CHAPTER 4
OVERVIEW – HISTORIC CONTEXT AND RESEARCH DESIGN

MISSION BAY HISTORIC CONTEXT
(Adapted from Olmsted and Olmsted 1997)

WATER AND SAND: THE NATURAL SETTING

The original landscape of the SF-80 Bayshore Viaduct Seismic Retrofit Projects (SF-80 Project) area—sand dunes and marshes, with abundant fresh water flowing into Mission Bay—determined the neighborhood’s historical development and character. Water was the defining element. The ground was full of it, lying in subterranean lakes under the peat-crusted marshes and surfacing in artesian springs to feed Mission Creek and other, smaller streams. The seaways of 260-acre Mission Bay produced a rich concentration of plant and animal life, and the inlet’s shallowness kept it well-flushed and cleansed by the tides.

The wealth of resources made the area a desirable home for Native Americans. When Spanish settlers came in the late 18th century, they chose a nearby freshwater lagoon on upper Mission Creek as the site of their mission. With the American era came radical changes to the original landscape. High-volume springs were ideal for water-intensive industries like sugar-refining, stock-butcherering, and tanning; the outflow of Mission Creek and the twice-daily tidal flushing of the bay created an efficient 19th-century industrial drain; and proximity to the greater San Francisco Bay and deep water made it easy to ship materials in and products out. Industrial enterprises and housing for workers sprang up on the higher ground. When San Francisco began to level its inconvenient sand hills along Market and other streets, the nearby bogs and marshes of the South of Market area (and ultimately Mission Bay itself) were waiting to be filled, disposing of the huge amounts of sand while creating more usable dry ground.

The natural setting of the project area was eventually transformed from wild marshes and sand hills to a grid of streets enclosing blocks of factories and high-density working-class housing. The water that first characterized the place, while perhaps not as apparent, was not gone. It still percolated and flowed beneath the streets and buildings. Its unseen presence became obvious again during the 1906 earthquake, when ground movement and subsequent structure damage in the area was severe.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

Pre-contact Native Americans, attracted by the fresh water and profuse resources, created two villages in the vicinity. Síldintac was their summer home on Mission Bay, while the winter village of Chutchui was a couple of miles upstream on Mission Creek. In 1776 Sonoran settlers under Lt. José Joaquin Moraga arrived from Monterey to found the Mission San Francisco de Asís near Chutchui, as well as the Presidio near the Golden Gate to the northwest. Over the next 40 years, virtually all of the surviving native people...
in the Bay area became attached to the missions (Milliken 1995:1, 53, 61). By 1817 a thousands native “converts” lived in squalid conditions around the Mission San Francisco (Beechey 1831[II]:20). That population declined along with the political power of the Franciscans, and as secularization of mission lands began in 1833, there were but 204 native converts near Mission Bay (Hittell 1878:70).

**Murky Titles and Tideland Squatters**

Early grants in present-day San Francisco County encompassed most of the land between the mission and the presidio/pueblo. SF-80 Project Blocks 1 through 7 were within the original pueblo grant lands, while Blocks 8 through 10 fell within the Potrero Nuevo, a grant created from former mission lands in 1835. The 1847 American conquest of California ushered in an extended period of struggle throughout the state for the physical and legal control of lands entitled under the former Mexican regime. The flood of settlers and speculators unleashed by the Gold Rush resorted to a variety of means, fair and foul, to obtain often vaguely titled lands from the Mexican owners.

The City of San Francisco assumed control of the pueblo grant, a title eventually confirmed in U.S. courts, and as those lands had not been held privately, they were not subject to excessive rancho title litigation. Early on, during the American takeover, temporary military governor General Stephen Kearny gave the town the right to sell beach and water lots between Fort Montgomery and Rincon Point for its own benefit (Bancroft 1884[V]:563-564), paving the way for future sales of submerged tidal lands near the present project area. Years later, in 1868, the Tidelands Act established a commission to sort out ownership claims to squatted-on watery lots, primarily in and around Mission Bay, and to legally sell the lots to the successful claimants. Physical possession was one requirement, resulting in some violent skirmishes among rivaling claimants. The Tidelands Act also paved the way for the railroad’s entry into the area, deeding 150 acres, mostly filled Mission Bay lands, to the Central Pacific for a freight terminal.

South of the mouth of Mission Creek, the Potrero Nuevo was the site of an 1849 development scheme by Dr. John Townsend and Cornelius de Bloom. The speculators secured title to Potrero Nuevo lands from the heirs of presidio soldier José Bernal and surveyed a plat of blocks and streets for the proposed city of South San Francisco. The timing, however, was not right: Townsend’s death during an 1850 cholera epidemic, along with poor existing access from San Francisco, spelled failure for the venture. While a portion of the larger original Bernal rancho was confirmed to Bernal’s heirs in 1857, the de Haro claim, which included Potrero Nuevo lands at Mission Bay, remained in litigation for another 10 years. Squatters had taken up residence on the claim in the meantime, defiantly building homes and fencing farmlands. The de Haro claim was finally overturned in 1867, the court ruling that the Mexican government had reserved the area for public grazing land. This cleared the way for legitimization of the squatters’ holdings.

**Engineering San Francisco: Landscape Becomes Cityscape South of Market**

The radical changes necessary to convert the South of Market area from sand dunes and wetlands into a vital part of the new city happened quickly and efficiently (Figure 4.1). Two processes were required for this to occur: first, development had to be planned and the land surveyed to give it the needed cultural structure for ownership and use;
Figure 4.1. SF-80 Project study area shown on 1852/53 U.S. Coast Survey Map
and second, the natural landscape had to be physically transformed to turn surveyed streets and lots into tangible reality.

