CHAPTER 10
CONSUMERISM, ETHNICITY, AND URBAN SUBCULTURES

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The history and archaeology of the SF-80 Bayshore Viaduct Seismic Retrofit Projects (SF-80 Bayshore Project) area are viewed in this chapter within the framework of an issue that is of importance to social historians: the process by which people from traditional, pre-modern cultures—both immigrant and native-born—adapted to life in an industrial society (Gutman 1977). In so doing, we focus on “the local and the diverse as against the grand narratives of cross-cultural anthropology” (Hodder 1999:153). The approach is unashamedly historical and contextual. Rather than beginning with an interpretive framework that is taken to be cross-culturally applicable (e.g., Deetz 1996; Winer and Deetz 1990), we investigate local contexts and then seek to understand how individuals and groups used material culture to pursue their own political, social, and ethnic agendas in particular places and times. In this way, we hope to avoid what Gosden (2001) calls the “static and monolithic view of colonialism” in which hegemonic domination is presented as unchallenged and material culture is to be understood through the lens provided by a single ideology. This section briefly summarizes the SF-80 Bayshore Project research design, focusing on those themes for which archaeological data requirements were recovered during construction monitoring. The reader is referred to the RDTP for further details (Praetzellis et al. 1997:149-177).

MODERNIZATION

While the great exhibitions of the 19th century displayed the newly available products of the industrial revolution, the very process of industrialization was transforming western society and culture. In 19th-century America, this process involved a change from a traditional, “face-to-face” society (Redfield 1955) to one that emphasized rationality in economic relationships, specialization, and efficiency, and in which attainment of the goal of an improved future was to be measured by material progress (Brown 1976:29; Wallerstein 1983). Until as late as the 1970s, many economic historians conceived of 19th-century modernization as a simple, linear process (e.g., Rostow 1960). According to this model, societies evolved in a straight-line path from traditional, agrarian-based communities in which social control was maintained by church, family, and an inviolable social order, to industrialized ones in which “centralization, bureaucratization, and role segmentation” were the rule (Bender 1978:56).

A parallel interpretation, and one that has come to predominate in recent years, rejects the idea that all vestiges of the pre-industrial past were shed by all segments of society undergoing urbanization. Bender (1978) proposed that the modernization of 19th-century American urban dwellers was multilinear and complex: multilinear because various class and ethnic groups participated to varying degrees; and complex since individuals and families were simultaneously involved with both traditional and modern
ways of life. Through the mechanism of family and social networks, national, religious, and ethnic ties remained strong and encouraged communal, traditional values and practices (Bender 1978:122; Haraven 1978). At the same time, industrial time discipline, the cash economy, and relationships with government institutions necessitated that individuals be able to function within the modern order (Rodgers 1978).

It has been suggested that a set of cultural values, practices, and aesthetics known as “Victorianism” (Howe 1976; Wiebe 1967) or “gentility” (Lawrence 2000) came to predominate within the Euroamerican cultural and political establishment of this modern society. Victorianism is said to have been a “homogenizing force” (Hardesty 1980) upon the working class (both immigrants and native-born working class alike), replacing traditional mores with modern values and patterns of behavior suited to workers’ roles in an industrial society. Archaeological research is in a unique position to measure both the relative pervasiveness of Victorianism, as well as the degree of resistance to the values of the emerging industrial society in the form of the development of distinctive working-class and other cultures.

The concept of gentility is not without its problems, however, for it may conjure up a seductive but ultimately unproductive vision of how the Victorian world worked—that of total cultural hegemony. In this skewed model, the various segments of society are seen as buying into the notion of the intrinsic rightness of 19th-century power relations and accepting the attendant practices and symbols more or less wholesale. According to Gramsci, the forces that sought to promote genteel values did not attempt to impose their hegemony by coercion or “rule” but by shaping common perception in order to make their power seem a part of the natural order (Gramsci 1971). Leone’s (1984) study of the Paca Garden is a classic example of the role of material culture in this process. And this role, it should be emphasized, is an active one in which material culture does not merely reflect values but plays an active part in creating social relations.

Powerful as this approach may be, it may leave little role for members of subaltern groups in the “discourse” that leads to the creation of their own culture (Beaudry, Cook, and Mrzowski 1991; cf. Orser 1996:167-173). Furthermore, this approach tends to result in rather mechanical interpretations of the meaning of genteel material culture—interpretations that vary little with the specific contexts in which the items were used. Although the “tastemakers” determined the idiom in which respectable taste was expressed (Lynes 1955), they did not control how it was used. We assert that the presence of matched sets of dinnerware does not always mean that the household was striving for Victorian perfection any more than an increase in the proportion of Staffordshire pots over traditional Mexican or Chinese ceramics necessarily indicates that the users of these items were “assimilating.” Although cultural hegemony and its cousin, the dominant ideology thesis (Althusser 1971), are useful in constructing large-scale generalizations, they are too inflexible and static to help understand the complex social dynamics of historical cases at the household scale.

In discarding aspects of the cultural-hegemony model, we question the notion that everyone who used genteel material culture employed these items to convey the same ideas or used them for the same purposes. Rather, we suggest that (1) these “incarnated signs” (Appadurai 1986:38) possessed powerful, conventional meanings understood
throughout 19th-century California; and (2) in a society of diverse ethnicities, social classes, and political agendas, people used others’ knowledge of these meanings as “cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1984:53) to pursue their own strategies, not merely to imitate the Victorian upper crust in an attempt at social advancement.

Genteel Values and Practices

Gentility was one of the key influences on 19th-century American thought and fashion (Bushman 1992), although its influence was international, extending to South Africa (Ross 1999), New Zealand (Belich 1996), Australia (Lawrence 2000), and everywhere the British Empire and economy had held sway.

Victorian values had strong and clear behavioral and material correlates, many of which were displayed in the home (Praetzellis 1991). The essential moral quality of a genteel family was expressed through the presentation of tasteful, Gothic-style artifacts in their appropriate context (Eastlake 1878). To maximize this effect, the home itself had to be of the correct style and internal arrangement. Clark (1976) examined the relationship between Gothic architecture and mid-19th-century Christian values. This architectural form, with its church-like exterior and functionally discrete interior spaces, provided the ideal context in which highly formalized Victorian social interactions, dubbed “secular rituals” (Moore and Meyerhoff 1977), were carried out.

Artifacts played an essential part in Victorian families’ household rituals. On the largest scale, Romantic Revival houses were themselves designed to accommodate these rituals (Clark 1976:51-52). If a prospective visitor was allowed beyond the front stoop of a middle-class home, the hallstand would receive their visiting card. This piece of furniture was a veritable icon of respectable values because of its role in this highly formalized practice of social visiting, an essential part of 19th-century manners (Ames 1978; Lynes 1963:147). Proceeding through the hall, the new arrival would be ushered into the parlor. It was here that morning callers were received and afternoon tea parties and evening receptions were held. In the parlor, the guest would experience an environment created solely for such formal receptions—a room through whose embellishments was expressed the public face of both middle- and working-class households (Cohen 1986). The parlor’s interior was a vision of respectable clutter: weighty, dark-stained furniture shrouded in swags of heavy fabric; walls jammed with copies of famous works of art; and every flat surface home to some figurine or gilded trinket (Seale 1981; Vaux 1864:95-97). The expense of outfitting a middle-class parlor in 1877 was more than three times that of any other room (Lynes 1963:142). Only in the homes of the rich was it not maintained at the cost of some inconvenience, for this room took away space from a family’s informal living space; a suburban landlady, cited by Calvert Vaux, claimed that “all the best families lived in the basement,” leaving the parlor, according to Vaux, as “a sort of quarantine in which to put each plague of a visitor” (1864:97). The volume of good taste in the parlor was redundant to the point of being overwhelming, and all who entered understood its cultural significance (Grier 1988).

The dining room was also a public room in the Victorian house. The rules to be obeyed here were even more elaborate and intricate than in the parlor, and the display of fashionable artifacts, such as dinnerware, was equally important. The best dinner service, crystal, and silver were displayed on a sideboard, while decorative platters and bric-a-
brac ringed the wall on a shoulder-high plate rail. Under the popular “English” system of dining, serving vessels were passed from hand to hand around the table; plates never arrived pre-portioned from the kitchen in a well-regulated Victorian household. At a formal dinner, each table setting included several drinking vessels; until the rise of the temperance movement in the 1880s, each course might be served with its own type of wine (Lynes 1963:176-199).

Nineteenth-century intellectuals from John Ruskin to Henry Ward Beecher fostered the belief that beautiful surroundings created good people (McLoughlin 1970; Ruskin 1959; Watkin 1977). While tasteful design could educate, bad design was berated as an immoral influence (e.g., Beecher 1868). Starving a child’s soul of beauty condemned it to an empty life of frustration and despair. Material culture had the power to improve and uplift, and reformers explicitly promoted specific decorative modes to achieve their religious and social ends. The moral connotations of material goods, however, shifted through time and according to observer. Whereas the Gothic Revival inspired middle-class European and American consumers from the 1840s through the 1870s, the embellishments that had formerly designated comfort came to be seen by the 1890s as cluttered gaudiness, connoting sloth. The Arts and Crafts and Colonial Revival movements and the Centennial celebration inspired pride in America and its accomplishments. A “Buy America” campaign stressed not only products of local origin, but products along a certain line. These goods wedded the wonders of technology with the simplicity of nature, a marriage that can be seen most clearly in Craftsman-style architecture. According to Gustav Stickley, a proponent of things Craftsman, “Luxurious surroundings suggest and induce idleness. Complex forms and costly materials have an influence upon life, which tells a sad story in history. On the other hand, chasteness and restraint in form, simple, but artistic materials are equally expressive of the character of the people who use them” (1903 cited in Cohen 1986:264). By the turn of the century, the American middle class had by and large rejected Victorian fashion and adopted a style of decor that was seen as simple, natural, and efficient (Cohen 1986:275).

WORKING-CLASS CULTURES AND RESISTANCE

The modernization of the cultures of 19th-century urban dwellers neither proceeded uniformly across society nor immediately supplanted all pre-industrial modes of life (Bender 1978). The meaning and value of material goods shifted for working-class urban dwellers, ethnic minorities, and the non-native born as they did for members of the white middle class.

The existence of an urban, distinctly working-class, culture in England was recognized by E.P. Thompson (1963) as an outgrowth of the industrial revolution. Although the traditional rights and responsibilities of craftsmen were being eroded by creeping industrialization, these values retained their strength and eventually jelled into the trades-union movement. Later writers have emphasized not only working-class political movements but also class-specific values and mores, often interpreting these as resistance to the genteel values of the time. Stedman Jones, for example, points to the rise of a “working class culture which showed itself staunchly impervious to middle class attempts to guide it” (1974:462). The working class was said to be governed by
“strict rules of propriety” (Booth 1902, cited in Stedman Jones 1974:463). These rules, however, were not the same as those of the Victorian middle class, who sought to reform the manners and morals of the working class through the medium of universal education. For example, unlike the middle class, working people did not save money to accumulate capital but rather to buy objects and clothing for display: “evidence about patterns of spending . . . suggest that a concern to demonstrate self-respect” was more important than saving for the future (Stedman Jones 1974:473).

As a mode of exchange, barter was still widespread well into the 18th century (Braudel 1975:328, 333), and products of the farm and forest were regularly exchanged for manufactured goods at many country stores in America throughout the 19th century (Carson 1954:19-38). Cordwood was offered for sugar; embroidery could pay off a grocery bill. In this environment, obtaining goods was a face-to-face operation between buyer and seller, in which the value of things was judged in relation to other things. When facing off, the actors knew each other’s financial condition, credit worthiness, and reputation as a bargainer. Was the cord of wood worth 10 pounds of sugar to a local merchant, or 20? The answer might depend as much on the bargainers’ relationship as on the storekeeper’s assessment of local needs.

