, the right of way had been graded at last, and transit in the form of horse drawn cars on rails extended from the waterfront out Market to Valencia and south almost to Bernal Heights. In the same year, city directories began to list a few retail establishments in the area, led by John Claffey's fruit store at 922 Market⁴, the first know retail enterprise in Mid-Market. Buildings were still so scattered that the San Francisco San Jose Railroad could bring its fire-belching steam locomotives to a terminal at Market and Valencia, where passengers transferred to horse cars for the trip downtown to the built up area. After 1873, they could transfer to the new Market Street Railway cable car, which greatly improved transit service, as well as adding a distinctive new feature—the metal cable slot between the car rails, from which could be heard the moving cable below—"the hum of the slot."

Although cable cars were eventually found in many cities, they were to become an enduring symbol of San Francisco, and particularly Market Street. Writing in 1914, Jack London mused:

"Old San Francisco, which is the San Francisco of only the other day, the day before the Earthquake, was divided midway by the Slot. The Slot was an iron crack that ran along the center of Market Street, and from the Slot arose the burr of the ceaseless, endless cable that

⁴ Langley, Henry G. *The San Francisco Directory for the Year 1869*. (San Francisco: Commercial Steam Presses, S.D. Valentine & Sons.) The building is not extant.

was hitched at will to the cars it dragged up and down. ...North of the Slot were the theaters, hotels, and shopping district, the banks and the staid, respectable business houses. South of the Slot were the factories, slums, laundries, machine-shops, boiler works, and the abodes of the working class.”⁵

Later, after electric street cars replaced cable cars and the Municipal Railway was formed to compete with the privately owned Market Street Railway, the “hum of the slot” was to give way to the “roar of the four” as Muni and its competitor each ran two sets of tracks down Market Street.

Probably the most consequential change in the area during this time was the construction of the New City Hall at the site of the old Yerba Buena Cemetery, now the Main Public Library. This move struck some as ill conceived. One real estate newspaper exclaimed “It is absurd, however, to talk of having the city hall so far out on Market Street. If a change is to be made at all, let the new building be erected either upon Portsmouth or Union Square.”⁶ Begun in 1871 and beset by corruption and delays, the building was barely finished in time for the 1906 earthquake, which instantly converted it to what it had already long been called by locals—“the New City Hall ruin.”⁷ In its disintegrated state, with the great dome left perched on its few remaining spindly supports high above a mass of rubble, the building laid bare the faulty and fraudulent work that had gone into it over the course of 35 years. Despite this tragicomic episode, the plan had been set to eventually build a civic center in the vicinity. And that decision gave new importance to Mid-Market Street as part of an evolving locus of public life. The present Civic Center, considered the finest collection of Beaux Arts buildings in the country, was constructed slightly west of the “new City Hall ruin” after an international architectural competition and some contention over its exact location. The first two components, the present City Hall and Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, were completed in 1915.

Without the cable car and its successors, the governmental center could not have been moved to what were still the outskirts of the city. This shift came as part of a general trend to differentiate spatially between the various functions of cities, as the older pedestrian scale was enlarged by new modes of transportation, while simultaneously the scale of both business and government expanded to require more room. At the same time and for similar reasons, a new Central Business District was taking shape along Market Street.

By 1887, the time of the earliest Sanborn fire map of the area, Mid-Market was densely developed, primarily with frame boarding houses and hotels, intermixed with stores and saloons. A number of public entertainment sites were also present, a Knight’s of Pythias lodge hall with dance hall on the ground floor near 5th Street, the Grand Central Hall at the east corner of 6th Street, and the imposing Odd Fellows Hall at the west corner of 7th Street.

5 London, Jack. “South of the Slot” in *Novels and Stories*. (New York, Literary Classics of the United States. 1982)

6 Magee, Thomas. *The San Francisco Real Estate Circular*. San Francisco, November 1869

7 Young, John P. *San Francisco, a History of the Pacific Coast Metropolis, Volume II*. (San Francisco. S. J. Clarke Publishing Co. 1912)



Odd Fellows Hall, 1890, destroyed 1906
Source: San Francisco Public Library

These halls functioned as fraternal social spaces, but were available for rent to accommodate musical and theatrical presentations as well. There was also a baseball stadium at 8th and Market at this time. Most patrons for these venues likely came from the dense South of Market neighborhood immediately adjacent. Mission Street was also fully developed with a mixture of residential and commercial, or light industrial buildings, as were the streets and alleys between Market and Mission.

The 1899 Sanborn shows greater commercial development at the lower end of the survey area, with large dry goods stores dominating the north side of Market, including Weinstock Lubin & Co. at Taylor Street, J J O'Brien Co. at the corner of Jones and several other smaller establishments.



Baseball park, 8th and Market
Source: Greg Gaar Collection, San Francisco, CA



View west from Market & Taylor (1900)
Source: San Francisco Public Library

On the south side, Hale Brothers was doing business at 937-947 Market, between 5th and 6th. At the other end of the area, also on the south side, large furniture stores were to be found, including Chas. Plum and Co., Fincke & Schindler's, and Bare Bros., all clustered near 9th Street. The Salvation Army and several smaller second hand stores were on the south side near 7th. One additional

public building, Academy Hall, was found at Mission and Mary streets, and in place of the baseball park of 1887 was a small amusement park with a “steeple chase” ride on wooden trestles and a large panorama of the Battle of Manila, commemorating the American victory over Spain just one year earlier. Another popular attraction was the Anatomical Museum at 1051 Market.

So, by the turn of the 20th century, Mid-Market had evolved to a busy commercial corridor containing large dry goods and furniture stores, a proto civic center, the main transportation lines of the city, and many popular amusements. A famous silent film taken just six days before the earthquake and fire of April 18, 1906 by local movie pioneers, the Miles Brothers, recorded a cable car trip down Market, beginning around 8th Street and ending at the Ferry Building. It recorded the bustling streetscape replete with cable cars, horse drawn vehicles, early automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, baton twirling policemen, stray dogs, newsboys, and a solid wall of imposing commercial buildings along both sides of the street, in short, a prosperous, intensely urban landscape—one that was about to disappear—destroyed by earthquake and fire. The area would be rebuilt rapidly after the disaster with many of the same elements as before. However, a new phenomenon—the film medium used to record that trip—would now assert a much larger role in the new landscape, both physically and socially.



A Trip Down Market Street 1906 ([click to play](#))

Source: Miles Brothers, courtesy Prelinger Archives

Disaster and Re-Construction: 1906-1919

When the earthquake struck San Francisco on the morning of April 18, 1906, the world of the Miles Brothers' film was reduced to ruin within seconds. Many of the masonry buildings on Market Street were significantly damaged. Most that escaped were later destroyed by the fire that raged for three days. Photographs from the time show massive piles of rubble with remaining portions of buildings hovering overhead threatening to plunge at any moment.

After the disaster, Market Street became the major route for refugees headed for the ferries to Oakland, and for days witnessed long lines of people trudging along carrying, pushing, or pulling everything they had managed to save.



Refugees on Market Street
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Simply removing the rubble was an enormous task, one which required every available hand for months before rebuilding could begin. Railroad tracks were laid down Market and many other streets to allow the debris to be hauled away. Much of it was used to fill the remaining portions of Mission Bay. Three Mid-Market buildings survived—the Old Mint, the Hibernia Bank, and the Grant Building (corner of 7th Street). In addition, the façades of the original Hale Brothers store at 979 Market (1902) and the Wilson Building, just next door, were left standing and acquired new buildings behind them.

Reconstruction commenced rapidly on Market Street. The lessons of the disaster, though imperfectly understood, informed the rebuilding. In fact, the entire Mid-Market area had already been included in a “fire district” that prohibited combustible exteriors. However, the many frame buildings that predated the 1883 law had been allowed to remain. They were now gone. Thus, reconstruction on Market Street was uniformly of masonry. The streets to south of Market were slower to be rebuilt, largely due to a public controversy over whether the fire district



Market Street 1906, Hale Bros. façade at right
Source: San Francisco Public Library

would be expanded to include them. The main objection to its expansion came from small property owners for whom the additional cost of masonry was prohibitive.⁸

During reconstruction, Mid-Market emerged more uniform in its architecture and in its business and social character than before the disaster. Essentially, the landscape was reconstituted in a short period of time, and thus embodied the particular architectural and economic vision then current, rather than a sampling of many time periods. Most replacement buildings were designed in the Beaux Arts style popular at the time. Because the pre-earthquake commercial nature had been successful, it was renewed and solidified, becoming more clearly the territory of the new middle class.

By the time of the 1913 Sanborn map, both sides of Market Street had been solidly rebuilt east of 7th Street, though there were still many vacant lots further west. The most prominent post-earthquake additions to the streetscape were several large theaters, including the Market Street Theatre (934-936) The Pantages (939), the Empress (965) Grauman's Imperial (1073) and the American (1185).



American Theater 1907
Source: San Francisco Public Library

8 Tobriner, Chapter 10, Fire Codes, 1906-1915

In addition, a number of motion picture venues were housed in ordinary commercial storefronts or other *ad hoc* spaces. These included The Elite Nickelodeon (1110), the Empire (965), Hallahan & Getz (936), Charles Maio (980), the Panama (1025), the Photo Theater (941) and the Premium (1063), as well as an unnamed storefront at 54 7th Street. The smaller venues were a phenomenon of the time—nickelodeons—showing continuous bills of short silent films all day long. Other entertainment venues were also to be found—including a dance hall at 1136 Market, the rebuilt Odd Fellows Hall at the corner of 7th Street, and Eiler’s music company at 973, where musical performances, many free, were held.

The area was well suited to theaters and assembly spaces because of the relative ease with which two means of egress could be accommodated. On the south side of Market, most buildings ran through the block to Stevenson Street, thus allowing exits on both ends of the building. North of Market, the small trapezoidal and triangular blocks were convenient for similar reasons. Market Street frontages of the theaters often contained unrelated retail space, with one narrow portion serving as the entrance to the theater, which then mushroomed to a full width auditorium volume in the interior of the block.⁹



Weinstein’s bridge over Stevenson
Source: Tim Kelley Consulting

The pre-disaster department stores had reopened in new buildings, as had the large furniture dealers. These companies also benefited from the small grain street grid on the south side by using smaller buildings on Stevenson Street for warehousing and other back-of-the-house functions. The buildings were often connected by enclosed walkway bridges spanning Stevenson on upper stories. At least one of these bridges that formerly connected the Weinstein’s department store to an auxiliary building behind survives.

Another type of business concentrated in the area was photography studios, generally housed above ground level, including at least one in a rooftop penthouse.¹⁰ In the days before most people owned cameras, these studios took countless individual, family, and group portrait pictures. In many cases, the subjects were posed in front of scenery or backdrops that the

⁹ The Market Street Theatre, Pantages, Empress, Grauman’s Imperial, and the American all followed this mushroom plan.

¹⁰ Margaret Huppert studio, 1220 Market, not extant

studio provided. In addition, in the days of vaudeville, thousands of itinerant performers needed publicity photos taken, sometimes specific to the city in which they were performing. The Dana Studio at 1035 Market was nationally known for its photos of performers.

In 1913, Mission Street and the connecting streets and alleys were less fully rebuilt than Market Street. Here, many hotels, often of masonry construction, were replacing the smaller scale wood frame residential buildings that had burned in 1906. The Whitcomb Hotel, on the west corner of 8th and Market, was serving as the interim city hall.

Ninety one, or 60% of the existing one hundred seventy buildings in the Mid-Market survey area had either survived or been rebuilt by 1913, the end of the “short reconstruction era.” Another twelve were added by 1919, the end of the “long reconstruction era.” Thirty six more were constructed in the 1920s, which were the time of a nationwide building boom, and the high point for construction of “movie palaces.” Thus, by the 1930s, 81% of the present building stock was in place.¹¹

1920s Movie Palaces

During the 1920s, a period of great construction activity nationwide, thirty seven buildings were added to the Mid-Market survey area. Most were infill on Mission and the connecting streets, largely small- to mid-sized commercial buildings. Three of the keystone buildings of Mid-Market—the Warfield, Golden Gate, and Orpheum theaters—also date from this period, 1921, 1922 and 1925, respectively.

Depression and World War II: 1930-1945

From the stock market crash of 1929 through the Great Depression and up to World War II, building activity was at a near standstill. Nine buildings went up in Mid-Market from 1930 to 1940. With the major exception of the San Francisco Furniture Mart, these were small infill projects. In the war years (1941-1945), there was only one building added to the survey area, 1339 Mission Street, a small concrete commercial structure.

Post War: 1946-1974

The post-war era of frantic building activity locally and nationwide essentially bypassed Mid-Market, which by this time was, on the one hand, a fully mature built environment—and on the other hand, a casualty of capital flight to suburban areas.

Construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system wrought the greatest changes to both the physical and social environments during this time period. Conceived during the war years by the leaders of major downtown corporations, it was a means of strengthening a regional economy in which a suburban work force could commute to office jobs in downtown San Francisco. Throughout the 1950s and into the 60s the plans gradually materialized into the present state chartered BART agency financed by sales taxes in the member counties.

¹¹ Based on Assessor's Office dates of construction



BART construction 1969
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Construction on the Market Street tunnel portion of the new system began in 1967 and according to one historian:

For at least another five years, this main artery was to upset San Franciscans and visitors with never-ending noise, rubble, and ugliness¹²

For four more years after that, Market Street was subjected to a beautification program that further disrupted foot traffic for the widening and repaving of sidewalks and mandated the removal of theater marquees and lighted signage. Though there were other factors involved, disruption from this construction activity helped deliver a final blow to businesses in Mid-Market. And in the longer term, the area that had prospered around surface cable car transportation, which stopped at every intersection, became *terra incognita* to new generations who sped through it deep underground.

12 Wirt, Frederick M. *Power in the City; Decision Making in San Francisco*. (Berkeley. University of California Press. 1974)

B. Social and Cultural Development; Creating the New Middle Class (1870-1930)

As the Mid-Market area rose from primeval sand dunes to become a physical reality, it was defined by its social context. In the case of Mid-Market, the space responded to both the local conditions of an expanding city with an established class structure and to broader social-political developments that were affecting the nation as a whole by altering that same class structure. In her 2009 *American Consumer Society, 1865-2005*, Regina Lee Blaszczyk summarizes those developments thusly:

The growth sectors in Victorian America—manufacturing, transportation, publishing, finance, retailing, and wholesaling—created jobs... Growing businesses needed thousands of employees to handle paperwork. The new office jobs provided men, who headed most households in the United States, with the means for upward social mobility... By the 1880s, the American middle class had three sectors: professionals such as lawyers and doctors, business owners, and white collar workers.¹³

White collar workers were a brand new sector of the middle class. Limited in the beginning mainly to male workers, gender barriers soon began to fall due to the growing demand, the belief that the new work environment was suitable for women, and the fact that women could be paid less. Like all social groups with the means, this new class sought to define itself and to differentiate from other groups. But the size of the group meant this involved far reaching changes in the social structure. Blaszczyk explains:

Changes in social attitudes, values, products, and institutions help divide the past century and a half into three periods: the late Victorian era, 1865 to 1900; the Modern era, 1900 to World War II; and the Boomer era, 1945 to 2005. These periods aren't based on the political benchmarks of most U. S. history textbooks, but suggest a new way of looking at America through its consumption patterns. Each period has a unifying theme, summarized briefly here and explored in depth in the book's three sections and nine chapters.

In Victorian America, industry and commerce expanded, and new types of retailers appeared: department stores, mail-order houses, and five-and-tens (a precursor to the dollar store). Economic growth enabled some people to shop for a wider selection of factory-made goods. A standard "consumer identity kit" evolved to symbolize the "middle class" lifestyle. A person's identity kit contained artifacts—the products of civilization—such as the single-family home, cozy furnishings, and fashionable clothes...¹⁴

Mid-Market reflects this history in its concentration of commercial establishments that supplied the "consumer identity kit" for the emerging middle class: dry goods and department stores, five-and-tens, clothing stores, and furniture stores all were concentrated here, as were the consumers themselves. For the businesses that catered to them often also employed them. Significant numbers of people born into the working class, so in local terms, from South of the Slot, now found themselves able to fill "white collar" jobs in the new retail establishments and

¹³ Blaszczyk, Regina Lee. *American Consumer Society, 1865-2005*. (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson Press. 2009.) p18

¹⁴ Ibid, pp2-3

become members of the new middle class. A large percentage of them were women.

These new conditions in turn enabled more women to establish life styles independent of previous social and financial restrictions. One result of this new freedom was an expansion of the social spaces available to women; this included new commercial entertainment venues, which came to shape Mid-Market even more powerfully.

All of these developments found space outside the historical class structure. The existing elite spaces remained where they were, north of Market and east of 5th Street, where legitimate theater, tea rooms, and exclusive department stores continued to reign. There, women's social freedom was slower to expand. And South of the Slot remained solidly working class.

The following sections investigate two major aspects of these social developments that were manifest in the Mid-Market area—department store and retail sales employment and popular entertainment. These two institutions were important both locally and nationally in forming the new social class.

C. Department Stores; Outfitting the Middle Class (1892-1962)

Nationwide, department stores initially developed in the 1880s as enhanced dry goods stores. The year 1888 marked the first time that the term “department store” was used, referencing one such store opening in Los Angeles.¹⁵ At first, department stores were regarded with mistrust, as they were a new concept and required a new approach to shopping and running errands. The growth of department stores in the 1890s was encouraged by a declining economy, however, which reached its lowest point during the Panic of 1893. This seeming detriment to commerce set the stage for department stores to become fiercely competitive and seize the market from smaller specialty shops, which they tended to consume, putting them out of business or sometimes incorporating them as departments or counters within the larger store. This upset the clientele of existing shops, but eventually the populace accepted department stores as convenient and cost-saving establishments.¹⁶

These general trends remained true in San Francisco’s downtown shopping district. Most of the major department stores began as dry goods shops, a few of which opened during the Gold Rush and the local population boom it caused. It is difficult to assign the status of “first department store” to any one establishment in the city, as many of these small shops grew and expanded their offerings making the point at which they could be considered a full-fledged department store vague. However, the forerunners in becoming well-known downtown establishments, like the Emporium, the City of Paris, and the White House, had reached maturity by the 1890s, when the concept of department stores finally hit its stride and gained acceptance from the public.

Contemporaneously, Mid-Market Street gained its first department store in 1892, with the establishment of the Hale Bros. store between 5th and 6th streets, opposite Mason Street. This establishment began small, but within a decade grew into a six-story building capable of housing true “departments.” In 1902, Hale Bros. moved to a larger L-shaped building on the same block, which had frontage on both Market and 6th streets (979-989 Market Street). In 1904, Hale Bros. was joined by Prager’s department store on the corner of Market and Jones streets (1072-1098 Market Street). Prager’s moved into the existing five-story Renaissance Revival style Murphy Building, which had formerly housed professional offices but which Prager’s outfitted luxuriously to serve their retail needs.

Around this time, the economy of the 1890s rebounded and department stores were economically capable of improving upon their bid for dominance over small specialty retailers. Many did this by improving their offerings in a broad sense: providing more complimentary services and amenities for customers and improving the variety and quality of merchandise they carried, all while being able to offer reduced prices. Department stores tried to appeal to the desires and busyness of their predominantly female clientele, who previously traveled all over the downtown area and other neighborhoods running errands and taking care of household business. In an age where a woman’s presence on the street was not always deemed appropriate, this was an inconvenience that the department stores attempted to solve by offering a feminine refuge where all the day’s

¹⁵ Jan Whitaker. *Service and Style* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2006) p12.

¹⁶ Whitaker, p8.



Murphy Building center, later Prager's department store, Hibernia Bank under construction lower left (1891)
Source: San Francisco Public Library

errands could be taken care of at once. Department stores became cities within the city, where a customer could not only shop, but have a refined meal, write and mail a letter, send a telegram, buy theater tickets, have their hair done, make a telephone call, have the children looked after, and even view an art exhibit.¹⁷ Some department stores, like Hale Bros., also offered lectures and classes for the betterment of its patrons. For instance, in 1913, a six-day domestic science course taught by a renowned Southern cooking expert was offered free of charge to help women improve their housekeeping and culinary skills.¹⁸

In this attempt to create a self-contained, self-sufficient, retail-based community, department stores also began addressing the welfare of the community. Hale's was known to have hosted entertainment for orphans at the store and contributed generously to the Red Cross, charitable activities that could only have improved their reputations in the eyes of customers. They also sought to retain employees by providing better benefits. Hale Bros. was particularly advanced in this respect. From around 1889 through at least 1909, the company operated the Hale Bros. Welfare School for its employees. Maintaining a school room within the department store, Hale Bros. provided for the grammar school education of the young clerks who worked the store's

17 Jessica Ellen Sewell, *Women and the Everyday City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). p27.

18 "Mrs. Vaughn Opens Call Free Cooking School on Monday," *San Francisco Call*, 1913.

counters during the day.¹⁹ A reading room and lending library was also available, providing appropriate literature that intended to improve employees' intelligence, attitudes, and even grammar. A nurse was retained for the emergency care of employees (and customers), and a lunch room was provided, allowing employees a place to eat food brought from home or a hot meal purchased for about three cents.²⁰ All of these benefits worked to better employees as well as encourage them to linger at their place of employment rather than rush back to the working-class neighborhoods they were from. It engendered loyalty among Hale Bros. employees, who tended to work for the company for prolonged periods. On the 59th anniversary of the company's founding, seventy-four employees were recognized for their service of five to twenty five years.²¹

The continued development and improvement of the department store concept marked the birth of the "modern department store." The business it generated enabled many companies to build their first major stores, often following up with annexes, additions and off-site warehouses to accommodate their rapid growth.²² While this national trend got off to a strong start in San Francisco though, it did not reach fruition before the 1906 earthquake and fire literally leveled the playing field for department stores in the city. With the entire downtown burned, not one city-like department store was left with a viable building or a stock of merchandise to sell. On Mid-Market Street both the Prager's and Hale Bros. stores were destroyed, although the front façade of the Hale's building remained standing.