The South of Market was given much of its identity as a separate place within the city when surveyor Jasper O’Farrell created Market Street in 1847. At that time the original townsite of Yerba Buena constituted about 40 acres surrounding Portsmouth Square and functioned as the commercial center for much of the sparsely settled Pacific Coast. O’Farrell cut off the established (roughly north/south) town grid of Yerba Buena diagonally, laying out what he envisioned as a broad future boulevard across what was then an uninhabited sand-hill wasteland. Streets to the south conformed to this diagonal layout: O’Farrell “correctly appreciated the importance of making the main streets in the southern part of town agree in general direction with the route followed by people going from Yerba Buena Cove to the Mission” (Hittell 1878:116). Other defining features of this survey were larger blocks and lots, and wider streets in the lands to the south of Market Street. The view in those pre-Gold Rush times that the area was of limited value resulted in the oversized blocks, each containing six 100-vara lots. The broader grid and streets also reduced the amount of grading that would be necessary to access the lots.

Initial response to South of Market real estate was tepid, but Gold Rush population growth soon spurred development. By 1852 the Mission Dolores Plank Road Company, franchised to collect tolls for seven years, had built planked roads on Mission and Folsom streets, each over 2 miles long. A City-funded toll-free planked road authorized in 1853 was built on Brannan Street (crossing the SF-80 Project area at Eighth Street), at the time more of a causeway along the northern edge of Mission Bay than a road. The 1857/59 Coast Survey map shows all three planked roads connected to downtown via the Third Street thoroughfare, as well as by a wagon road on the Sixth Street alignment, which ran all the way to the still-undeveloped Market Street (Figure 4.2). The Brannan Street free road was the preferred corridor for development: the 1857/59 map shows that most lots accessible by this road were already filled and graded, while marshes, pools, and sand hills remained on many lots along the toll roads.

The planked roads were only a temporary solution. City-owned streets as well as private lots needed permanent filling and grading. With marshy wetlands to be filled and steep hills north and south of Market to be leveled, all that was lacking was the means to move the sand. The answer was provided by David Hewes, who combined a steam shovel with movable tramways for hauling the sand. The resulting system was dubbed the “Steam Paddy,” a somewhat derogatory reference to the Irish workers who provided much of the non-mechanized earth-moving labor of the time. From 1852 to 1854, and from 1858 to 1873, Hewes’s Steam Paddy was at work shaping the terrain of San Francisco (Hittell 1878:438). Eventually, Mission Bay itself would disappear under the relocated sand fill. The 1857/59 Coast Survey map gives us a snapshot of the SF-80 Project area as this massive and rapid transformation was underway.

**Early Settlement South of Market: Prosperous Germans on Block 3**

The human flood that washed over northern California in 1849 turned San Francisco into a major American city in the space of a few months. Expedience directed most early building construction, resulting in informal and ephemeral structures hurriedly put up with minimal rough lumber along with liberal amounts of canvas. With few exceptions,
dwellings and shops ranged from tents to board shanties to single-story framed buildings (Hittell 1878:213; Soule, Gibon, and Nesbit 1855:252). The shores of Yerba Buena Cove remained the focus of settlement during the Gold Rush years. The 1852/53 Coast Survey map shows few buildings south of Market Street, but it is impossible to know how many impermanent tents and shanties may have existed there on the southern suburban fringe, unnoted by the survey.

Jeweler Emanuel Christian Charles Russ and his family emigrated from Saxony to New York in the early 1830s. Russ and his three sons enlisted in a regiment of New York Volunteers and came to fight in the Mexican War; arriving in California in March 1847, they were immediately mustered out. Joined by his wife and smallest child, Russ succeeded over the ensuing years at a variety of pursuits, including gold-mining, real-estate development, and operating a hotel and jewelry store. Russ bought property on both sides of Harrison Street between Sixth and Seventh streets, and by 1852, the family had settled as the first permanent residents on project Block 3. They soon moved across the street and opened Russ Gardens, the city’s first commercially operated pleasure garden, on their Block 3 property. The place became a favorite Sunday and holiday recreation spot for San Franciscans, with special celebrations for different groups: May Day for Germans, Bastille Day for French, and the Fourth of July for Americans in general. Russ died in 1857, and when the gardens burned down in 1861, the family created Garden Street on the site, lining it with New York-style working-class tenements on small lots.

Near Russ Gardens at Seventh and Harrison streets was another German household. Charles August Christian Duisenberg and his brother, Edward, natives of Bremen, came to San Francisco as forty-niners after working for a German mercantile firm in Valparaiso, Chile. Their mother and grandmother came to live with them in 1851. The Duisenbergs lived at the Block 3 house as early as 1856, along with Frederick Mebius, Charles Duisenberg’s import and commission mercantile business partner. Edward Duisenberg was the Acting Consul for the independent City of Bremen, while Charles was the long-time German Consul for San Francisco, flying the German flag over the house for many years as a symbol of that office. Charles was involved in other aspects of the local German community, such as helping to found the German Hospital and the German Benevolent Society. Mebius became Hanoverian Consul, married a Russ daughter, and moved to Folsom Street by 1861. While on a trip to Switzerland, Charles Duisenberg married Minna Schupf, bringing her back to San Francisco in 1869. His brother Edward, his mother, and grandmother had all died by then, the lost family replaced by Minna and the two sons and two daughters they had in the following years. The Duisenbergs lived under the German flag on Harrison Street until Charles’ death in 1894. The property was sold to “capitalist” Walter E. Dean that year, and by 1899, the house had been torn down and replaced by a draying business. In 1906 the property became the Southside playground.

