PART III: HOUSEHOLDS

Part III continues the discussion of project findings at the household scale in five chapters. What did individual households purchase, use, create, repair, and discard? The chapters range widely, covering immigrant women and their household possessions, needleworkers and sewing implements, tobacco, life at home, and ethnicity and socioeconomic status as reflected in Jewish and Irish households.
This chapter considers the women who helped create the various artifact assemblages analyzed in more technical sections. We consider them by name, by size of family, by ethnicity, and by their cooking styles. Documents are not as forthcoming about some of the women, but those who slip beneath the written records can sometimes be glimpsed through the more visible women. In today’s world, the most astonishing aspects are how young they were when they left their homelands or married. Yet each one, from the highly articulate and well-published Kate Douglas Wiggin (Privy 1) to the women who could not read or write, offers an entry point into married life in the 19th-century West.

Most of the women were foreign-born. Each inevitably began the process of assimilating to California society, and each did so individually, leaving traces in the archaeological record. It is impossible to know to what degree “ethnic particularism” — assimilating into a culture while still retaining one’s ethnic identity — influenced their actions (Hyman 1995:11). But with knowledge of the places from which they came and consideration of the typical lifestyles that characterized each, we can read between the lines and see acculturation, the process of becoming an American woman, in operation. Some women acquired the basic markers of the larger society — dress, values, language, material objects — to greater degrees than others. In a manner akin to the assimilation of foreign tools (metal axes, fish hooks, iron kettles) among native societies, most women took to some categories of material goods, notably clothing, in rapid fashion. Values are difficult to determine from artifacts alone, but historians often use intermarriage as a measure of changing values. Within San Francisco’s early Jewish population, even the marriage between a Bavarian Jew and a Jew from Poland initially implied intermarriage, let alone one between Jew and Gentile which prompted family separations. Two factors were critical among the Irish: marrying outside the Catholic faith and/or wedding someone of different ethnicity (e.g., German, French, Italian). Based on census records, these were rare occurrences within the neighborhoods studied, despite their cultural diversity (Burchell 1979:79).

For most, San Francisco was wholly Other, unlike any place they had ever lived. Its neighborhoods rang with cultural diversity. A pastiche of languages hummed in accompaniment. Men outnumbered women. All classes of people intermingled on the streets; children darted about. There were few elderly. The city itself was a “crossroads — of things past and present, cultural and social” — a place in which the existence of different symbolic expressions, world views, and modes of behavior was inescapable (Maffi 2000:270). It is useful to think of it as “made up of different contributions, ever contradictory, ever evolving, ever reinventing [contributions] which kept influencing what lay beyond the neighborhood borders” (Maffi 2000:271), and which shaped ideas and behavior inside household walls too.
Some idea of the cultural chaos—the way that day-to-day activities brought one into contact with different traditions—can be quickly brought out by comparing street culture with home life. Hannah Hart, a young Australian Jew, lived in a neighborhood jammed with small craftsmen (brewers, bootmakers, shoemakers, textile dyers, seamstresses) and tradesmen (chicken dealers, fruit dealers, grocers, hucksters, candy makers, toy store owners, saloon and restaurant keepers), who spoke German, French, Swiss, Italian, English, American English, Mexican Spanish and other Hispanic variants, or Chinese. She would soon be married and move to the study area where other languages resonated, styles of dress collided, and English was the lingua franca for all schoolchildren. Many Irish families lived south of Market; Gaelic was spoken in many homes and on streets or sidewalks, providing an undercurrent of sound that blended with the Yiddish spoken by many small shopkeepers.

The following pages provide a social context for Hannah and other women, mainly wives, associated with the assemblages. They are placed within their families, for all stayed home and kept house. Their daughters did not necessarily do so, but their immigrant mothers belonged to a traditional generation. This does not mean that married women did not work and work hard, but that their labor, often unpaid, took place within the hidden domain of the family. They were often isolated within their homes by the weight of a workload that was “mighty hard,” while daughters attended school, sons roamed far, and husbands worked throughout the city (Mary Jane Megquier, a San Francisco 49er, quoted in Jolly [1998:3]). Both custom and conservative California equity laws bound women to their households (Sparks 2006:76–81; Yung 1995:25–26). They are shown here as wives, mothers, hostesses, housekeepers, gardeners, nurses, educators, students, and consummate shoppers.