Hale Bros. during the post-earthquake reconstruction
Source: San Francisco Public Library

This setback actually improved business prospects for department stores. In the months following the earthquake, there was an entire city of consumers eager to reestablish their lives with food, clothing, and household goods, as well as assuage a visceral response to death, destruction, and discomfort through the purchase of luxuries. Commercial competition was fierce, and department stores raced to rebuild, obtaining early building permits and employing carpenters in shifts to get the work done. A number of the downtown department stores claimed to be the first to reopen. Hale Bros. was touted as the "first store to be rehabilitated since the great fire," while Prager's was called "a

pioneer among the large retail concerns to return to its old location on Market Street."²³ In truth, Prager's reopened in a temporary building in its original location on July 28, 1906, while Hale Bros. erected a building behind the salvaged façade of their former store and opened again in September. The manager of Prager's was quoted as saying that business was "better now than before the fire," while Reuben Hale declared that "business this fall and during the summer months has been greatly in excess of the expectations of most of the optimists."²⁴

19 "Graduate from Welfare School," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 February 1909.

20 "Systems of Industrial Betterment," *The Magazine of Business*, vol.2 (A.W. Shaw Company, 1902.)

21 "Hale Brothers Will Celebrate 59th Birthday," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 April 1935

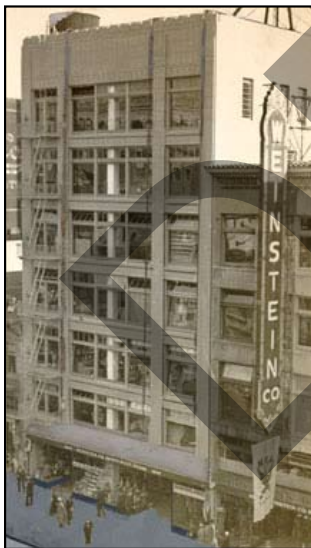
22 Whitaker, p16.

23 "Crowd the Store on Opening Day," *San Francisco Call*, 29 July 1906.

24 "Shoppers Buying Largely of Luxuries," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 December 1906.

After getting an initial foot in the door with quick reconstruction and reopening, both Hale Bros. and Prager's had to consider the future and the need for permanent facilities for their businesses. The Hale Bros. store had re-opened in a three-story annex on 6th Street, while a permanent building was reconstructed behind the surviving Market Street façade (probably completed in early 1907).²⁵ However, the reconstructed store was half the size that it had been previously (the entire southwestern ell of its original L-shaped plan, including its 6th street facade, was not reconstructed to original parameters). Meanwhile, the temporary Prager's building, while commodious, was intentionally temporary, wood-framed, and unimpressive in comparison to the five-story, ornately designed retail palace the store had occupied previously. Both companies responded by building monumental and permanent stores within the following six years.

In 1910, Prager's opened their new store on the same site occupied by both their original and temporary stores. It was described as a "three story, class A store building...the front will be largely of plate glass, with metal frames with ornamental effects, while the interior will be furnished effectively and handsomely... The Prager building will be one of the largest in floor room in San Francisco." The Classical Revival style store was constructed for a cost of \$125,000.²⁶ Two years later, in 1912, Hale Bros. relocated to their landmark store on the south corner of Market and 5th streets (901 Market Street). The six-story building was designed by the Reid Brothers, the renowned San Francisco architecture firm that had also designed the company's earlier store. The five-story building was designed in the Classical Revival style and constructed in five and a half months.²⁷ Like many department stores of its day, it featured a central atrium covered by a large expanse of skylights.



Weinstein's Department Store

Source: San Francisco Public Library

Elsewhere in the city, merchant Isidor Weinstein had used the disaster-fueled popularity and prosperity of Fillmore Street to open the venture that would become Weinstein's Department Store. After the 1906 Earthquake, Fillmore Street served as one of the city's major commercial corridors (in tandem with Mission Street) that substituted for the devastated Market Street. Although businesses began to reopen on Market Street as early as the summer of 1906, as evidenced by Hale Bros. and Prager's, Fillmore Street retained some of its newfound bustle. Weinstein opened shop there in 1907 and used it as a springboard for a move to Market Street in 1910. Weinstein's premises on Market Street, between 6th and 7th streets (1035 Market Street), subsequently became the third department store along Mid-Market Street.²⁸

With physical holdings eliminated, department stores had to reestablish themselves based purely on reputation after 1906. Although most rebuilt on or near their original locations, a conceivable dividing line

25 Ibid.

26 "Prager & Co. to have a new home," *San Francisco Call*, 27 January 1910.

27 *Splendid Survivors*. p92.

28 "Weinstein's Closes Its Big Store," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 May 1966.

formed that separated the elite and luxury department stores from the mid-range and discount department stores. The range of an upper-class shopper was focused north of Market Street between Stockton and Kearny streets, where department stores like Gump's, the City of Paris, and the White House were located. Meanwhile, the Market Street corridor, particularly Mid-Market southwest of 5th Street, hosted stores more amenable to middle and lower-class shoppers (Hale Bros., Prager's, and Weinstein's). The Emporium, which was considered mid-range, lingered in between, a block farther northeast, but still on Market Street.²⁹

The high-end department stores were emphatic about quality and showed less concern about prices. Their desired customers were elite enough not to have to worry about such things. These stores even rejected the term "department store" because of its association with the cost-cutting, bargain retail practices that were the foundation of the department store model. They often continued to be listed under "dry goods" in city directories. The elite department stores were willing and able to do business on a credit system, because their wealthy customers were always good for the money. Thusly, they were able to offer more services and amenities. Contrary to marketing logic, they set themselves apart and retained their dignity by not advertising or only posting small, understated newspaper notices that never named prices or the prospect of a sale. Discounting and sales events were unheard of and window displays and sales floors were kept modest and refined. The elite department stores left showmanship and blatant self-promotion to the discount retailers.³⁰

On the other hand, the middle-class department stores advertised with large, graphically effusive print ads that described sale items in detail and displayed discounted prices in bold lettering. Stores like Weinstein's came to be known for their showy demonstrations and raffles staged in storefront windows, strategies to attract a customer in off the street. Allowing purchases on credit was less common in mid-range and discount department stores, but stores creatively found solutions that made their customers feel like they were getting a good financial deal when they shopped. As early as 1906, Prager's instituted a cash stamps system that was an incentive to customers and a benefit to the store, because it encouraged concentrating all one's shopping at Prager's. Cash stamps were offered, one for every ten cents spent. Five hundred stamps was the equivalent of \$1.75, which could be redeemed as cash to make purchases. Although not an incredible deal when the numbers were crunched, it had the psychological effect of a bargain and was an ongoing system that kept customers spending loyally at Prager's on a consistent basis.³¹

After World War I, a new class of department store arose from between the dignified elite department store and the bargain emporiums that was in fact was a product of the two. Bargain stores began improving the quality and variety of their merchandise and offering more amenities and services in order to capture a higher-class of clientele, those feeling flush in an atmosphere of post-war prosperity. Meanwhile, the elite stores relented in their dignity and began allowing

29 Sewell.

30 Whitaker.

31 Ad for Prager's cash stamps, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 April 1906.

Prager's cash stamp ad, 1906
Source: San Francisco Chronicle, 1906

for more liberal advertising and promotion in order to compete.³² It is into this category that the Hale Bros., Prager's and Weinstein's eventually seemed to settle. Many solved the problem of continuing to serve their lower-class patrons by establishing bargain basements, which became popular at the time. This convention of keeping discounted merchandise in the basement of the store helped keep customers of different classes discretely separate and allowed the store to offer inexpensive goods to one group while still maintaining the elevated reputation they had advertised to the other, successfully capturing the patronage of both.

Although department stores had become common institutions in the first decade of the twentieth-century, 1918 was the first year in which San Francisco city directories began featuring a separate section in the business listings specifically for department stores (as versus dry goods stores). That year the Mid-Market Street establishments of Hale Bros., Prager's, and Weinstein's were listed in that section, along with a Nathan Smith's department store at 1063 Market Street, across the street from Prager's. Little is known about Nathan Smith's, except that it was located in a relatively small, two-story building and was not listed in later directories.

In the late 1910s and 1920s, department store shopping reached its zenith. Department stores became not only places of commerce, but arbiters of lifestyle, especially for the middle class. In a continued effort to rise above common discount stores — often referred to as variety stores or five-and-dime shops—department stores increased their influence by integrating amenities like store-published magazines that went beyond simple merchandise catalogs, radio programs, entertainment and promotional events, and even clubs and special interest groups for various subsets of their customers. For instance Hale Bros. hosted a chapter of the Calling All Girls club, which appealed to teenage girls interested in fashion.³³

Up until 1920, Mid-Market Street was dominated by Hale Bros., Prager's, and Weinstein's. Only a dry goods store, known as Meister & Adou (across the street from Prager's at 1106 Market Street) competed for a similar type of business.³⁴ It was incorporated by G.J. Meister, C.A. Adou, J. Ballentine and Samuel Ephron and appears to have been a middle- to upper-class store known for its selection of clothing and furs.³⁵

In 1921, Prager's department store closed with a massive retirement sale.³⁶ The closure was not in response to any trend, nor the fault of hard times (in fact, the opposite); Prager's had simply reached the end of its twenty-five year run and did not continue after the retirement of its founder, Lesser Prager. By 1925, the Prager's building at Jones and Market had become the Anglo-California Bank, later known as the Crocker-Anglo National Bank. Mid-Market Street boasted one less department store, but was soon to experience a shift in the atmosphere of competition between the existing stores and newcomers.

32 Whitaker.

33 Whitaker, 286.

34 San Francisco City Directory, 1920.

35 "Coast Trade Outlook Excellent," *Fur Trade Review*, vol. 49, issue 3, 1921; 106.

36 "The Sensation of San Francisco! Prager's Retirement Sale," (advertisement), *San Francisco Call*, 23 January 1921.

In the early-1920s, Hale Bros. and Weinstein's were joined by The Clarion department store (at 1185 Market Street), The Bargain Spot store (1083 Market Street), and two Woolworth's stores, which were listed as department stores in the 1925 city directory although they better fit a five-and-dime model. This reflects the competition mounting between department and discount stores. The common discount store was an ever-present competitor, and at the end of the 1920s, a new player arrived on Mid-Market Street in the form of the S.H. Kress & Co. store. Established on the south side of Market Street, between 5th and 6th streets, around 1926, Kress was located only a couple doors down from Hale Bros., and a block-and-a-half from Weinstein's. Although it was considered to be a five-and-dime store rather than a department store, it was large and organized on a department store model. It was in direct competition with the existing department stores, which, while fighting to distinguish themselves from their common discount store roots, were still competing with lower-end chain and variety stores.³⁷

The Market Street Kress store does not appear to fit the strong architectural context that the Kress company established for their nation-wide chain of stores and for which Kress stores are still recognized today. Samuel H. Kress, an avid art collector, aimed to make the buildings that housed his stores public works of art for the betterment of the communities in which they were located. Many Kress stores are now recognized as local landmarks or are listed on the National Register for their fine expression of the Art Deco or other popular architectural styles.³⁸ However, the Kress store on Market Street was not purpose built and therefore exhibited the lingering architectural styling of its 1911 construction. Prior to housing the Kress store, the building had functioned as a commercial retail and office block (the Emma Ferris Building), with the city's original Pantages Theater located at the rear. Necessarily, some remodeling likely occurred in order to make the building suitable for Kress' use. In 1956, the building underwent an extensive modernization that included remodeling the façade with an International style aesthetic that may have approached, but did not meet the high architectural standards that the Kress company typically had for its establishments.

Because of their steep discounting, S.H. Kress & Co. stores were particularly popular and therefore competitive during the Great Depression, which was a hard time for department stores. The 1929 San Francisco city directory reflects the trend toward discounting and bargain retailing by being the first volume to supply a sub-section of department store listings for "5c to \$1.00" stores. In fact, on Mid-Market Street, these stores outnumbered the conventional department stores listed. They included Frank's Dollar Store, National Dollar Store, J.J. Newberry Co., and two Woolworth's stores. In the face of this growing discount store trend, many of the middle-class and elite stores had to rely heavily on their bargain basements to keep sales up and money flowing.



Kress, before its 1956
modernization
Source: San Francisco Public Library

³⁷ Whitaker.

³⁸ The Kress Foundation. "The Kress Legacy," <<http://www.kressfoundation.org/about/legacy>> 29 April 2011.

Around 1930, Hale Bros. and Weinstein's were joined by two new department stores on Mid-Market Street. The Boston Store, possibly a branch of a well-known Chicago department store, was located at 1083 Market Street. It appears to have been a small-scale shop based on its location in a mixed-use building with retail space only on the first story. Meanwhile, the Eighth Street Store was located at 1185 Market Street, with frontage on 8th Street, as its name suggests. It was housed in a four-story building that was surrounded by the Crystal Palace Market. Both were gone from city directories by 1931 (although a photograph from 1958 shows Eighth Street Store signage on the building at 1185 Market Street).³⁹ In 1933, Jacoby's department store operated at 1143 Market Street, but it was gone by the following year.

The third significant and long-lived department store on Mid-Market Street was J.C. Penney Co., which arrived in 1934. Although originally located in the Lincoln Building at 867 Market Street, just outside the survey area, it would ultimately be influential on the Mid-Market area. The three big department stores were also joined by the Holtz Bros. department store in 1938 (1111 Market Street), which was gone by 1940.

According to city directories, there were few dry goods stores on Mid-Market Street, which may indicate their decline in favor. The five-and-dime stores were represented consistently through the 1930s by Kress, J.J. Newberry Co. (967 Market Street), National Dollar Store (929 Market Street), Woolworth's and the F&W Grand Store (1053 Market Street), which, in various years, went as the F&W Grand-Silver Store and the Grand Department Store.) Like Kress and Woolworth's, the other three were outlets of larger chains. F&W Grand and J.J. Newberry were national, while National Dollar was a San Francisco-based chain with stores throughout the West.

Despite a struggling economy and a relative lack of openings and closings of distinct department stores, the existing stores did show signs of life. Perhaps in an effort to expand their geographic markets and capture business in outlying areas of the city, many department stores opened branch stores in the 1930s. Hale Bros. lead the way by opening a large store on Mission Street in 1929. It was often referred to as some variation of the Hale Bros. Mission Store, Hale Bros. in the Mission, or the Hale's Mission Home Department Store. In 1930, Weinstein's opened a branch store on Ellis Street, quickly followed by two branches on Kearny and Turk streets the following year, a fourth store on Polk Street in 1933, and an additional Market Street store (on lower Market) in 1934.⁴⁰

The discount stores followed suit. Woolworth's, an early leader, had opened two stores on Market Street as early as 1925 and maintained them through the 1930s, adding up to a dozen additional branches throughout the city. Kress opened a branch store on Mission Street in 1932, the same year that F&W Grand opened an additional Market Street store. By 1933, National Dollar Store had expanded to three stores in the city, and J.J. Newberry had opened a branch on Mission Street.

39 San Francisco Public Library Historic Photo Collection, photos AAB-6246 and AAC-6908.

40 San Francisco City Directories.

In general, department stores became less formal institutions during the Depression years. Merchandise shifted toward more casual, domestic-made clothing and goods, which must have been a setback for elite department stores like Gump's and City of Paris, which specialized in exotic goods and luxury items from Asia and Europe. Service and free amenities were also scaled back to reduce store expenditures and to produce extra income. Elegant tea rooms became pragmatic lunch counters, fees were charged for services like gift wrapping and deliveries, restrictions were put on the return and exchange of merchandise, and sales were held regularly to increase public patronage and the turn over of stock. Cost cutting also affected the employer-employee relationship and lead to unionization battles, detailed elsewhere in this context statement.

Somewhat surprisingly, the Depression did not seem to have a devastating impact on the department stores along Mid-Market Street. Although they were at the depths of their popularity, Hale Bros., Weinstein's, J.C. Penney Co. and the others survived the years of poor economy, as well as the following years of war. The nation's economy improved during World War II, but retail establishments struggled to do business due to war rationing. With employment rates high, there were plenty of customers with plenty of money to spend; however, because of rationing, department stores did not have the goods to sell. It was common for limits to be set on the number of items a customer could purchase, and the sales that had gotten the stores through the Depression had to be curtailed during the war years. Business hours were also reduced simply because the stores could not handle the customer traffic. Nevertheless, the merchandise that stores were able to obtain and distribute resulted in healthy profits.

The 1930s' trend of department store expansion in the form of branch stores and annexes plateaued but persisted through the 1940s. The number of branch stores fluctuated, but many stores generally maintained those they had opened in the 1930s, or closed and opened branches on a less frequent basis. Hale Bros. and Kress both maintained their stores on Market and Mission streets. Weinstein's eventually settled on three Market Street stores and three additional branches with a fourth opening on Clement Street around 1945. It also had branches outside the city in Sunnyvale and Hayward. The National Dollar Store stuck to its three branches on Market, Fillmore and Mission streets, adding an additional store on Chestnut Street in 1945. J.C. Penney maintained its one Market Street store, and Woolworth's continued to operate its thirteen city-wide locations, including two stores on Market Street. From 1939 to 1943, Hale Bros. operated a store called Halesworth, which was listed as a separate business located within the main Hale Bros. store on Market Street. Based on the name, it may have been a bargain basement or discount shop intended to compete with the five-and-dime stores.

During the war era, Hale Bros. experienced a change unusual in an atmosphere of status quo. Although the Hale's building was purpose built for the store, the company never actually purchased the land on which the store stood. In 1943, Hale's was caught in a lease dilemma when prominent local real estate man Louis Lurie purchased the property on the south corner of 5th and Market streets and leased the building out from under Hale's to the J.C. Penney Co. Forced to vacate their building, Hale's moved across 5th Street to the Lincoln Building on the east corner of

Market and 5th streets (demolished for the Westfield Center), which had previously been occupied by the J.C. Penney Co. Although the Lincoln Building was large and Hale's occupied the majority of the four-story interior, it only presented a narrow storefront to the street, as it shared the ground story of the building with storefronts belonging to, at various times, Grayson's, Leeds Shoes, Zukors, Woolworth's, Manning's Café, and a number of other smaller retailers. Additionally, the Lincoln Building was located next door to the massive and popular Emporium department store, putting Hale's immediately next to its biggest competitor, with the now-dominant J.C. Penney store nearby and Woolworth's in the same building. Despite this heavy competition, Hale's continued successfully for some time, perhaps due to the booming economy that neglected no retail establishment.⁴¹



Hale Bros. new location, 1951
Source: San Francisco Public Library



JC Penney's, occupying the former Hale Bros. building
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Prosperity continued into the post-war years and with rationing lifted, supply could once again meet demand. Customers spent liberally and department stores turned over large quantities of stock quickly and made money. In the late 1940s, the popularity of department stores rebounded and they entered a new heyday, despite still being dogged by competitive discount chain stores. At this time, some new stores opened, including Squire's Department Store (1083 Market Street), the Nathan Bailkin department store (1183 Market Street), the J.M. Long & Co. (1169 Market Street) and Columbia of San Francisco (1111 Market Street). Discount stores also increased in number. With the exception of Columbia of San Francisco, which operated from 1948 to 1954, and Squire's Department Store, which existed from 1944 to around 1960, these stores generally only lasted a couple of years but were indicators of new vitality in the industry.

In the post-war era, many stores expanded and remodeled their premises. On Mid-Market Street, the Weinstein's and Kress stores both underwent mid-century façade remodels. Weinstein's was revised with a simple, flat, unadorned façade, while the Kress store became an International style edifice, as mentioned previously. Hale's, trying to make the best of its new premises, took a fresh approach to store organization that included the elimination of the "bargain basement" and the

41 "Real Estate: San Francisco's Lurie," *TIME Magazine*, 4 October 1943.

distribution of discounted goods throughout the store. Floors were also subdivided according to department, rather than each floor serving one department. This better coincides with the organization of department stores today. In 1951, the store was remodeled, giving Hale's a stronger presence through signage, improving the interior, and providing for additional sales and display space.⁴² On Mid-Market Street, only the J.C. Penney store in its relatively new location in the former Hale Bros. building retained its original appearance of monumental Classicality.



Weinstein's, after its 1950's era remodel
Source: San Francisco Public Library



Kress, after its façade remodel
(1956)
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The age of the automobile spawned the age of traffic jams, and downtown city streets were no longer easy or pleasant places to visit. With the convenience of a car at hand, shoppers were disinclined to take public transit to department stores downtown, yet neither were they inclined to drive downtown, negotiate traffic and find parking in order to shop. Thus, downtown department stores, just as they were remodeled and expanded, began to lose favor with customers. Department store chains were forced to rely on their outlying branch stores for business. Branch stores were often more accessible from growing suburban areas and had more parking available for every shopper's personal car. As shopping malls entered the common vernacular in the 1950s, the inclusion of one or more department stores as anchors to a mall became common and made the stand-alone department store nearly obsolete. In San Francisco, the Stonestown Galleria mall opened in 1952 and originally featured branches of the Emporium and Woolworths. Later city directories show a number of department stores moving to that outlying area, either within Stonestown mall or on adjacent streets.

Downtown stores often remained in operation for some time but were of lesser importance, seen as dated and of lesser caliber. As the original store, they were often still considered to be a

⁴² San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, photos AAB-6479 and AAC-7056.

company's main store, but were used for the sale of less popular or slower-selling goods; commonly they served as the furniture marts for a department store chain. During the late 1940s and 1950s, they owed their survival in part to post-war trends, like returning G.I.s starting families, buying houses and needing to outfit them with furniture and homegoods.