Yet another German, Henry Schmiedell, lived on Block 3 starting in the late 1850s. Eventually a wealthy and successful merchant, real-estate broker, and stockbroker, Schmiedell had probably known the Duisenberg brothers in Valparaiso before the Gold Rush. Although he moved to a larger house north of Market in the 1880s, Schmiedell still held the South of Market house and property when he died in 1894. His heirs retained the place until at least 1899.
Raising Vegetables in the City: A Transitional Land Use

As planked and simple sand roads penetrated the South of Market area, market gardens to feed a growing city were planted on many of the more level lots. Wells and windmills tapped abundant groundwater to make these operations possible. While large commercial gardens lined Folsom Street southwest of the SF-80 Project, smaller 100-vara plots, such as those recorded by the 1857/59 Coast Survey map on SF-80 Project Blocks 2 and 3, represented transitional productive use of lots that had been filled, graded, and accessed from the expanding public-road system with driveways. Henry Schmiedell, for example, had planted gardens on his Block 3 property before building his house there. The map also depicts Russ Gardens and an adjacent Block 3 parcel as garden plots. On Block 2, four out of six 100-vara lots are shown planted in gardens. It is unclear, which of the garden plots in the project area were commercial operations and which were planted to supply individual households. Both were likely to have been represented.

Anecdotal evidence connects Chinese gardeners and produce peddlers with the larger market gardens to the west and southwest of the project-area blocks. While some Chinese vendors apparently purchased their vegetables from non-Chinese markets, most references agree that Chinese growers leased garden plots and Chinese laborers worked the market gardens of the Mission. Early South of Market resident James Roxburgh, reminiscing in 1926, describes youthful excursions up Mission Creek to an area of Chinese gardens near where 12th, 13th, and 14th streets intersected (South of Market Journal [SMJ], June 1926:15). After the late 1880s, area Chinese gardeners had been largely displaced by Italian immigrants.

Butchertown on Mission Creek

When the Gold Rush exploded San Francisco’s population, vast amounts of meat were required to keep the people fed. Market hunters supplied much wild game in the early years, but large-scale commercial butchering of livestock animals, a messy and smelly business, was a necessity from the start. The foot of Ninth-Street area at the mouth of Mission Creek—sufficiently removed from the town center—was the ideal spot for slaughtering operations. By the early 1850s, the place had become the city’s slaughterhouse and was known as Butchertown. Related and equally malodorous industries, such as tanneries and glue, fertilizer, tallow, and soap manufacturers, also located there. Abundant fresh-water supply for production and the twice-daily tidal flushing for waste disposal, as well as ready shipping access via roads and shallow-draft scows, all contributed to make the site well-suited to these industries. Boardinghouses and tenements within the neighborhood offered cheap living space to those who worked here.

The 1857/59 Coast Survey map shows a small wharf and five permanent buildings in the area, with a wagon road to a nearby hog farm and stock pens. By 1868 the city business directory lists seven wholesale butchers at or near Ninth and Brannan streets, and three more near the Brannan Street bridge. Eight cattle wholesalers were listed in the nearby Potrero district, pointing to the likely source for much of Butchertown’s beef. After 1865 cattle were also landed at the Hobbs or Cattle Wharf on the Long Bridge to be herded to Butchertown slaughterhouses (SMJ, June 1926:16).
Hides had been Yerba Buena’s (and most of California’s) only export prior to U.S. annexation, mostly shipped to the East Coast for tanning. By the 1850s large-scale tanning had become a California industry. The 1859 city directory locates two tanneries, those of William Field and J.J. Fulton, on Simmons (Sixth) Street near Brannan. By 1867 the Funcke & Wassermann Tannery was in operation at Ninth and Brannan streets, on project Block 6 ( Douglass 2002:41-51). San Francisco had 19 tanneries by 1868.

As San Francisco grew, the stench of the Mission Creek Butchertown became too offensive to residents of downwind neighborhoods. Their agitation culminated in the 1871 “Offensive Trades and Occupations and Nuisances” ordinance. It was designed to force relocation of butchering and related unpleasant-smelling industries to a new Butchers’ Reserve 5 miles south to the mouth of Islais Creek. The 1899 Sanborn maps show, however, that meatpacking operations continued on the south side of Mission Creek, and stockyards as well as several soap factories existed on project Block 9. The 20th century saw new offensively scented and even dangerous industries come into the neighborhood, such as the Stauffer Chemical Company across from Block 9, and a match factory on Block 10. This area south of the original Butchertown seems to have become a place where nuisance-producing but economically important industries were unofficially tolerated, in spite of the 1871 ordinance.

FILLING IN AND BUILDING UP: CONTINUED GROWTH

As Hewes’s Steam Paddy chugged away through the 1860s, San Francisco grew steadily southward into an increasingly homogeneous South of Market cityscape (Figure 4.3). The area was a focal point of a building and real-estate boom in the city that continued to expand until the 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad. Several factors spurred growth here, including the final clearance of Nuevo Potrero land titles, the nearly completed work of the Steam Paddy, the labor needs of increasing industry, and advances in transportation and its infrastructure.