Many had few relatives in the city, but sometimes, after disentangling kinship connections, what initially appears to be two families sharing a duplex becomes one large extended household (e.g., Sarah McDonald and Susan Tobin, Well 866). Composite households, containing unrelated bachelors, widows, even young couples with small children, also appear. Ironically, looking at women within their families brings them further into the public eye. One can imagine arguments and see marital discord and, perhaps, even the dissolution of marriage bonds (the Metcalf women, Well 851 or Hannah Martin, Privy 806). There are glimpses of women and their negotiations with the fashion world, trips to the butcher shops and flower markets, even to an internationally known children’s kindergarten on Silver Street. We can also begin to discern socio-economic differences that cross-cut ethnic boundaries as seen in Table 4.1 where fragments of perfume bottles and jewelry lessen in Irish assemblages from working class neighborhoods.

This research originated with a desire to know more about their foodways. This chapter does give insight into cuisine, although not as much as one would wish. But, placing women first changes the focus of archaeological study and it does so in some intriguing ways. It opens a window onto birth, sickness, sexuality, death and remarriage, children’s lives, and care of the aged. The impact of household size can be assessed, hints of household composition emerge (primarily masculine or primarily feminine) and stages in the life cycle of the family enter the field of play as mediating factors. The difference between deposits prompted by catastrophic events (the 1868 earthquake) and those precipitated by family events (pregnancy, weddings, other celebrations, family moves, deaths, and family breakups) can be read between the lines (Figure 4.1).

Since personal identity was tightly interwoven with ethnic identity in any immigrant community, Hannah’s life and those of other women are presented in sections arranged by point
Table 4.1. Distribution of Perfume, Jewelry, and Fans among Assemblages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Composition</th>
<th>Number of Assemblages</th>
<th>Perfume Vials</th>
<th></th>
<th>Jewelry</th>
<th></th>
<th>Fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American/English families</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European families</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish families outside Baldwin Court</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish in or near Baldwin Court</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Irish Assemblages** include the following: American and/or English families: Baker, Shaw, Peel (2); European: Aaron, Ackerman/Strauss, Martin/McIver, and Metcalf.

**Irish Assemblages** include wealthier families: Gee, Monahan, Moynihan, Dolan/Michelson, Donnelly/Beal, and McDonald/Tobin; and those that live in or near the working class neighborhood of Baldwin Court: Fegan, Mayne/O’Connor, Thompson, Cadigan/Fuchs, Murphy, McSheffrey, Clark, Taylor, McEvoy, and Brown. Baldwin Court was part of the low lying land near the waterfront that constituted Block 4 whereas the other assemblages were associated with Irish families that lived on streets that were on the other side of Rincon Hill (primarily Blocks 10 and 11).

Figure 4.1. Percentage of clothing and food consumption artifacts for four 1868 features (post-earthquake, 1 to 4) and four 1880 features (5 to 8).
of origin. Because so many were of Irish descent, Ireland’s women come first. There was a small but very active network of Jewish families in the city by 1849, so Lena Strauss, Hannah Aaron, and Hannah Martin follow. There were no assemblages from French or Italian households or from the African American, Mexican, Chilean, Argentinean, or Chinese families living in San Francisco, so these women are missing. But there were a few women, married to mariners, from Norway and Germany, whose lives provide additional insight (Aletta Michelson, Isabella Gee, Catherine Metcalf). In all cases, child-rearing and homemaking were essential parts of their stories, but there is also indication of the shift from woman as constantly laboring, unpaid helpmate, to women with more leisure, who reflected (or displayed) their husbands’ roles and status in the city (Isabella Gee, Minna Duisenberg). There are a few widows who bridged the boundary between domestic work and wage labor, making enough to keep their families afloat and own their own homes (e.g., Mary Moynihan), but they did so within the confines of the family.