During the 1950s, department stores tried to compete with discount stores by undertaking many of the same strategies they had used during the Depression. They closed their tea rooms and lunch counters, eliminated free services like alterations, package wrapping and deliveries, laid off their doormen, stopped offering child care at in-store playrooms, and discontinued parades and special events. These changes were coupled with major business arrangements such as mergers, buy-outs, and the formation of retail chains meant to strengthen the influence and marketing power of department stores. Although the changes had that effect, they resulted in independent stores losing their identities. The truly one-off department store became a thing of the past.

At its height, Hale Bros. had branches in San Jose, Salinas, Petaluma, Stockton, and Sacramento, as well as the Hale's Mission Home Department Store, a women's clothing store at Grant Street and Maiden Lane, and two smaller appliance stores on Market and Mission streets within San Francisco. In 1949, Hale's bought out the Sacramento-based Weinstock, Lubin & Co. department stores. The following year Hale's merged with Broadway Department Stores of Southern California, becoming part of an extensive state-wide chain and taking on the name Broadway-Hale. In the 1960s, the Broadway-Hale chain expanded rapidly by opening stores outside of California and bought out additional chains, including the holding companies for the Emporium and Neiman Marcus. In 1962, Hale's left Market Street and consolidated into its Mission Street store until 1966. Eventually, the Broadway-Hale conglomerate, which was the sixth largest department store chain in the mid-1980s, went bankrupt, was reorganized, and eventually subsumed into Macy's West. The Hale Bros. name had been lost in the shuffle years earlier. The store at 5th and Market Street, which was better known for its association with Hale's and not the later J.C. Penney occupancy, was converted to professional offices over ground floor retail shops in 1985 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places the following year.

Weinstein's department store, which had branched into seven stores, with two outside San Francisco, closed its original Market Street location in 1966 and appears to have generally downsized. City directories show that the company relocated into two stores on lower Market Street, while the original Weinstein's reopened as an E.J. Korvette department store.⁴³ E.J. Korvette was a chain from New York that was one of the first companies to redefine discount stores, replacing five-and-dime shops and forerunning later discount chains and warehouse stores. However, in 1966, Korvette was in the decline of its business by 1980 was defunct.

J.C. Penney was already part of a major national chain, which had over 1,600 stores in the 1940s and 1950s.⁴⁴ In 1962, the company entered the discount market with a spin-off chain that lasted about twenty years. They also went into catalogue sales, eventually surpassing Sears, and, at

43 "Weinstein's Quits Market Street After 56 Years," *San Francisco Examiner*, 25 May 1966.

44 Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._C._Penney

select stores, broadened their merchandising to include garden centers, pharmacies, sporting goods departments, beauty salons, portrait studios, and auto care centers. Eventually opening international stores, J.C. Penney is still in business under that name today, although the store on Market Street in San Francisco closed around 1975.⁴⁵

The S.H. Kress & Co. store persisted in its Mid-Market Street location until around 1976, when it closed. The chain had been purchased by a sporting goods and apparel retailer in 1964, and downtown Kress stores were slowly phased out and relocated to malls. Eventually, the chain was discontinued completely in the 1980s.

By 1953, Woolworth's had downsized from two Market Street stores to one, located in the Flood Building on the northeast corner of Market and Powell streets, just outside the survey area. In the late 1970's, Woolworth's was the largest retail chain in the world (and the store in the Flood Building was the largest in the country⁴⁶), but as it moved away from its five-and-dime origins into territory dominated by other specialty retailers, it lost influence and was defunct by 1997. The store persisted through the 1980s and was likely closed in 1996 when the company went out of business.

National Dollar Stores, another Mid-Market Street mainstay of the discount department store variety, remained at its location through the 1980s. Although it is no longer there today, National Dollar Stores is still in business and has other local stores.

⁴⁵ Wikipedia. San Francisco city directories.

⁴⁶ <http://www.floodbuilding.com/mid.html>, 22 June, 2011

D. Department Store Employment; Bankrolling the Middle Class (1892-1962)

From their beginnings, department stores were major sources of employment for women, one of the earliest such institutions. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the number of working women in California skyrocketed. According to the federal census, in 1880, 8% of the state's women worked for money; in 1900, 13.22% worked; and in 1920, 17.77% of the state's female population worked.⁴⁷ The 1930 census reports that in San Francisco, 34% of the female population 15 years and older was employed, with 9% of working women employed as saleswomen or store clerks. Thus, department stores, and related dry goods, discount, and clothing stores, were major sources of employment for young women.

Gender

Early department stores functioned as self-contained cities, striving to provide a safe, sanitized alternative to their urban surroundings. As such, they were imagined as entirely feminine spaces, separate from the city around them, a safe place for upper class women to shop, socialize and relax, and as a respectable place for young women to work.⁴⁸ This resulted in an "Adam-less Eden," as Edward Filene referred to his Boston store.⁴⁹

Nationally, the number of saleswomen jumped from under 8000 in 1880 to over 58,000 in 1890. There were myriad reasons that sales work became a female dominated field, ranging from women's ready availability to their cheap wages to their confidence in selling particular items.⁵⁰ By 1940, one in 16 women were saleswomen and two in every five salespeople were women. In department stores, women made up almost 9/10 of the total employees. However, department stores remained a sex-segregated workplace. Although department store employees were predominantly women, the male employees tended to work in the more lucrative departments: men's clothes, sporting goods, rugs and appliances, all of which tended to pay a higher base rate and larger commissions.⁵¹

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, women who worked were primarily young single women; if women worked it was typically out of absolute financial necessity and employment was frequently perceived as something short term, with women retiring from the workforce upon marrying.⁵² Unlike men, who traditionally worked under a kind of apprentice system with automatic advancement, women's jobs were considered short term, dead end jobs.⁵³ As the 20th century progressed, young women began working for a wider variety of reasons, including new

47 Sewell.p176

48 Sewell pp27-30

49 Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores 1890-1940* (University of Illinois Press, 1988). p76

50 Ibid. p23

51 Ibid. pp179-180

52 Lynn Y. Weiner, *From Working Girl to Working Mother; The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980* (University of North Carolina Press, 1985). 24

53 Benson. p24

experiences, personal satisfaction, and the means to live independently from their families.⁵⁴ The earliest employees of department stores were young, unskilled women hired for their low cost and easy availability. Hiring was therefore not particularly selective and training was minimal, as store owners believed their goods would essentially sell themselves. Early department store managers instructed their sales staff to do as little as possible.⁵⁵ As a result, sales work was accessible to women who would otherwise have gone into more working class or blue collar industries. Technically considered white collar work, it was the lowest caste of white collar work, with long hours, low wages and the perception of the job as a service/servant position. Clerical work, on the other hand, required more education, paid more, and required less contact with the public.⁵⁶

The working class demeanor of the early shop girls or department store clerks provided a sharp contrast to the upper and middle class clientele the owners were attempting to draw into their stores. In the early decades of the 20th century, sales work for women in department stores evolved from being perceived as unskilled, tawdry, and immoral to being something of a status symbol. This change was largely effected through efforts on the part of the store owners and managers to improve their reputations in response to criticisms regarding their poor working conditions and to increase their profitability. As department stores attempted to move into a new position as tastemakers, they found they needed their saleswomen to appeal to a specific audience, treading a fine line between subservience and style-savvy.

Additionally, in response to a public outcry about the working conditions in department stores, owners began introducing welfare work and training into their stores. Welfare work, which would eventually evolve into personnel management, combined facilities for the staff—rest rooms, lounges, dining rooms—with basic education on subjects such as hygiene, etiquette, and grammar. While some of these efforts clearly benefited the workers, they also produced a more refined saleswoman and increased efficiency in the department stores. After the 1920s, the term “welfare work” fell out of favor, but the services provided continued. Training programs ranged from grammar school like classes for the younger employees to more advanced classes for adults. Classes focused on general education, merchandising training, and salesmanship training. By the end of the 1920’s most stores had in-house training departments, although a parallel training system was being developed wherein women attended independent schools or classes in public schools that specialized in training saleswomen. Store owners enthusiastically hired students and graduates of these programs, which provided them with well-trained employees at little cost to the store.⁵⁷

In the earliest days of department stores, married women only worked if it was an absolute financial necessity. By the 1920s, though, married women were working not just out of financial necessity but in order to improve their families’ quality of life, reflecting evolving consumption trends and standard of living measurements.⁵⁸ Additionally, selling was one of the few jobs that

54 Weiner. pp24-25, 18

55 Benson. pp24-26

56 Benson. pp183-184

57 Benson. pp130-153

58 Weiner. p86

middle-class, middle-aged, married women could step into with minimal training, and due to their personal experience, this demographic frequently excelled at the job.⁵⁹ Although there was cultural criticism of women who worked outside the home,⁶⁰ it was actually in the best interest of department stores to encourage two-income families, with their greater discretionary income. In the 1930s, over half of department stores reported that 40-50% of the female staff was married, despite attempts by many state governments to ban married women from working.⁶¹

Department stores rewarded age, paying older workers more. Older workers were also typically more satisfied with their jobs. As salespeople, older women were believed to possess dignity, graciousness, and courtesy and possessed the ability to sell things that they themselves had used in their own homes. During 1930s, this began to change; the growing cultural obsession with youth led to the replacement of middle-aged saleswomen with lower paid younger employees. Additionally, as stores were acquired by chains or joined ownership groups, they became more likely to dismiss long-time employees.⁶²

Race

Department stores were primarily a white environment, for both shoppers and employees. Until the 1960s, blacks were only hired for behind the scenes jobs: elevator operators, porters, and janitors. During World War II, personnel shortages led to some blacks being hired as salespeople. A 1943 article pointed out that waiting on customers involved servility; since blacks were hired as household servants, their presence in department stores should be acceptable to white customers. After WWII, stores began making an effort to hire blacks and Asians in proportion to their representation in the community, and by the mid-1960s, blacks had sales jobs in most department stores—except in big-ticket departments. However, this timing related to the decline of most downtown department stores.⁶³



Protesters on Auto Row, 1964
Source: San Francisco Public Library

59 Benson. p204

60 Weiner. pp85-86

61 Benson. p205

62 Ibid. pp200-203

63 Whitaker. pp170-172

In San Francisco in the early 1960s, there was a major push by several civil rights organizations, including NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination, to improve the hiring processes of local businesses. Major campaigns included boycotts and pickets of Mel's Drive-in, Lucky's stores, the Sheraton Palace Hotel, the businesses on Van Ness's Auto Row, and Bank of America, all of which had a very low percentage of black or minority employees. CORE and the San Francisco Ministers Union threatened a Christmas 1963 boycott of the downtown department stores, with a return to the "Don't shop where you can't work" approach launched by the NAACP in the 1940s. Although the boycott was of all the downtown department stores, there was particular focus on Macy's and J.C. Penney's, where the small percentages of black employees were concentrated in the janitorial departments and other behind the scenes jobs. The boycott quickly achieved its goal, and the stores revised their hiring policies.⁶⁴ Cumulatively, the San Francisco jobs campaign of 1963-1964 produced over 375 equal employment contracts, promising thousands of jobs to the city's blacks and other people of color.⁶⁵



Civil rights march, 1963
Source: UC Berkeley: Bancroft Library

Union Organization

Although other unions (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union and Retail Shoe and Textile Salesmen's Union local 410) had been attempting to organize department store and five and dime employees, it wasn't until Marion Brown, a former Woolworth's clerk who was fired in September 1936 for attending a union informational meeting, began running a stealth campaign to organize retail workers that progress was made. Brown began meeting with store workers in their own homes and encouraging them to promote the union at their individual stores and to attend secret meetings. From February 1937 to April 1937, membership grew from 100 to 2000 and the union was waiting to be chartered by the American Federation of Labor.⁶⁶

A key issue in the drive to unionize was poor working conditions; low pay, long hours, and forced overtime were the norm, and staff had no platform for complaint. Employers viewed their female retail staff as disposable: unskilled and easily replaceable. An additional issue was that of store wide seniority. Although women made up the majority of department store employees, the most lucrative departments—appliances, menswear, and furniture—were traditionally staffed by men. By establishing store wide seniority, women could move more easily into these departments without losing their seniority.

64 Daniel Edward Crow., *Prophets of Rage: the Black Freedom Struggle in San Francisco, 1945-1969* (Taylor & Francis, 2000) pp124-125

65 Vanessa Tait. *Poor Workers' Unions: Rebuilding Labor From Below* (South End Press, 2005) p30

66 Reagan, Michael B. "1937 Department Store Strike." FoundSF <http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=1937_Department_Store_Strike> 28 April, 2011

Although the female staff was motivated to organize, they faced resistance from the male dominated labor movement for a variety of reasons. Despite the working class origin of most store clerks, retail was considered a white collar occupation, and a female dominated one at that. Labor organizers viewed retail workers as short term employees, only working to pay a bill or until their husbands returned to work, despite data that indicated that most female retail staff had worked in the industry for thirty or forty years.⁶⁷ As a result, the attitude toward the clerks' efforts to unionize was fairly patronizing. Editorials in the Labor Council publications called for educating clerks in order to promote the union label campaign and encouraging women to use their buying power to shop union-made, rather than acknowledging the reasons female store employees might actually be motivated to unionize.

Department Store Employees Union (DSEU) Local 1100 was chartered by the Labor Council in April 1937 and a constitution was adopted wholesale from the Retail Clerks International Union. Despite the dominance of female employees, the candidates for leadership positions were all men. Initially, DSEU 1100 encompassed all department store employees, regardless of position in the store; however, in 1940, the food service workers in the stores became part of Waitresses' Local 48, a segregated women's union founded in 1906.⁶⁸

1937 Strike

With the union chartered, negotiations with the major stores began in April 1937. Negotiations ran along two lines, with talks with major department stores (Hale's, Emporium, etc) being conducted separately from talks with chain stores and five and dimes (Kress, Woolworth, etc). On August 9, the chain store employees voted to strike, walking off their jobs and setting up picket lines. In solidarity, the International Longshoremen Association (ILA) Warehousemen's Union local 38-44 honored the women's picket lines and shut down the Woolworths warehouse on Bryant Street. After five days, the chain stores folded to the union demands, agreeing to better working conditions, benefits, union recognition, and preferential hiring. The department stores soon followed suit with a similar agreement for their staff.

1938 Strike

The following year, contract negotiations were not as successful for DSEU 1100. Better prepared, the department stores had formed the Retailers' Council. In addition to hiring anti-union negotiators, they attempted to dissuade their own staff of the benefits of organization. The union was seeking to expand on the gains made during the previous year's negotiations, specifically seeking a shorter work week, storewide seniority, and a full union shop. When the stores were unwilling to consider these issues, the union voted to strike. Within a week, the union had amended their demands, dropping the 35 hour work week and the full union shop, but insisting on the seniority.



Pickers at Kress
Source: San Francisco Public Library

⁶⁷ Benson. p189

⁶⁸ Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing it Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century*. (University of Illinois Press, 1991.) p.101



Picket signs from the 1938 strike
Source: San Francisco Public Library

This time the strike lasted eight weeks, and the picket lines were much more violent. Stores were determined to stay open during the strike and hired security companies who escorted strikebreakers and customers into the stores, leading to clashes between the picketers and the police and store managers. Store owners attempted to capitalize on the picketline violence by portraying the unions as undemocratic radicals through advertisements in local papers. The DSEU also suffered from the lack of visible support from their allies the ILA (by now transformed into the International Longshore & Warehousemen Union (ILWU), and affiliated to the CIO instead of the AFL), who were engaged in a dispute of their own (the “hot box car” incident, in which warehouse owners were deliberately locking out warehouse

workers who refused to work on a boxcar loaded by strikebreakers by moving the boxcar from site to site; workers at over 19 San Francisco sites were eventually ordered off the job for refusing to unload it⁶⁹) and were in no position to come to the aid of the DSEU. Instead the DSEU turned to the public for support, holding well-attended town hall meetings and producing pamphlets and brochures.

After nearly two months of pickets, the Retailers’ Council agreed to the amended terms presented by the DSEU, and the union voted to return to work. Although the contract was essentially unchanged from the previous year, the eight-week battle proved that the clerks’ union could not be easily defeated by the store owners.



Hale's employees returning to work after the strike, 1938
Source: San Francisco Public Library

San Francisco department store workers remained affiliated with the AFL until its merger with CIO in the 1950s, unlike workers in New York and other major cities, who were CIO affiliates.⁷⁰

69 “The ILWU Story” <http://www.ilwu19.com/history/the_ilwu_story/the_warehouse_industry.htm> 4 May, 2011

70 Cobble. p113

E. Popular Entertainment; Captivating the Middle Class (1880-1963)

Stage & Vaudeville

The first recorded entertainment spectacle in San Francisco was the October 29, 1848 opening of Rowe's Olympic Circus in a tent in Portsmouth Plaza. Ticket prices were \$3 for the pit, \$5 for boxes, and \$55 for private boxes. Around that same time, plans were announced for construction of two new theaters.

As San Francisco grew into a major West Coast city after the Gold Rush, it became a hub for entertainment and amusement, in part carrying on the boisterous hedonism of its early days as a rich, enthusiastic, male-dominated frontier town. Before 1850, theaters were almost exclusively male-dominated places, with working-class and minority men being the most common patrons. Prostitutes were the only women that commonly attended theater (as a work-related activity), while slightly more respectable women occasionally occupied the most expensive seats, always escorted by a man. Around 1850, theaters began to try to improve their reputations. Prices were raised to discourage unsavory patrons, design changes were made, performance content was subdued and sanitized, and rules were enforced barring unescorted women and unseemly audience members. This eventually resulted in four basic levels of theater being available in San Francisco: theaters for plays, opera and "legitimate" theater; theaters for lower-class vaudeville shows; foreign language theaters serving the immigrant communities; and disreputable variety houses and music halls.⁷¹

As the city grew and became a less-transient place, its citizens settled into society roles and class-stratifications, its physical infrastructure grew, and it became a focal point for the rest of the country. This lent to a refinement of entertainment, which also began to exhibit class and quality stratification, geographic orientation, and the introduction of non-local talent. The 1870s have been called San Francisco's "halcyon period" for theater, a time when the first large performance venues were opened and national stars came to perform on their stages, thanks to the new trans-continental railroad.⁷²

Two major venues opened in the vicinity of Mid-Market Street in the late 1870s; the Baldwin Theater and the Tivoli Opera House. The Baldwin Theater opened with a performance of *Richard III* in 1876, setting the tone for its typical fare of dramatic plays and other more staid performances. The theater was part of the elegant Baldwin Hotel, which occupied almost the entire block on the northeast corner of Powell and Market streets. It was owned by E.J. "Lucky" Baldwin, elite hotelier and high-stakes gambler, and was managed by Thomas Maguire, who had produced dramatic performances in San Francisco since the Gold Rush. The Baldwin Theater attracted fashionable upper-class audiences and became one of the most artistically significant venues in San Francisco at the time.⁷³

⁷¹ Sewell.

⁷² Misha Berson, *The San Francisco Stage: From Golden Spike to Great Earthquake, 1869-1906* (San Francisco: San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum, 1992) p25.

⁷³ Ibid.

The Tivoli Opera House, which opened in 1879 near the corner of Mason and Eddy streets, was slightly more modest. Rather than heavily dramatic plays and grand opera, the Tivoli concentrated on the more accessible genre of light opera, and hosted performances that were typically produced or composed by local artists and cast with local actors. The family-run theater proudly maintained an air of approachability reinforced by its reasonable admission prices, acceptance of all classes, and rejection of ostentation. Food, such as beer and oysters, was served during performances and community interaction was encouraged. As a result, the theater became a sort of social hall as well as an arts venue.⁷⁴

The Baldwin Theater and the Tivoli Opera House illustrate a stratification of elite and middle-class theaters that had already begun to develop in San Francisco's burgeoning theater district. When the Orpheum opened about a decade later, in 1887, near Powell and O'Farrell streets, yet another level was established. As the largest playhouse in San Francisco at the time, the Orpheum was also the busiest and most accessible. Although it maintained an elegant image and attracted an audience that ranged from working to upper class people, it offered low ticket prices and typically showed the most common and approachable forms of entertainment, namely, vaudeville and variety shows. Eventually developing into a 17-theater chain, the Orpheum Circuit was considered the "big time" for vaudeville performers.⁷⁵

By the 1890s, vaudeville had become popular in San Francisco. Consisting of shows that contained a number of diverse acts, from trained animals to singing and dancing to skits and comedy routines, the vaudeville genre could appeal to the varied tastes of a large audience in a single show. Later, short films would also be integrated into these programs; however, the days before motion pictures were the height of vaudeville popularity. Vaudeville theaters came into being when prices at respectable theaters became too high for working class audiences. They offered short performances for an inexpensive price and content perhaps better suited to the lower classes; that is, humorous, entertaining, sometimes slightly-bawdy acts rather than formal highbrow theater. Eating and smoking was common in vaudeville theaters, as was talking and audience participation and interaction with the performances on stage. Generally, it was a more boisterous and less refined scene.

Although the Orpheum was the first dedicated vaudeville venue in San Francisco and probably the best-known, the vaudeville trend spurred the opening of other such theaters. In 1897, the New Olympia Music and Concert Hall opened in a former panorama building on the corner of Mason and Eddy streets. A newspaper article promoting its opening described the theater's revolutionary sounding board for improved acoustics and advertised a performance by the Boston Ladies Military Band and a number of "clever singers and specialty people."⁷⁶ Other notices in the amusements sections of the newspapers show that the venue consistently offered a program of "specialties," and in 1901 it was advertised as a vaudeville venue with musical and acrobatic acts.⁷⁷

74 Ibid. pp55-59.

75 Ibid. pp91-93.

76 "The New Olympia," *San Francisco Call*, 27 November 1897.