By the mid-19th century in American cities, however, economic relationships had become almost exclusively money-based. Until this time, transactions between urban merchants and their clients were personalized to the degree that credit was relatively easy to obtain, the price of merchandise was not marked on items, and their cost fluctuated with the customer’s ability and willingness to pay the asking price. By the 1870s, this old system was fading rapidly, and in urban areas the “cash store” predominated.

It was a short step from the one-price system to marketing on a national scale. Mass retailing—based on high turnover and low unit-price, anonymity, and the one-price system—completed the depersonalization of the storekeeper/customer relationship and established the mode that has come to typify such relationships in mature capitalist economies. It was, in short, an inevitable part of the process of economic modernization.

The principles behind the one-price system were classically Victorian and had their social, as well as economic, counterparts: the system was a rational one based on fixed standards, reproducible conditions, and efficiency (Brown 1976:42-43). It could be applied to all persons equally, since the customer/merchant relationship was not influenced by the individuals’ social roles outside the transaction. Proponents conceived of it as yet another example of the evolution of 19th-century society, whereby the practices and methods of rationalized business “were a natural outgrowth of a general law of Progress” (Polanyi 1957:274).

While patronizing secondhand stores was clearly motivated also by economic concerns, the continuance of barter in the face of the rise of a cash-based economy is an area in which 19th-century working-class and non-native-born resistance can be seen. The modes of barter and variable prices were embedded in community social relations and were precisely the kind of pre-modern arrangements that were contrary to all things Victorian. Where genteel society had absolute values for things, the pre-modern system had negotiation and variability. Where the new way involved standardized, role-specific performances, the old way had complex, multilevel relationships that spilled over the
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND STRATEGIES

VICTORIANISM IN THE BAYSHORE PROJECT AREA

Erica S. Gilson

The Victorian era was a time of great social and economic change, and the Bayshore Project area was a microcosm of these changes. The influence of Victorian culture on household behavior and the adoption of Victorian tastes by middle-class households are evident in the Bayshore area. This influence can be seen in the architectural styles of the houses, the decor of the interiors, and the clothing worn by residents. The Bayshore Project area was a perfect example of the middle-class Victorian lifestyle, with its focus on comfort, elegance, and tradition.

A market in secondhand clothing flourished in much of the 19th century due to the inability of manufacturers and retailers to produce and distribute clothing at prices working-class people could afford (Lemire 1988:23). Technological advances, however, eventually resulted in mass production of inexpensive goods efficient distribution networks, and annual catalogues. The new system accommodated and encouraged changes in fashion, influencing the purchasing patterns of working-class people. As the consumer revolution progressed, junk stores declined and the mass retailers through their department stores and catalogues, came to serve as a sort of “cultural primer” (M.L. Miller 1981:53, 183).

The purchasing power of many late-19th century working-class households was not a simple emulation of middle-class standards with a time lag due to delayed prosperity, but rather a creative compromise forged in making a transition between two very different social-economic worlds (1986:274). Despite efforts by domestic reformers, these choices often centered on the comfortable, contained, and of Victorian decor roundly rejected by this time by those in the vanguard of middle-class taste.

Boundaries between gentility and social roles were further blurred as urban areas became a crossroads for secondhand goods—ranging from household furnishings to clothing. Sales of secondhand goods were high during the early 20th century, as the economy was slow, and many families were forced to sell their belongings to pay for necessities. This phenomenon is reflected in the Bayshore area, where secondhand goods were a common sight and a means of survival for many families.
Table 10.1. Economic and Social Characteristics of the Households with CR-eligible Features, SF-80 Bayshore Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Occupation*</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Property Value</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1031 Harrison</td>
<td>Privy 3</td>
<td>Duisenberg</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Professional+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>ca. $50,000 in 1870</td>
<td>German church of St. Marcus**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Maria</td>
<td>Privy 1</td>
<td>O’Neil</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>$10,330 in 1870</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Kate</td>
<td>Privy 30</td>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Anne – No Children – Yes</td>
<td>$2,000 in 1870</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Kate</td>
<td>Privy 38</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Irish (County Mayo)</td>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Husband &amp; Kids – Yes Wife - No</td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Kate</td>
<td>Privy 39</td>
<td>Wendt</td>
<td>German/Irish</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Boniface’s Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>414 Seventh</td>
<td>Privy 41</td>
<td>Buckley</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>$2,600 in 1870</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Catholic Church (10th St.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>520 Eighth</td>
<td>Privy 20</td>
<td>Noonan</td>
<td>Irish (County Limerick)</td>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Rose Catholic Church (Brannan)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Occupation categories according to statistical studies (see Chapter 11 and Appendix H).

**Possibly United German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of St. Mark’s Church – south side of Geary Street, between Stockton and Powell (1879 City Directory, p. 1071).
for occupation levels are those used in the statistical studies comparing SF-80 Bayshore residents with those from the Caltrans’ SFOBB West Approach and Cypress projects (see Chapter 11 and Appendix H).

Victorian attitudes reflected the replacement of old English aristocratic values with those of the middle class and, as such, they found a strong foothold in the middle-class population of the United States. Independence, frugality, industry, and hard work were seen as among the primary goals to strive for. As the 19th century progressed and more and more middle-class men were employed outside the home in jobs providing goods and services, a new ideal of womanhood developed. This “cult of domesticity” held that women should remain at home, where they provided a safe haven for their husbands away from the outside world of trouble and vice. Home was viewed as a shelter, free from outside evils, where women would train their children while setting a moral example for them. Women raised their children, shopped for food and clothing for the family, washed and cleaned, decorated the home, and entertained. Essentially anything to do with the home came under the women’s sphere of influence. Perhaps as an outlet for women, the tea ceremony became a decidedly female ritual—a chance to get together with other women.

The pervasiveness of Victorian moral values throughout society influenced people in many ways, which should in turn be reflected in their artifacts (Praetzellis 1991). The home, viewed as a center for this new morality, was seen as the place to demonstrate one’s values (Halttunen 1989). Here would be displayed the objects reflective of family respectability (Yamin 2000a), and here artifacts could be used to reinforce desired behaviors and rituals among the occupants (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992). Victorians believed that living in beautifully appointed houses would create morally good people; as such the converse would also be true—living in unattractive homes created immoral people. The most public of rooms, the parlor, would have been ornately decorated and used to demonstrate one’s respectability to the outside world. Similarly, the dining room, with its matched china sets in a variety of forms and its bric-a-brac placed on a plate rail, would have further reinforced and confirmed the family’s station in society and its strong sense of values (Green 1983).

The working-class consumer was not immune to these Victorian ideals and aesthetics. At Five Points in New York City, even the poorest of workers had partial sets of matching tableware in a variety of serving pieces, as well as an assortment of decorative household items (Yamin 2000a). It has been suggested that rather than mimicking the middle class, the use of the residents’ limited wealth to purchase fashionable goods was a reflection of a distinction within the classes rather than between them (Cook, Yamin, and McCarthy 1996)—a way of asserting one’s identity and value as a person. As the working classes could often ill-afford the desired trappings of Victorianism, some would have turned to secondhand shops to supplement their possessions.

Almost all of the features recovered from the Bayshore Project exhibit some appreciation of established Victorian aesthetics. The German Duisenberg family, located on Block 3 and by far the wealthiest of our project area residents, had enough capital to afford all the aesthetic elements of Victorianism. Deposited after Charles’ death in 1894, the contents of Privy 3 appear to represent years of accumulation. The ceramic tableware included a wide variety of serving and eating dishes and the remains of at least two
matched sets. The decorative molded patterns were typical of the 1860s; their styles would have complemented each other on the table and included named patterns such as Fig, Memnon Shape, Wheat, and Prairie, along with the ever-popular simple molded panels. Almost all the glassware that graced their table was decorated, many in pressed or cut panels, but also many in a variety of patterns, including Roman Key, Honeycomb, Inverted Fern, Loop, and Dart, Ashburton, and Bohemia.

The presence of 3 teapots, 2 teapot/sugars, and at least 25 cups attests to the importance of the tea service to Mrs. Duisenberg. In addition to the cups were two motto cups, one of which was decorated with aphorisms from Benjamin Franklin’s “The Way To Wealth.” These cups were often used for younger children as a way to commend their behavior and at the same time instruct them in desired values. Much like motto cups and alphabet plates, children’s toys also had dual purposes. Toys, often miniatures of adult items, could be used to play with and at the same time teach children their future roles in society. The 10 tea-set pieces and 11 dolls would have been used for play and for schooling young Duisenberg girls. Similarly, the boys had a toy pistol, with which they could have mimicked their father who appears, based on the 31 pieces of ammunition recovered, to have been a hunter.

The Duisenberg were known for their hospitality and entertained on a grand scale. Dressed in fashionable attire, Mr. and Mrs. Duisenberg would have presided over formal multicourse dinners, beginning with soups and stews and running through breads, vegetables, meats, and dessert. In keeping with Victorians’ love of clutter, their house was decorated with bric-a-brac, including a standing porcelain circus bear and a hollow parian porcelain figurine.

Near the other end of the spectrum of wealth would have been Anne Mills, an Irish widow raising two children. Privy 30 at 36 Kate Street, one of the interior streets on Block 4, was probably filled during a house clean-out around the time of the family’s move elsewhere in the city in 1882. While listed as keeping house, Anne may have continued her work as a laundress, and possibly even as a seamstress, to support the family. Although her table settings were quite dated at the time of deposition, they would have presented an attractive picture with complementary molded patterns, though of limited variety. The majority of the glass also was decorated, most of it paneled, but some of newer patterns as well. This may reflect changes occurring in the pressed-glass industry at the time. The creation of lime glass in Pittsburgh around 1864 allowed for a faster pressing time and, therefore, a lower cost (Blaszcyk 2000). These items may have been more easily attainable for someone of Anne’s means. She was serving relatively sophisticated alcoholic beverages in a variety of fashionable goblets.

Included among the artifacts were 4 teapots, 1 teapot/sugar, and 19 cups/mugs—a substantial amount for such a small family. There was also a motto cup for use by and instruction of the children. In addition a number of slate pencils and writing tablets as well as several ink bottles attest to her children’s continuing education.

Anne appears to have been quite industrious and self-reliant, putting up quantities of food in various canning jars and crocks. Not surprisingly, her meals were basic, with a high proportion of soups and stews. The presence of three flowerpots in the privy may attest to home decoration or homegrown herbs for cooking.
Anne Mills, while living on reduced wages following her husband’s death, continued
to try to set a good, class-appropriate example for her children. The archaeological evidence
shows that she and her family dressed in predominantly plain inexpensive to moderately
priced clothing. A few finer-quality items may have been purchased from nearby
secondhand stores. In a much less grand fashion than the Duisenenbergs, she may have
taught her children appropriate behavior, both by example and with the use of various
artifacts, including “educational” toys, motto cups, and slate writing pencils and tablets.
Based on the remains, Mrs. Mills appears to have been an industrious, hard-working
woman who endorsed Victorian values and embodied them to the best of her ability.

Living at 31 Kate Street, down the block from Anne Mills, the Wendt and Dean
families occupied separate residences on the same property. John Wendt, who was
German, was an unemployed express-wagon driver, while his Irish wife, Mary, kept
house. The Wendts were unusual in the project area, as they had no children. The Irish
Dean family, listed as boarders on the property, included Anthony, a laborer, his wife
Bridget, a housewife, and their four children all under the age of 11. The Wendts, who
lived at the property from 1877 through 1880, may have rented out the smaller building
on the property when money became tight. Privies 38 and 39, associated with the Dean
and Wendt families, respectively, were both deposited about 1882.