By 1880 only 30 Irish women in the city worked at low status factory jobs, only 10 held upper middle class jobs as clerks (Burchell 1979:55). More accessible options were jobs as domestic servants (i.e., day labor requiring minimal skills or literacy), milliners and seamstresses (i.e., craftswomen), nurses, or teachers—a position requiring specialized training and literacy. Women as wage workers are peripheral in this description of immigrant women’s lives in San Francisco as seen through archaeology. Finally, as the second generation comes of age, there are clearer indications of women working in white collar positions (e.g., Ida Strauss, Amelia Aaron, Sarah and Margaret Taylor; see Jolly 1998; Sparks 2006).
POINT OF ORIGIN: IRELAND

Irish women were held to different standards than their men. According to San Francisco’s Catholic Guardian, men were oaks; women were tendrils (Burchell 1979:77). Catholic values required them to be excellent and to be useful to others, but not to excel (Gregg 1856). Men, not women, were ordained by God to handle the great and weighty matters of life; women were their helpmeets—emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually different. Men saw them as mothers, tending the sick and nurturing children, as kin, and, in quite distinctly separated contexts, as sexual creatures. Men knew them to be tenacious, courageous and resourceful, but expected wives to work within the home after marriage (Diner 1983). Irish homes were “central to everything in life” (Dowling 1998:63). Women strove to see their families survive. Men took pride in saying “no wife of mine has ever had to work” (i.e., do wage labor once she married) and many men never thought of their wives as having worked (Smith 1982:447).

In 1850, when few Irish lived in San Francisco, women in Ireland went barefoot and dressed simply. They wore a shift, petticoat, and dress, used a cloak for warmth, covered their hair with a cap, and protected their gowns with long work aprons. Over the next few decades women more often wore a shawl, a red flannel skirt, and bodice. They obtained much of their clothing at second-hand fairs or street markets. According to Kate Wiggin’s descriptions of rural Irish women in Penelope’s Irish Experiences (1902), daily dress had changed little by the late 1890s (Figure 4.2). Gradually English styles became both more popular and more obtainable (Mageean 1997b:70–71). Little pieces of cloth that survived in a damp context, coupled with hundreds of different dress fasteners, bits of whalebone, and all the necessities to make a fancy dress or strap one’s self in a corset, are found across the artifact assemblages. These indicate the fashionable changes Irish women made in their dress after acclimating to city life (Figure 4.3).

The contrast between Irish home styles and those that immigrants adopted, as they could afford them, was dramatic. George W. Russell—Irish writer, poet, and painter—pointed out how families in the home country were amazed by the transformation in the women who emigrated: “The girl . . . remembered without a hat, with bare feet, with short red petticoat is seen as a duchess in her American transformation.” There she was in photographs, smiling beneath a glamorous hat in a dress of fine fabric (Figure 4.4). Her kinfolk marveled; her sisters “trembled with longing and delight” (Mageean 1997b:71–72). The married women for whom she worked grumbled to themselves when they saw her wearing a velvet cloak and a hat as elegant as any they owned (Elliott 1868). And when the dress was torn or the hat tatty, she tossed it in the privy fill (e.g., Meg Brown at Privy 1307), sold it to the ragman, or recycled it at a junk store (Wiggin 1923). Old clothes supplied the basis for made over clothing. Hence, small boys frequently collected cast-off clothing and sold it to shopkeepers, whose wives mended, patched, exchanged, and sold this apparel at neighborhood stores. According to a Swedish visitor, both fabric and eastern-made clothing was cheaper than food in the 1870s (Bjork 1950). Family histories, and the printed observations of Henry George, tell of Irish women possessed by a craze for fine shawls, fans, or

Figure 4.2. Nineteenth-century Irish women. (From the author’s collection)
parasols, no matter the state of the family finances (De Mille 1942a:440). Any woman who wanted to dress well had opportunities to do so, as is quite apparent among assemblages recovered from Block 10.