77 Advertisement, *San Francisco Call*, 16 April 1901.

A few other smaller entertainment venues specializing primarily in music were located along Mid-Market Street before the turn of the twentieth-century. One was the Vienna Concert Hall on the north side of the street, just east of Mason Street. It was a relatively small building with a stage at the corner of its L-shaped plan. Advertisements in the *Daily Alta California* newspaper suggest that the Concert Hall was the permanent home of the Vienna Ladies Orchestra, which played at the Tivoli Opera House in earlier years and later gave nightly free performances at the Vienna Concert Hall as well as appearing at other venues.⁷⁸ Another venue was Café Zinkand on Market Street between 5th and 6th streets, a large café offering music and entertainment acts. It catered to a late-night, after-theater crowd and so had a more entertainment-oriented atmosphere than many other restaurants. In addition, a few halls, like the Occidental Music Hall at Mission and Mary streets, hosted musical performances and acted as fraternal and social halls for the surrounding neighborhood and were likely less profit-driven than the big performance venues. Dance halls could also be found, but often in tandem with nearby saloons and offered more nefarious entertainment typically sought out by the less desirable elements of society.

The stratification of theater quality remained intact for many years, but in the 1890s, the upper-level theaters, including vaudeville venues, became more widely attended by women of all classes, occupying all sections of the theater depending on what they could afford. Matinees had almost exclusively female audiences and therefore did not require the usual male escorts to preserve propriety. Evening shows, however, had mixed-gender attendance and demanded that women be escorted. These changes in the gender demographics of audiences continued to influence the content of performances, the marketing practices of theaters, their location, and generally accepted rules about attendance.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the majority of the prominent entertainment venues were clustered at the eastern end of Mid-Market Street, where the Baldwin, Tivoli, Orpheum and Olympia theaters were located. Situated to the immediate west of the growing downtown shopping district, these performance venues represented a middle ground between the territories of the upper-classes, who shopped at elite department stores to the northeast, and middle- and working-classes who would come to dominate Mid-Market Street and the discount stores and middle-class restaurants available there. The theaters, which in many cases were more democratic venues than stores and restaurants, served both demographics and so easily filled the city blocks between the two territories. Eventually, theaters would extend down Mid-Market Street to the west, branding the streetscape as an entertainment district; however, the identity and function of theaters would gradually shift from the stage-centric venues described above to more technologically advanced motion picture theaters of the twentieth century.

Panoramas

In the years before motion pictures, however, other visual amusements tempted the public's eye. Panoramas were a major attraction in many American cities during the 1880s and were a novelty that is hard to imagine as extraordinary in today's overwhelmingly visual culture. Typically depicting sweeping landscapes as the backdrop for epic historic events, panorama paintings were

⁷⁸ Advertisement, *Daily Alta California*, 11 July 1887.

housed in large round buildings with skylights, glazed domes, or clerestories that flooded the interior with light. Once inside the building, surrounded by the 360-degree painting lining the rotunda's interior walls, the audience was seemingly immersed in the scene that was depicted. The panorama allowed viewers to experience, as wholly as possible at the time, a place and event they would have had little exposure to otherwise.

Panoramas were accessible to people of all classes as they did not require a great deal of education to understand and were in fact edifying in their depiction of historic events. Admission was moderate at about 25 to 50 cents and with the great amount of detail illustrated, could fill an hour or more with looking and marveling at the realism. Maps or keys were often provided to identify and explain significant landmarks or people in the painting. Sometimes, as panorama exhibits became more sophisticated, music, narration, and three-dimensional props might be used to enhance the realism and immersive qualities of the experience. Panorama exhibits commonly traveled, so that any venue would periodically have a fresh scene for viewing and thus maintain a steady income.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1886-1889 show three panorama venues located in the Mid-Market Street area at that time. The Panorama Building on the southwest corner of Eddy and Mason streets was built in 1884 and designed by well-known local architect Albert Pissis. In 1887, a newspaper advertisement implores audiences not to miss the panorama of the Battle of Waterloo at the Panorama Building, which was soon to be replaced by a panorama of the Battle of Vicksburg.⁷⁹ In 1889, the building was purchased by J.K. Prior who continued to exhibit panoramas for some time at reduced rates. Upon his purchase of the Panorama Building he replaced the Battle of Vicksburg scene with one depicting the Siege of Paris.⁸⁰ Looking to draw more viewers, the Siege of Paris exhibit eventually included a mock battle, artillery engagement, thunder storms, and other electrical and mechanical effects.⁸¹

A building belonging to the California Panorama Company, on the corner of Market and 10th streets, opened around 1890 and showed various panoramas depicting such subjects as the Storming of Missionary Ridge at the Battle of Chattanooga and a sweeping vista of Yosemite. Photographic panoramas of California towns may have also been exhibited in the building, as the California Panorama Co. is known to have produced a number of such photographs.

Beginning in 1886, a panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg was exhibited in a smaller rotunda building on Market Street, in front of the old City Hall, opposite 8th Street. This panorama appears to have been on permanent display and did not travel as others did. With this and other panoramas, promotional articles and advertisements lauded the realism of the scene depicted, including testimonies by veterans of the particular battles attesting to the *déjà vu* they felt upon entering the panorama.

79 Advertisement, *Daily Alta Californian*, 15 June 1887.

80 "The Vicksburg Panorama Sold," *Daily Alta Californian*, 1 October 1889.

81 "Last Chance," *Daily Alta Californian*, 26 March 1891.

As the popularity of panoramas waned in the 1890s, most panorama attractions shut down. This was due in part to the emergence of motion pictures, which far outshone the static 360-degree painted scenes. The distinctive large round buildings were commonly reused for new purposes, however. By 1892, the Panorama Building at Mason and Eddy had closed and the building was converted into a billiard hall surrounded by multi-story galleries featuring booths for refreshments.⁸² In 1897, it became the Olympia Music and Concert Hall showing vaudeville performances.⁸³ In 1900, the building at 8th and Market Streets, which had always housed the Battle of Gettysburg panorama, was converted into a boxing arena for use by the Columbia Athletic Club.⁸⁴ Likewise, the California Panorama Co. building at Market and 10th streets also became a sports venue in 1896, housing a bicycle academy and velodrome.

Despite the genre's loss in popularity, one panorama sprang up much later than the rest in an effort to stage a revival of the art form and keep its creators, the Milwaukee Panorama Company, in business. Located near the north corner of the steeplechase track at 8th and Market streets, the rotunda housed a panorama of the Battle of Manila that was painted on location in 1899 by a team of German artists, August Lohr, Franz Biberstein, George Peter, F.W. Heine, and Franz Edward Rohrbeck. The Battle of Manila panorama, which depicted a very recent military event, could not overcome the obsolescence of panoramas and failed financially.⁸⁵ The building was demolished within a year and was replaced by a theater.

Sports & Recreation

As noted above, the Gettysburg Panorama building was converted into a boxing club and the California Panorama Co. building at Market and 10th streets became a bicycle academy and velodrome after their useful days as panoramas had waned. The latter was a relatively advanced and innovative use for the building as the modern bicycle had only come into being in 1885 with the invention of the chain drive and the following advent of pneumatic tires, freewheel mechanisms, derailleur gears, coaster brakes and hand brakes. Responding to the coming of the "golden age of bicycles," Thomas H.B. Varney's Rambler Biclorama became a unique new amusement on Mid-Market Street in 1896.

Varney, who had formerly sold bicycles and blacksmith supplies in San Francisco, played on the building's former use as a panorama. The Biclorama was a shop for the sale and maintenance of Rambler brand bicycles, as well as a riding academy. The three-story panorama rotunda was fitted with two velodrome tracks on the upper level, which were illuminated by the building's glass dome. The outer track was for male cyclists, while the inner track for women cyclists was concealed by a high partition to protect their modesty. The lower levels of the building featured sales and repair shops serving the retail Rambler business, as well as ladies' parlors, men's smoking rooms, and separate locker rooms, dressing rooms, showers and baths for "wheelmen" and

82 "The Panorama Building," *San Francisco Call*, 1 April 1892.

83 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1899.

84 "New Boxing Arena," *San Francisco Call*, 20 January 1900.

85 German American Pioneers.org, "What Happened to the Panorama Painters?," <<http://www.germanamericanpioneers.org/documents/WhathappenedtothePanoramaPainters.pdf>>, 10 May 2011.

“wheelwomen.”⁸⁶ The Biclorama also became the headquarters of local cycling clubs including the Bay City Wheelmen and the Alpha Ladies Cycling Club.

Another venue, taking many guises over the years, but almost always dedicated to some form of sporting or recreation, was the large lot on the east corner of Market and 8th streets. From 1874 to 1881, the property had been occupied by the Mechanics Institute Pavilion, where annual mechanics’ and manufacturers’ fairs were held. The pavilion was eventually demolished and the cleared lot opened in 1884 as a baseball field known as Central Park or Recreation Park. A few small shops fronted on Market Street, while bleacher seats accommodating 15,000 spectators were located at the edges of the field providing a view of games played by the teams of the California League.⁸⁷



Baseball park at Market and 8th streets
Source: Greg Gaar Collection, San Francisco, CA

The 1899 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that the lot had become more developed and, in addition to many small shops bordering it on all sides, had an elevated steeplechase track at the center. The term is somewhat confusing as the lot is certainly too small to have lent itself to traditional equestrian steeplechase, but the track may have been used for track and field steeplechase events or as a bicycling course by the local cycling clubs.⁸⁸ The

northwest end of the track featured a terminal building with a bar on the first story and grandstand seating above. Near the north corner of the steeplechase track was a large round building housing the panorama depicting the Battle of Manila.⁸⁹

By December 1900, the steeplechase track, panorama, and other buildings on the lot had apparently been cleared. The Central Theater came and went between 1900 and 1911, after which the area remained undeveloped and served as a venue for temporary events and exhibitions like circuses and carnivals until 1922. The Circus Grounds, as they came to be called, consisted of about four acres of land with only six small shops and a saloon clustered at the west corner of the lot, leaving the rest open for events. In 1916, an ad in the *San Francisco Chronicle* promoted a four-day run of John Robinson’s four-ring circus and million-dollar menagerie, which included

⁸⁶ “New Biclorama,” *San Francisco Call*, 13 March 1896.

⁸⁷ Wikipedia: Recreation Park. McGowan, Gail. *Crystal Palace Market*. San Francisco City Guides: Guidelines, <<http://www.sfcityguides.org/>>, 10 May 2011.

⁸⁸ “The Field of Sport,” *San Francisco Call*, 11 July 1896.

⁸⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1899-1900.

fifty acts per show, two to three shows per day, and a parade. The ad also notes that the circus employed over 1,500 people.⁹⁰ Later the same year, the Sells-Floto Circus came to town and used the Circus Grounds for three days of boxing, wrestling, equestrian acts, trained elephants (with a woman trainer), forty clowns, and acts put on by Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.⁹¹ Well-known circuses like Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey also performed there, and the Circus Grounds boasted their own balloon ascension ride.⁹²

In 1922, the Circus Grounds were sold to Arthur F. Rousseau, who purchased the property from the McCreery Estate for \$1,500,000. He also bought the two adjacent lots to the east of the property and planned to immediately develop the entire site with ten four- to six-story buildings, which would be leased to furniture and clothing retailers. Plans for a theater or a large market were also proposed for the center of the site, but the 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows that only the market plan was ultimately realized.⁹³ The Crystal Palace Public Market that opened on December 14, 1922 was a large, L-shape, two-story building containing 65 stalls, each leased to an individual vendor. Stalls sold food and other goods and services, and included a bank, beauty parlor, cobbler, photography studio, appliance shop, catering service, tobacco and news stands, a florist, and thirteen restaurant stalls, and an Anchor Steam beer stand. It was touted as the largest market of its kind in the world.⁹⁴



The Crystal Palace Market, Market and 8th streets, 1927
Source: San Francisco Public Library

What had been primarily a sporting venue for much of its history was eventually developed to better meet the growing demand for retail and commerce along Market Street. As the city grew

90 John Robinson circus advertisement, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 April 1916.

91 "Well! Well! Well! Another Circus, Boys! Here We Are! The Only Champs in Captivity," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 September 1916.

92 McGowan.

93 "Big '8th and Market' Lot is Sold for \$1,500,000," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 March 1922.

94 McGowan.

and evolved, there was no longer a place for sports and physical recreation in the downtown area; such activities moved to the lesser developed fringes of the city. The ballpark-come-circus grounds made way for commerce, but it remains an interesting facet illustrating the wide variety of early entertainment along Mid-Market Street.

Nickelodeons

The ability to project motion pictures is credited to Eadweard Muybridge, whose experiments in photographing animal locomotion at Leland Stanford's horse farm in Palo Alto culminated in a showing of the first "motion pictures" to an audience at the San Francisco Art Association on May 4, 1880. The moving pictures were shown on a screen by a projector known as a Zoopraxiscope, but while Muybridge was able to project a moving image onto a screen, the pictures were merely silhouettes of his photographs printed on glass disks, not true photographs.⁹⁵

Further refinement of motion picture projection took place outside the Bay Area and was spurred by intense competition among a number of domestic and international inventors, including Thomas Edison. True motion picture projection in America was arrived at in 1896, and the finish line was crossed by both the Biograph projector and Edison's Vitascope. The former was the first device to project images for an American audience in a movie theater; the latter was the first commercially successful celluloid film-based motion picture projector.⁹⁶ With two major projection devices on the market and new developments and improvements being made constantly, 1896 was also the year that San Francisco saw its first screening of a motion picture at the Orpheum Theater. The following year, the Cineograph Theater on Market Street was one of the first theaters in the nation to feature only motion pictures.⁹⁷

Film entertainment actually waned in popularity during its first few years, after its initial novelty wore off. In 1898, however, the Spanish-American War proved an exciting subject and interest in film was renewed with the screening of war footage. However, it waned again with the end of the war. Short films continued to be integrated into vaudeville programs but didn't achieve real popularity until the advent of the nickelodeon concept.⁹⁸

The eventually ubiquitous nickelodeon originated with a storefront theater of that name in Pittsburg in 1905. The Nickelodeon was the first permanent venue to show motion pictures exclusively (typically multiple short films filling about a half-hour program), and the idea quickly spread across the country, with such theaters taking on the common name of "nickelodeon." By 1907, the United States had about 4,000 nickelodeons.⁹⁹ The same year, Mid-Market Street boasted five known theaters; the American Theater (1123 Market Street), the Central Theater (at Market and 8th streets), the Colonial Theater (just off Market Street on McAllister Street, near Jones Street), the Unique Theater (on Market near Mason Street), and the Lyceum Theater (in the Odd Fellows Hall at 7th and Market Streets). Although it is uncertain whether all of these theaters

95 Geoffrey Bell, *The Golden Gate and the Silver Screen* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1984) 31-37.

96 Filmsite. <<http://www.filmsite.org/pre20sintro2.html>>

97 Bell. p100.

98 Sewell.

99 Wikipedia: History of film. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_film>

showed nickelodeon films (as versus live vaudeville shows or other entertainment), it is possible that they may have shown moving pictures exclusively or integrated them into their broader fare. It is also likely that a number of other storefront nickelodeons were present in the area, but were not so prominent as to be listed in city directories (the Unique and Lyceum theaters were not).

The story of the Unique and Lyceum theaters represents one of the first instances of the show business industry coming to San Francisco. Around 1900, one of California's leading names in motion picture theaters, Sid Grauman (best known for Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood), got his start on Mid-Market Street. Having pursued theater-related ventures in Alaska during the Klondike Gold Rush, Grauman moved to San Francisco and joined his father in business. With 800 kitchen chairs and a piano, they opened a vaudeville theater on Market Street near Mason Street and called it the Unique Theater. Motion pictures were soon integrated into the Graumans' programs, to which they charged five cents admission. The Unique was the venue for the West Coast premier of *The Great Train Robbery* in 1903, which was considered groundbreaking for its film editing techniques. Experiencing success, the Graumans opened up a second theater called the Lyceum in the Odd Fellows Hall at 7th and Market streets and ushered in the popularity of nickelodeons in San Francisco.¹⁰⁰

Like the Graumans' early theaters, nickelodeons were commonly amateur affairs set up in small storefronts. All a nickelodeon proprietor needed to get into business was a projector, a few reels of film, and a space for an audience to gather. Shop windows could be blacked out with paper or paint, the room filled with kitchen chairs, and a screen set up at one end. Costing only a nickel for admission, and providing the ability to watch the continually repeating program for as long as one liked, nickelodeons soon became extremely popular attractions.

The inexpensive nature of nickelodeons opened early cinema to a diverse audience. They became an equalizing force between genders, classes, and ethnic backgrounds. The rise of labor unions resulted in fairer treatment of workers, including the reduction of working hours, which meant more leisure time for the working-class. Additionally, women were increasingly joining the work force, which meant that they had disposable income and could attend shows without having to be "treated" by a man. This resulted in women attending nickelodeons alone and with their children (often in comparable frequency to men's patronage of saloons). Subsequently, nickelodeons came to be seen as safe, family-friendly venues. Theaters marketed to women particularly because of these evolutions and because attracting a female audience gave a theater an air of respectability. Nickelodeons also became appropriate places for courtship, as young unmarried women frequented them and the dark, social, dramatic atmosphere lent itself to romantic interaction between genders while still "chaperoned" by the surrounding audience.¹⁰¹

Low admission prices allowed working-class patrons to attend. Because the working class was largely an immigrant population, the fact that early films were silent meant they could be appreciated by all, despite language barriers. For this reason, many nickelodeons were located in and

100 Susan Saperstein. *Grauman's Theaters*. San Francisco City Guides: Guidelines, <<http://www.sfcityguides.org>> 11 May 2011.

101 Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.)

around residential, working-class neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves. Those on Mid-Market Street may have actually served a slightly more elite demographic, simply because they were located in a primarily commercial district that would have required travel out of one's home neighborhood to attend. Women who were out shopping at department stores and shops along Market Street would likely have been the usual audience at Mid-Market Street theaters. In fact, nickelodeons were most numerous on south side of Market Street between 2nd and 7th streets, with seven located west of fifth street, closest to the less expensive department stores.¹⁰²

The business of early cinema consisted not only of showing films but also making and distributing films. In the years leading up to 1908, the industry was a free-for-all for small independent film makers. Locally, the Miles Brothers were pioneers in film making and distribution. After capturing a collection of motion pictures while doing railroad survey work in Alaska, the two eldest brothers opened a theater in Seattle in which to exhibit their films. As initial interest in the films waned, the Miles Brothers shut down their theater and relocated to San Francisco in 1902, where they were eventually joined by their two younger siblings. Their most significant achievement occurred at this time, with the establishment of the country's first motion picture exchange. The brothers conceived of a business that would rent films to theaters, freeing theater operators from having to purchase expensive reels that were only good until their entertainment value was depleted. A typical entertainment program consisted of multiple film reels, each costing up to \$100, so this revolutionary concept reduced costs for theater operators, while providing the Miles Brothers with a hefty income from renting reels out multiple times to various theaters.

The Miles Brothers established themselves as the West Coast representatives of the prominent American Mutoscope & Biograph Company out of New York (one of the originators of projected motion pictures) and eventually distributed Biograph films across the West and into Canada. As the popularity of nickelodeons skyrocketed after 1905, the Miles Brothers achieved commercial success, eventually opening distribution offices throughout the country, but always remaining headquartered in San Francisco. In addition to film reels, they also rented out projectors, further lessening the cost and commitment for start-up nickelodeons.¹⁰³

The Miles Brothers also undertook their own filming to supplement the reels of footage their distribution business could offer for rent, and, during the time they contracted with Biograph, actually produced film for the company to copyright. They later broke away from Biograph, however, and took on more ambitious filming under their own name. In 1905, they filmed a boxing match that lasted 75 minutes and required multiple specially modified cameras to handle the amount of film needed to capture a scene of such length. For a short time the Miles Brothers used a film studio they set up in a former fraternal hall at 1139 Market Street, where they could film staged narrative films, which were coming into fashion. Unfortunately, the 1906 earthquake destroyed the studio before the Miles Brothers could get fully into producing story films and quashed further growth of the company.

¹⁰² Sewell.

¹⁰³ David Kiehn, "The Miles Brothers: Film Pioneers in San Francisco." *Argonaut Journal of the San Francisco Historical Society* 20:2 (Winter 2009): p72-85

The Miles Brothers are well known for their fortuitous filming of “A Trip Down Market Street,” which documented San Francisco’s main thoroughfare only days before it was destroyed by the 1906 earthquake and fire. This and a similar film, “A Trip Down Mt. Tamalpais,” were filmed for Hale’s Tours, which featured the novel format of a theater outfitted like a railroad car that provided the sensory illusion of a train ride complete with whistles and rail noises, rocking and movement of the theater enclosure, blowing air, and painted scenery scrolling past side windows. The projector was located at the rear of the “car” with a screen at the front. Like “A Trip Down Market Street,” all the films shown in Hale’s Tours theaters consisted of forward-moving single-takes to create the illusion of realistic motion through the scenery. “A Trip Down Market Street” began near the Miles Brother’s studio at 8th and Market streets and proceeded toward the Ferry Building, covering a 14-minute traverse of the streetscape, a length made possible by the modified cameras that the Miles Brothers had developed for their earlier boxing match film.¹⁰⁴

The content of early films was much akin to “A Trip Down Market Street,” simple scenes of every day life that were non-narrative and intended merely to demonstrate the new marvel of moving pictures. Later, pictures that were much like (and sometimes were) filmed versions of vaudeville acts were made. Before 1905, these films retained the bawdy overtones of variety acts, but began to be tempered as nickelodeon audiences became increasingly female. Around 1908, the dime novels that were popular at the time (especially with young women) began being translated into short melodramatic films, which in turn increased women’s interest in cinema. Romance and comedic gender interactions continued to be a major theme in film, which was titillating even to proper audiences but typically ended with a statement on morality. As films became narrative, they engendered greater following from audiences who became captivated by the fiction and intrigued by the on-screen talent. Initially, actors were anonymous, but soon audiences began identifying favorites and wanted to know the actors’ names and about their off-screen identities. Thus, movie stars and fans came into being.