The juxtaposition of the two archaeological features creates an interesting comparison
of the two families. The Dean family would have set an attractive if dated table, with a
variety of serving vessels that suggest multicourse meals. Much of their tableware was
molded, including three items in the Sharon Arch pattern. Other patterns included
Scallop Decagon, Sydenham Shape, Chinese Shape, and the popular panels. Stemware
and tumblers accounted for more than half of the drinking vessels, most of these paneled
as well. The Deans could afford to eat well, purchasing better cuts of meat for their
meals. The presence of a variety of condiment containers implies a liking for well-seasoned
foods. In addition, Mrs. Dean put up an assortment of foods in her canning jars and
crocks.

The Wendt family table had few specialty/serving dishes—a few bowls, a platter,
and oval dish, and a tureen—although almost half of all tableware was decorated,
predominantly with the ubiquitous dated molded patterns popular among Bayshore
Project residents. Unlike the Deans, the Wendts drinking vessels of choice were cups/
mugs, with only about two pieces of stemware. The lack of any teapots, sugar dishes, or
creamers suggest that Mrs. Wendt may have chosen not to host afternoon teas.

Unlike the Wendts, a variety of toys were recovered from the Deans’ privy, including
portions of a matched paneled tea set and three dolls. Interestingly, a children’s ABC
riddle plate was found in the Wendt’s privy. This may have been a curio piece. All of
these items suggest an eye to instructing young children in etiquette of the times.

Clothing recovered from Privy 39 reveal that the Deans preferred moderately priced
items. Two thimbles and several straight pins suggest that Mrs. Dean engaged in creating
and/or repairing her family’s clothing. The children’s shoes, well-worn when discarded,
suggest hand-me-downs between siblings. Mrs. Dean’s footwear, while stylish in the late
1870s, would have been outmoded when discarded, although the presence of several
fragments of jewelry, a cane, and a purse would have helped create a more fashionable
though modest portrait. While no clothing was recovered from the Wendts’ privy, their footwear was of a finer quality and included stylish high-laced boots for Mary and comfortable though expensive footwear with a Goodyear welt for John. The Wendts may have been less inclined or able to entertain socially at home, but they appear to have wanted to create a more fashionable picture for the outside world.

The overall portrait of the two families would suggest that the Wendts were less interested in or less capable of maintaining appearances within society. With no children, they may not have felt the need to create the moral atmosphere that was so prevalent in other homes. The presence of better-quality footwear suggests they may have spent more of their income on clothing themselves comfortably and fashionably. The lack of decorative items, personal accoutrements, and tea service items in the Wendts’ privy may be reflective of a general reticence of the childless couple, a lack of finances, or simply a result of the fact that the privy itself was severely impacted by the original freeway builder’s trench. In contrast, the Wendts’ lodgers, the Deans, used their limited resources in an effort to present a respectable and genteel appearance to society and to raise their children in the proper atmosphere.

Thomas O’Neil was an Irish glass cutter who lived at 3 Maria Street on Block 4 with his wife, Maria, and their four children, all under age 12. Unlike most of the other features of the Bayshore Project, Privy 1 appears to be a remodeling effort or disposal of unwanted items rather than conversion to flush toilets or a residence clean-out after moving.

Deposited sometime in the early 1870s, the privy contained few serving dishes: only a pitcher, platter, and slop bowl. Half of the tableware was decorated with molded patterns typical of the 1860s, not too out of date at the time of deposition. While different, these patterns—Corn and Oats, Fig, and Lily of the Valley—would have been complementary. All of the glass goblets and tumblers were decorated with pressed patterns, primarily paneled. Two teapots, one earthenware and one ferrous, along with three cups indicate that Maria may have served a formal social tea to acquaintances, as well as a more casual family tea.

It is difficult to tell the degree to which the O’Neil family endeavored to uphold the Victorian mores of the times. Mr. O’Neil had $10,000 in real estate and could have been considered one of the wealthier occupants of the Bayshore Project area; however, he had only $300 in personal property. The scant artifacts recovered from Privy 1 may be reflective of this lack of easily disposable cash or, more likely, the result of severe disturbance and truncation of the feature by the freeway bent cut.

The last feature on Block 4, Privy 41, was located at 414 Seventh Street. Andrew Buckley, an Irishman who worked as a porter in a liquor store, his wife, Eliza, and their seven children ranging in age from 25 to 5, lived on the property from about 1880 to 1889. It appears that the feature was deposited in the early 1880s, when the house was converted to flushing toilets.

While not as wealthy as the Duisenbergs, the Buckleys set a lavish dinner table. The high quality of tableware included at least two matched sets, one of which was a sided porcelain teapot with lid, creamer, butter dish, and sugar. An additional two matched sets of stemware, and a decanter with matching cordial glasses were also recovered.
More than a third of the tableware was porcelain, and almost half was decorated, primarily with molded and paneled designs. The majority of the glassware was decorated, some paneled, others with patterns popular a decade earlier—Ashburton, Pittsburgh Diamond, Prism with Diamond Points, Ribbed Bellflower, Waffle and Thumbprint, and Roman Key. As with most of the Bayshore Project residents, while the table would have been attractive, it would have been dated. In addition to the matched porcelain tea-ware set, an additional two teapots, creamer, and a sugar were used in the household. With the high quantity and quality of tea wares recovered, the tea ceremony appears to have been an important social ritual for Mrs. Buckley and her older daughter.

Adhering to the standards of the time, the Buckley family had a variety of items for children. At least three children’s chamber pots were recovered, suggesting an attention to early toilet training. As if to reinforce this practice, a toy pitcher and two basins would have added to the children’s toiletry education. Additional toys include nine dolls and seven tea-set items, all of which would have been used to teach young girls their future role in society. A single motto cup with the gilded phrase “Forget Me Not” was also intended for children.

More so than any other household from the Bayshore Project, the Buckleys’ home was fashionably decorated with typical Victorian clutter, including two flowerpots, an ornamental basket, a vase-like base, and three vases—porcelain, blue opaque glass, and white opaque glass.

Alcoholic-beverage bottles of all types dominated the collection. The sheer diversity and quantity of these bottles suggests that Mr. Buckley may have been storing goods from his place of employment or may have been recycling the containers. As early as 1870, Andrew is listed as owning $2,500 in real estate: by the time of privy deposition, land values would have risen considerably. Adding to the family income, the three oldest boys were also employed.

The last feature from the Bayshore Project, Privy 20 was located in a relatively rural area at 520 Eighth Street, Block 6. At the time of privy deposition, in the early 1880s, more than half the block was undeveloped, yet on this single lot resided 15 individuals. William Noonan, an unemployed Irish housepainter, lived there with his wife, Catherine, their 3 children, ages 8 to 14, and a domestic helper. Catherine Noonan kept both the house and a dairy with 10 cows, possibly on space on the same block if not the lot itself. In addition to the family, the widowed Mrs. Winifred Gorman and her 3 children resided on the lot, along with 5 adult lodgers.

Unlike most of the other residents from the Bayshore Project, the Noonans and their lodgers appear not to have adhered to the Victorian standards so pervasive of the time. They set a fairly informal table, with no matching sets and with sparsely decorated wares. There were few serving items, only two tureens and an oval dish. All of the glassware was decorated with pressed patterns, the greater-part of which were paneled. The relatively low quantity of tableware suggests that the Noonans and their lodgers may have kept separate kitchens.
Dinners for the Noonans and their lodgers would have consisted of hearty though inexpensive food with an emphasis on beef. The majority of these meals were moderately priced to inexpensive cuts of meat typically used for soups and stews.

Mrs. Noonan may have been too busy with her dairy and lodgers to have spent time indulging in afternoon tea. Only six cups were recovered, while no teapots were found. Similarly, no children’s tableware or motto cups were recovered, although there were four items from a tea set and a single doll, suggesting some form of home training. In addition there were several pencil and writing slate fragments for the children attending school to practice their letters on.

Clothing and footwear recovered from Privy 20, also bespeaks a certain practicality. With but two exceptions all of the clothing was plain, basic everyday wear. The presence of a large quantity of straight pins may be indicative of home clothing alterations and mending. Shoes and boots were built to last and were worn-out when finally discarded.

The artifacts recovered from Privy 20 indicate that the Noonans and their lodgers were both practical with their purchases. Few aspects of their discards would indicate an adherence to the Victorian aesthetics so pervasive of the times.

The Bayshore Project residents present a rare, small-scale portrait of late 19th-century life in San Francisco. Artifacts recovered from the Bayshore features indicate that some, though not all, of the families participated in the aesthetic standards of Victorianism: using toys and other objects for multiple purposes, not the least of which was instructional; engaging in the elaborate tea ceremony; and decorating their homes in fashionable clutter in order to display family respectability.

The Duisenbergs, the wealthiest family, spent a moderate amount of their time and money on the trappings of a Victorian home. Interestingly, it was the Buckleys, a family of more modest means, who presented the most upscale home, with an abundance of artifacts revealing an attempt to achieve the Victorian ideal. The Duisenbergs, the more socially established family, may not have felt the need to “prove” themselves, as they were already moving in the highest social circles due to Mr. Duisenberg’s former appointment as German consul. While Andrew Buckley and his family may have been aspiring to greater social heights. Whether this was an effort to set themselves apart from similar families, an attempt to climb the social ladder, or a simple eccentricity is unknown.

The childless Wendts and the Noonans with their lodgers do not appear to have been as caught up in Victorian ideology as other Bayshore residents. Artifacts from their respective features do not reflect the expected matched tableware, variety of serving vessels, tea sets, toys, or household clutter expected of the home. Both Mr. Wendt and Mr. Noonan were unemployed and, as such, may not have been able to afford, or willing to spend money on, such paraphernalia. The Wendts, with no children, might not have felt the need for such visual accoutrements, instead preferring to spend their limited income on better shoes and clothing. Likewise the Noonans, living near Butchertown in a relatively rural area of the city, may have been too busy with their lodgers and dairy to spend much time or effort on something that may have seemed superfluous to the family.

The remaining SF-80 Bayshore residents all appear to have attempted to create a Victorian environment in their homes. The widowed Mrs. Mills, who may have been
living off her husband's savings, nevertheless still maintained an attractive home with much of the trappings of Victorian society. The Dean family, and to a lesser extent the O'Neils, also appear to have spent time and effort to make a presentable Victorian home.

COWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
Michael D. Meyer

The Bayshore Project Consumer Behavior/Strategies Theme also covered adaptive strategies in urban settings associated with the acquisition and consumption of foodstuffs or the organization and use of space (Theme A, Question 3, in Praetzelis et al. 1997:163). One feature exposed but not fully recovered was a cow burial on Block 6 at 522 Eighth Street. There were no associated artifacts to date the burial event, and the bones were in poor condition having been disturbed by freeway bent construction. The cow was an old animal at its time of death. The burial location was in an open yard near a small building, as shown on the 1887 Sanborn map. It was likely buried in the later half of the 19th century. Although cattle may have been grazing in the area since the late 18th century, in the early days, a dead carcass would have been stripped for hide and tallow and left on the surface to rot rather than being buried (Rolle 1963:114-115).

With the early Mission Creek Butchertown so close to the site, the burial could predate the settlement of the block; historical references to the cows on the block and analogous cow burials from 19th-century West Oakland, however, suggest that this animal may have just been another neighborhood cow that died and was buried by its owners in the yard.