The history of the George family in Henry George’s biography indicates that his Irish grandmother-in-law had a perpetual yen for decorative china or specific plant varieties, such as begonias, used as specimen pot plants (De Mille 1942a:440). Abigail Meagher Parrott wrote her sister that, “no day in the past year has found me without fresh flowers on my table” (Dowling 1998:321). Flowers grew readily in the California climate—roses, fuchsias, salvias, geraniums, verbenas, and gillyflowers, to name a few. Two-thirds of the vases and two-thirds of the common flowerpots in the artifact assemblages (those dating to or before 1880) came from Irish households (Table 4.2). Twenty-seven, or 87 percent, of the 31 figurines did as well—a contrast with the two unambiguously Jewish deposits, in which there were no figurines, one vase, and a single common-clay flower pot (Figure 4.5). However, note that Harriet

Figure 4.3. Buttons and fasteners, Privy 1301. The 145 buttons found in the Taylor family’s privy represent a minimum of 37 garments; which included a woman’s dress or outergarment constructed of dark-green teal wool twill and matching silk lining.

Figure 4.4. Irish girls frequently sent pictures home as well as money, tickets, clothes, and other presents. (From the author’s collection)
Levy’s description of her mother’s “splendid” parlor mantel specifies a series of figurines: two pairs of bisque shepherds and shepherdesses; one pair of gaily painted terra cotta gypsies (Levy 1996:102). Perhaps the glory of the parlor and the sanctity of behavior within it differed? Still, the broken flower vases, pots, and figurines reveal that Irish-American women kept decorative items in their homes. Their men gifted them with dishes and figurines knowing they were fond of these. In Ireland, homes were furnished spartanly, but most had a series of wall shelves where women displayed a few eye-catching pieces of pottery. It is not surprising, given the conservative nature of Irish and Scots folk culture that the use of decorative ceramics continued well into the 20th century (McNeill 1929). Folklorist Henry Glassie noticed their presence in the 1960s; his work is helpful in thinking about some of the sherds of painted earthenware in the West Approach collection.

Glassie, with his eye for color and pattern, saw “the softness of textiles, a busy glittery dance of little things, a rainbow of color and a happy cacophony of pattern” enlivening Irish homes (Glassie 1999:267; 2006:194–199). Women hid from sight their everyday dishes: ordinary plates, jugs, mugs, and cups for strong tea. Gaily decorated pieces of pottery—platters, plates, and decorative cups of different shapes—lined the shelves of dressers. Ask a woman who gave her these items and you could see her social network. Each one was a gift; each one was a friend that recorded something special, a chain of friendship, or a family member, and each one demonstrated the affection her family showed her. The plates both commemorated and displayed social relationship, and it is understandable that such ceramic pieces were “things to see, not things to use in eating” (Glassie 2006:194–199). They included transfer-printed, hand-painted, or machine-

Table 4.2. Distribution of Vases and Flowerpots among Assemblages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Composition</th>
<th>Number of Assemblages</th>
<th>Vases n</th>
<th>Vases %</th>
<th>Flower pots n</th>
<th>Flower pots %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American/English families</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European families</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Euro-American subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish outside Baldwin Court</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish in or near Baldwin Court</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irish subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>70%</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>70%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table 1.3 for list of households by status and/or ethnic composition.

Figure 4.5. Two porcelain figurines from Irish households (not to scale). The figure on the left may have belonged to Catherine Thompson (Privy 1303). The Parian porcelain figure on the right came from the household of widow Mary Moynihan.
decorated platters and plates, usually in blue and white, with birds, flowers, boats, castles, and mansions, and most had been produced one to two generations earlier. The brightly colored ceramics were a woman’s way of molding space that gave her home its personality. Women took pleasure in the care of “the delph.” Some saw their careful sudsing, washing, rinsing, and drying as an act of love. These prized possessions were fragile; they could break easily and often did when carelessness or hot temper entered a home. We may see them as mementos, but they lose personality in archaeological catalogs, where their role in food consumption is more apparent than pride of place in a home.

The group photographs of artifacts in each assemblage point to the presence of colorful wares, side by side, with the ubiquitous white earthenware, too plain for a gift. During the 1868 earthquake, Eliza McEvoy (Privy 1316) lost a blue and white soup plate with a large, central floral display and a smaller plate with hand-painted flowers, berries, and leaves. Susan Taylor (Privy 1301) lost a blue shell-edged plate, a blue transfer-printed cup, and four tiny transfer-printed mugs, too delicate for her children to use. Isabelle Clark (Privy 1311) lost a lovely flow-blue pitcher (Figure 4.6), a tureen lid unusually decorated with seashells, and different transfer-printed vessels in light blue, dark blue, and purple. Isabella Gee (Privy 807) lost a large water ewer decorated with hand-painted flowers over a rich transfer-print, a blue shell-edged platter, and a gilded one. While each of these vessels might have been used at the table on special occasions, their age and decorative motifs also suggest a role in display. And while carelessness destroyed many, if not most, vessels found in artifact deposits, all of these assemblages date to a time shortly after the 1868 earthquake. In these cases, it was nature—the ground shifting like bowl of jelly—that threw fragile objects off shelves or tables and rolled beds across rooms without distinction as to ware-type or daily care. It was a woman’s pottery and glass that was destroyed rather than her clothing—and the artifact assemblages show this.