Public transportation in San Francisco’s early years took the form of omnibuses and cabs. The Omnibus Road, which ran large stagecoach-like vehicles from South Park in the South of Market district to North Beach, converted to tracked horse cars in 1862 to become the city’s first street railroad (Hittell 1878:182). The 1860s saw the building of horse-car lines on many South of Market streets. The Sixth Street horse-car line, running from north of Market down Sixth to Brannan, then down Brannan to Mission Creek, started in the mid-1860s and operated with horses until it became one of the city’s earliest electric lines around the turn of the century. The railway passed between Blocks 2 and 3 on Sixth, and past Block 5 on Brannan to end at Block 7. Its presence allowed Sixth Street to become a major retail commercial corridor. The construction of the Long Bridge as a continuation of the Fourth Street horse-car route, across Mission Bay and beyond to Potrero and Hunter’s Point, was another important stimulus to South of Market development.

The Character of the Place: South of Market, 1860s-1870s

O’Farrell’s 1847 survey had largely set the distinctive physical character of the area when it was still a wilderness of sand hills and swamps. Steam-powered machines and
human labor had made O'Farrell's grid of large blocks and broad, flat streets a reality. The level streets were easily traveled by the omnibuses, horse cars, and carriages, and by the drays hauling goods and materials to and from the factories. The flatness and uniformity, however, gave the South of Market a monotonous and, perhaps at times, slightly menacing feeling. It was a place where strangers might easily get lost. Rudyard Kipling once got lost there after wandering in to find himself “in a hopeless maze of small wooden houses, dust, street refuse, and children who played with empty kerosene tins,” unable to understand the speech of locals from whom he sought directions (Kipling 1949:4). Low houses, tenements, hotels, and lumber- and coal yards covered the blocks. Only occasional landmarks in the form of steeples, larger buildings, and the smoking stacks of factories rose high enough to provide locational clues. A single public park, Columbia Square, was developed after the Civil War.

Many of the blocks came to have small secondary interior streets, as owners subdivided large lots into tiny residential lots for building small houses and tenements. The streets were placed according to the owners’ wishes, without City permission. An example of this within the SF-80 Project area is Block 3’s Garden Street, created between

Figure 4.3. David Hewes and the Steam Paddy at Eighth and Harrison. David Hewes poses with his workmen and associates in front of the steam shovel and train system that spread the sandhills north and south of Market Street into Yerba Buena Cove and Mission Bay in the 1860s. George Gordon's sugar refinery was located in the six-story building on the right. This building was damaged by the 1868 earthquake. (Courtesy of the Bancroft Library)
Harrison and Bryant after Russ Gardens burned, around 1861. Both sides of the 35-foot-wide street were surveyed into 25- by 75-foot lots, some of which housed six families each in cramped tenements. The interior streets were probably the true public places South of Market, where neighbors met and interacted. No photographs and few written references exist to tell us about life in their tenements and tiny houses. The 1874 Land Use Map shows many of these interior streets, including representations of buildings constructed upon them (Figure 4.4).

**AT WORK**

Public transportation allowed many 19th-century residents of the SF-80 Project area to work throughout the South of Market, as well as in adjoining districts. It was preferable, however, to work in one’s own neighborhood, avoiding the time and expense of commuting, and making it possible to eat the midday meal at home. Along with the industries of Butchertown, many other local manufacturers and businesses provided jobs for project-area residents.

The same natural features that made the area suitable for the animal-products industries made it an excellent place for sugar-refining. There was a high demand for sugar on the West Coast: Hittell (1878:457; 1882:544) calculated western per-capita consumption to be well over double that of the East Coast. The Hawaiian Islands provided a ready source of the raw sugar to be refined. George Gordon’s San Francisco and Pacific Sugar Refinery, across the Eighth and Harrison intersection from project Block 4, was one of the earliest factories in the South of Market, opening in 1856. Claus Spreckels built his competing California Sugar Refinery two blocks away on Block 7 in 1867-1868 (Figure 4.5). A high percentage of Irish immigrant laborers at the San Francisco Sugar Refinery, some of whom lived on Block 4, led to its local nickname of the “Irish Sugar Refinery.” Spreckels’ “German” refinery, smaller but equipped with the latest technology, soon dominated the market. The last portions of the Block 7 physical plant, used as late as 1906 for syrup production, were demolished during initial SF-80 Bayshore viaduct construction in the 1950s.

Late in the economic boom of the 1860s, Bank of California manager William Ralston invested a large sum in an existing San Francisco carriage-making firm, the Kimball Carriage Factory. With the transcontinental railroad becoming a reality, he saw a potential market opening up for rail cars. Ralston sought to build the established carriage works into a major manufacturer of rolling stock for the nation’s expanding rail system. A three-story brick factory for the new Kimball Carriage and Car Manufacturing Company was constructed at the corner of Bryant and Fourth streets, covering, along with the yards, an entire 100-vara lot on SF-80 Project Block 1 (Figure 4.6). The operation, which was to employ 230 men, boasted up-to-date wood- and iron-working machinery, and state-of-the-art paint and upholstery shops (White 1985:76). The completion of the railroad was as disappointing here as in other areas of business: the large orders for rail cars never materialized. The local demand for horse cars provided some work, but not enough to save the business (Figure 4.7). In a now-failing economy, rail passenger cars that Kimball did produce were so luxurious as to price themselves out of the market. Responsible for the company’s mountain of debt, as well as that of the Pioneer Woolen Mills, Ralston
Figure 4.5. Spreckels's California Sugar Refinery. Spreckels's employed many workers in the project area, particularly after the rival Gordon refinery shut down in around 1873. (San Francisco City Directory 1883)
Figure 4.6. William Ralston (pictured above) and the Kimball Carriage Works. Taken from the corner of Bryant and Fourth, this view shows the Kimball Carriage Works shortly after it was completed in the late 1860s on SF-80 Bayshore Block 1. Ralston employed 230 craftsmen in the building. Anticipating the coming of the railroad, Kimball constructed the highest quality equipment for railroad sleeping cars; but at $20,000 for a sleeper that only carried 11 passengers (with private bathrooms), there were no customers. (Courtesy of California Historical Society)
attempted in 1875 to liquidate his personal fortune, helping to precipitate the 26 August “Black Friday” bank run and further disaster. Ralston resigned, signed over most of his assets to the bank, and went for a fatal swim in the bay. The Kimball works was closed on Block 1 by late 1876, but the shops soon attracted furniture makers and other woodworking enterprises to employ area workers.