In the 19th century, livestock was prevalent throughout the Bayshore Project area: from the ubiquitous horses, who transported people and goods throughout the city, to the animals at Butchertown, who fed residents and supplied other raw materials for the tanneries and tallow and soap factories. The Sanborn maps indicate stables with a large “X” across the top of the building, although many stables also had addresses suggesting occupancy by humans rather than or as well as livestock, and some of the larger ones were specifically listed as residences.

Next door to where the cow was buried, Mrs. Noonan kept a 10-cow dairy at 520 Eighth Street in 1880; in 1887 the Sanborn map still identified the basement of an outbuilding as a stable. The lot next to hers was fenced with a one-story shelter, presumably for the cows. The South of Market Journal (SMJ) twice mentioned cows in the neighborhood. In May 1926, George Patterson reminisced about people living next to “Nunan’s Celebrated ‘Cow Lot’” (SMJ 1926 1 [10]:10). In June of that year, James Roxburgh—another author of the “Memories of the Past” section—told the story of a cow on Minna Street a few blocks north of Block 6:

Those who lived on Minna between Seventh and Eighth will remember Mrs. McDonald, who, one day, lost her cow, and said “I’ll give my daughter Delia to the boy who brings my cow home.” Among the boys who heard this remark was Hughie Hallahan, and he skirmished around, found the cow and brought her home. Well, to finish the story, Hughie married Delia, which proved to be a most happy marriage [SMJ 1926 1 (11):11].
The Noonans appear to have been an exception in having so many cows within a residential area. More common would be Mrs. McDonald keeping just a single cow for home use. In West Oakland during the Cypress Project, several cow burials dating to the late 19th century were uncovered. One skeleton displayed evidence of the use of a homeopathic cure for “hollow horn disease,” or anthrax, that was apparently unsuccessful (Meyer 1997:61). In *Martin Eden*, Jack London (1909:151-152) tells of a West Oakland landlady, ca. 1900, who had her children take the family cow to graze weeds and grass along the street. The children had to keep a watchful eye for the poundman, who would confiscate the animal, forbidden within the city limits at the time.

In the 1880s West Oakland and the San Francisco Mission Bay neighborhoods would have been very similar. Block 6 was removed from downtown San Francisco. It was a transitional area with a mix of rural open-space, industries, and housing that included boardinghouses, detached suburban homes, and high-density row houses all within the same block. In West Oakland the most noticeable difference was that work was centered on the railroad, yet still with a variety of industries. West Oakland had been, and to some extent remained, a suburb of San Francisco into the 1880s. Both areas had seen a shift from large early estates to mixed working-class housing and commercial/industrial properties. For those of modest income, keeping a cow may have made all the difference in maintaining an adequate caloric intake, so long as the nearby water and grass were free or very cheap. When a cow stopped producing milk, it was still several hundred pounds of beef on the hoof. For residents of San Francisco and West Oakland in the late 19th century, having to bury a cow represented a great loss. With so many experiencing periods of unemployment, the animal must have been very sick to bury that many meals, or at least the opportunity of sale if eating the family cow seemed distasteful.

In an ironic twist, the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire simultaneously brought a higher proportion of industry and livestock to Block 6. By 1913 the North German Hotel was the lone remaining residential property. The Western Pacific Railway on Ninth Street necessitated teams of horses, which were stabled on the corner of Eighth and Bryant, behind a saloon and blacksmith shop. The teaming sheds were larger than any previous building on the block. If not for the post-earthquake loss of residential housing on Block 6, there may have been more cows on the block well into the 20th century.

**THE IRISH IN SAN FRANCISCO – FROM THE GROUND UP**

The second question within the SF-80 Bayshore RDTP’s Ethnicity/Urban Subcultures Theme involved understanding the dynamics of cultural pluralism and social stratification during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and elucidating economic distinctions between the material culture of members of distinct ethnic and subcultural groups (Praetzellis et al. 1997:166). As all but one of the Bayshore Project archaeological features are associated with Irish families, the Irish will be used to discuss this topic—first from a broad geographic perspective, then with the aim of identifying the San Francisco Irish experience, and finally through examining how Irish ethnicity is expressed archaeologically in the SF-80 Bayshore Project area.
IRISH ETHNICITY
Jack Mc Ilroy

At its simplest, it might be imagined that the path of the Irish migrant, newly arrived in America, progressed in linear fashion through being an Irish person in America to an Irish-American to an American. The process could take generations for some families, or happen in a single lifetime for others. The reality is likely to be much more complex with, for example, Mac Eoini (2000) rejecting a one-way assimilation path and seeing migration as a process in itself, and not a transitional phase, before the migrant is absorbed by the new society. The migrant options vary from assimilation to multiculturalism to outright expulsion from the new society. While acknowledging this complexity, archaeologists nonetheless expect that ethnic behavioral patterning—including the fading of ethnicity in the acquisition of host-country materials and the development of Americanized-behavior patterns—should be archaeologically visible.

Ethnicity in American Archaeology

Staski’s (1990) review of studies of ethnicity in North American historical archaeology indicates that the three most researched ethnic groups have been Chinese, African Americans, and Hispanics—not surprisingly given the Spanish influence all across the southern United States. The range of Chinese and Hispanic studies can be found amid a potpourri of references to ethnicity studies in archaeology in Staski’s bibliography (1990:133-145), while the archaeology of African Americans was the focus of a recent issue of Historical Archaeology (Franklin and McKee 2004). Another focus of interest has been North American Jewish communities, while groups with other European roots have received much less interest (Staski 1990:124-125), although this is now changing.

Staski (1990:124, 132-133) observes that the archaeological study of ethnic groups entails a number of methodological challenges and that this study, and its correlates of assimilation and acculturation, involve an interplay of economic level, social status, the availability of goods, family size and life cycle, religious and political affiliation, and individual preference. To these may be added a close cousin of availability, the convenience of buying goods at the nearest store.

Much depends on definition. Thernstrom, Orlov, and Handlin (1980:vi) outlined 10 major parameters involved in ascribing ethnicity: common geographic origin; migratory status; race; language or dialect; religious beliefs; ties transcending kinship and community boundaries; values, traditions, and symbols; literature, folklore, and music; food preferences; settlement and employment patterns; political interests in the old and new countries; and institutions that serve and maintain the group. Archaeologists might want to add consumer choice to the list.

Staski simplifies matters, following Henry (1987:360), in seeing an ethnic group as a social group but one that serves two related functions. It provides members, who must be born into it, with an exclusive subculture with which they can identify. And it allows members to confine primary relationships to others within this subculture. The former definition is the stronger biologically, the second socially.

Items carried from home by the emigrant will be precious, possibly retained and handed down through generations. These potential direct symbols of ethnicity will be
few in number and statistically less likely to show up in archaeological deposits (McGuire 1983:194). Despite the difficulties, the archaeological correlates of ethnicity can be unraveled through excavation and have been most successfully dealt with through an analysis of consumer goods and dietary choices (Staski 1990:124).

The literature, however, can be, and is, contradictory on the archaeological correlates of ethnicity. Studies from Washington, D.C., neighborhoods demonstrated that ethnic-based differences could be isolated while economic-based differences could not (Cheek and Friedlander 1990:34). On the contrary, O’Brien and Majewski (1989) demonstrated that immigrant families from Kentucky and states to the east clearly showed up in the archaeological record in Missouri on the basis of wealth and status rather than ethnicity. Work on rural families in Arkansas provided little support for food use as an indicator of ethnicity for a prominent Jewish household, while there were clear material indicators of religious conformity and a high living standard (Stewart-Abernathy 1986; Stewart-Abernathy and Ruff 1989).

The need for interpretive caution has long been recognized. Different ethnic groups can develop similar material culture, while there can be extensive variation within the archaeological record of a single ethnic group (Hodder 1979:452).

Wilkie (2004:118) suggests that we (presumably archaeologists, anthropologists, historians) often fail to recognize economically disenfranchised ethnic groups in our research, whether they be Italian, Hispanic, Irish, Asian, Jewish, Eastern European, or multiracial. She states that much of the research on African American lifeways (and by implication on other subordinate ethnic or minority groups) that archaeologists have come to rely on was gathered by academics, journalists, and government-sponsored agencies who were substantially influenced by the racist rhetoric of their time. Archaeologists today, therefore, have the opportunity to illuminate the common cultural heritage of African Americans, white Americans, and other ethnic groups (Wilkie 2004:116).

Lightfoot (1995:199) suggests that historical archaeology offers the opportunity to study poorly represented ethnic laborers in pluralistic colonial communities, and that the discipline is ideally suited to examine the multicultural roots of modern America. Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff (1998:199) demonstrate this approach with a case study of Native Californian women and Native Alaskan men at the Russian colony of Fort Ross in northern California. Based on an analysis of residential space, the ordering of domestic tasks, and the structure of trash disposal, the authors argue that trash deposits and middens in built environments offer a promising way to examine culture change and persistence. Lightfoot’s (1995:211) characterization of the subjects of his study—ethnic laborers in pluralistic communities who are poorly represented in written accounts—could equally apply to the Irish of the SF-80 Bayshore Project area. But unlike the Annales school of French history, which advocates the study of culture change over long periods (Lightfoot 1995:199, Staniforth 2003), on the Bayshore Project we are looking at short time spans, between 1847 at the earliest to the time of the great San Francisco earthquake and fire time-marker of 1906.
The Irish Migration

The essays in Bielenberg’s (2000) *The Irish Diaspora* review the history and myths of Irish emigration. Mac Einri’s introduction to the volume concludes that the Irish experience of migration, while clearly part of a European pattern, was unique for the period between the Famine (1845-1854) and the mid-20th century. Mac Einri (2000) cautions that because the reasons for leaving, the selection of destination, and the process of integration into the new country were complex, there is danger in easy generalizations. Two reasons cited by Coogan (2000), both subject to controversy, may shed light on this concept of exceptionalism, with the Famine playing a role in both. The first is that Irish emigration confined itself almost exclusively to American cities, rather than rural settings, due not only to poverty, but also as a rejection of working on the land after the horrors of the Famine. The second, proposed by Irish-American historian Kerby Miller (1985), is that the Irish considered themselves not as emigrants but as exiles, torn unjustly and unwillingly from a native land to which they yearned to return. Opposing the latter view is Irish-American scholar Lawrence McCaffrey, who sees it as stereotyping the Irish as dysfunctional dreamers rather than as hard-working pragmatists who bettered themselves greatly by coming to America (Coogan 2000:257). The view would also be opposed by McKenna’s synthesis of the Irish experience in Argentina, where a group of farmers and semi-skilled tradesmen became hugely successful (Mac Einri 2000). Whatever the reason, the American destination was deeply rooted in the Irish psyche, with the U.S. popularly, if not hauntingly, referred to as the 33rd county of Ireland.

Eventually, according to Walsh (1978a), a sense of ethnic Irish community must erode to the point of absorption within the adopted community. He suggests that San Francisco offered the best single test-case for the then-historically revisionist view: that the further away from the industrial Northeast the Irish relocated, the better their American adjustment, and the easier and swifter their advance. This perception, Walsh contends, was a more active one than the old view of the Irish as uprooted peasants fleeing famine and disease, arriving unwanted in an America on the verge of vast industrial and urban expansion, to end up as semi-permanent unskilled labor. Burchell agrees, seeing the Irish experience in San Francisco between the Gold Rush and 1880 as placing them a generation ahead of their compatriots in much of the rest of the United States (1980:184). This is a question that should be amenable to archaeological analysis, which would allow comparing, after a generation, the artifacts of residents of similar socioeconomic status and skills who arrived at the same time, but who settled on East and West coasts. With the possible exception of the Buckley family, such a generational advance was not particularly evident from the artifact assemblages recovered on the Bayshore Project.