Another suggestion that women continued to display colorful, nostalgic ceramics can be seen in the continued presence of blue, shell-edged plates and platters well beyond their customary use date. Produced in large quantities with variegated rim decoration since ca. 1790, this ceramic type gradually fell out of fashion well before mid-century, yet it is present in many of the later (ca. 1880) artifact assemblages (e.g., Nancy McSheffrey’s one blue, shell-edged plate [Privy 1310]; Cecelia Murphy’s four [Privy 1318]). Mrs. Murphy also owned a platter or large plate with gaudy reddish pink flowers, green leaves, and blue berries dancing around its rim. While this pattern is seen elsewhere in these deposits, it is primarily associated with the homes of Irish women. The Dolan/Michelson assemblage (Privy 857/858) reflects the possessions of both Irish and Norwegian families, but here too one finds decorative earthenware, this time of French origin. There are three tiny cups in the McIver/Martin (Privy 806) assemblage that may have been kept in a display case; they would have had little impact on a shelf filled with larger, more ostentatious earthenware. The presence of colorful ceramics is barely visible in the deposits of two Jewish women, Mrs. Aaron (Privy 814) and Mrs. Strauss (Privy 849), and their forms, hollow-
ware serving pieces, are not as amenable to display as are plates and platters. The same can be said for the deposit associated with the families of Minnie Samuel and Catherine Smith (Privy 1300), neither of whom was Irish.

Does this mean that the Irish women of San Francisco and the women of northern Ireland or highland Scotland had the same fondness for gay pottery that they could display, admire, and fondle through washing, drying, and polishing? There is enough information in the archaeological data to be suggestive, but not definitive. Yet, consider the similar pottery recovered from Irish households in a New York tenement neighborhood (Yamin 2001:160–162). The New York assemblages show the same patterning: colorful, decorative wares in forms that are easy to display at sites associated with Irish families; and a lack thereof at the few sites associated with Jewish families. While Irish homes were furnished spartanly, both 19th century accounts and Claudia Kinmonth's (1993, 2006) analysis of paintings and furniture indicate most homes had either wall shelves or a dresser where women displayed a few eye-catching pieces of pottery, primarily blue and white. Contemporary ethnographic evidence is both tantalizing and substantive (Figure 4.7).

One approach to understanding these Irish American women is to look at the life they left behind. Most lived in rural areas, in small homes whose turf fires centered their lives (Figure 4.8). Most could not read and write. They learned housekeeping through apprenticeship—from mother to daughter, from aunt to niece. They knew how to cook with an iron pot over a fire; few had ever used a stove or had access to running water or well-made lamps. They bought their tea and sugar by the ounce or half ounce (George 1883). They had never been inside a well-stocked grocery store selling coffee, currants, raisins, and exotic nuts, and could not afford these delicacies. One can only imagine what they felt strolling through open city markets filled with the scent of oriental spices—cloves, curry, cumin, ginger, coriander—where German bakers, Italian fishermen, Jewish grocers, Chinese vegetable peddlers, and Irish or German butchers hawked their wares.

In Ireland, women grew herbs and vegetables in kitchen gardens and had almost no money to spend at market. They did much hard, physical labor. Once, potatoes had been rare. Farmers,
hesitant about the vegetable’s moral character and how to tame the uncontrollable passions that might rise up by eating it, planted very few (Chambers 1733, quoted by McNeill 1929). Potatoes, however, are exceedingly nutritious and gradually became a staple (Clarkson and Crawford 2001). By the early 19th century, most Irish ate a diet based simply on potatoes, dining by the fire’s glow and holding a skeehogue (potato basket) on their knees (Evans 1942:73). They sat on stools and they sat on chairs, but a kitchen table—let alone one for dining—was rarely seen. There were exceptions—church holidays, seasonal holidays, and family celebrations—when women scrimped, scavenged, and traded to pile mutton and ham on cabbage mounds, and each guest took their tiny share. Still, potatoes thrust out most other types of foods.