The 1887 Sanborn map shows the former Kimball premises filled with a busy complex of manufacturers, including the West Coast Furniture factory and two other furniture makers, a Chinese cigar box factory, a marble works, a sausage factory, a blacksmith, and a plating shop. The 1887 maps of SF-80 Project blocks offer a sampling of other kinds of businesses providing employment South of Market in the late 19th century. In addition to previously mentioned businesses, men might find work at the supply yards selling coal, wood, feed, and lumber scattered through the project area. The Spring Valley Water Works was next to the former Kimball Carriage site. Small manufacturing included a cooperage, pickle factory, matzo factory, chemical laboratory, photo plate factory, cream of tartar works, mattress factory, flourmills, pasta makers, and winery. Four laundries, three of which were Chinese-owned, were on Block 1, with another Chinese laundry on Block 3. Necessary to most of these was extensive drayage to move goods and materials. Public transportation industries are represented by the Central Railroad stables, car barn, and blacksmith shop on Block 5.

The labor of feeding families and running households in crowded houses and tenements doubtless occupied many area women. Other work open to them might have been found at various hotels and boardinghouses, the Eighth Street Primary and Grammar schools, the Starr King Primary School, the Stanford Free Kindergarten, and the retail shops lining Fourth and Sixth streets. While no clothing factories were operating in the project blocks in 1887, this was one manufacturing field that often employed women, and “works in the shirt factory,” “tailoress,” and “milliner” were women’s occupations noted among project-area families by census takers. Women might also work as servants,
nurses, or business proprietors, such as Margaret O’Brien, who ran a saloon on Block 4’s Chesley Street in 1889.

**The Immigrant Mix in the 1880s**

A review of 1880 U.S. Census population schedules for the Fifth Street strip of Block 2 found several families of northern European origin who were probably of Jewish ethnicity based upon their nativity, names, and occupations. The Solomons, from Germany, lived over the family junk business with their four children. Ferdinand Falkronhalm, native of Sacheim, was a liquor-store sales clerk who lived with his wife, Caroline, over the pickle factory on Fifth Street. Their next-door neighbors were Prussian-Polish immigrants Michael (a furniture salesman) and Emilie Marks, and their four children. Also living above the pickleworks were Samuel Morris (a Polish-born “huckster” or peddler), his Prussian-born wife, Henrietta, and two sons; and kosher butcher H.L. Freedberg and his wife, Julia, both Prussians, with their California-born daughter.

Also on this same block of Fifth Street, occupying a single tenement, were four Italian and three Irish families, totaling 37 individuals. The Italian breadwinners included three laborers and an unemployed miner, while the Irish wage-earners included two house painters and a varnisher. These were the only Italians recorded by the 1880 census within the SF-80 Project area. On other project blocks, substantial numbers of Irish immigrants dominated. German immigrants formed another major group living on project-area blocks, many working in the tanning, meat-cutting, and sugar-refining industries, as well as operating grocery stores and saloons. Chinese laundrymen lived and worked on Block 1. Households scattered through the project blocks also contained first- and second-generation immigrants of English, Russian, Scottish, French, Swedish, Swiss, and other nativities. While definitely an international mix, the people of the South of Market were overwhelmingly of European and Euroamerican background.

**Corner Grocery/Liquor Stores and Saloons as Workingmen’s Clubs**

At nearly every South of Market intersection were corner grocery stores, liquor stores, and saloons, and various combinations thereof. The grocery/liquor stores, of course, kept families supplied with food, but most also sold beer by the bottle or mug. Actual saloons, with bars, stools, and perhaps tables, were more conducive to the spending of recreational time. The proprietors of these businesses were almost always German, and customarily ran weekly tabs for their patrons.

At midday, workers could visit nearby saloons to take advantage of free lunches that might, incidentally, induce them to have a drink or two. In the evenings, after long hours at industrial jobs, the saloons and corner liquor stores gave workingmen a temporary escape from crowded houses and tenements into a relaxed atmosphere. The corner grog shop, whatever its form, served as a social club for weary workingmen.

The transcontinental railroad brought an influx of cheap goods and jobless immigrants to California. The resulting depression of the 1870s gave rise by 1877 to Dennis Kearney’s Workingman’s Party, dedicated to blaming low wages and unemployment on Chinese labor, and expelling the Chinese from the labor market. The movement gained much support among San Francisco Democrats, reducing that party’s membership by 80 percent by 1879. Into the Democrat leadership power vacuum stepped
“Blind” Chris Buckley, a bartender and former conductor on the Third Street horse-car line. He organized the city’s Democrats into 47 “clubs” that rallied party spirit with clambakes, breakfasts, and rewards for loyalty (Callow 1982:264-265). Buckley built an organizational hierarchy with himself at the top surrounded by a small army of street thugs known as his “Lambs.” Buckley’s clubs were easily assimilated into the cozy culture of the South of Market saloons, giving impoverished workingmen there, especially the Irish, a new sense of clout. Running on a system of patronage and graft, gaining and keeping power by stuffing ballot boxes and intimidating rivals, Buckley’s machine ruled San Francisco politics through the 1880s. Boss Buckley’s saloon politics were a part of life in the South of Market neighborhoods of the time (Callow 1982:266-269; Kipling 1949:34).