Whether pushed out by famine, political conditions, or economic hardship, the emigration-destination lands of America, Canada, and Australia must—for those leaving, and for those left at home—have seemed further than the Moon. To understand what banishment to Australia meant (or to America or Canada), one must understand the geographical knowledge of the day. In the late 18th century and well into the 19th, much of the world was largely unknown to Europeans. The interiors of most continents were still unexplored, and even North America had only pockets of population. Robert Hughes in *The Fatal Shore* points out that it could hardly have been worse if the convicts
sent off to Australia (and it applies as much to free emigrants) had been told they were going to the Moon—at least they could see the Moon (Hughes 1988).

For those who left Ireland freely for the U.S., an "American Wake" was often performed the night before departure. The departees may never have wandered far from their home village or community streets. They were now about to start on a dangerous journey, leaving all that was familiar and entering a realm not that far removed from the dead. The aptly named "coffin ships" that took so many across the Atlantic to America, and the convict ships that ferried more reluctant others to the ends of the world in the new penal settlements of Australia, were the Irish version of the boatman on the River Styx. Except for a rare visit back, this Irish traffic was almost entirely one-way, whether from the over one million who fled to the U.S. in the famine years of 1845 to as late as 1854, the 700,000 migrants in the 1880s, or the more than 20,000 who otherwise fled the Emerald Isle yearly between 1834 and 1914. Mostly from a rural and agrarian tradition, they became America’s classic urban inhabitants, the pick and shovel pioneers, builders of roads, canals and railroads (Rischin 1978:3-4). Many would have arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs, a few keepsakes from home, their culture, and religion.

Germany and Great Britain sent the greatest number of immigrants to the U.S. in the 19th century, with Ireland next in line, although many of those counted as British were actually Irish (Rischin 1978:3). In the 1860s, the largest proportion of the San Francisco Irish lived in the working-class districts South of Market Street, close to St. Patrick’s Church, around which much of their lives would have revolved (Bullough 1978:29-30) and close to where the Bayshore Project is located.

In the building trades to which many Irish in San Francisco gravitated, few precautions for fire prevention and control were exercised. Each time the city burned—and such fires were frequent—tradesmen, teamsters, and laborers were in greater demand and financial rewards came along with organization. As the fires approached businesses, warehouses, and luxury homes, the teamsters’ bargaining position was even stronger—to which owner’s call for help should they respond first? (Walsh 1978a:13). Some organized Irish did indeed advance rapidly in the West.

Germans were the best-organized nationality in San Francisco in the 1860s, according to Bullough (1978:29-30), but the Irish were quick to catch up and politics was to be their strong point. One reason put forward for their rapid development of political power was that the Catholic Church, to which most belonged, had a hierarchical nature and demanded discipline. It provided an effective template for a political party to follow. In addition, the centuries-long battle of the Irish with the Anglo-Saxon political system ensured that they knew all about electoral fraud, judicial chicanery, and how to manipulate the rules for partisan advantage. The Irish well-understood politics as the means a group uses to secure, hold on to, and exploit power (Coogan 2000:275).

Jensen (2002:405) cautions that myths can take hold among ethnic groups without substantial evidence. Irish Catholics in America have strong memories of job discrimination highlighted by omnipresent signs of "No Irish Need Apply." Jensen believes these NINA signs were, in fact, extremely rare or even nonexistent. Tim Pat Coogan (2000:276), something of a doyen on Irish political history, would disagree, citing accounts
of stories of big employers like Colgate in New Jersey exhibiting signs saying "No Irish, no Catholics." For Jensen, the NINA slogan had utility in that it told the emigrant Irish they should stick together against the (presumably American) Protestant enemy in terms of jobs and politics. The NINA myth persisted because it aided ethnic solidarity and, on its dark side, justified physical assaults against any threatening “other.” Discovering such signs of ethnic solidarity on an archaeological excavation would start to confirm the myth as at least locally factual.

Many Irish in the mid-19th century would have arrived with a sense of victimhood, as refugees from the Famine of 1845-55. It is usually spelt with a capital ‘F’ in Ireland, much as the Wall with a capital ‘W’ meant only one thing to Berliners during the Cold War. A sense of victimhood would tend to reinforce a sense of ethnic cohesion. Jensen (2002) contends that such a sense of solidarity was greatest for groups who lived in high-tension local situations with neighbors they feared, as did the Irish, African Americans, Jews, Japanese Americans, and white Southerners after Reconstruction.

THE SAN FRANCISCO IRISH

Annita Waghorn

The popular image of Irish migration to America is of coffin ships bringing the most famine-starved and wretched of Ireland’s poor to the slums and rail gangs of the East Coast. Within this image the Irish are a homogenous mass, suffering both from their rural, poverty-stricken, Catholic heritage, and the struggle for acceptance into white, protestant America. Although perhaps applicable to many Irish Catholics who made their homes in eastern cities such as New York or Boston, this image does not do justice to the complexity and multiplicity of the Irish immigrants’ experiences in 19th-century America. Much of this complexity is evident in the history of San Francisco’s Irish community, which more readily found, on America’s West Coast, much of the opportunity it was seeking.

The stereotype of Irish settlement in America is overwhelmingly one of the Catholic outsider in an American nation shaped by Anglo-Protestant values (Rischin 1978:3). Early Irish immigration to the United States, however, was largely a movement of Protestant men and women, the so-called Scots-Irish from the Ulster province, Scotland, and England. In the years before the 1840s, when the great migrations from Ireland and mainland Europe began, the Scots-Irish were absorbed into Protestant America, particularly in the Southern states, with relatively little difficulty (Kenny 2000). Nativist and anti-Catholic feelings were stirred later, however, by the Irish Catholics, who suffered violent protests as early as 1829 (Burchell 1980:2).

From 1845 until 1855, the Irish potato crop, which the majority of Ireland’s population relied upon for subsistence, failed due to infestations of a fungus, Phytophthora infestans. The result for much of the country was devastating. What the Irish refer to as an gorta mór, or ‘the great hunger,’ killed between 1.1 and 1.5 million people and prompted the emigration of another 2.1 million, all out of a pre-Famine population of just 8.5 million (Kenny 2000:89). Only 10 percent of these immigrants were Protestant, although Protestants comprised 25 percent of the Irish population. The majority of emigration
came from those counties less hard-hit by the Famine in north-central Ireland (Sligo, Roscommon, Longford, Cavan, Monaghan, and Fermanagh) and the south-central plains (Queens, Tipperary, and Kilkenny; Kenny 2000:98). Of those emigrating between 1845 and 1855, 1.5 million fled to the United States. The stereotype of the Irish immigrant to America during these years was of a pitiable, ragged refugee from hunger. Although records suggest that the U.S.-bound Irish immigrants during the Famine years were generally poorer and less skilled than those of previous generations, they were primarily not those hardest-hit by the Famine. The Irish made most destitute by the Famine either lacked the funds to escape Ireland, or could only afford to flee to England, swelling that country’s Irish-born population by 1861 to over 700,000, up 58 percent from the early 1840s (Miller 1985:295). Emigration to America was costly, consequently, the American-bound emigrants included large numbers of smallholders, comfortable farmers, artisans, and small entrepreneurs: a Quaker aid-worker in Ireland during the Famine wrote that, “unfortunately for us, it is the industrious and enterprising who leave us . . . in many cases taking out with them considerable sums of money” (Miller 1985:294). The small farmers leaving Ireland fled not so much starvation as increased rents, tithes, and taxes. For many artisans, farmers, and the relatively prosperous, “the Famine was simply the last straw, final proof after three decades of depression that Ireland was irredeemable” (Miller 1985:294). These immigrants were likely to arrive in America less traumatized than starving Famine refugees, and more capable of making their way, socially and financially, in their new surroundings. Following the agricultural recovery from the Famine after 1856, emigration continued to be a favored option for many Irish Catholics, driven by the continued hardships and depressed economic conditions in colonial Ireland, and attracted by the opportunity offered by America. Between 1856 and 1921, 3.5 million Irish emigrated, of which a little over 3 million flocked to the United States (Kenny 2000:131).

The Irish Catholics of the Famine years were one of the earliest in the large waves of immigration from Europe and Ireland that were to transform the character of the United States in the second half of the 19th century. The Irish Catholic immigrants landed in the port cities of the East Coast, where they quickly established large enclaves. Although they may have been able to leave Ireland with some resources, in the bustling port cities of the United States they were still among the most impoverished inhabitants, with a status only exceeding that of African Americans (Kenny 2000:99). The Irish Catholics were one of the early targets of Nativist protests and parochial, Protestant American fears of being swamped by waves of immigrants. Adopting many of the stereotypes promoted in Victorian England, Nativists derided Irish Catholic immigrants as lazy, lacking in civility, frugality, and a strong work ethic, and given to violence and intemperate drinking (Kenny 2000:96). Struggles against prejudice remained a strong thread in the experiences of many of the first- and second-generation Irish Catholic immigrants during the peak period of Irish immigration between 1856 and 1921.

**Irish Immigration to California**

In settling in the East Coast cities of the United States, Irish immigrants were trying to make their way in communities that had more than 200 years of predominantly Anglo-Protestant history and that had an established elite and class hierarchy (Burchell 1980:2). This was not the case, however, in less-entrenched areas like California. Prior to its
absorption into the United States in 1848, California had no strongly established history of American or Protestant cultures. The Gold Rush drew people from a vast array of backgrounds and circumstances, most with the goal of rapidly making their fortune and returning home. The circumstances created a culture overnight, and San Francisco became the embodiment of that culture, one based on opportunism, impermanence, and boldness (Walsh 1978a:13). There was little interest in sinking personal money or time into social or civic structures that characterized long-established, more orderly settlements (Walsh 1978a:20).

Irish immigrants were amongst those attracted by San Francisco and the goldfields. The fragmentary 1852 California State Census of San Francisco indicates that, of the 36,151 people living in the near-instant city, 12 percent were Irish-born. Only 5.1 percent of the city’s population in 1852 came directly from Ireland (Burchell 1980:34); most came, instead, via interim cities such as Philadelphia, Boston, New Orleans, or New York, and even, in the case of 589 Irish-born, from Sydney, Australia (Walsh 1978a:11).

One of the themes of 19th-century migration was the challenge faced by largely rural people in adapting to established urban, industrialized communities. The Irish in San Francisco, although coming from a primarily pre-industrial, agrarian culture, had probably developed familiarity with American urban culture from life in the East Coast cities in which they had initially landed. Moreover, in coming to the West Coast they did not have to again try and integrate themselves into an established social and economic system: “In San Francisco during the 1850s, everyone was uprooted, Americans and foreigners alike” (Walsh 1978a:21). In addition, Rischin has suggested that the additional journey from the East Coast required for settlement in California meant that its Irish settlers would probably have been of more able and ambitious character, and with more financial resources than many who remained in the East Coast cities (Rischin 1978:4). From 1848 until the 1880s, there were various unsuccessful attempts to set up associations and schemes to aid migration to California, in part to reduce the cost of labor, which remained high during through the 1880s. In the absence of such immigration-aid schemes, however, the majority of Irish immigration came from a “movement of self-supported individuals and families” (Burchell 1980:38).