A brief overview of Irish eating patterns reveals that meat, offal, and milk products dominated in the early 1600s. The rich ate beef and mutton; the poor consumed smaller animals—rabbits and game birds—as well as pigs and offal. Prodigious quantities of milk and milk products were consumed— as broths, curds, butter, and cheese. Families grew cabbage and green kail [kale]. These were supplemented by leeks, onions, watercress, wild garlic, spinach, and goosefoot; by a limited number of fruits; and by herbs (Clarkson and Crawford 2001). Cooking had much in common with other Gaelic regions of England, namely Wales and Scotland. And, as Scotland did under English control, Ireland too retrograded in its cooking habits during the 18th and early 19th centuries when it was under the implacable hands of English landlords (Freeman 1997; McNeill 1929).

By circa 1750, foodstuffs became tradable. Wheat brought a high market price and thus was not used in home consumption, although beer and oatmeal in many different guises were. Pork and bacon became valuable exports. Butter and eggs could be sold at market. The sale of foodstuffs could help pay the rent. Nature’s larder was opened when necessary. Women gathered nettles and found seaweed (laver or sloke or dulse) along the coast, bringo roots in the sand, cockles on exposed tidal flats. But these opportunities were restricted to coastal locations.

By 1800 Irish eating habits belonged to one of two patterns. The first resembled patterns seen in England. Prosperous families ate meat (beef, mutton, pork, poultry, rabbits, game birds, and offal); grain-based foods; dairy products; small amounts of fish, oysters, and other shellfish; and fruits and vegetables. They purchased wine and liquor as well as groceries. Those less prosperous—three-quarters of the population—ate milk products or potatoes “washed down with buttermilk or whiskey” (Clarkson and Crawford 2001:75), and had little variety in their choice of other food. Some foodstuffs were seasonally available, particularly oatmeal and herring. Others, especially meat, became peripheral—reserved for feasts and festivals. Butter, bread, fish, eggs, and bacon became treats. This was what most Irish immigrants had experienced in their daily diet and it did not produce a wealth of traditional dishes.

O’Grada (1994a) urges readers to be suspicious of recipes that claim to be traditional: champ, boxty, colcannon, potatoes and bacon, and Irish stew. These, he wrote, are primarily late-19th-century dishes created by wives of prosperous farmers. Hasia Diner believes that the Irish “failed to develop a national cuisine” (2001:85). She notes a lackadaisical attitude towards cooking, a lack
of skill, and a consequent disconnect between cooking and a woman’s identity, her sense of self worth. Consequently there was an absence of food lore, few memories of what the Irish diet had been (Diner 2001:98). She does admit the existence of a rich set of food traditions prior to widespread potato cultivation (Diner 2001:103).

Diner (2001:114) equates the lack of food descriptions in narrative accounts, what she calls “the sounds of silence” with Irish American foods and believes that food had no role in holding together Irish American communities. Irish women supposed to learn to cook through working as servants in the kitchens of well-to-do American families and were not taught at home. Yes, they patronized any number of Irish butchers and food markets, but these, apparently, sold no distinctively Irish foods (Diner 2001:128). Part of her evidence is the absence of food memories in literary works by Irish Americans (Diner 2001:150–151). Yet there is some evidence of Irish feasts in California and one wonders if there would be more if someone dug deeper. The Murphys in Los Altos Hills, for example, were well known for their immense celebrations, cooking sheep, pigs, steer and bulls’ heads for more than 5,000 guests (Taaffe 1998). When Henry George brought the mayor home for a wee bit to eat late at night, his Irish wife, Annie, served an Irish stew (De Mille 1943a:240). Two other San Franciscans—Eleanor Downey Martin (born in County Roscommon) and her sister, Annie Downey Donahue—were famous for hosting splendid dinners and other forms of entertainment (Dowling 1998:57–67). The wide range of vessel forms, their quality and quantity in the archaeological data suggest that Isabella Gee (born in Northern Ireland) was an excellent hostess who served a wide range of guests at her table (Figure 4.9).