**Helping Hands**

When things got tough for a Buckley club member, the party hack at the corner saloon could always be approached for help—a feature of the system was the distribution of public funds to those in need. This allowed the machine to be viewed as compassionate and caring, while incidentally buying further loyalty. Aside from Boss Buckley, primary support for working-class families in trouble came from family, friends, and neighbors. Sympathetic tradesmen also helped at times, perhaps by extending extra credit or letting something go free-of-charge.

Map and city directory research shows a wide range of benevolent societies, often based on religion or ethnicity, were organized to help others in need. These included the German Benevolent Society, Association of the Daughters of Israel, British Benevolent Society of California, Ladies Protective and Relief Society, San Francisco Scottish Thistle Society, and Native Sons of the Golden West. Various temperance societies, and special-interest protective and trade organizations also tried to improve life according to their particular views. Privately formed organizations founded many San Francisco hospitals and clinics, such as the German Hospital, the French Hospital, and the Pacific Dispensary for Women and Girls. Also originating with private and church groups were such refuges as the Old People’s Home of San Francisco, Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, Protestant Orphan Asylum, Little Sister’s Infant Shelter, Home for the Care of Inebriates, and the Salvation Army. On SF-80 Project Block 7, Stephen Maybell’s Army of Heaven Mission offered shelter to transients from the late 1880s through the 1890s.

Free kindergartens, such as the El Emmanuel Free Kindergarten on Block 4 and the Stanford Free Kindergarten on Block 6, relieved harried mothers and gave area children an educational start. Public schools, like the Eighth Street Primary and Grammar schools on Block 4 and the Starr King Primary School on Block 3 continued that education. Organizations like the Young Men’s Christian Association and the Young Men’s Hebrew Association looked to the welfare of young men. South of Market in 1894, Major Sidney S. Pexiotto started an after-school program for local boys in a hall next to Columbia Square, across Harrison from Block 3. His Columbia Park Boys’ Club offered the boys organized athletics and various arts programs, including music, drama, and fine arts (SMJ, November 1929:11).
18 APRIL 1906

The earthquake and fires of 1906 wrought particular havoc on the South of Market. Neighborhoods of flimsy buildings, built over filled-in marshes and covered creeks were devastated by the quake’s energy (Figure 4.8). Scattered fires grew into firestorms that consumed block after block of collapsed wooden structures. Attempts to create firebreaks with dynamite only made things worse, as whole buildings were blown into piles of kindling. By the end of the day, unknown numbers of the South of Market community were dead, and survivors had scattered to outlying areas from the Mission to Oakland.

Many survivors of the 1906 disaster found shelter in small semiportable cabins, soon known as earthquake cottages, which were set up in the city’s parks. With few public spaces in the South of Market district, earthquake cottage refugee camps sprang up in Columbia Square and Franklin Square (Figure 4.9). Some residents may have found the cottage life an improvement over the crowded tenements they had lost. As the
rubble was cleared away, some of these cottages were moved from the parks and set up on private lots to replace the lost housing. This happened in the SF-80 Project area on Block 4, where a cluster of earthquake cottages appeared at the corner of Homer and Chesley streets in 1913. Elsewhere, earthquake cottages were moved to lots where new permanent houses were built alongside. The trend, however, was to build multifamily tenements and apartments to house workers for the growing number of South of Market industries. Blocks 3-5, as shown by the 1913 Sanborn maps, illustrate this tendency. Corner residential hotels were another major part of post-fire construction. A plan by architect Daniel Burnham to redesign the destroyed sections of the city along more Parisian lines was never implemented, as the practical realities of getting the city up and running took precedence.

From Residential Community to Industrial District

The brief period of housing construction after 1906 was soon over, as the South of Market became increasingly industrial. Zoning codes, legalized in 1911 by the Supreme Court, promoted separation of land use—segregating residential neighborhoods from commercial/industrial areas. Zoning, along with postquake fire laws, effectively limited new housing in the district to brick hotel and apartment buildings. Almost no housing at all was built in the project-area blocks between 1913 and 1950. Population South of
Market dropped from 62,000 in 1900 to 24,500, 80 percent consisting of single men, by 1910 (Averbach 1973:203).

More and more industry did move into the project area in the years after the quake, including Sunset Publishing Company, the Overland Freight Transfer depot, and the West Coast Paint Factory on Block 1; the Workman Packing Company cannery on Block 4; Enterprise Foundry on Block 6; and the Western Pacific Railroad freight-yard complex on Blocks 6 through 10. Smaller businesses, including laundry, bakery, ice cream-making, metalworking, automotive repair, and junkyard operations were scattered throughout project blocks.