San Francisco grew rapidly even after the early gold fever had abated. Although in January 1848 the city had only about 200 buildings and less than 1,000 people; in just four years there were more than 36,000 people, and by 1870 San Francisco had swelled to include 150,000 people and become the 10th largest city in the United States. Ten years later, the population had grown to 250,000. Much of this growth was fueled by continued strong immigration: in 1870 native-born inhabitants outnumbered foreign-born by just over 2,000 (75,754 vs. 73,719). During these years, San Francisco continued to exercise a strong draw on Irish-born immigrants. The Irish were the largest non-native population in the city due to continued influx of Irish-born immigrants (Burchell 1980:3), and by around 1875, the city held America’s sixth largest Irish community (Rischin 1978:6). By 1880 over one-third of the city’s population could be said to be part of the Irish community, with more than 30,000 first-generation Irish settlers, and more than 43,000 belonging to the second generation (Burchell 1980:3-4).
Chapter 10: Consumerism, Ethnicity, and Urban Subcultures

Contemporary commentators frequently noted how amenable California was to Irish settlement, as the Irish appear to have met with little of the prejudice that they experienced in East Coast cities. By 1868 one observer could write, “There is not a State in the Union in which the Irish have taken deeper and stronger root, or thriven more successfully, than California” (Maguire 1868:262). From its founding, the San Francisco Irish community was predominantly Catholic; in 1880 the only indication of an Irish-Protestant presence in the city were two small branches of the Loyal Orange Institution of the United States (Burchell 1980:4).

The Irish in San Francisco appear to have suffered relatively little anti-Catholic prejudice: the editor of the city’s longest-surviving Irish Catholic newspaper, the Monitor, wrote in April 1869 of prospective Irish immigrants to California: “Our Countrymen need not fear . . . that they will have to encounter the prejudices against their race or religion, that are such drawbacks to their settlement in many parts of the Eastern States” (Burchell 1980:4). Any Anti-Irish feeling in the State may have been reduced after 1860 by increased Chinese immigration that took the brunt of much of Californians’ growing anti-immigration, Nativist tensions (Burchell 1980:37). The lack of anti-Catholic feeling was also no doubt helped by the polyglot nature of San Francisco’s post-Gold Rush population, and the fact that the Catholic Church had a well-established presence in California due to the state’s Spanish and Mexican heritage (Rischin 1978:5). Indeed, by the 1870s, the Catholic Church had established itself as the foremost religion in California, with the number of seats in Catholic churches growing from 6,050 in 1860 to 21,000 in 1870 (Burchell 1980:5).

Contemporary commentators make clear that in San Francisco, despite its German, European, and Mexican populations, the Catholic Church was almost synonymous with the Irish community (Burchell 1980:90). The Church supported the community psychologically and socially, with such services as the Female Catholic Orphan Asylum. By 1880 at least seven societies under the Church’s patronage offered much-needed social services in the city, including the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Magdalene Society, and the St. Boniface Orphan Asylum (Burchell 1980:92). From the 1860s, members of the Irish community were the major financial backers of church building efforts and programs of social services. Notable Irish patrons included Jasper O’Farrell, John Sullivan, Catherine Sullivan, and institutions such as the Hibernia Bank (Burchell 1980:89). The principal church for the South of Market area of the city, St. Patrick’s, was constructed on Market Street in September 1851. In 1872 the church was moved to the north side of Mission between Third and Fourth streets, just a few blocks from the east end of the project area (Burchell 1980:88).

**Political Organization**

The sense of optimism and commitment to settlement in California felt by many Irish immigrants was evident in the readiness with which they entered the political, economic, and social life of San Francisco. The sense of impermanence felt by many gold seekers in California gave them little impetus to contribute to the development of political or civic institutions in the city. The Irish readily filled this void, perhaps sensing in the political confusion of Gold Rush cities such as San Francisco, an opportunity for political and social respectability and power that was denied them in more established
American cities and towns (Rischin 1978:5). Consequently, first- and second-generation Irish residents of San Francisco achieved political office up to two generations before their compatriots on the East Coast: San Francisco elected an Irish-born mayor, Frank McCoppin, in 1867, predating Irish-born mayors in New York by 13 years, and in Boston by 18 years (Rischin 1978:5). Early political leaders included David C. Broderick, California Senator until 1859, who was born in Washington, D.C., of Irish parents; William Higgins, who became the Republican party “boss” in the 1860s; and Chris Buckley, John C. Murphy, and Jack Mannix (Bullough 1978:32).

The Changing Face of the Irish Community

During the years of the Gold Rush, the average resident of San Francisco was single, young, and male. From the beginning, Irish immigrants to the city differed markedly from this pattern. The Irish, while tending to be young (only 14.4% of the 1852 Irish immigrants were over 40), preferred to immigrate not singly but as family groups (Burchell 1980:49). In 1852 Irish-born residents in the city were only 69.7 percent male compared to 83 percent in the population at large (Burchell 1980:49, 73). Immigration in family groups offered both advantages and disadvantages; the family offered support and comfort, but also placed additional financial burdens on the new immigrant. For instance, within the San Francisco population in 1852, every 100 workers supported an average of 14 children and 3 elderly. The 589 Irish in family groups who emigrated to the city from Sydney and who were recorded in the 1852 California State Census supported 62 children and 1 elderly per 100 workers, a burden in a city that sported such limited services and charities (Walsh 1978a:12).

The preference for living within family groups continued to be a strong characteristic of the San Francisco Irish community: the 1880 U.S. Population Census schedule indicated that the majority of Irish preferred to live with family members, and if that was not possible, then with other members of the Irish community. This pattern was particularly strong in the middle-class areas of the city. For instance, in 1880 in San Francisco’s 11th Ward, 65 percent of Irish households were composed of nuclear families, and only 27 percent of first- and second-generation Irish men lived as boarders (Burchell 1980:76).

Most Irish children in San Francisco grew up in solidly Irish households. The community appears to have maintained a strong sense of identity, partly by encouraging endogamy, or marriage within the community. The census schedules from 1852, 1870, and 1880 indicated that over 84 percent of Irish-born males married Irish-born females. It is possible of course, that many of these marriages took place in Ireland before immigration. However, 75 percent of those Irish-born men who married after immigration to the U.S. married women who had either one or both parents born in Ireland (Burchell 1980:79). Marriage within the Irish community continued to be a strong tradition even in the second generation. In 1880, 30 percent of men and 33 percent of women born in America of two Irish-born parents, married Irish-born spouses. Of the remainder who married people born in the U.S., 68 percent married spouses who had two Irish-born parents, and only 21 percent married people with no Irish parentage at all (Burchell 1980:80).
This preference for marriage within the Irish community was also shared by people
who might be thought to have only limited Irish cultural connections, such as people
born outside of Ireland with only one Irish parent. In the 1880 Census, only 22.9 percent
of such men chose a partner with no Irish-born parents. Women however, appeared to
have married more freely outside of the Irish community—in 1880, 52.6 percent of
women with one Irish parent had married spouses with no Irish parents (Burchell
1980:81). The strong preference for endogamy would have been heavily influenced by
the Catholic Church, which forbade marriage to Protestants (Burchell 1980:85). Endogamy,
however, together with the noted preference for family-based living arrangements,
indicates the importance placed by the Irish community on the family as both a stabilizing
influence and as the primary means by which Irish cultural values and traditions were
asserted and reproduced within the community.

While the Church and the family acted as the focus of community life, an additional
means by which Irish values were transmitted were the large number of societies and
associations supported by the Irish community. These societies provided religious
guidance, recreational or social opportunities, labor union or political functions, and
financial or social support. Secular fraternal and social organizations included the
Hibernian Society, the Sons of the Emerald Isle, the Fenian Brotherhood, and the Ancient
Order of the Hibernians (Bullough 1978:30). The societies were available from the earliest
days of Irish settlement during the Gold Rush: in 1852 the Hibernian Society of San
Francisco was created, boasting within months a membership of 50 to 60. The Sons of
the Emerald Isle was also founded in 1852. Initially, these societies were exclusively male
and directed towards fraternity, secularism, and benevolence. The Sisters of Mercy
founded the first female society, the St. Mary’s Ladies Society, in 1859 with the intent of
promoting religious values and works (Burchell 1980:98). Other important societies were
the Hibernian Savings and Loan Society, founded in 1859, the Father Mathew Total
Abstinence and Benevolent Society in 1869, and the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of
the Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1874 (Burchell 1980:97, 105). The proliferation of
these societies indicates the extent to which the Irish were “settling very firmly into the
fabric of city life” (Burchell 1980:97). Membership to the various religious, political, and
recreational societies was widespread, indicating the variety of interests to be found within
the community: in 1880 Langley’s Directory indicated that over 7,500 Irish men and
women were members of Irish and Catholic societies in San Francisco. These societies,
along with the Church and family, formed the basis of Irish community life: “One road
led from these societies to the Church; a second to social intercourse; a third to political
life” (Burchell 1980:95).

**Changing Areas of Living in the City**

During the frenzy of the Gold Rush, there was relatively little residential segregation
in terms of class, economic level, or ethnicity within San Francisco. During the 1850s,
however, a gradual segregation of residential areas by class took place. By the late 1850s,
working-class inhabitants were concentrated in the Second, Third, Fifth, and Ninth wards,
later moving into the Tenth and Eleventh wards. Initially areas such as Rincon Hill and
South Park, south of Market Street had been the preserve of the better off. As these
neighborhoods were colonized by industry in the 1870s, and as innovations such as the
cable car made living in areas like Nob Hill more feasible, the well-to-do retreated from
the South of Market wards, which became associated with the working class (Burchell 1980:39).

While San Francisco never had an Irish ghetto, and first- and second-generation Irish residents could be found living in all the wards of the city (Burchell 1980:65), there were areas of the city that supported concentrations of Irish inhabitants. In 1862 an Irish neighborhood was located at the foot of Telegraph Hill. Another clustered in the working districts south of Market Street in the vicinity of Old St. Patrick’s Church on Market, demonstrating “an Irish version of the Italian’s campanilismo, a desire to live in the shadow of one’s church steeple” (Bullough 1978:29). By 1870 the center of the Irish community lay in the Seventh Ward, where 27.8 percent of the residents (or 2,891 people) were Irish-born immigrants. There were also concentrations of Irish inhabitants in the First Ward, and along the shores of San Francisco Bay south of Market Street in the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh wards, where they made up more than 20 percent of the population (Burchell 1980:46-47). The wealthiest Irish-born lived in the Second, Eighth, and Twelfth wards (Burchell 1980:63).

These residential patterns began to change as second-generation Irish matured and entered the work force. Census schedules indicate that during the 1870s, increasing numbers of the second generation moved away from the lower-status, South of Market wards, towards the higher-status Second, Fourth, and Eighth wards. Burchell suggests that this represents an upward movement by the entire Irish community, since by 1880, lower-status wards were appearing to lose Irish inhabitants, while the numbers of those in the middle-class wards remained stable (Burchell 1980:49). Despite the evidence of movement, the Seventh Ward retained the greatest proportion of Irish inhabitants—53.1 percent of the ward’s population (Burchell 1980:49), followed by the Ninth, Eleventh, and Twelfth wards, each with from 40 to almost 50 percent. Numerically, the bulk of the Irish population lived in the wards South of Market (Burchell 1980:48), in and around the blocks of the SF-80 Bayshore Project area.

The South of Market area was thus the heart of the Irish community in the city. The housing stock of this area, although predominantly new—having been developed after the Civil War—was of generally poor quality. It was noted that these neighborhoods began “to assume the objectionable characteristics of the tenement system” (Young 1912, cited in Burchell 1980:45). The poor housing stock, particularly in the area’s eastern end bordering the San Francisco Bay, contributed to its image as a neighborhood acceptable only to the poor and the working class (Burchell 1980:45).