There is a variety of evidence in the artifact assemblages—from those at the yards on Baldwin Court to those recovered from Perry Street—that some dietary practices remained identical to those of the home country. Take teapots, tea cups, and mugs for tea. The Irish love for strong tea, thickly dredged with sugar, was such that some saw it as almost a national obsession and damned its consumption (Clarkson and Crawford 2001:103–104, 235). It was as indispensable and as necessary to Irish women in San Francisco as it was in Ireland or Great Britain. They too
set the pot on the stove where it stayed for hours until finally, the liquid used to make another poured out hot but clear. One privy produced nine teapots; others held four or five; Isabella Gee had at least three. When one remembers that the materials in these assemblages were deposited over a month or so, a contrast to the slow accumulation of sheet refuse, the quantity of tea consumed seems prodigious. Judging from the assemblages, most families owned more than one pot and went through a succession in a lifetime (Figure 4.10). Basically, these were common functional pots made of pearlware, black-glazed or Rockingham-type earthenware, and molded white ironstone—a good indication that women used them to brew tea to drink (i.e., not tea used for social display).

There are also other artifacts associated with food preparation, including healthy quantities of faunal remains. There are a modest number of vessels used to prepare food, and numerous artifacts associated with food consumption. Both the faunal remains, overwhelmingly of beef or mutton with lesser quantities of pork, and the long life spans—well beyond the average—of these Irish Americans testify to a healthy diet and families that were well fed. They do not, however, speak of a uniform diet. There are individual variations. One family eats a lot of pork, another serves a suckling pig, a third eats barely any pork at all. Beef and mutton vie for first place in some families, and it is clear that in the choice of a roast, people’s preferences vary. Some women cook better cuts of meat than others, and some concentrate on soups and stews (Table 4.3). There is certainly enough mutton to infer that varied forms of Irish stew appeared at the dinner table. Cuts of beef used for stew, or “slink” in Scotland and Ireland, are well represented. There is documentation of the importance of family Sunday dinners, where roasts might have
Table 4.3. Irish Assemblages and Types of Meat (by percent of weight)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assemblage</th>
<th>Beef</th>
<th>Mutton</th>
<th>Pork</th>
<th>Fowl</th>
<th>Rabbit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gee</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolan/Michelson</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donnelly/Beal</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moynihan</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monahan</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald/Tobin</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheridan</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dent/Hannan</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Blocks 9–10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fegan</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEvoy</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadigan/Fuchs</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Connor</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McSheffry</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noonan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Mills</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dougherty</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurley/Cunliffe</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Dean</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Blocks 4–6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
been served. There is also information on what poorer families ate when funds were low: milk, bread, potatoes, cornmeal, and the cheapest fish of all (De Mille 1942b:99).

THE LADIES OF BALDWIN COURT

Women living on Baldwin Court in the Tar Flat neighborhood had a much harder life than those on Perry Street, as did their men. This industrial area was dominated by metal foundries that were deeply affected by the 1870s depression and times were hard; little money was to be had (Figure 4.11). Men in working-class neighborhoods “[worked] ten hours a day in order that [they] might sleep eight and have two to three hours for themselves when [they] were tired out and all their faculties exhausted” (George 1868). Working-class men, especially laborers, were often seen running for Mission Street streetcars. And given that the city averages 2 to 3 months of rain a year, often blown in on afternoon winds, these men returned home in the rain and the fog with one single thought in their minds: a whiskey or beer at a neighborhood pub to ease the cold and boost the spirit before going home. An 1869 Catholic Guardian reported that working men needed an income of approximately $15 to $20 a month to cover rent ($5.00), transportation ($3.00), daily beer or whiskey ($3.00), and pub entertainment ($4.00) (Burchell 1979:69). This, of course, includes no support for a wife or children and little cash for family meals. According to Henry George, it “was not a reasonable life.” They struggled; their wives and children struggled. Their artifacts—working boots or shoes, wool clothing (“the universal afternoon wear”), tobacco pipes, and liquor bottles—testify to this. Overall their sons had fewer marbles to play with although the sizes of several caches testify that they played for keeps (Figure 4.12).