**The Depression Years and Beyond: Skid Row to Freeway Construction**

The Depression hit the Bay Area hard, as jobless down-and-outers from across the country wound up at the end of the rails in California. The South of Market, already a bleak community of factories and transient men living in cheap hotels, attracted masses of the new economic refugees looking for work, lodging, or even just enough food to get through the day. City-funded soup kitchens, the Salvation Army, the Hebrew Sheltering Society, the Scandinavian Lutheran Mission, and various gospel missions were among those helping the unemployed survive from day to day. When the Depression eventually faded, South of Market’s identity as “Skid Row” did not. While the war years brought plenty of jobs, and an influx of African American, Chicano, and Filipino populations previously almost absent, it remained largely a transient community. The postwar years saw an increase in the elderly, occupying the cheap housing left by war workers, and a continuation of the area as a Skid Row, plagued by poverty and alcoholism. “Slum Clearance” efforts by HUD and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in the 1960s eventually resulted in the creation of the Yerba Buena Center, but not until displaced tenants had gained some concessions, including the construction of new senior housing units. The portion of Route 80 in the project-area blocks was built in the early 1950s. A bit of verse penned by an early resident in 1926 seems to sum up South of Market history:

> Oh, ye saints look down on this new made town  
> And tell me, pray, which way to go?  
> The shoreline’s deranged and everything’s changed  
> And never a corner I know.  
> Now everything’s new and the landmarks are few  
> Oh, ye saints look down on this new made town  
> And tell me, pray, which way to go?  

— *South of Market Journal*, December 1926
RESEARCH DESIGN

The SF-80 Bayshore Viaduct Seismic Retrofit Projects research design and treatment plan (RDTP) has a long history. It is based on those developed for the cities of San Francisco (Praetzellis and Praetzellis, eds. 1993), Sacramento (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1993), and Oakland (Praetzellis 1994). After its appearance in the RDTP for the SF-80 Bayshore Project (Mc Ilroy and Praetzellis 1997), it was subsequently revised for the cities of San Francisco (Praetzellis and Ziesing 1998; Van Bueren et al. 2003; Walker and Ziesing 2002; Ziesing 1998, 2000), Sacramento (Ziesing 1999), Santa Rosa (Stewart 2002), and Los Angeles (Costello et al. 1996). Archaeologists outside the ASC have adapted the research design for other areas, including Stockton (Costello and Marvin 1999). Some of the projects for which these research designs were written never transpired, while others are still being implemented. Applications of the research design are available for San Francisco (Mc Ilroy, Meyer, and Praetzellis 2001), Sacramento (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997; M. Meyer 2002), Oakland (Praetzellis 2001; Praetzellis and Praetzellis, eds. 2004), and Los Angeles (Costello et al. 1998; Costello 1999), among others. As the research design is widely available, it will only be outlined here.

The research design follows a contextual approach. Contextual archaeology emphasizes the specific historical, social, and cultural contexts of behavior rather than the supposed universal influences sought by the practitioners of processual archaeology. This approach parallels the trend in the social sciences in general toward problems of “contextuality, the meaning of social life to those who enact it, and the explanation of exception and indeterminants rather than the regularities in phenomena observed” (Marcus and Fischer 1986:8). Structuralism, symbolism, critical theory, and “meaning” (Leone 1986) are stressed in interpretation. Contextualists also recognize the active role of both material culture and the archaeologist in the (re)creation of the past.

This research emphasizes something some historical archaeologists have known for years: our most effective work is often done at the small scale, emphasizing the commonplace and bringing the lives of the disenfranchised and often poorly documented into focus. It is this very characteristic of the data—their placement in the realm of the small scale, mundane, and personal—that puts household-level historical archaeology in a position to undermine and offer an alternative to universal interpretive models. According to theorist Matthew Johnson (1999:34), the result of processual archaeologists’ insistence on finding coherence and pattern in human history through large-scale and normative analyses is masking and homogenizing a diversity of past human experience that can only emerge through small-scale analyses. Historical archaeology, he claims, has access to “a space between often very powerful master narratives of cultural and social identity and much smaller, stranger and potentially subversive narratives of archaeological material” (Johnson 1999:34).

The main framework for the SF-80 Bayshore Project research is a question of longstanding importance to social historians: the processes by which people from traditional, pre-modern cultures—both immigrant and native-born—adapted to life in an industrial society (Gutman 1977). The research design focuses on three main issues: modernization, Victorianism, and working-class culture, each of which has discernible archaeological correlates and relates, on various levels, to the principal research questions.
RESOURCE TYPES

The SF-80 Project followed a consolidated approach to CEQA compliance, in which archaeological resources were identified and then immediately evaluated for eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). For this reason it was necessary for the RDTP to identify all resource types that might conceivably require evaluation. Some rarely encountered or generally nonsignificant property types were developed in the RDTP, as much in anticipation of ineligibility as eligibility, since it could not be ruled out that extraordinary examples of a given resource type might be discovered. This was felt to be a prudent step in order to avoid having to create a framework for evaluation after fieldwork was under way, which would have been necessary if an unexpected landfill or dump had been encountered in the absence of an evaluative framework.

It is important to note that merely identifying a resource type does not, in itself, render examples of the type significant under CEQA. Once a resource is identified, it must be evaluated by the criteria and data requirements in the RDTP. Historical research for the SF-80 Project suggested that examples of 10 historic-period archaeological property types might have been present within the SF-80 Project area. Many of the archaeological targets were chosen because they had the potential to contain more than one resource type. For example, the industrial sites overlapped with both industrial features and domestic occupation sites.

The resource types identified in the RDTP are listed below; an indication of findings is given where it helps to clarify our categories.

1. Domestic occupation sites comprised the largest number of sites recommended for testing. All of the resulting eligible features were from domestic occupation sites.

2. Domestic architecture was represented by only one site recommended for testing—the Duisenbergs’ first Gold Rush-period house, which the family reportedly brought with them from Chile.

3. Commercial sites included 12 stores, 2 stables, and a hotel within the project right-of-way.

4. Institutional sites to be tested focused on a church, the Eighth Street Primary School, Stanford Free Kindergarten, and the Army of Heaven Mission.