The gradual movement of second-generation Irish out of the South of Market area during the 1870s attests to their rising economic mobility and a desire to separate from the working-class associations of the neighborhood. The movement to some extent may also have been fueled by Irish interest in homeownership (Burchell 1980:49). In an attempt to counteract the deleterious effects of the state’s high interest rates on real-estate loans, the California state government passed legislation in 1861 and 1864 that encouraged the establishment of associations designed to help members acquire homesteads in the rapidly expanding suburbs of cities such as San Francisco. These associations were viewed as a means by which working-class men could improve their family’s future through the stability and financial gain of homeownership. The founding of associations such as the
Hibernia Homestead Association and the success of the Hibernia Savings and Loans Society attest to the eagerness of the Irish to invest in homes and property (Burchell 1980:42-43). By 1870 almost one in three Irish-born, 40-year-old men owned real estate, although the value of this property was significantly less than that of native-born and German-born men. Irish-owned property was distributed throughout the various city wards, indicating that no strong correlation existed between the increasing density of Irish occupation and decreased property ownership (Burchell 1980:61, 63).

**Working Your Way up the Social Ladder**

The Irish community from its earliest Gold Rush days was distinguished by the range of high-status occupations it included. Although the majority of the community consisted of laborers, the 1852 community also included 6 lawyers, 10 doctors, 2 chemists, 20 merchants, and 4 brokers (Walsh 1978a:12). Many Irish thrived in San Francisco’s frenetic economic climate, and significant numbers of the city’s economic elite were Irish-born. For instance, the earliest foundry in the city was established by immigrants James and Peter Donahue. The firm Donahue, Kelly & Co., established in 1864, was among the city’s largest private banks (Maguire 1868:273). At times Irish immigrants combined their financial resources to establish consortiums, like the one that produced the Hibernia Bank (Walsh 1978a:14). The Hibernia Savings and Loans Society was among the most successful Irish-backed business institution in the city. It was patronized by Irish of all classes: of its deposits totaling $5,241,000 in January 1867, seventh-eighths were from Irish investors, and “of the amount deposited by the Irish fully three quarters belong to the working classes, including mechanics, laborers, and girls in various employments” (Maguire 1868:276).

The predominance of high-status professions among the Irish, unusual in first-generation immigrant communities, continued into the 1860s. In 1870 although San Francisco had much smaller Irish populations than New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and St Louis, it had a larger number of Irish in high status and high-paid occupations. For instance, San Francisco had 27 Irish bankers although Philadelphia with three times the Irish population had only 18, and Boston, having twice the numbers of Irish dwellers, had only 4. As a further indication that the San Francisco Irish community was relatively successful and skilled, it should be noted that the East Coast cities had a greater proportion of Irish in lower-status occupations, such as in the case of Boston, which had three times the number of Irish laborers and domestic servants than San Francisco (Walsh 1978a:12).

Even laborers, however, had an uncommon advantage in San Francisco compared to other cities. Throughout the Gold Rush and into the 1860s and 1870s, the city experienced a shortage of labor. During the 1850s an entire city had to be built, including neighborhoods that repeatedly burned. All of this presented a Gold Rush in itself to teamsters, tradesmen, and laborers. As a contemporary commentator observed: “Labor . . . was highly prized and reverently regarded in California; for without it nothing could be done, where everything had to be done” (Maguire 1868:271). San Francisco was generally acknowledged to have much higher wage-rates than eastern cities—a significant draw for unskilled laborers, although living costs (with the exception of food) were higher on the West Coast. Whether the greater cost of living in San Francisco canceled out the
advantage of higher wages for the working-class immigrant was hotly debated (Burchell 1980:68). As the contemporary commentator Henry Luce noted of San Francisco: “Everything is dearer—house rent, clothing, and most of the necessities of life” (Luce 1885, cited in Burchell 1980:69). The shortage of workers gave labor greater political and economic influence within the city. The involvement of the Irish working-class, as San Francisco’s most politically active ethnic minority, remained an important factor in city politics into the 1900s (Walsh 1978b:59). Although politically astute, the Irish working class was never politically or even socially homogeneous. Its members aligned themselves to support parties and politicians that best served their interests, while retaining a distinct preference for the Democratic Party (Bullough 1978:29, 32).

The employment status of Irish-born men improved steadily along with general improvements in San Francisco’s economy until after 1875, when the California and San Francisco economies entered an economic depression (Burchell 1980:56). While unskilled laboring remained the most common occupation for men, the proportion of the community’s Irish-born men who engaged in more remunerative work rose as the San Francisco economy became more varied and immigrants obtained a broader range of skills. While 45.1 percent of all Irish-born employed men were working as laborers in 1852, this figure had dropped 32.5 percent by 1860, to 30.8 percent by 1870, and further still by 1880 to 25.5 percent (Burchell 1980:54-55). Despite the progress for the Irish-born men in San Francisco, labor figures from 1870 indicate that the Irish fared much less well than native-born or German-born residents. While only 6.1 percent of native-born and 7 percent of German-born men were employed in unskilled occupations, 38.1 percent of Irish-born men in their 40s were so employed. Within the same year, 48.7 percent of native-born and 49 percent of German-born men were in white-collar jobs, compared to 15.7 percent of Irish-born men (Burchell 1980:60).

The occupations of second-generation Irish indicate a community rapidly improving its social and economic lot. By 1880 considerably fewer second-generation Irish men were working in unskilled work: 9.7 percent compared to 31.5 percent of the first generation. This was accompanied by rises in employment rates of the second generation in higher-status employment: skilled blue-collar work employed 31.3 percent of the second generation compared to 18.6 percent of the first; and white-collar work employed 27.7 percent compared to 19.9 percent of the first generation (Burchell 1980:57). Within 30 years of the establishment of the Irish community in San Francisco, only 1 in 10 second-generation men were working at unskilled blue-collar occupations (Burchell 1980:58).

Irish-born women did not show the same mobility, both because many continued to work within the home, and because the opportunities for female employment in the city remained limited. Domestic service was the number one occupation for women. Of the alternative areas of semi-skilled employment, only limited numbers worked in factories (a total of 30 women in 1880) or found employment in the clothing trades (12% of Irish-born women), or non-domestic service jobs such as nursing, cooking, and waiting, which employed a further 10 percent. The 1880 Census records only 10 Irish-born women working as clerks, 82 as boarding- and lodging-housekeepers, 37 as store or saloon owners, 80 working in religious houses, possibly as teachers, and 41 as lay schoolmistresses (Burchell 1980:55). Second-generation women also experienced much less improvement
in their employment prospects than did men of the second generation: even by 1880, over 70 percent of the working second-generation women remained in semi-skilled occupations, primarily domestic service (Burchell 1980:57).

Each ward within San Francisco displayed its own unique character based on the density of Irish habitation and the wealth of those occupants. The Seventh Ward, however, was recognized as the heart of the Irish community. Within this ward in 1880, only 12.7 percent of Irish males, both first and second generation, were in white-collar occupations, while 33.5 percent worked at unskilled blue-collar jobs. In contrast, the wealthy Eighth Ward showed a very different character, where 44.6 percent of the Irish community worked in white-collar employment, and only 17.6 percent in unskilled blue-collar work. Other wards with large Irish populations, such as the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth—showed a community more evenly divided between white-collar, skilled blue-collar, and unskilled blue-collar employment (Burchell 1980:65).

It is tempting to paint a rosy picture of Irish settlement in San Francisco as a steady climb up the ladder to social and economic fortune—in fact, an immigrant’s dream. It is undeniable that San Francisco did present opportunities to incoming Irish. The city’s lack of an established elite or strong anti-Catholic prejudice, its flexible social and economic structures, and its ready demand for unskilled labor certainly offered opportunities for the Irish-born and their children. The Irish community of San Francisco, however, was not homogeneous socially or economically, but was instead complex and multilayered. Some Irish became immensely successful, while others lived their lives in laboring jobs close to the community’s working-class heart in the Seventh Ward. It is clear, however, that the community, economically and geographically dispersed as it was, shared many values—including a preference for family life; a devotion to the social, economic, and political benefits of associations; and a strong sense of Irish identity, which is still demonstrated by the city’s annual St. Patrick’s Day marches.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY
Jack Mc Ilroy

Studies in Irish Ethnicity

Only a few archaeologists have directly approached the study of Irish ethnicity. Irish Americans are featured in Ed Staski’s (1983) comparative study of Irish and Jewish American alcohol consumption. The online database abstract (www.firstsearch.oclc.org) outlines his conclusions:

Popular stereotypes concerning drinking have influenced scholarly descriptions and interpretations. There is, for instance, widespread and questionable acceptance by researchers that ethnic identification often correlates strongly with rates of alcohol consumption. Through refuse analysis, this study suggests that no such correlation exists; at least as far as household alcohol use is concerned. Instead, it is found that the degree of social heterogeneity within households, causing stress among individuals, is positively associated with consumption rates. Ethnicity might be related more closely to expressed attitudes about drinking, though results are inconclusive.
Yamin’s study of Irish households in the Five Points neighborhood of 19th-century New York found few artifacts marked with Irish symbols of any kind. Diet, however, remained traditionally Irish (Yamin 2000b:152). She suggests that, for poor New Yorkers, the purchase of fashionable consumer goods—as evidenced archaeologically in their privies—represented a form of resistance to the dominant class, in that it demonstrated their inherent respectability to their immediate world (Yamin 2000b:151). Most relevant to the SF-80 Bayshore Project may be her observation that the expression of Irish identity in the Five Points archaeological record was subtle, contrasting sharply with the concern with Irish identity discussed by many of the historians she collaborated with on this project (Yamin 2000b:153). She emphasizes the need for archaeologists to work closely with social historians, some of whom have been reluctant to pay attention to archaeological data, and that one way to do this is to make archaeological findings more accessible (Yamin 2000b:155). The need to better define and utilize the historian–archaeologist interface and the critiques each may have of the other also have been noted in Australia by R. Ian Jack (1993) and Sybil Jack (1993).

From a study of three privy deposits associated with Italian, Portuguese, and American/Mexican families on a Sacramento, California, project, Nettles and Hamilton (2004) concluded that the artifact assemblages were relatively homogeneous, with some distinctiveness showing in faunal and floral remains. The database is small and the results may be anomalous or idiosyncratic. But the ability to find familiar foods in unfamiliar foreign lands may be a target of many migrants. That familiarity may help reinforce a sense of security in the new country.

**Bayshore Artifacts**

According to the 1852 California State Census, there were 4,338 Irish among San Francisco’s 36,151 inhabitants, for 12 percent of the population. By 1900 they comprised 27 percent of the population of 350,000 (Walsh 1978a:11). Somewhere in that growing population were the families of SF-80 Bayshore Irish residents Thomas O’Neil, Anne Mills, Anthony Dean, Andrew Buckley, Mary Wendt, and William Noonan and the Irish laborers at his lodging house. See Table 10.1 for some of the economic and social characteristics of the seven households that can help identify patterns of ethnicity.

Identification of the archaeological attributes of ethnicity on any site will require statistical analysis of a high number of tightly controlled datasets sufficient to identify those patterns. While a handful of features can demonstrate patterns, they can equally be the result of anomalous behavior. Comparing percentages is always hazardous with small samples, such as those from the Bayshore Project’s seven CR-eligible features. Table 10.2 provides a nonstatistical comparison of the major artifact categories represented in these features. It shows more similarity than difference among the features, although Andrew Buckley, the Irish porter associated with Privy 41, tends to skew the average.