Early narrative films tended to be about “common” men and women and sympathized with the poor against the wealthy. Movie makers and working-class audiences both identified with this perspective, while members of the middle-class who might happen to attend nickelodeons (less common, but not unheard of) viewed it as a voyeuristic glimpse in to the lives of the other half. Later, this favored perspective was reversed as middle-class audiences grew. As society began breaking out of the restrained propriety of the Victorian era, the American ideal of middle-class life, which offered the possibility of upward mobility, personal freedom, grand romance, and expressiveness, became the popular theme in cinema. This perspective sided with the upper classes and somewhat alienated traditional working-class viewers, making them the voyeurs into another way of life; however, it did not seem to turn them away from the theaters.

Act Two 1906-1946

As with all other businesses in downtown San Francisco, the 1906 earthquake and fires had devastating consequences for theaters and film-related businesses. After the Miles Brothers’ reel of “A Trip Down Market Street” barely escaped the disaster (the film was taken by train to

¹⁰⁴ Kiehn.

New York the night before the earthquake hit), their business was left burnt-out, with \$80,000 in losses, and only a couple of undamaged cameras.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the Miles Brothers and many other motion picture enterprises made the most of the situation and were some of the first businesses to come back after the disaster. The Miles Brothers took their remaining cameras and recorded the aftermath of the disaster, distributing the films to audiences eager for a glimpse of San Francisco in ruins. Local theaters also bounced back, in part because they required little equipment and could be housed in a tent. As Market Street was rebuilt after the 1906 disaster, theaters and other such entertainment venues were common and successful. For as little as five cents, San Francisco's quake-shocked population could buy a half-hour of escapist entertainment, which boosted morale. Both of the Graumans' theaters, the Unique and the Lyceum, were destroyed in the 1906 disaster, but the Graumans reacted quickly, salvaging one projector, a few reels of film, and pews from a burnt church. They erected a large tent on the site where the Unique Theater had stood on Mid-Market Street and began showing movies. They were later awarded a commendation by the city for uplifting public morale for this. After two years in the tent theater, the Grauman's opened the New National Theater at Post and Steiner and eventually another theater on Market Street, between 5th and 6th streets, called the Empress Theater (later, the St. Francis Theater), which could seat an audience of 1,800.¹⁰⁶

Similarly, the Central Theater, which had opened on the Circus Grounds at 8th and Market Streets around 1900, was destroyed in the disaster but quickly reopened within two months. From June through October of 1906, it was housed in a large tent, and named literally the Tent Theater. Eventually moving into a permanent building with a broad barrel vaulted roof and fly tower, the theater reclaimed its original name and operated as the Central Theater until 1912.¹⁰⁷

1911 was the only year in which San Francisco city directories provided a separate section listing nickelodeons, with at least sixty in the city, six of which were located along Mid-Market Street: Elite Theater, Golden Palace Theater, Market Street Theater, Panama Theater, Pantages Theater, and Premium Theater. No directory section was provided for



Central Theater, operating out of a tent after the 1906 earthquake
Source: San Francisco Public Library

theaters or moving picture theaters; however, the amusements section listed four theaters along Mid-Market Street: American Theater, Central Theater, Orpheum Theater, and Savoy Theater. It

¹⁰⁵ Kiehn.

¹⁰⁶ Saperstein.

¹⁰⁷ McGowan. Historic photos of Central/Tent Theater with captions, AAA-8615/8616, 9127; San Francisco Public Library Historic Photo Collection.

can be assumed that these were primarily vaudeville and live theater venues, while the “nickelodeons” showed film programs. Some, like the Pantages, were known to be more major venues showing a mixed live and film program, rather than the quintessential storefront nickelodeon. A *San Francisco Call* article from 1911 reflects the explosion in nickelodeon numbers in an article concerned with the illegal licensing of “cheap theaters” and new restrictions put on the number of seats each nickelodeon was allowed to have (fewer than 400 in any nickelodeon housed in a wooden building).¹⁰⁸



Undated photo of the Pantages Theater (located in the building that would later house the Kress store)

Source: San Francisco Public Library

Nickelodeons continued to serve the working class population of San Francisco in the following years, but as the popularity of motion pictures grew and became more attractive to middle and upper class audiences, movie-makers and theaters responded by producing longer, more elaborately produced films, which were shown in large, lavish movie theaters, often called movie palaces. Prices at palace theaters were often twice that of nickelodeons and varied by time of day and seating section to ensure that lower class patrons did not attend at peak times and stayed in less desirable sections of seats segregated from upper classes. Growing beyond the simple nickelodeon, movie palaces became the craze of the 1910s and onward.

Feature films developed around 1909 and by 1915 had become standard motion picture fare. In cases where nickelodeons showed programs of many consecutive short films and vaudeville theaters showed live acts interspersed with film, the feature film was one within the program that was set apart from the short clips or acts. A feature film was typically longer, eventually

¹⁰⁸ “Grand Jury Joins Nickelodeon Fight,” *San Francisco Call*, 20 November 1911.

referring to any multi-reel film, and had more plot, acting and special effects to its credit.¹⁰⁹

Coinciding with the development of feature films, Thomas Edison established the Motion Pictures Patents Company in 1909, which was an attempt to regulate (and in fact eliminate) the operations of over 10,000 small, independent film producers, distributors, and exhibitors across the country, who until that point had been producing films at will. Although the Miles Brothers had taken a hard hit in 1906, they had continued to produce industrial and actuality films (forerunners of the documentary) and rent out films by other producers until this move by Edison pushed them to bankruptcy in 1910.¹¹⁰

The Motion Pictures Patents Company was actually a conglomerate of a number of prominent early film producers including American Vitagraph Studios (founded 1897), Biograph Company (1895), Lubin Studios (1902), Essanay Studios (1907), Pathé (1896), Kalem Company (1907), Georges Méliès (1897), Selig Studios (1896), and George Klein Productions. They were opposed by the Motion Picture Distributing and Sales Company, a conglomerate of independent filmmakers, one of whom was Herbert Miles. Although the independents eventually won out and Edison's attempt was deemed to be a unlawful trust and dissolved in 1915, it marked the first move toward making motion pictures a legitimate industry, one that would grow to include a relatively small cast of successful and influential movie studios and distribution companies that would eventually go so far as to brand and control chains of theaters.¹¹¹

In the beginning, feature films often traveled, like a stage performance, with an exhibitor taking the show on the road with scheduled showings in different locations. When the exhibitor had played the film to the extent of its entertainment value as a special show, the reels would often be sold to small local theaters or nickelodeons that would play it to local audiences and possibly to the lower-class demographics less likely to have seen the film as a special traveling show. Eventually, feature films became more stationary (and more regulated); the transition is evidenced in the number of formal theaters that began to be established on Mid-Market Street after 1909. 1912 was the first year in which moving picture theaters were listed as a distinct category in city directories, although in the previous year, motion picture theaters big and small were apparently listed as nickelodeons. 1912 also marked the formation of Universal Studios, one of the first film production companies to emerge after the dissolution of Edison's Motion Pictures Patents Company.¹¹² This marked the start of a competitive business environment for motion picture production, distribution, and exhibition; however, during the early years it did not influence the ownership or management of theaters. The theaters on Mid-Market Street remained largely independent, with only a few belonging to newly forming chains like those presided over by Sid Grauman and Alexander Pantages.

Motion pictures eventually become legitimized and by around 1917 were generally considered

109 Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema, 1907-1915* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

110 Kiehn, 83.

111 Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_film_studio>

112 Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_film_studio>

on equal terms with live theater. As feature length films became the norm and “movies” took off as a popular form of entertainment, movie palaces became larger, more showy, and with greater public visibility than nickelodeons. In contrast to nickelodeons tucked into storefronts, movie palaces were typically located in purpose-built structures that were architecturally distinct from the stores and office buildings around them. Major theaters were stand-alone buildings with high style architecture and eye-catching decoration. Smaller theaters defined themselves by way of large arched entries, prominent marquees, and elaborate ornamentation that differentiated them from adjacent shops, although storefronts were sometimes located along the front of the building, which was placed mid-block to achieve some integration with the streetscape.

The geography of movie palaces along Market Street responded to the geography of department stores, with theaters situated north of Market Street (around Union Square), adjacent to but not within the shopping district, and scattered westward along both sides of Mid-Market Street. In 1911, there were ten theaters along Mid-Market Street, including both those considered to be theaters and those considered to be nickelodeons. They included the Savoy Theater (which had opened as the Colonial in 1907); the Market Street Theater (opened in 1909), the Elite Nickelodeon, the Pantages Theater (opened in 1911), the Empress Theater (opened in 1910), the Panama Theater, the Premium Theater, the Golden Palace Theater (opened in 1908), the American Theater (opened in 1907), and the Central Theater (which had opened on the site of the Circus Grounds at 8th and Market Streets in 1906, immediately after the earthquake, and was closed by 1911).



Central Theater, rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake
Source: The Bancroft Library. University of California, Berkeley.

The American Theatre (1125 Market Street), designed by the Reid Brothers, was already under construction in 1906 when the earthquake and fires devastated San Francisco. Delayed, but not destroyed, it eventually opened in January 1907. Over the years it was known as the Rialto Theater in 1910, the Rivoli in 1923, and, perhaps most recognizably, as the Embassy Theater in 1927. In 1929 it was the first theater in San

Francisco to show Vitaphone Talking Pictures, which were some of the earliest “talkies” to be produced by Warner Brothers.¹¹³

113 Cinema Treasures <<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/3127>>



Embassy Theater, 1964
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The Market Street Theater (934 Market Street) opened in 1909 in one of the first large-scale theater buildings on Market Street. It was known as the Alhambra Theater in 1917, the Frolic in 1919, the Cameo in 1923, and the Marion Davies Theater in 1929. It gained its most recognizable identity as the Esquire Theater in 1940.¹¹⁴

The Empress Theater (at 949-961 Market Street) was designed by architect John Galen Howard in 1910. In 1917, it was taken over by Sid Grauman, who renamed it the Strand Theater and added it to his growing group of San Francisco theaters. It became the St. Francis Theater in 1924, and has remained such ever since. In 1912, another Grauman-owned theater, the Imperial, opened at 1077 Market Street. The theater was designed by Cunningham & Politeo and was a first-run movie venue. In 1929, it became the Premier Theater and then the United Artists Theater in 1931.¹¹⁵

The Pantages Theater (941 Market Street) was one of the initial links in the chain of theaters that came to dominate the western United States and Canada under the Pantages name. Like Sid Grauman, Alexander Pantages had gotten his start as a vaudeville and film exhibitor in Alaska during the Klondike Gold Rush, and after establishing theaters in the Northwest came to San Francisco around 1908. Pantages' first theater in San Francisco was



Empress Theater, 1910 (later known as the St. Francis)
Source: San Francisco Public Library

¹¹⁴ Cinema Treasures <<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/3130>>

¹¹⁵ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com>>

located at Sutter and Steiner Streets, but around 1910, moved to Market Street and was located at the rear of an office block at 939 Market Street. Pantages retained the vaudeville genre, but likely showed a program that increasingly featured motion pictures.

With the opening of these theaters and others, the 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance map illustrates the explosion of movie palaces along Mid-Market Street. City directories confirm that eleven theaters were in operation at that time, including most of those named previously. Some shifting did occur, however. The Tivoli Theater opened in 1913 where the Tivoli Opera House had been since 1879. The new building initially housed live theater and, later, movies. The Premium and Central theaters closed, while the Maio Biograph (in a theater formerly occupied by the Lesser Nickelodeon), Grauman's Imperial, and Jewel theaters opened, and the Elite nickelodeon relocated into the former Golden Palace Theater.

The Jewel Theater (1139 Market Street) opened in 1917 as another link in the Grauman chain. It became the Sun Theater and then the College Theater in 1920, the Francesca in 1921, and then the Strand in 1928. (The earlier Strand Theater, also owned by Grauman, at 949-961 Market Street, had closed by that time.) The theater was operated by the West Side Theater Company from 1940 to 1977, showing triple-features and hosting nightly bingo games.



The Strand Theater, 1960
Source: San Francisco Public Library

After Thomas Edison's Motion Pictures Patents Company was dissolved in 1912, a number of new motion picture production and distribution studios emerged in the following years. Universal Studios had been instrumental in defeating Thomas Edison's trust and was soon joined in the industry by Paramount Pictures (1912). Fox Films was founded in 1914, Warner Bros. in 1918, and United Artists in 1919. As its name suggests, the latter was a partnership of four well-known artists: director D.W. Griffith, and actors Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks. The 1920s saw the founding of Loews/MGM (1924), which came into being when nickelodeon and vaudeville proprietor Marcus Loew founded MGM as a motion picture branch of his business, and RKO Pictures in 1928.¹¹⁶ Over the coming decades, these studios would

influence the ownership and management of many of the theaters on Mid-Market Street, often with studio names appended to or replacing the theater's existing name. The studios also dictated programming, with only movies produced by a studio shown in its affiliated theaters. Because

¹¹⁶ Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_film_studio>

certain actors had long-term contracts with specific studios as well, the studio name would dictate which theater one might attend to see a certain star or signature genre. Independent, unaffiliated theaters continued to show films from a variety of studios, but often as late- or second-run features in a discounted, multi-feature program.

By 1920, a dozen theaters were present on Mid-Market Street, many being the same theater buildings under new names. The Pantages, the Tivoli, the Maio Biograph, the Panama, and the Imperial remained and were joined by the Oriental, the Frolic, the Strand, the Central, Aaron Goldberg Theaters, the Rialto and the Sun. The year 1925 saw the peak of movie palace presence on Mid-Market Street, with seventeen theaters lining the thoroughfare. The Golden Gate, the Warfield, the Granada, the Fox, and a new Pantages all opened in the 1920s and are marked by their elaborate architecture.

The Granada Theatre (1066 Market Street) opened in 1921 and later became part of the Fox chain. The building was an elaborate Andalusian-style movie palace designed by Alfred Henry Jacobs that would come to be known by its most recognized name, the Paramount Theater, in 1931.



Undated photo of the Granada Theater
Source: San Francisco Public Library

1922 belonged to the Warfield and the Golden Gate theaters, two of the major venues on Mid-Market Street. Both designed by prominent theater architect G. Albert Lansburgh, they still survive today. The Warfield Theater (982-989 Market Street) was a 9-story office tower with a theater at the rear that cost \$3.5 million to build. It was affiliated with Loews Theaters when it opened and later became affiliated with Fox. On opening night the theater featured the MGM-produced movie “The Fourteenth Love” with a guest appearance by its star Viola Dana and other Hollywood notables. For many years, a mixed program of vaudeville and silent films was featured. After the demise of vaudeville, the Warfield became a dedicated motion picture theater and stage performances did not resume again until the 1940s, when they shared the program with motion pictures. The Golden Gate Theater (1 Taylor Street) opened as a primarily vaudeville venue, but evolved to show motion pictures including high-tech Cinerama

films that were revolutionary for their multi-projector format. The storefronts along the façade of the building were typically occupied by theater-related businesses.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com>>

In 1925, the Egyptian Theater (1067 Market Street) opened with a program of low-priced, late-run releases. In 1943, it became the Studio Theater and showed sensational B movies to entertain the many servicemen that were on shore leave in the city during World War II. In 1947, the theater became the Guild, and for a year showed first-run re-releases of well-known movies like *Gone with the Wind*. At the end of 1947, the theater returned to showing low-priced, late-run action films in a triple-feature program that cost fifty cents.¹¹⁸



Warfield Theater, 1922
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The Pompeii Theater (1046 Market Street) was opened in mid-1925 and in 1936 was renamed the Regal Theater. The Regal was a small-scale theater that showed a program of low-priced action films that were changed multiple times a week. The theater later attempted to boost attendance by showing triple-features and including cartoons with every program.¹¹⁹

In 1926, a new Pantages Theater was built at 1182 Market Street and was designed by Alexander Pantages' preferred architect from Seattle, Benjamin Marcus Priteca, who developed the well-known "Pantages Greek" aesthetic for the theater chain. It only remained in operation for another few years, before the Pantages chain and its physical holdings were sold to RKO in 1929. By that time, vaudeville performances had been discontinued and the theater showed a dedicated motion picture program. The theater eventually became the Orpheum Theater, as it is known today.



The new Pantages Theater, 1929
(now known as the Orpheum)
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The Fox Theater (1350 Market Street), designed by Thomas Lamb in 1929, was owned and operated by movie pioneer William Fox and the Fox Film Corporation. It featured films produced by Fox Films, as well as stage shows. The Fox opened with the premier of "Behind That Curtain" starring Charlie Chan. During the Great Depression, the theater closed for six months due to financial difficulties, but was soon revived.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com/mid-market/>>

¹¹⁹ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com/>>

¹²⁰ Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_Theater_San_Francisco>

By 1930, the number of theaters on Mid-Market Street had shrunk to fifteen and generally stayed so through the decade. Within the same group of theater buildings, the Golden Gate was taken over by the film production and distribution company RKO, which appended its identity to the Golden Gate name. The Tivoli, which had been called the Columbia Theater (likely after the film studio of the same name), regained its traditional name, while the Embassy Theater, which had done a



Fox Theater, 1929

Source: San Francisco Public Library

short stint as a Warner Brothers Theater, reverted to being called the Embassy. It became a popular second-run film venue and featured a Ten-O-Win roulette raffle at each show.¹²¹ The Circle Theater (formerly the Maio Biograph) was remodeled in the Art Moderne style and became the New Circle Theater. The Imperial, after having been the Premier Theater for three years, became the United Artists Theater, and the Granada became the Paramount, fleshing out the trend toward name branding by film studios that is evident in theaters with names like RKO, Warner Brothers, United Artists, Fox, Paramount, and Loew's.

In 1939, both the Telenews Theater (930 Market Street) and the Newsreel Theater (980 Market Street) opened; the latter in the former location of the Circle/New Circle Theater. This was a direct response to the beginning of World War II and the public's interest in wartime footage and newsreels, television not being generally available or accessible to the public at that time. Both theaters appear to have shown programs of such newsreels, with the Telenews Theater opening with a showing of footage from the Nazi invasion of Poland.



Esquire and Telenews theaters, 1964

Source: San Francisco Public Library

During World War II, humor and morale-boosting entertainment was still needed. The Esquire Theater provided this as a popular first-run outlet for Universal's Abbott & Costello comedies, Maria Montez Technicolor costume adventure films, and the very popular Universal horror films.¹²² The year 1944 witnessed the addition of another

¹²¹ Cinema Treasures <<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/3127>>

¹²² Cinema Treasures <<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/3130>> Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com>>

new theater on Mid-Market Street, the Round Up at 1071 Market Street. Appropriate to its name, the theater offered a program of Western double-features that changed daily. It became the Center Theater in 1947 and showed a variety of action films and re-released films until 1949 when it came to specialize in comedies, shown with cartoons and short films. The theater had a long narrow “shooting gallery” layout with a single center aisle, which prevented it from showing widescreen films when they became the norm in the 1950s. The Center Theater stayed in business by converting to adult films, which it showed until 1987, when it was closed and converted to retail space.¹²³

Fade to Black; 1946-1974

In 1946, another tiny theater opened at 942 Market Street. Known as the Pix Theater, it was also a “shooting gallery,” like the Round Up. It did not issue tickets or have many guest amenities, but it did have air conditioning and a screen just wide enough to accommodate widescreen format films. The Pix showed a fifty-cent program of primarily violent, sensational action films in a triple-feature program with cartoons. In 1950, the Pix became the Newsvue, which, like the Newsreel and Telenews, showed only newsreels on weekdays. On weekends it showed cartoons. By 1955, the name Pix Theater had been restored, as had the former action film fare. Like so many others, the Pix eventually became an adult theater before being closed in 1972.¹²⁴

Prior to the conversion of these small theaters to adult film venues, the first adult theater had arrived on Mid-Market Street in 1947. The President Follies Burlesque (60 McAllister) started a trend that would grow to become a major presence in the area today. Having originally opened in 1907 as one of the earliest theaters on Mid-Market Street, it was formerly known as the Colonial, Savoy, Oriental, Plaza and President theaters. The President Follies Burlesque was eventually joined in its genre by the Market Street Cinema in 1972 (in the former Imperial/United Artists Theater), the Bijou and Pussycat theaters in 1974 (in the former Pompeii/Regal Theater and former Egyptian Theater, respectively), and the Crazy Horse Theater in 1994 (in the former Maio/Circle/Newsreel Theater).

In 1949, the Sanborn Fire Insurance map and city directory show that theater numbers remained steady at seventeen, with few relocations or changes of name. The Tivoli Theater closed, ending its extremely long tenure as a Mid-Market Street entertainment venue. The Telenews also appears to have closed, as did its cohort the Newsreel; their roles assumed by the growing presence of televisions in private homes. Otherwise, for the most part the remaining theaters stayed in situ and under the same names into the 1960s.

In 1964, the construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) commenced, which included extensive excavation and construction along Market Street, under which the subway runs. This seemed to mark the beginning of Mid-Market Street’s decline and the loss or degradation of many of its theaters and movie palaces. The President Follies Burlesque closed in 1963. The building was demolished and the site is now occupied by a high-rise community center for senior

¹²³ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com/mid-market/>>

¹²⁴ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com>>

citizens. The Fox Theater closed the same year and the Paramount Theater closed in 1965. Both of these large and architecturally striking movie palaces met unfortunate ends with the wrecking ball. The Fox Theater had attempted to stay open by hosting a series of Saturday midnight organ concerts in 1960, but was not successful. Fox Plaza, a mixed-use high-rise building, replaced the theater, retaining only the name reference for posterity. The former site of the Paramount is now a surface parking lot, with a small commercial building located on Market Street, in the block face gap where the theater's marquee and entrance used to be.