5. Industrial structures/architecture were limited to two sites—a stove-elbow factory and a smokehouse. The stove-elbow factory functioned as a backyard, family-owned business. The footing excavation missed this lot, but Privy 41 was discovered on the adjoining parcel. Construction monitoring encountered remains of the smokehouse. Using the RDTP procedures, this feature was identified and evaluated as ineligible.

6. Industrial features comprised the same sample—two sites—as industrial structures above.

7. Gardens and parks were targeted at six footings within the Russ Gardens site. Half of these footings were later dropped from the study because the exposures were inadequate to identify, evaluate, or realize any research values.
that might be inherent in these sites. The other three footings were retained, as they were also being monitored for other resource types.

8. Butchering sites were targeted at six footing within the historic Butchertown. All of the Butchertown targets overlapped with either domestic occupation sites or potential prehistoric sites. A cow burial was recovered on Block 6 and bones probably associated with a soap works were recovered on Block 9. The information was realized from these deposits by recording them and they were evaluated as ineligible using the RDTP.

9. Landfills and dumps were not included in the property types recommended for testing; such sites often turn up unexpectedly in filled areas. Refuse associated with the 1906 earthquake and fire was encountered at many of the targeted footings; these materials were evaluated as ineligible using the criteria in the RDTP.

10. Gold Rush-period sites included 10 examples of the property types listed above. As sites from this period are increasingly rare, it was proposed that any Gold Rush-period property type would be considered important. No Gold Rush-period sites were encountered.

RESEARCH THEMES AND QUESTIONS

From the historical issues and approaches mentioned above, the archaeologists constructed research themes, along with research questions associated with each theme. The interested reader is referred to the research design prepared for Caltrans (Mc Ilroy and Praetzellis 1997:161-177) for the complete list.

Due to the use of the consolidated approach wherein archaeological features were identified, evaluated, and treated in one process, the initial goal of the questions as they were phrased in the RDTP was to assess each feature's content and structure to determine if it qualified for evaluation. When these preliminary issues were resolved, the data requirements came into play. In the RDTP, each question was coupled with associated data requirements that were deemed essential if the features/strata being evaluated were to realize their research potential. The archaeological data requirements specified discrete features and/or layer interfaces in broad exposures. More complex questions involving comparative studies also require period interfaces composed of feature and layer interfaces connected with many households. Historical data requirements included historical associations for features/strata, as well as documentary exploration of the historical contexts involved. Besides stratigraphic integrity, artifact and faunal studies required sufficient variety and quantity to be reflective of the behaviors under study. To complete the evaluative process and determine a deposit's eligibility, the AIMS-R principles were applied (see Chapter 5). The RDTP also mentioned the public interpretive potential of remains to remind field archaeologists of the value of isolated artifacts or collections that may be used later for public outreach or developed into teaching collections for schools. This characteristic, however, did not contribute to the assessment of the resources’ CRHR eligibility.
Some targeted property types—such as gardens and architecture that required broad exposures—were dropped from the program when it became clear that exposures created by the monitoring program were too small to reveal these types of resources. No eligible landfills/dumps, commercial, institutional, or industrial features were discovered during monitoring. Table 4.1 lists only themes that were found relevant to SF-80 Project resources. Six principal questions are included for each theme. Clearly, human behavior is complex: there are many more questions that could be generated, and their answers simply generate more questions.

All of the CRHR-eligible features proved to be of the domestic-occupation property type. Thus, relevant research themes are limited to Consumer Behavior and Ethnicity/Urban Subcultures, and—when the sample size is increased by the contribution of other archaeological datasets—to Urban Geography. These themes are explored in Part V.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Principal Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Behavior and Strategies</td>
<td>How did consumer practices vary between various social, occupational, economic, and/or ethnic groups?</td>
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<td>To what degree do these differences correlate with wealth or other immediately apparent characteristics or with emic social categories?</td>
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<td>How were households, neighborhoods, and/or cities influenced by fashion, advertising, and/or social movements?</td>
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<td>How did households manage their finances; did they live within their “means,” did they take risks, and were the outcomes of their financial practices visible?</td>
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<td>How did households respond/adapt to life-cycle changes, stresses, and outside interventions?</td>
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<td>What role did household wealth or poverty play in consumer behavior?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity and Urban Subcultures</td>
<td>What was the influence of the class-based ideology known as Victorianism on various segments of the urban population?</td>
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<td>To what degree can Victorianism be said to have exerted a “homogenizing” influence on the cultures of ethnic or class subgroups?</td>
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<td>Is there evidence that other groups co-opted Victorian symbolism?</td>
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<td>What role did the “cult of domesticity”—including approved modes of child-rearing techniques, genteel entertaining, and social display—have in this household, neighborhood, or city?</td>
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<td>In what way did barter and “pre-modern” forms of exchange have a role in this household/neighborhood?</td>
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<td>How were ethnic, economic, and cultural differences expressed in this household/neighborhood?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Geography</td>
<td>Were modifications made to the natural landscape that influenced the city’s development and growth?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How were these modification processes implemented on individual parcels and blocks?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How did households/neighborhoods/cities use/adapt their backyards and open spaces?</td>
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<td>How did perceptions of the cultural landscape and modifications change over time and how did this impact the parcel/neighborhood/city?</td>
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<td>What influence might “place” have on households and their decision-making processes?</td>
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<td>How are the differences in neighborhoods and cities reflected in the material culture of those who live within them?</td>
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