When looking at artifacts by group, the percentage of domestic artifacts is almost identical in Irish glass cutter Thomas O’Neil’s Privy 1 in the 1870s (56.7%), Irish laborer Anthony Dean’s Privy 38 in 1882 (59.5%), and German merchant and consul Charles Duisenberg’s Privy 3 in 1888 (56.5%). The mostly Irish laborers, lodging at William Noonan’s house, who contributed to Privy 20 around 1880, are a little higher at 67 percent, while Irish widow Anne Mills at Privy 30 on 1882 is at 64 percent. It is Irish porter
Andrew Buckley who throws things off at Privy 41 in 1882, with only 35 percent. Skewed towards the other end are German express-man John Wendt and his Irish wife, with 78.6 percent at Privy 39 in 1882. There are both differences and similarities within the Irish group and similarities between some of the Irish and the German, while the Irish/German couple are out on their own.

Looking at artifacts by category, items of food preparation and consumption generally rank highest in the deposits, ahead of clothing items. Even so, Andrew Buckley’s privy rates lowest at 14.9 percent in this category, almost identical with Duisenberg’s 15.6 percent. Both ethnicity and class differences seem irrelevant here. John Wendt’s German-Irish family rate highest at 49.5 percent. When it comes to clothing items, the highest rate of artifacts is widow Mills at 20.9 percent, almost the same as Duisenberg’s 20 percent. The lowest is the Wendt family with 6.4 percent.

Items of grooming and health, indicative of concepts of personal appearance and of attitudes toward health, do not fluctuate as much among the households—from 3.7 percent (Wendt and Dean) to 5.6 percent (O’Neil), with Buckley again being different, but not greatly so, at 6.7 percent.

With food-storage items, the Irish widow Mills rates highest at 9 percent, possibly because she was a recent widow and needed to economize more than the other households. Andrew Buckley is close behind at 7.6 percent, while there is little difference between the lodging Irish laborers (2.5%) and the Duisenbergs (2.1%). What about small items? Miscellaneous beads, for adornment of adults and/or children and/or households, represent 11.3 percent at the Duisenbergs, who would have entertained more than their neighbors. But the lodging Irish laborers come next at 5.9 percent. The Wendts clocked in with no beads; perhaps they frowned on such frivolous adornment.

With alcohol, Victorian-era values might have been expected to encourage temperance and such was the case—not much drinking happened at home. The Duisenbergs would have needed to entertain, but their 2.6 percent of alcohol bottle artifacts seems low. The Wendts also had few alcohol bottles at 1.8 percent, along with the Irish laborers at only 1.7 percent. The corner store or saloon seems to have been a more welcoming place for a beer after work than your residence, although the O’Neils might have felt otherwise, at 11.2 percent. They might not have liked to go out much, although they could afford to; O’Neil—a glass cutter with considerable real estate—was well off. All these households, however, are out-distanced by porter Andrew Buckley, whose taste for porter and its cousins ran on the high side. A full 29.9 percent of his artifacts are alcohol-related. Out of a total artifact count of 980, there is an MNI of 293 alcohol bottles. The bottles vary from mostly ale and beer to wine, whiskey, mead, schnapps, and champagne. Was this man a stereotypical Irish drunk? Perhaps, but as it turns out he worked in a liquor store, where he probably got his alcohol at a discount. While clearly a good deal of drinking occurred at the Buckley residence, Andrew Sr.’s 25-year-old son might well have joined him for an after-work drink each day; a good bit of entertaining may also have occurred at the Buckley house, given the elaborate tableware and serving pieces. Nonetheless, the sheer quantity of empty bottles hoarded at this house on Seventh Street remains something of a mystery.
### Table 10.2. Comparison of Artifact Assemblages from CR-eligible Features, SF-80 Bayshore Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Privy 1</th>
<th>Privy 3</th>
<th>Privy 20</th>
<th>Privy 30</th>
<th>Privy 38</th>
<th>Privy 39</th>
<th>Privy 41</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Name</td>
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<td>Charles</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O'Neil</td>
<td>Duisenberg</td>
<td>Noonan/multiple boarders</td>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Wendt</td>
<td>Buckley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Glass cutter</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>Painter/laborers</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>Express man</td>
<td>Liquor-store Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>ca. 1880</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Artifact MNI</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>2,436</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Artifacts by Group %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Privy 1</th>
<th>Privy 3</th>
<th>Privy 20</th>
<th>Privy 30</th>
<th>Privy 38</th>
<th>Privy 39</th>
<th>Privy 41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weighted MNI</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Artifacts by Category %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Privy 1</th>
<th>Privy 3</th>
<th>Privy 20</th>
<th>Privy 30</th>
<th>Privy 38</th>
<th>Privy 39</th>
<th>Privy 41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category MNI</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1,253</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Maintenance</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10.2. Comparison of Artifact Assemblages (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts by Category</th>
<th>Privy 1</th>
<th>Privy 3</th>
<th>Privy 20</th>
<th>Privy 30</th>
<th>Privy 38</th>
<th>Privy 39</th>
<th>Privy 41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Prep / Consumption</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/Food Storage</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grooming/ Health</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Beads</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Containers</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mammal Meat Price %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mammal Meat Price</th>
<th>Privy 1</th>
<th>Privy 3</th>
<th>Privy 20</th>
<th>Privy 30</th>
<th>Privy 38</th>
<th>Privy 39</th>
<th>Privy 41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The more refined Duisenbergs discarded a total MNI of 33 alcohol bottles, 11 were wine/champagne, 10 were ale or beer, perhaps 4 whiskey bottles, and a single bourbon and schnapps. While the widow Mills also discarded a minimum of 21 alcohol bottles.

A smoke after dinner, gentlemen? There were 22 tobacco pipes and a spittoon in Duisenberg’s privy. The Dean family had around half that number with 10, while Andrew Buckley had 5 and a cuspidor. The Wendts had 4 pipes, the O’Neils and widow Anne Mills had 3 each. Surprisingly there seem to have been few smokers among the Irish laborers at the lodging house, with the recovery of only 1 pipe and a cuspidor. Smoking may have been frowned upon in the lodging house.

Looking at mammal meat by price, the Duisenbergs might be expected to have bought the choicest cuts. But at 19.2 percent they are slightly outranked by the lodging Irish laborers with 20.2 percent for high-priced cuts. The Anthony Dean family exceeds both at 26 percent; it seems they liked to eat well. That widow Anne Mills had fallen into poor circumstances seems indicated by her purchasing 66.7 percent of her meat in the low-price category, well ahead of the Irish laborers (residing at the Noonans) at 44.8 percent.

There were literate people at all addresses who could read and write, adults and/or children. The Duisenbergs had writing artifacts at 2.3 percent. This placed them just above the Irish laborers at 2.1 percent. Liquor-store porter Andrew Buckley, with 1.7 percent, may have needed to read and write for his job. But it is Irish widow Anne Mills’s household that comes out on top at 4.1 percent; illiterate herself, Anne’s two children were in school.

From what we can see, there are ethnic and class “crossmends” throughout this group and not where they might be expected. The Irish widow’s family has the same percentage of clothing items as a German merchant. The Irish glass cutter and Irish laborers have almost the same percentage of domestic artifacts as the German merchant. The Irish porter’s privy has almost the same percentage of food preparation and consumption items as the German merchant’s. The Irish laborers have almost the same percentage of food-storage items as the German merchant. The lodging Irish laborers show little interest in smoking or drinking alcohol, while the German merchant’s privy shows more interest in both. And the wealthy German merchant’s family shows almost the same percentage of high-meat price purchases as the Irish laborers. The sample size is too small to distinguish ethnic patterning, although the patterning may be buried deep. Given the engendered domestic roles of the day, what we are seeing in most cases represents the personal choices of the women running the household.

A. Praetzellis and M. Praetzellis (2004:23), reviewing the results of the Cypress Archaeological Project in West Oakland, concluded that 19th-century residents of that neighborhood—including households of lowly-paid, first-generation immigrants (many of them Irish) and African Americans—had tastes that ran to expensive cuts of meat, complex table settings, and fancy parlor bric-a-brac. It appears that the findings from SF-80 Bayshore would not significantly differ from the Cypress results. Statistical analysis of the Cypress data in relation to bottles showed no significant patterns in recycling by ethnicity or nativity, but the refuse of poorer households contained fewer whole bottles than those of wealthier ones. Other conclusions from the Cypress Project are that wine
bottles strongly correlated with better-paying professions, and that there was no evidence that wealthier households consistently purchased more expensive meat cuts than poorer ones. Praetzellis and Praetzellis (2004:22) conclude that a process of structuration operated in West Oakland, in which people were not deceived by the hegemonic structures set up by their would-be oppressors to naturalize social inequalities. Did this process also operate on Bayshore?

In West Oakland and in San Francisco’s South of Market, you could be poor and you could be proud. Pride was a significant factor in Irish emigration in days gone by (Coogan 2000:43). Being proud can involve wanting to have quality things for special events. The best ceramics would be set out on special occasions. Indeed, “poor but respectable” is indicated by the artifacts of the SF-80 Bayshore Irish.

An emphasis on re-use and recycling of materials may indicate that thrift was seen as important and for some, a necessity. Others would have used the “poor but proud” code to keep their distance from anything secondhand, since such purchases would have reinforced—not only to themselves, but perhaps worse to their neighbors—their level of poverty. The code to follow here may have been that, when possible, it was far better to buy expensive things and show them with pride.

Irish-Catholic values were strong and enduring. Perhaps the Lily of the Valley molded saucer in Privy 1 was bought because it attracted the pious woman of the household, reminding her of the line in the popular old Catholic hymn, “I’ll sing a hymn to Mary” by John Wyse (1825-98):

'O Lily of the Valley, O Mystic Rose, what tree,
Or flower, e’en the fairest, Is half so fair as thee?"

It would be intriguing to correlate the appearance of this artifact with the religion of the household inhabitants on a wider scale.

Historical archaeology on the SF-80 Bayshore Project, combined with that on the SFOBB West Approach and Cypress projects, has the potential to inform on ethnic and cultural differences. But along the way to those ends, it may tell as much about what the residents from so many different backgrounds—geographically, economically, ethnically, and racially—had in common. Humans appear to live parts of their lives in patterns or, as A. Praetzellis and M. Praetzellis put it: “In the rolling social stream, apparently patterned behavior and apparently meaningful symbols are constantly coming to the surface” (2004:20). And the patterns that are created can be statistically meaningful. Those patterns should be evident in archaeological assemblages, given a sufficiently large database, as is documented in Chapter 11.

Remembering

The memory of forced emigration in Ireland is so strong that the Irish government will today grant citizenship to anyone who has one grandparent born in Ireland. This is a form of commemoration to the multitudes who departed, and a gesture to their descendants from the descendants of those who stayed behind. Shackel (2003:9) views the act of finding, locating, and documenting a site (e.g., the Bayshore Irish sites) as telling the world what archaeologists view as important. This is also an act of
commemoration. Recognizing a site’s eligibility is another level of commemoration. And the act of undertaking archaeology of a subordinate group and trying to make its history part of the official history is yet another form of remembering.

The archaeology of these Irish households of the SF-80 Bayshore Project are in this realm of remembering. It also lies in the realm of the potential. Combined in a statistical analysis with the neighboring West Approach and Cypress projects, and eventually with data from projects far removed from San Francisco, they offer an insight into an Irish culture described by Rischin (1978) when commenting on the life of one Irish immigrant, Seamus Moriarty. Seamus was born in County Kerry around the 1880s and ended his days in San Francisco in 1927. For Rischin, Moriarty—and for us, these Irish archaeological features—represent “all the other San Francisco Irish who have . . . gone unrecognized from this world to the eternal reward they believed in” (1978:8).