In 1968, the St. Francis Theater was twinned, meaning that it was converted from a single screen theater to one with two screens in an effort to increase film offerings and attendance. Until 1975, the theater on the second floor was known as the Baronet, while the first floor theater remained the St. Francis. From 1975 to 2001, they were simply known as the St. Francis I and II. During its later years, the theater showed adult films and became another contributor to the seedy nature of Mid-Market Street. It was finally closed in 2001 and remains vacant and boarded up today.

The construction of BART continued through the 1960s until the system was put into operation in 1972.

Along with the Market

Street Beautification Act of 1964, which called for the removal of most theater marquees and illuminated signage on Market Street, and the later advent of home video, which decreased attendance at theaters, the demise of the Mid-Market theater district was set into motion.¹²⁵ In 1970, the United Artists Theater closed. It was reopened as a Loew's theater that struggled for two years before becoming the Market Street Cinema, an adult theater that still operates today. Transit-related development also spelled the end for the Esquire Theater and Telenews Theater,



St. Francis Theater, 1964
Source: San Francisco Public Library

¹²⁵ Up from the Deep <<http://upfromthedeep.com/mid-market/>>

which both closed and were demolished to make way for Hallidie Plaza, the Powell Street BART station and the cable car turnaround. In 1974, the Regal and Guild Theaters were converted to adult theaters known as the Bijou and Pussycat, respectively. The latter remained in operation until 1987 and the former until 1989. The Center and Embassy theaters also survived into the late 1980s (1987 and 1989, respectively), but developed tarnished reputations. Notably, the Embassy, which showed adult films in its later years, was damaged and eventually condemned by the Loma Prieta Earthquake. Next door to the Warfield Theater, the small theater that was known as the Crest from 1958 to 1978, became the Egyptian in 1978 and the Electric in 1981. In 1994, it became an adult theater known as the Crazy Horse.¹²⁶

The Strand Theater was kept afloat for a while by theater proprietor Mike Thomas, who purchased it in 1977. He also owned and operated the Warfield, the Crest, and the Embassy theaters around this time. The Strand was remodeled and its reputation cleaned up. For a time it was a popular venue for revival cinema and was known for its midnight showings of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show.” The Strand Theater closed in 1994 and reopened as an adult theater that operated until 2003, when it was shut down due to illegal activities taking place on the premises. It remains vacant today.¹²⁷

Through the years of Mid-Market Street’s decline, the Warfield Theater managed to survive by adapting from a movie palace to a rock concert venue. Perhaps its edgier audience was more amenable to the seedy surroundings than traditional movie-goers might have been. The theater was home to the Grateful Dead for many years and was a regular venue for shows promoted by Bill Graham Presents, as well as numerous other notable bands and musical talents. The theater was recently rehabilitated and reopened as a venue continuing to show music concerts, comedy shows, and other stage entertainment. The Warfield’s sister theater, the Golden Gate, also survived, although it experienced sporadic programming and periods of vacancy through the years of Mid-Market Street’s decline. The Orpheum Theater also sustained itself to the present day. After many years as a movie palace it was remodeled in 1977 and became the home of the Civic Light Opera. It eventually became a successful venue for stage performances, including Broadway plays.

Today eight historic theater buildings remain on Mid-Market Street. The Golden Gate, Warfield and Orpheum theaters still operate as high-end theaters, although they now offer Broadway plays and music concerts rather than motion pictures. The St. Francis, the Center, and the Strand theaters have been closed and either stand vacant or have other uses. The Crazy Horse and the Market Street Cinema both function as adult theaters.

¹²⁶ Cinema Treasures <<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/5741>>

¹²⁷ Cinema Treasures <<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/5741>>

F. Social Space of Market Street (1880-1974)

Market Street itself is historically one of the premier social spaces of San Francisco, site of both organized and spontaneous congregations of citizens come together to celebrate or protest civic affairs and historic moments. In between such occasions, and often at the same time, it was historically a large open air space in which to see and be seen by fellow citizens, to enjoy time with friends or sample the pleasures on offer to consumers of the new and expanding middle class culture. In short, to be a San Franciscan: simultaneously observer and actor in the story of the city.

The nature of the space itself invites this use. Even before the commercial and civic enticements were in place, people were drawn to Market Street, perhaps by the spacious contrast it made with the more cramped areas on both sides of it. Writing in 1912 about the period of the 1880s, John Phillip Young records:

The street crowds at night were a particularly noticeable feature. The climatic conditions being such as to tempt people out doors after sun down, the evening saunter developed into a habit, and the south side of Market and the west side of Kearny became a fashionable promenade. The wide sidewalks were crowded from curb to house line with a leisurely moving throng, and rapid progress could only be made by taking to the street or passing over to the less popular side, which would be nearly deserted. This parade was repeated on Saturday afternoons after the matinee performances in the theaters, which were mostly situated on Bush Street, the Baldwin having penetrated farthest west. The north side of Market street and the west side of Kearny continued to enjoy the favor of promenaders long after large department stores, erected on the south side of the principal thoroughfare, began to offer attractions in the way of brilliantly illuminated show windows, which rivaled those of the more popular side.

This tendency was so marked that it created an impression that the north side of Market Street would always enjoy supremacy, and it had a decided effect on the prices of real estate. In the period we are now dealing with the region “south of the slot,” a slang phrase suggested by the cable road on Market street, had not put forth any claims to recognition as a business center. Mission street was still a thoroughfare lined with private residences, some of which had seen better days, but none of which were remarkable either for size or beauty in the down town district. The owners of property, however, were not inclined to underrate its value, but with the prescience which such possession begets peered far into the future and predicted changes which were later wrought. But the public generally insisted upon thinking of “south of the slot” as a section destined to permanently hold the unenviable distinction which attaches to congested quarters in large cities.¹²⁸

The custom of the promenade, an unofficial but universally understood time and place for people to congregate, is probably as old as cities themselves. Some European cities have specially built sites for the purpose. In the Spanish tradition, the ubiquitous central plaza served. In this country the tradition often involved a cool spot where summer heat could be minimized, the levy in New Orleans, the Battery in New York. For San Francisco, Portsmouth Plaza and Union Square were

128 Young, John P. *San Francisco a History of the Pacific Coast Metropolis Vol II.* (San Francisco. S J Clarke Publishing Company. 1912.) p547

the early locations. Promenading, as the term suggests, usually involved some degree of movement. With nodal locations such as plazas, the movement was circular, around the periphery. In warmer climates, especially in the Spanish tradition, the plaza was often ringed by colonnades that offered more relief from the heat. This, of course, was not necessary in San Francisco, but in the early days shelter from the near constant wind-blown sand was welcome.

Most promenades were defined or structured by social class. We see this in the passage from Young quoted above. By the 1880s, the theater industry had become socially stratified with what is now known as “legitimate theater” casting off its more déclassé aspects, seeking to attract a genteel audience. The bawdier, less “respectable” entertainment cast out was to become the nucleus for a new form of popular entertainment—vaudeville. With the legitimate theaters all located north of Market, the Saturday matinee patrons could be expected to come from a higher social stratum than those who took to the “less popular” south side. And as we have seen in Section B above (*Social and Cultural Development 1865-1906*) Mid-Market was fast becoming the habitat of the emerging new middle class.

Mid-Market was less popular with the people Young was describing perhaps, but it was more popular in the broader sense. In *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco 1890-1915*, Jessica Sewell finds clear social declivities not only north and south of Market Street, but east and west of Fifth Street:

While tea rooms clustered around the elite shopping district downtown [Union Square and north of Market], the largest concentration of cafeterias was along Market Street, particularly between Third and Seventh. Market Street shops on the whole served a less elite audience, particularly south [west] of Fifth Street, and these cafeterias were highly accessible to those less elite shoppers, as well as to women working in downtown shops and offices.¹²⁹

Sewell is referring to a time when, as Young relates, “...large department stores, erected on the south side of the principal thoroughfare, began to offer attractions in the way of brilliantly illuminated show windows, which rivaled those of the more popular side.”¹³⁰ This is the beginning of “window shopping,” a synthesis of the more ancient urge to promenade with the creation of a new consumer culture. And Mid-Market would become a center of the new pastime.

Department stores are treated more fully elsewhere in this Context Statement, as are popular entertainment properties—the less legitimate offspring of the north-of-the-slot theaters. These uses were attracted to Market Street because, among other reasons, foot traffic was already present. They then acted as anchor tenants around which smaller businesses targeted to the people found there—cafeterias, rather than tea rooms—clustered. Eventually, the streetscape was the product of its inhabitants, a socially created space. Underlying its creation were social-political decisions stretching back to Jasper O’Farrell, who in 1847 projected a major thoroughfare through desolate sand dunes, and to the decision twenty five years later to build a new city hall in that same wilderness.

¹²⁹ Sewell, p80

¹³⁰ Young, op cit

In addition to class, Mid-Market also displayed clear gender coloration. Dry goods stores, department stores, and five-and-tens were both staffed and patronized primarily by women. Market Street, Sewell claims, “was male before noon, female from noon to five, and mixed gender from five on.”¹³¹ Mid-Market was perhaps less clearly male before noon than the blocks closer to the business district, but from noon on, through the prime ladies’ shopping and lunch hours, it was definitely female. And thanks to the plentiful entertainment and low cost dining establishments, it was mixed gender in the evening. Thus, the area approached the Jane Jacobs ideal of 24 hour street life.

As Mid-Market was becoming a place of particularly middle class presence, it was also being integrated into the larger social space of the city as a whole. One measure of this process is the history of parade routes in San Francisco. From the earliest days of the gold rush, the city had seen holiday celebrations in the form of public processions, what historian Mary P. Ryan calls “The Performance of People in Association.”¹³² An organized parade can communicate *who* is important in the society—by who is included in the participants or the reviewers—what *places* are important—by the route and terminus—and *what* is important—by the events or holidays commemorated. It can also communicate in a negative voice, disdain for or triumph over a population—by marching in an area where it is not welcomed.

In the early years, public processions were restricted to the immediate vicinity of Portsmouth Plaza. Soulé describes many such events from the early 1850s, all taking place at the Plaza and on “the principal streets” nearby.¹³³ This usually meant a loop down Montgomery to Market and back up Kearny to the Plaza. The closing action of the 1856 Vigilantes was to march up 3rd Street en masse and down Market to Montgomery, then north to the Plaza. But their foray into the South of Market was probably intended to intimidate the working class population of that area.



Portsmouth Plaza, 1856
Source: San Francisco Public Library

¹³¹ Sewell, p 22

¹³² Ryan, Mary P. *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

¹³³ Soulé, Frank, John H. Gihon and James Nisbet. *The Annals of San Francisco*. (New York, Appleton & Co. 1854)



Labor Day parade, 1935
Source: San Francisco Public Library

By 1869, participants in the 4th of July parades were forming up at 6th and Market, but marched from there to the Plaza. Until the advent of the Workingmen's Party and the Sandlot era the routes of these parades seldom strayed into Mid-Market. The Workingmen's Party, which in the late 1870s was at the peak of its importance, viewed the sandlots around the new city hall construction site as sacred ground, often paraded from there down Market Street.

By the turn of the 20th century, Market Street was the primary route for most public processions. In 1901 the Labor Day parade formed on East Street (the Embarcadero) and marched up Market to Montgomery, to California, to Kearny, back down to Market, and out to Van Ness, then back to the Mechanics' Pavilion at 10th Street. In this period, Labor Day parades, though they terminated at the Mechanics' Pavilion, often lingered at Market and Kearny, site of the De Young family's Chronicle Building, to express

defiance of the newspaper's fierce anti-labor stance. In 1905, following the election of a complete Union Labor Party city government, a celebratory rocket accidentally destroyed the large clock tower that crowned that building and contained the owner's private office.

Parades are also a primary medium for the expression of military pride, and Mid-Market has hosted many examples, including



News of the Japanese surrender in 1945 brings crowds to Market Street
Source: San Francisco Public Library



Scene from four day "Peace Riots" on Market Street
Source: San Francisco Public Library

the "official" Armistice Parade of 1918, which followed by several weeks a more spontaneous public celebration, and the Victory Parade in 1945, which was anticlimactic to four days of what can only be called riots concentrated in Mid-Market that broke out with the announcement of the Japanese surrender in World War II. Twelve people were killed and hundreds more injured before order was restored in that instance.

G. Socio-Economic Decline of Mid-Market (1950-1974)

For a variety of reasons, the middle class that had made Mid-Market its own eventually abandoned the area, with what has been seen as disastrous consequences. Until the Great Depression of the 1930s, that class had been on an ascendant arc both socially and economically. But the stock market collapse and resultant financial wreckage put a full stop to the arc. As a result, the two main economic mainstays of Mid-Market—department stores and movie theaters—were hard hit. Retail sales were fractions of what they had been. Many of the people whose purchases had fueled those sales were now out of work, unable to sustain the middle class identity they had pursued. Though the main Mid-Market department stores survived, their economic health was poor. And although it was in many ways a creative golden age for American movies, with classic musicals, screwball comedies, and gangster dramas being turned out by the major studios—movie attendance actually declined from eighty million per week in 1930 to fifty five million in 1932.¹³⁴ People out of work could not even afford what had formerly been an insignificant ticket price.

Although unemployment and the effects of the Depression were somewhat lessened in the late 1930s, as the build up towards a war economy got underway, changes had begun in Mid-Market. In some ways, World War II presaged the tourist economy that has come to define San Francisco. During the war years, thousand of newcomers came to the city to fill war related jobs. Millions more in the armed forces passed through the city, which was the major staging site for the war in the Pacific. And in their numbers, they tended to congregate on Market Street, the downtown of the unfamiliar city. Although the center of that universe was Powell and Market, just east of the survey area, its effects extended through Mid-Market, aided by the gravitational pull of a USO center and temporary barracks in the Civic Center.

But the USO was not the only entertainment on the minds of young soldiers and sailors away from home in uncertain times. Movie theaters increased the number of show times. Saloons extended their hours, either legally or not. Dance halls did booming business. And new types of entertainment began to appear on Mid-Market; cheap amusement arcades, pool halls, bowling alleys; and tattoo parlors all made their appearance. Though servicemen were generally welcomed, the social and entertainment infrastructure of Mid-Market began to focus less on a “respectable” middle class, that is, one actively aspiring to higher status, and more on a hedonistic mélange of people without local roots. The VJ Day “victory riots,” in which mobs of people rampaged in the Mid-Market area for four days after hearing the news of the Japanese surrender, leaving 12 dead and over 1000 injured,¹³⁵ added to the idea that Mid-Market was no longer a middle class social space.

In the post-war years, Mid-Market, in common with many American downtowns, suffered from the general exodus of the middle class to the suburbs. Department stores, theaters, and other types of businesses relocated along with their client base, as parking and congestion became

¹³⁴ Ashby, LeRoy. *With Amusement for All: a History of American Popular Culture since 1830*. (Lexington, KY. University Press of Kentucky. 2006) p222

¹³⁵ See *San Francisco Chronicle* and other extensive newspaper coverage, 8/14/1945 – 8/21/45



Demolition of Fox Theater, 1963
Source: San Francisco Public Library

dominant issues. Hale Bros. was gone from Mid-Market by 1962, and Weinstein's, which had survived the Depression and the war years, closed its doors in 1966.

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, movie attendance continued to shrink as television devastated the film business. The Fox Theater, crowning jewel of the Mid-Market entertainment district when it opened in 1929, was demolished in 1963, marking a symbolic end to the days of the Mid-Market movie mile. Its demolition spared the Fox from becoming a pornographic film house, the fate that befell many others on Mid-Market. Three large theaters on the north side, the Golden Gate, Orpheum, and Warfield were eventually restored and dedicated or re-dedicated to live entertainment.

Robbed of its economic and social vitality, Mid-Market attracted fewer people, and those were from lower status groups. The final blow to its economic well being was delivered by construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit and Muni Metro tunnel between 1967 and 1972, which disrupted the street, sidewalks, and retail activity for five years. This was followed by a program of "beautification" that lasted another four years. Included in the beautification work were a widening of the sidewalks and repaving in brick, construction of United Nations and Hallidie plazas, planting street trees, removing overhead wires and theater marquees, and installing replicas of the historic "Path of Gold" street lights. These projects, all proposed by the 1962 "What to Do About Market Street"¹³⁶ paper published by SPUR, unfortunately, did little to reverse the decline of Mid-Market. In fact, by removing surface street cars and placing transit underground, they removed more people and eyes from the street, which continued its decline.



Sidewalk work, Market and McAllister streets, 1972
Source: San Francisco Public Library

136 San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association. *What to do About Market Street*. San Francisco. 1962

III. METHODOLOGY

The Mid-Market Redevelopment Area Historic Survey project is comprised of four major elements—field work, review and updating of existing historical forms, creation of new forms, and archival research. It will create two major work products: this Historic Context Statement and the associated Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms prepared or updated for the 197 individual properties included in the area.

In the first stage, field work was conducted. In April 2011, TKC historians walked the entire survey area, photographing and taking field notes on every property. Field notes typically included the number of stories, materials, use, style, obvious alterations, and any unusual characteristics.

Next, TKC transferred approximately 500 existing DPR form PDFs, which had been prepared for previous Mid-Market projects, to a new database, and compared the coverage of those forms to the current proposed boundaries of the Mid-Market Redevelopment Area. Since all these forms were over 10 years old, those within the current survey area (approximately 70) were updated with the results of the new field work. New forms were then created for approximately 127 properties not previously recorded.

Simultaneously, TKC conducted archival research in both secondary and primary sources. These included previous historical evaluations in the area, maps, city directories, ownership records, newspapers, and periodicals. This research was used to evaluate approximately 55 properties that had not previously been evaluated. DPR 523B forms were produced for these properties.

IV. IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

Many properties in the survey area had been assigned a historic rating previously. This section describes the recognized historical surveys and other historical registration activities that have been conducted in the Mid-Market Redevelopment Survey Area since the advent of standardized evaluation methodology in the 1960s.

A. Here Today

Published in 1968 by the San Francisco Junior League, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* was the earliest comprehensive historic resources survey to be completed in San Francisco. Prepared by volunteers, the survey provides a photograph and limited information on approximately 2,500 properties located throughout San Francisco. The survey was adopted in 1970 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors under Resolution No. 268-70. At present, the survey files are archived at the Koshland San Francisco History Center in the San Francisco Library.

As a recognized local historical register, all properties identified in the published book are considered to be architecturally significant. In the survey area these include the Old Mint (1869), Hibernia Bank (1892), the Civic Auditorium (1874), Hale Brothers Department Store (1912), and the Wilson Building (1908). The survey took little notice of historical associations other than to identify the designers, so may have omitted buildings it did not consider architecturally significant. The present survey will explore those historical associations.

B. 1976 Citywide Architectural Survey

Between 1974 and 1976, the San Francisco Planning Department completed an inventory of architecturally significant buildings throughout the City and County of San Francisco. An advisory review committee composed of architects and architectural historians assisted in the final determination of ratings for the roughly 10,000 buildings surveyed. The unpublished survey consists of sixty volumes of survey data on file at the San Francisco Planning Department. Both contemporary and older buildings were surveyed, but historical associations were not considered. Typically each building was assigned a numerical rating ranging from "0" (contextual importance) to "5" (individual significance of the highest degree). The inventory assessed only architectural significance, which was defined as a combination of the following characteristics: design features, urban design context, and overall environmental significance. When completed, the 1976 Architectural Survey was believed to represent the top 10 percent of the city's building stock. Furthermore, in the estimation of survey participants, buildings rated "3" or better represent approximately the best 2 percent of the city's architecture. The survey was adopted in 1977 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors under Resolution No. 7831. The Planning Department has been directed to use the survey although the methodology is inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines PRC 5024.1(g).

The 1976 Survey included 37 extant properties within the Mid-Market Redevelopment Survey Area. Seven were rated “1,” seven more were rated “2,” six were “3,” seven were “4,” and five were “5,” the highest possible rating. Five more are of an undetermined rating. **(Appendix A)**

C. San Francisco Architectural Heritage

San Francisco Architectural Heritage (Heritage) is the city’s oldest not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of San Francisco’s unique architectural heritage. Heritage has sponsored several major architectural surveys in San Francisco, including one Downtown. Heritage ratings range from “A” (highest importance) to “D” (minor or no importance) and are based on both architectural and historical significance.

One hundred three buildings, or roughly 60% of the building stock in the present survey area has been rated by Heritage. Seventeen are rated “A,” seventeen more “B,” fifty two “C,” and sixteen “D.” One is Not Rated. **(Appendix B)**

D. Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code

San Francisco City Landmarks are buildings, properties, structures, sites, districts and objects of “special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value and are an important part of the City’s historical and architectural heritage.” Adopted in 1967 as Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code, the San Francisco City Landmark program recognizes the significance of listed buildings and protects them from inappropriate alterations and demolition through review by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission. As of the date of this report, there were 260 landmarked properties and 11 landmarked historic districts in San Francisco that are subject to the provisions contained within Article 10. The Article 10 designation process originally used the Kalman Methodology, a qualitative and quantitative method for evaluating historic properties. As of 2000, Article 10 was amended to use National Register methodology

Five designated landmarks are contained in the present survey area: the Brittain Hardware Building (1907); the Hibernia Bank Building (1892); the Orpheum Theater (1925); the James Lick Baths (1890); and the Old Mint (1874).

E. Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Survey

In the wake of the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989, the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (now the Historic Preservation Commission) initiated a survey of all known unreinforced masonry buildings in San Francisco. Aware that earthquake damage already sustained, in addition to future seismic activity, could result in the demolition or extensive alteration of vulnerable masonry buildings, the Landmarks Board sought to establish the relative significance of all unreinforced-masonry buildings in San Francisco. The report: A Context Statement and Architectural/Historical Survey of Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Construction in

San Francisco from 1850 to 1940, was completed in 1990 by Planning Department staff. In total, the survey examined more than 2,000 privately owned buildings in San Francisco. The UMB Survey listed the buildings in three categories: Priority I, Priority II, and Priority III UMBs. These categories were based on the relative significance of the resource, with Priority I being the most significant and Priority III being the least. The survey also included the production of DPR 523 A and B forms for selected properties. The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) evaluated the survey report and made determinations of eligibility for listing in the National Register for many of the 2,000 buildings.

Sixty three buildings in the Mid-Market Redevelopment Area Survey were included in the UMB survey. (**Appendix C**)

F. National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's official inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. Typically, resources over fifty years of age are eligible for listing in the National Register if they meet any one of the four significance criteria and if they retain sufficient historic integrity. Resources under fifty years of age can be determined eligible only if it can be demonstrated that they are of "exceptional importance," or if they are contributors to a potential historic district. National Register criteria are defined in depth in National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. There are four basic criteria under which a structure, site, building, district, or object can be considered eligible for listing in the National Register. These criteria are:

Criterion A (Event):

Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

Criterion B (Person):

Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

Criterion C (Design/Construction):

Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; and

Criterion D (Information Potential):

Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A resource may be eligible for listing on the National Register at a national, state, or local level. Properties formally found eligible are considered also to be listed on the California Register of Historical Resources, though properties may also be eligible for the California Register independent from the National Register process.

Thirty six properties in the Mid-Market area are currently considered eligible for the National Register—twenty five of them as contributors to National Register Districts, and two as individual properties. Nine more have been found eligible by survey actions which have not yet been confirmed. In addition, four properties have been evaluated and found not eligible for listing and three more are currently being evaluated. (**Appendix D**).

G. California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-eligible properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. This includes properties identified in historical resource surveys with Status Codes of “1” to “5,” and resources designated as local landmarks through city or county ordinances. The evaluation criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

Criterion 1 (Events):

Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2 (Persons):

Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

Criterion 3 (Architecture):

Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential):

Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Resources listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register are automatically listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. California Historic Landmarks from No. 770 onward and locally designated landmarks are also automatically listed in the California Register. Although the Office of Historic Preservation maintains an inventory of historic resources throughout the state of California, this inventory does not contain a comprehensive listing of California Register listed properties. Within the Mid-Market Survey area, only one building, the Orpheum Theater, is listed separately on the California Register, while all the National Register properties are dual listed.

H. Other Surveys and Technical Reports

Splendid Survivors, the published account of the Downtown Survey conducted by Michael Corbett and Charles Hall Page Associates, is a comprehensive survey of the downtown area, including most of the Mid-Market area, conducted in 1977-78.¹³⁷ It is an authoritative source for basic historical information on many of the existing buildings. Using the Kalman Methodology, which differs somewhat from the methodology used in the present survey, ratings were assigned to each of the pre-1945 buildings. These ratings ranged from 'A' (highest importance) to 'D' (minor or no importance). There are a total of 102 survey area buildings thus rated: 17 'A'; 16 'B'; 51 'C'; and 15 'D' (**Appendix B**).

¹³⁷ Corbett, Michael. and Charles Hall Page Associates. *Splendid Survivors; San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage*. (San Francisco. California Living Books. 1979)

V. DEFINITION OF PROPERTY TYPES

A. IDENTIFICATION OF PROPERTY TYPES ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORIC CONTEXTS

The following section identifies the general characteristics and distribution of property types within the Mid-Market survey area. In addition to describing the general characteristics of each property type we also include examples from the Mid-Market Survey Area, each accompanied by a photograph. In evaluating the significance of an individual property, it is important to determine if it is related to one of the historic contexts identified at the outset of the survey. For each building type discussed below we have identified one of the historic contexts discussed in Chapter I, Subheading C above: "Identification of Historic Contexts and Periods of Significance."

The area is overwhelmingly commercial in nature, with some residential, civic, and fraternal uses. Commercial buildings and hotels account for over 88% of the building stock. Market Street presents a solid commercial street wall broken only by the formal spaces of Hallidie and United Nations plazas on the north. On the south, only Trinity Plaza Apartments adopts an anomalous position set well back from the street and skewed from the grid. Presently there is also one vacant lot due to demolition (1125 Market). The buildings comprising the street wall range from eight stories to one story. All are masonry.

Mission Street displays a mix of commercial buildings with some having residential spaces above. Here, the street wall is broken in many places and features eleven vacant parcels or surface parking lots. The numbered streets and minor streets have both commercial and some residential buildings, including the only single family home in the survey, 30 Laskie Street.

Residential buildings include eighteen hotels, most dating from the post-earthquake rebuild period 1906 to 1915. The Hotel Renoir, at Market and McAllister was constructed as a six-story building before the earthquake, restored as a three-story building after the quake, and had an additional five stories added during a 1926 renovation, creating its current height of eight stories. There are also two modern hotels, the Holiday Inn on 8th Street and the Rodeway Inn at 9th and Mission. Nine of the older hotels are contributors to the National Register eligible San Francisco Apartment Hotel Historic District or the locally designated Civic Center Historic District. One more, the historic Hotel Whitcomb at 8th and Market, served as the temporary City Hall after 1906 and is individually eligible for the National Register.

Three grand civic buildings are present: the Old Mint, the Court of Appeals, and Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. In addition, the Hibernia Bank, though actually commercial, gives the appearance of a civic building, while the Civic Center directly abuts the survey area, as does the imposing new Federal Building on 7th Street.

One fraternal building is present, Odd Fellows Hall at 7th and Market. Finally, Hallidie, United Nations, and Mint plazas are formal open spaces, while Market Street itself becomes a civic

space, either formal or informal, at times of civic events. All of these property types are related to the historic contexts discussed in Section II above.

Commercial

Commercial buildings in the survey area include theaters, many of them prominent elaborate buildings; loft buildings; former department stores; and small general retail spaces. None of the historic department store buildings retain their original use today. Commercial buildings are associated with the Theater, Department Store, and Physical Development contexts.

Theaters

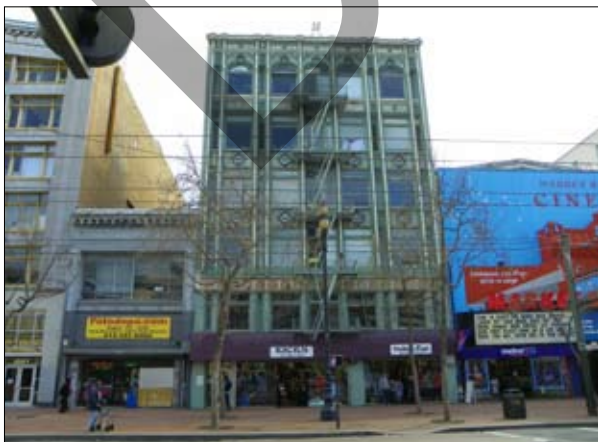
Theaters in the area range from large scale “palaces” such as the Golden Gate or Orpheum, generally dating to the 1920s, to smaller examples such as the Strand, generally earlier. They are concentrated on the north side of Market Street. All are masonry construction. The more intact facades display extensive glazed terra cotta. Most are multi story, with offices above the ground level. In these cases, the auditorium may be full height, leaving only part of the footprint usable for the office spaces. In addition, many have ground floor retail spaces unrelated to the theater operation.



Golden Gate Theater (1925)
Source: TKC



Orpheum Theater (1922)
Source: TKC



Former Egyptian Theater (1924-25)
Source: TKC



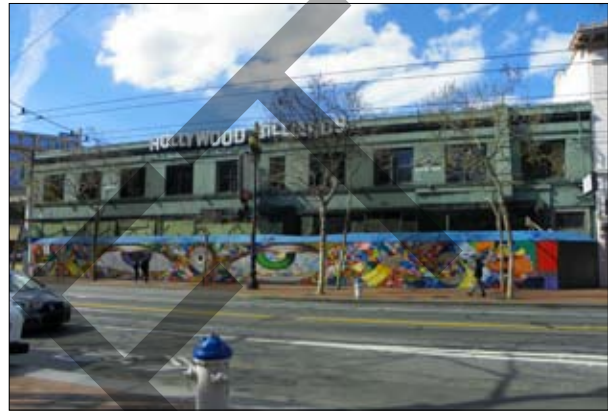
Warfield Theater (1921)
Source: TKC

Styles reflect the elaborate Moorish, Spanish Revival, and Renaissance/Baroque favorites of 1920s theater design. These were inspired by a desire to envelop the customers in a complete fantasy world.

Smaller scale theaters include the Strand, the former Crest, and the former Bijou. These buildings date mainly from between the earthquake of 1906 and 1919. They are less architecturally elaborated than the larger 1920s buildings, and have generally not been restored as those have.



Former Crest (1910). Façade 1956
Source: TKC



Former Bijou (1906)
Source: TKC

All the theaters have in common second means of egress onto a different street or alley. Since they were constructed during a period of rapid transformation from vaudeville to movies, most originally had stages with scenery flies and dressing rooms. It is uncertain if any of these survive within the buildings that have not been renovated for stage entertainment. None of the original or historic marquees remain.

Department Stores

Of the many former department stores in the survey area, only the Hale Bros - J. C. Penney building at 5th and Market and the Prager's Department Store building at Jones and Market retain integrity. This property type was quick to be “modernized” in times of economic stress in order to refresh its appeal to consumers. Thus, many of their storefronts were altered in the 1930s Great Depression or the 1950 & 60s as they attempted to respond to suburban competition.



Prager's Department Store building (1910)
Source: TKC



Hale Bros./ J. C. Penney's building (1912)
Source: TKC

At least one buildings, the Kress department store, was also been used as theaters. The Kress building was constructed as the Pantages Theater in 1907 with unrelated retail spaces at ground level, as was common. By 1926 it had become an outlet of the S. H. Kress & Co. national chain of discount department stores.



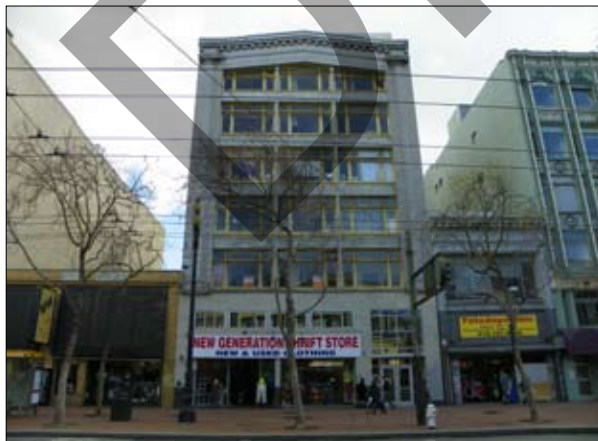
Weinstein's Department Store (1912)
Modernized 1950
Source: TKC



Kress Department Store – Pantages Theater (1907)
Modernized 1956
Source: TKC

Loft Buildings

These are multi-story, multi-purpose, masonry buildings intended for general office or light manufacturing uses. They feature open floor plates suitable for office or general-purpose commercial space including a variety of uses such as storage, display, or light manufacturing. Tall and narrow in massing, they often feature large window openings in a skeletal façade in order to maximize natural light. This is also accomplished by the use of skylights. By design, a loft building is intended to be flexible in its arrangements and uses. The first type, commonly built between 1906 and 1913, is a load-bearing brick structure with an internal heavy, “slow-burning” timber frame to support floors and roof.



Ede Building (1910) Brick & terra cotta, wood posts
Source: TKC



Sterling Furniture Building (1907) Brick with wood posts
Source: TKC

Later lofts are of reinforced concrete construction. Examples include the Dohrman Hotel Supply Co. building at 972-976 Mission and an unnamed building at 1161 Mission.



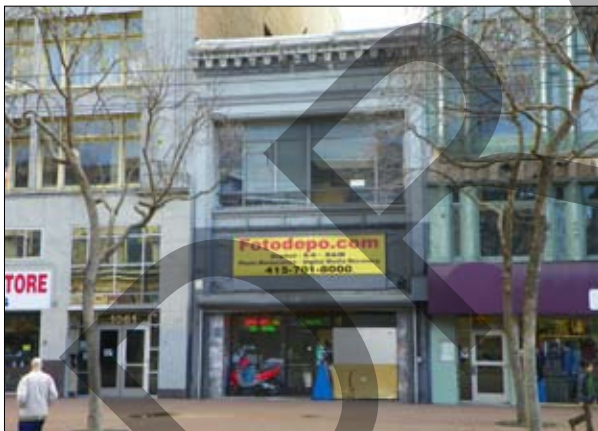
Dohrman Hotel Supply building (1925)
Source: TKC



1161 Mission Street (1924)
Source: TKC

Small Commercial

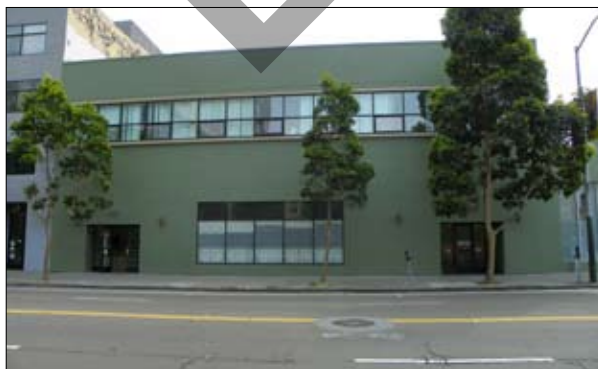
Small commercial buildings are found on all the streets of the survey area. They range in height from single story retail spaces to three story blocks. All are masonry construction. Most date from the post-earthquake rebuild and are generally Classical Revival in style. A few post-World War II modernist designs are also present.



1063 Market (1909) — Source: TKC



972 Market (1912) — Source: TKC



1171-1179 Mission St (1948) — Source: TKC



65 9th Street (1946) — Source: TKC

Residential

In the Mid-Market survey area, there are essentially two types of residences: mid-range hotels which housed a combination of long-term lodgers and short-term guests, and working class rooming houses which primarily housed long-term lodgers. (There is also an anomalous single family home, located on an alley in the southwest portion of the survey area.) The two types are often difficult to distinguish visually and in many cases the same building has served both roles. Both tend to be multi-story masonry blocks with two or three part vertical compositions over retail bases, rising straight from the sidewalk. They are articulated with symmetrically placed windows and detailed with Classical Revival ornament including terminating and intermediate cornices. The hotels generally have unobtrusive entrances, and ground floor lobbies are rare, as are sidewalk canopies and large signage.

The Whitcomb Hotel, located at 1215 Market Street, is the primary example of the mid-to-upper-range hotels. (Most hotels in a comparable range were to the north and east of the Mid-Market survey area, on Nob Hill and closer to Union Square.) Built in 1911 and used as the temporary City Hall until San Francisco's Civic Center was rebuilt, the Whitcomb reopened as a hotel in 1917. As was the trend with higher end hotels¹³⁸, advertisements promoting the opening of the hotel explicitly listed the manager, clerks, chef, and orchestra leader.¹³⁹ The 1930 census listed 100 residents at the Whitcomb Hotel, a combination of guests (46), lodgers (26), boarders (6), and proprietors and their families (19). Guests were of course short term visitors, while boarders were long-term residents who took their meals at the hotel. Lodgers were long term residents who took their meals elsewhere.¹⁴⁰ The Whitcomb's higher end nature is reflected in the occupations of the residents: nurses, teachers, advertising men, housewives, salesmen and retirees. The population in 1930 was slightly older, with a relatively high percentage of women.¹⁴¹

There were only three hotels in the survey area, all in the 900 block of Mission Street, that listed only guests, no lodgers or boarders, in the 1930 Census. The Hotel Thomas, located at 951 Mission Street, billed itself as family hotel with weekly rates. Advertisements from the 1920s promote the warm lobby, en suite rooms and in-room baths or showers.¹⁴² The census records reveal the residents to be waiters, clerks, salesmen, and general laborers, with a low percentage of women and a high percentage of foreign born residents. Although in theory the residents were all short term, their professions tie in with the work available in the immediate area and closely mesh with the residents of the nearby rooming houses. Similarly, guests of the Hotel Chronicle (936 Mission) and the Pantages (948 Mission), who were almost exclusively male, included salesmen, clerks, laborers, engineers, stevedores, jockeys, cooks, actors, and retirees.

The rooming houses in the area were primarily purpose-built rooming houses, with two to six stories of small equal-size rooms and shared baths above first-story retail space and small or

138 Paul Groth. *Downtown Living: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (University of California Press, 1999). p169

139 "Personals and Hotel Gossip" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 March, 1917

140 Groth. p92

141 1930 Census

142 Classified ad, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 November, 1922

non-existent lobbies. The rooms typically included a single bed, a chair, a case closet—a cabinet or wardrobe built out into the room rather than in the wall—and, in some cases, a sink. Combined with illicit hotplates, the sinks made it possible for residents to cook in their rooms without relying on the cafeterias and cafes in the area for food.¹⁴³

Rooming houses typically provided easy access to work places and were situated close to stores, restaurants, bars and sources of commercial entertainment. All of these amenities were included within the Mid-Market survey area, with the stores providing employment and supplies, cafes and cafeterias providing prepared food, and the amusements (theaters, nickelodeons, etc) providing entertainment. Among the occupations of the rooming house population listed in the 1930 Census were salespeople, performers, theater ushers, clerks, bookkeepers, hotel workers, typists, waiters, barbers, and news agents, all of which would have been employed in the survey area.

Rooming house inhabitants also found working class employment in the more industrial areas south of the survey area; in addition to those mentioned above, listed occupations included miners, mariners, laborers, painters, carpenters, electricians, railroad men, stevedores, and mechanics.



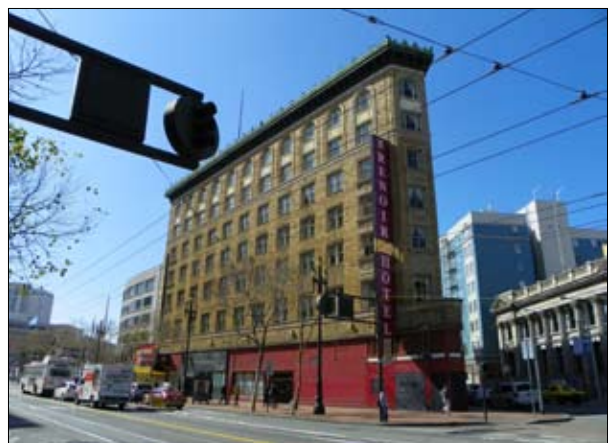
Hotel Gordon (1911)
Source: TKC



Chase Hotel (1907)
Source: TKC



81 9th St Apts. (1912)
Source: TKC



Renoir (Shaw) Hotel 1900 & 1926
Source: TKC

¹⁴³ Groth. p97

Many of these jobs were erratic or seasonal, and support the idea that rooming house residents were often transient, moving when a job ended or vacating the city during slower periods.¹⁴⁴

Approximately 23% of the rooming house and hotel population in the survey area were female; however, because working women made such a lower wage than working men, many women shared rooms with other working women (or were housewives with no outside occupation). Couples, both married and unmarried, were also relatively common in rooming house.¹⁴⁵

According to the 1930 Census, 100% of the hotel and rooming house population in the survey area was white, supporting the evidence that most employment in the immediate area was fairly segregated.

Assembly/Fraternal

Public assembly properties include the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and three public plazas: Hallidie, United Nations, and Mint Plaza. Market Street itself is also a sometime public assembly space. In addition, Civic Center Plaza lies just outside the survey area.



Civic Auditorium, (1915)
Source: TKC



UN Plaza
Source: TKC

The Civic Auditorium is a grand example of Beaux Art architecture that forms one side of Civic Center Plaza, perhaps the grandest collection of such buildings anywhere. The Auditorium is used today for entertainment shows, public school graduations, conventions and trade shows, among other things. It is a venue for more or less planned public events.

Market Street, on the other hand, is the site for less scripted events. Although parades are organized and regulated, participation in Market Street events are not fully predictable by virtue of its being a public street. Thus, even at its most organized, Market Street is a venue for free public expression. In addition, there are spontaneous mass events here on occasion, and as a public space it is a site for constant free enactment of citizenship by citizens.

¹⁴⁴ Groth. p106

¹⁴⁵ Groth. p107

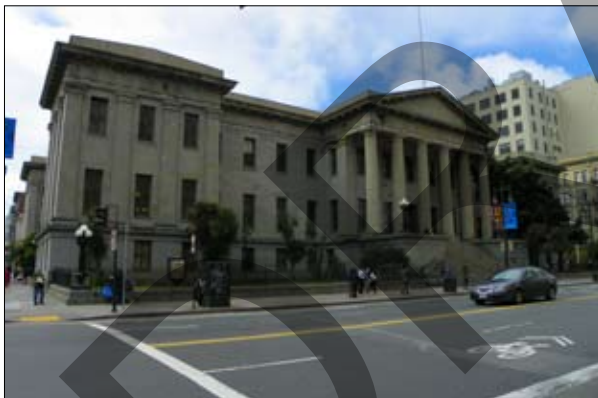


Gay Pride parade, 1981
Source: San Francisco Chronicle

The open plazas are less important in their roles than Market Street or the Civic Auditorium. United Nations Plaza houses farmers' markets and is occasionally the site for protests specifically against actions of the federal government because a federal office building defines one side of it. Otherwise, it functions as a pedestrian route between the Civic Center and Market Street. Hallidie Plaza is a busy entrance to the BART and Muni subways, and also has some commercial functions. Mint Plaza too is commercially oriented.

Civic/Fraternal

In addition to Civic Auditorium, the Old U. S. Mint (1869) is a keystone of the survey area. The Hibernia Bank building (1892, 1905, 1907) is also included in this category because of its monumental architectural design, which more closely resembles a public rather than a commercial building. Both are survivors of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Odd Fellows Hall is the only remaining fraternal building in the area, which prior to 1906 held several others.



Old Mint (1869) — Source: TKC



Hibernia Bank (1892) — Source: TKC



Odd Fellows Hall (1907) — Source: TKC

B. DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE BUILDING TYPES

Commercial buildings dominate the entire survey area, punctuated by the monumental theater and civic structures. Residential buildings and somewhat smaller scale commercial buildings are found on Mission and the connecting streets. Civic Auditorium and the Old Mint are at opposite ends of the survey area.

C. CONDITION OF RESOURCE TYPES

Overall, the condition of the buildings in the survey area is Fair to Good. Most notable exceptions are limited to the ground level retail spaces, where alterations and disrepair due to economic decline are evident. Several of the larger theaters have been renovated within the past 25 years, as have the Old Mint and Hibernia Bank.

DRAFT

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SIGNIFICANCE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

A historic context statement must also include the identification of attributes, historical associations, and levels of integrity requisite to list members of identified property types in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). As discussed above and tabulated in Appendix D, the survey area presently contains thirty-six properties rated as eligible for listing on the National Register. Most of these are eligible by virtue of being contributors to either the Theater and Loft District or the Civic Center District. Both of these districts were related primarily to Criterion C (architecture).

This context statement has established additional historic contexts that were not previously examined, including:

- Social and Cultural Development
- Department Stores
- Department Store Employment
- Popular Entertainment
- Social Space of Market Street
- Socio-Economic Decline

Additional properties could become eligible for listing on the National or California registers or for local listing under these new contexts. Since most buildings that are architecturally distinguished have already been identified and declared eligible, it is likely that any additional listings would necessarily be as contributors to new historic districts based on the contexts above, under National Register Criterion A or California Register Criterion 1. Such districts might be either contiguous or discontinuous.

Integrity requirements for district contributors would be less stringent than for individual listings. In most cases the street level facades have been radically altered over time. However, for a district contributor, that might not necessarily be disqualifying if the integrity aspects of location, association, feeling, and setting were intact. In addition, sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to convey the building's significance would have to remain. These might still be found on upper stories or beneath modern alterations. Façade modernization in itself is a recognized historical context for retail commercial buildings, including department stores and movie theaters. Thus, modernization fabric may be judged to have acquired historical significance in its own right.

The official criteria for National and California registers are laid out in Chapter IV, Sections F and G above. In addition, it is important to point out that local city landmark designation requires a resource to qualify under National Register criteria, though not necessarily to

meet National Register levels of significance or integrity. Also, properties that are listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register are officially listed in the California Register.

B. OTHER PRESERVATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The primary stated purpose of the Mid-Market Historical Resource Survey is to inform the adoption of a Redevelopment Area that in turn would facilitate the social, economic, and physical rehabilitation of the area. Currently, the area has been in deep decline for several decades, though early efforts at rehabilitation have begun.

The most important tools the historical preservation and the present survey might bring to bear on that purpose are the provision of preservation incentives to owners of historic properties, including the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit programs, the IRS-sponsored façade easement donation program, the California Mills Act property tax abatement program, and the California State Historical Building Code. Owners of historic properties should be made aware of these potentially lucrative programs.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The threshold qualification for the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program is that a building be listed individually on the National Register, or be located in a registered historic district and certified by the National Park Service as contributing to the historic significance of that district. Once over this threshold, the proposed rehabilitation of the property must be “certified” by the National Park Service, based on the actual work to be done. In the end, the project may qualify for an income tax credit of 20% of the amount spent. Although the process is complicated and generally requires the participation of legal, accounting, and preservation professionals, the amount of the tax credit, particularly for buildings such as those in the survey area, may make it worthwhile.

Façade Easements

Façade easements make use of Internal Revenue Code Section 170(h) and Department of the Treasury Regulation Section 1.170A-14, which provide for income and estate tax deductions for charitable contributions of partial interests in historic property (principally easements). Generally, the IRS considers that a donation of a qualified real property interest to preserve a *historically important land area or a certified historic structure* meets the test of a charitable contribution for conservation purposes. For purposes of the charitable contribution provisions only, a *certified historic structure* may include the land area on which it is located. A facade easement on a building in a registered historic district must preserve the entire exterior of the building (including its front, sides, rear, and height) and must prohibit any change to the exterior of the building that is inconsistent with its historic character. The easement donor must enter into a written agreement with the organization receiving the easement contribution, and must provide additional substantiation requirements. If the deduction claimed is over \$10,000, the taxpayer must pay a \$500 filing fee. This program too often requires the advice of professionals.

Mills Act

The Mills Act is a California state law (California Government Code, Article 12, Sections 50280-50290) administered by local governments. In San Francisco, it takes the form of a contractual agreement between the City and County of San Francisco and the owner of a qualified property that provides for a property tax reduction for owners who agree to comply with certain preservation restrictions and use the property tax savings to help offset the costs to restore, rehabilitate, and maintain their historic resource according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and the California Historical Building Code. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors approves all final contracts. Once executed, the contract is recorded on the property and leads to reassessment of the property the following year.

The threshold qualifications for a Mills Act property are:

- Individually Designated Pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. Properties that have been designated an individual landmark and approved by the Board of Supervisors .
- Contributory Buildings in Historic Districts Designated Pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. Properties that have been listed as a contributory structure to a local historic district .
- Properties Designated as Significant (Category I or II) Pursuant to Article 11 of the Planning Code. Properties located in the C-3 zoning District that have been determined to be a Category I or II Significant Building .
- Properties Designated as Contributory (Category IV) to a Conservation District Pursuant to Article 11 of the Planning Code.
- Properties Designated as Contributory (Category III) Pursuant to Article 11 of the Planning Code. Properties in the C-3 zoning District that have been listed as a Contributory Structure (Category III) which are located outside of a Conservation District.
- Individual Landmarks under the National Register of Historic Places. Properties that have been officially designated as a National Register individual landmark .
- Contributory Buildings in National Register of Historic Places Historic Districts. Properties that have been identified as a contributory building in a National Register Historic District.

State Historic Building Code

The State Historic Building Code (SHBC) is an alternative code whose purpose is to protect California's architectural heritage by recognizing the unique construction problems inherent in historical buildings and offering an alternative code to deal with these issues. The SHBC provides alternative building regulations for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration or relocation of structures designated as qualified historic resources. This includes any building deemed of importance to the history, architecture or culture of an area by an appropriate local, state, or federal governmental jurisdiction such as the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, and officially adopted city or country registers, inventories, or

surveys of historically or architecturally significant sites, places or landmarks. All are deemed qualified historic resources pursuant to Part 8, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations Chapter 8-2, Section 8-218, which is the definition section of the SHBC.

Redevelopment Area

In addition to existing preservation programs, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency may wish to explore the feasibility of assisting property owners to rehabilitate historic properties through low interest loans, grants, and revolving funds. The rehabilitation of the Mid-Market corridor has long been a priority for the SFRA and local residents and business people alike. As a means to stimulate rehabilitation of tired buildings with poor aesthetics, it may make sense to encourage building owners and tenants to fix up their storefronts and entire building facades. In addition to cleaning up the appearance of these buildings by removing disfiguring non-historic alterations, building and business owners should be encouraged to restore any historic signage that remains, or create new historic signs that are in character with what formerly existed along Mid-Market Street prior to the decline of the 1960s through the present.

C. AREAS REQUIRING FUTURE WORK

Historic Structure Reports

In order to qualify for any of the tax relief programs cited above, it will probably be necessary to complete a Historic Structures Report (HSR) for the building(s) involved. An HSR is a detailed study that provides documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property's history and existing condition. A historic structure report also addresses management or owner goals for the use or re-use of the property. It provides guidance for selecting the most appropriate approach to treatment, prior to the commencement of work, and outlines a scope of recommended work. The report serves as an important guide for all changes made to a historic property during a project-repair, rehabilitation, or restoration-and can also provide information for maintenance procedures. Finally, it records the findings of research and investigation, as well as the processes of physical work, for future researchers.

Even if tax incentives are not sought, a similar report should be prepared to inform any major rehabilitation or restoration of a Mid-Market historical resource.

District Expansion

In her 1997 survey covering most of the present survey area, Historian Anne Bloomfield suggested that if the boundaries of the National Register Theatre and Loft District were expanded slightly they could encompass three additional buildings (969, 972 and 1115 Market Street) as contributors. This would then allow these three to meet the threshold requirement for tax incentives. This report recommends that a district expansion be investigated as a cost efficient plan for raising the status of the three buildings.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this context statement, Tim Kelley Consulting has investigated the formation and the history of the Mid-Market area, which historically was a vibrant and prosperous “downtown,” home to an emerging new middle class in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We have sought to understand the reasons why the area has deteriorated socially and economically since then.

We find that the area has a large stock of gracious, solid commercial buildings, as well as a smaller collection of residential buildings. This built environment could lend itself to an arts district as currently envisioned by Redevelopment and city authorities, as well as strong support from the arts communities.

DRAFT

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Published

Ashby, LeRoy. *With Amusement for All: a History of American Popular Culture since 1830*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006.

Bell, Geoffrey. *The Golden Gate and the Silver Screen*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1984.

Benson, Susan Porter. *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores 1890-1940*. University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Berson, Misha. *The San Francisco Stage: From Golden Spike to Great Earthquake, 1869-1906* San Francisco: San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum, 1992.

Blaszczyk, Regina Lee. *American Consumer Society, 1865-2005*. Wheeling, IL.: Harlan Davidson Press, 2009.

Bowser, Eileen. *The Transformation of Cinema, 1907-1915*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Cobble, Dorothy Sue. *Dishing it Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century*. University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Corbett, Michael. *Splendid Survivors, San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage*. California Living Books, 1978.

Crow, Daniel Edward. *Prophets of Rage: the Black Freedom Struggle in San Francisco, 1945-1969*. Taylor & Francis, 2000.

Groth, Paul. *Downtown Living: The History of Residential Hotels in the Unites States*. University of California Press, 1999.

Hittel, Theodore H. *History of California, Vol. 2*. San Francisco: Pacific Publishing House & Occidental Publishing Co., 1885.

Isenberg, Alison. *Downtown America a History of the Place and the People Who Made It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Jacobs, Allan. "Getting Going, Staffing Up, Responding to Issues" in *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*. Rutgers, New Jersey, 1983.

Kiehn, David. "The Miles Brothers: Film Pioneers in San Francisco."

Langley City Directories

London, Jack. "South of the Slot" in *Novels and Stories*. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1982.

Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.

Ryan, Mary P. *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

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

Soulé, Frank, John H. Gihon and James Nisbet *The Annals of San Francisco*. New York: Appleton & Co., 1854.

Tait, Vanessa. *Poor Workers' Unions: Rebuilding Labor From Below*. South End Press, 2005.

Tobriner, Stephen. *Bracing for Disaster Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2006.

Weiner, Lynn Y. *From Working Girl to Working Mother; The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980*. University of North Carolina Press, 1985..

San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association. *What to do About Market Street*. San Francisco, 1962.

Whitaker, Jan. *Service and Style*. New York: St. Martins Press, 2006.

Wirt, Frederick M. *Power in the City; Decision Making in San Francisco*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Young, John P. *San Francisco a History of the Pacific Coast Metropolis Vol II*. S J Clarke Publishing Company, 1912.

B. Public Record

San Francisco Assessor's Office
US Census

C. Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps

D. Newspapers & Publications

Argonaut: Journal of the San Francisco Historical Society
Daily Alta California
Fur Trade Review
Magazine of Business
San Francisco Call
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco Examiner
San Francisco Real Estate Circular.
TIME Magazine

E. Internet Resources

Cinema Treasures. <http://cinematreasures.org>
Filmsite. <http://www.filmsite.org/pre20sintro2.html>
Flood Building. <http://floodbuilding.com>
Found SF. <http://foundsf.org>
German American Pioneers.org. <http://www.germanamericanpioneers.org>
ILWU Local 19. <http://www.ilwu19.com>
Kress Foundation. <http://www.kressfoundation.org>
National Park Service. <http://www.nps.gov>
Plummer & Associates Blog. <http://www.plummersearch.com>
San Francisco City Guides. <http://www.sfcityguides.org>.
Up from the Deep. <http://upfromthedeep.com>
Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BUILDINGS RATED IN 1976 CITYWIDE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATION	RATING
88 5 th Street	Old United States Mint	5
1 Taylor/42 Golden Gate Avenue	Golden Gate Theater	5
99 Grove Street	Bill Graham Civic Auditorium	5
1 Jones Street	Hibernia Bank Building	5
1182 Market Street	Orpheum Theater	5
901-919 Market Street	Hale Bros, Penney's	4
982-998 Market Street		4
1072-1098 Market Street	Prager's Department Store	4
1100-1112 Market Street	Hotel Shaw/ Renoir Hotel	4
83 McAllister Street	Methodist Book Concern	4
1 United Nations Plaza	J.S. Godeau Building	4
6-26 7 th Street	Odd Fellows Building	3
943 Market Street		3
973-977 Market Street	Wilson Building	3
1017-1021 Market Street	Eastern Outfitting Company Building	3
1301-1375 Market Street	Merchandise Mart	3
1235 Mission Street		3
66 8 th Street	PG & E Mission Substation	2
1000-1026 Market Street	San Christina Building	2
979-989 Market Street		2
34-38 Mason Street		2
66 Mint Street	Bank/ Remedial Loan	2
959-965 Mission Street		2
972 Market Street		2
938-942 Market/30-32 Mason Streets		1
1001-1005 Market Street	Delger Building	1
1067-1071 Market Street	Egyptian Theater	1
1095-1097 Market Street	Grant Building	1
79 McAllister ST		1
936-940 Mission Street		1
1018 Mission Street	Kean Hotel	1
951-957 Mission St		Y
1125-1127 Mission Street		Y
1284-1288 Mission Street		Y
948-952 Mission Street		Y
949 Mission Street		Y

APPENDIX B: HERITAGE RATED BUILDINGS

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR	RATING
88 5 th Street	Old United States Mint	A
6-26 7 th Street	Odd Fellows Building	A
1 Taylor/42 Golden Gate Avenue	Golden Gate Theater	A
99 Grove Street	Bill Graham Civic Auditorium	A
1 Jones Street	Hibernia Bank Building/Police Station	A
1017-1021 Market Street	Eastern Outfitting Company Building	A
1059-1061 Market Street		A
1095-1097 Market Street	Grant Building	A
1182 Market Street	Orpheum Theater	A
1215-1231 Market Street	Hotel Whitcomb/ Ramada Hotel San Francisco	A
901-919 Market Street	(Penney's) (former)	A
973-977 Market Street	Wilson Building	A
979-989 Market Street		A
982-998 Market Street		A
83 McAllister Street	Methodist Book Concern/ Scientology	A
1235 Mission Street	Orange and Green ceramic tile facade	A
959-965 Mission Street		A
974 Market St		B
1000-1026 Market Street	San Christina Building	B
1067-1071 Market Street	Egyptian Theater	B
1072-1098 Market Street	Prager's Department Store	B
1083-1087 Market Street	Federal Hotel	B
1100-1112 Market Street	Hotel Shaw/ Renoir Hotel	B
1301-1375 Market Street	Merchandise Mart	B
948 Market Street		B
969 Market Street	St. Francis Theater	B
34-38 Mason Street		B
35-55 Mason Street	Ambassador hotel	B
54 Mint Street	Haas Candy Factory/ McElroy	B
66 Mint Street	Bank/ Remedial Loan	B
1018 Mission Street	Kean Hotel	B
1 United Nations Plaza	J.S. Godeau Building	B
1200-1208 Market Street	Marye Building	B*
26-28 6 th St		C
114 7 th Street		C
80-98 9 th Street		C
34 5 th Street/410 Jessie Street	Hale's Warehouse	C
532-536 Jessie Street		C
923 Market St		C
925 Market St		C

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR	RATING
929 Market St		C
929 Market St		C
931 Market St		C
966-970 Market St		C
1272 Market Streer	Hotel Avalon	C
1001-1005 Market Street	Delger Building	C
1007-1009 Market Street	New Step	C
1023 Market Street	de Laveaga Building	C
1025 Market Street		C
1028-1056 Market Street	Golden Gate Building/Bijou Theater/Hollywood Billiards	C
1035-1045 Market Street		C
1049 Market Street	Sterling Furniture Building	C
1063 Market Street	Globe Investment Co. Building	C
1127 Market Street		C
1212 Market Street		C
1220-1232 Market Street		C
1236 Market Street		C
1240 Market Street		C
943 Market Street		C
962 (950-964) Market Street		C
972 Market Street		C
48-56 Mason Street		C
652-654 Minna Street		C
1149-1145 MISSION ST		C
951-957 Mission St		C
1119-1121 Mission Street		C
1151-1153 Mission Street		C
1161 Mission Street		C
1167-1169 Mission Street		C
1284-1288 Mission Street		C
1328 Mission Street		C
1375 Mission Street		C
936-940 Mission Street		C
942-946 Mission Street		C
948-952 Mission Street		C
956-960 Mission Street		C
968 Mission Street		C
537 Stevenson Street		C
101 Turk/ 57 Taylor Street		C
40-48 5 th Street		C**
1256-1264 Market Street	Wells Fargo Building	C**
1278-1298 Market Street	Chase Hotel	C**

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR	RATING
79 McAllister ST		C**
1125-1127 Mission Street		C**
1133-1137 Mission Street		C**
426 Jessie Street		D
1011-1013 Market St		D
1075 Market St		D
1089-1093 Market St		D
934 Market St		D
969 Market St		D
1066 Market Street		D
1133-1139 Market Street		D
1145 Market Street		D
935-939 Market Street		D
993 Market Street		D
995-997 Market Street		D
476-480 Minna St		D
1068 Mission Street		D
1139 Mission Street		D
1345 Mission Street		D
570 Jessie Street		NR

APPENDIX C: BUILDINGS IN UMB SURVEY

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR
40-48 5 th Street	
26-28 6 th St	
6-26 7 th Street	Odd Fellows Building
80-98 9 th Street	
426 Jessie Street	
532-536 Jessie Street	
570 Jessie Street	
1011-1013 Market St	
923 Market St	
925 Market St	
929 Market St	
929 Market St	
931 Market St	
966-970 Market St	
969 Market St	
974 Market St	
1272 Market Street	Hotel Avalon
1000-1026 Market Street	San Christina Building
1007-1009 Market Street	New Step
1017-1021 Market Street	Eastern Outfitting Company Building
1028-1056 Market Street	Golden Gate Building/Bijou Theater/ Hollywood Billiards
1035-1045 Market Street	
1049 Market Street	Sterling Furniture Building
1059-1061 Market Street	
1063 Market Street	Globe Investment Co. Building
1083-1087 Market Street	Federal Hotel
1100-1112 Market Street	Hotel Shaw/ Renoir Hotel
1133-1139 Market Street	
1200-1208 Market Street	Marye Building
1212 Market Street	
1220-1232 Market Street	
1256-1264 Market Street	Wells Fargo Building
1278-1298 Market Street	Chase Hotel
935-939 Market Street	
943 Market Street	
962 (950-964) Market Street	
969 Market Street	St. Francis Theater
972 Market Street	
993 Market Street	
34-38 Mason Street	
35-55 Mason Street	Ambassador hotel
48-56 Mason Street	

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR
79 McAllister ST	
83 McAllister Street	Methodist Book Concern/ Scientology
476-480 Minna St	
652-654 Minna Street	
1149-1145 Mission St	
1018 Mission Street	Kean Hotel
1068 Mission Street	
1119-1121 Mission Street	
1133-1137 Mission Street	
1151-1153 Mission Street	
1284-1288 Mission Street	
1328 Mission Street	
1345 Mission Street	
1375 Mission Street	
936-940 Mission Street	
942-946 Mission Street	
948-952 Mission Street	
956-960 Mission Street	
968 Mission Street	
537 Stevenson Street	
101 Turk/ 57 Taylor Street	

APPENDIX D: NATIONAL REGISTER RATED BUILDINGS

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR	RATING	DISTRICT
---------	------------------	--------	----------

88 5 th Street	Old United States Mint	1CL	
982-998 Market Street		1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1 Taylor/42 Golden Gate Avenue	Golden Gate Theater	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1 Jones Street	Hibernia Bank Building/Police Station	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1000-1026 Market Street	San Christina Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1028-1056 Market Street	Golden Gate Building/Bijou Theater/Hollywood Billiards	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1072-1098 Market Street	Prager's Department Store	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1100-1112 Market Street	Hotel Shaw/ Renoir Hotel	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
6-26 7 th Street	Odd Fellows Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1001-1005 Market Street	Delger Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1095-1097 Market Street	Grant Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1083-1087 Market Street	Federal Hotel	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1067-1071 Market Street	Egyptian Theater	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1063 Market Street	Globe Investment Co. Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1059-1061 Market Street		1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1049 Market Street	Sterling Furniture Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1023 Market Street	de Laveaga Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1017-1021 Market Street	Eastern Outfitting Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1007-1009 Market Street	New Step	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
979-989 Market Street		1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
973-977 Market Street	Wilson Building	1D	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
35-55 Mason Street	Ambassador hotel	1D	
48-56 Mason Street		1D	
101 Turk/ 57 Taylor Street		1D	
99 Grove Street	Bill Graham Civic Auditorium	1D	
34 5 th Street/410 Jessie Street	Hale's Warehouse	1D	
901-919 Market Street	(Penney's) (former)	1S	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
54 Mint Street	Haas Candy Factory/ McElroy	1S	
993 Market Street		2D2	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1066 Market Street		2D2	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1011-1013 Market St		2D2	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1035-1045 Market Street		2D2	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1025 Market Street		3S	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1053-1055 Market Street		3S	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
948 Market Street		3S	
969 Market Street	St. Francis Theater	3S	
974 Market St		3S	
995-997 Market Street		6X	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1075 Market St		6X	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1089-1093 Market St		6X	Mkt St. Theater & Loft
1375 Mission Street		6Y	

ADDRESS	OTHER DESIGNATOR	RATING	DISTRICT
25 Cyril Magnin		7	
1170 Market Street		7J	
10 United Nations Plaza		7L	

DRAFT