Only two assemblages yielded the more expensive dolls; most were quite ordinary. The little girls of Baldwin Court had fewer dolls than the Irish girls on Perry and Silver streets (an average of 3.5 per family vs. 8 for the latter) and markedly fewer tiny tea sets (3.5 vs. 18). The averages shown in Table 4.4 fall well below the 11 dolls recovered from the wealthy Duisenbergs’ privy fill on adjacent Block 3. A well-made, quality European doll could cost above $10.00, which was more than a month’s rent in San Francisco’s poorer neighborhoods. What stands out here is the larger amount of toys among upwardly mobile Irish families.
when compared to those in poorer neighborhoods and those of European immigrants.

Today, a $10.00 doll seems modestly priced, but to put it in perspective, consider Annie George’s (Mrs. Henry George) heartfelt wish when her husband brought in just a few dollars a day, she had to manage on almost nothing, and help pay the rent by sewing for her landlady. The family took a pragmatic approach: they left a more expensive flat ($18/month) to live at 9 Perry Street, renting for $9.00 a month. Annie’s wish was simple: “that her husband would manage regularly to make twenty dollars a week!” (De Mille 1942b: 100). It is no wonder that wives made do with a single bottle of perfume if they had any, and some did not. There were fewer decorative figurines than among the better off Irish homes. While almost every assemblage across the West Approach area contained a vase for flowers, the number recovered from Baldwin Court was extraordinarily high (50% of the total). However, the number of ordinary pots used to grow pot herbs, flowers, or specimen plants was lower (Table 4.2).

Yard space was minimal and approximated the size of a small deck on one of today’s condominiums (ca. 15 feet wide by 10 feet deep, if not less). Front yards were miniscule if one can count a 3-foot setback as a yard. The small homes—none any wider than 15 feet and few much deeper than 20 to 25—were filled to the brim with children and extraneous men (lodgers). Boys probably played kick the can and shot craps on the street, gathering into small gangs that protected their turf (Baldwin Court) against encroachment. Girls watched from door stoops while caring for their siblings. Several families had no indoor plumbing, and bought water from the early-morning delivery trucks. Think of it as an area with an active street culture and one where boys occasionally slipped off to the docks to skinny dip as their counterparts did in New York.

### Table 4.4. Distribution of Dolls and Tiny Tea Wares among Assemblages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Composition</th>
<th>Dolls</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Miniature Tea Wares</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>Avg.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>Avg.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American/English families (4)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European families (4)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish outside Baldwin Court (6)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish in or near Baldwin Court (10)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>209</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Table 4.1 for listing of families.

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Figure 4.12. Marble collection. Sixteen of these seventeen marbles from Privy 1306 were found grouped together, perhaps in a small bag.
The rate of illiteracy on Baldwin Court was high. When women cannot read or write, it is impossible for them to use a cookbook. They cook as they were taught by other women in the family or by neighbors (Wood 2004); the litany of complaints about Irish domestics is one indication that Irish cuisine differed from middle- and upper-class American modes of cooking. These complaints are recorded in letters, novels, and cartoons; the view that Irish women couldn’t cook was almost ubiquitous within middle-class and the upper social ranks of American society (Hardy 1992). However, Senator Joseph McKenna observed that President McKinley visited Mark Hanna’s Washington home each Sunday for breakfast, drawn by the politics discussed and Hanna’s cook, Maggie Maloney’s “mouthwatering hash” (San Francisco Monitor, “Maggie Maloney’s Hash,” December 10, 1921). The story of Maggie Maloney’s Sunday corned beef hash is a counterpoint to the stereotypic view (Dowling 1998:79). Assimilation brought with it other alterations to traditional Irish fare. Through their daughters, women had access to a wide range of recipes from those in newspapers to those in books. Of course, whether mothers were receptive to the new ideas about food their daughters brought home from school is something else entirely. It is more likely that the women exchanged recipes with their Jewish and other European neighbors, as this is a practice well documented elsewhere (e.g., Diner 2001:119; Ferris 2005; Wood 2004). One need only see the recipes for Irish stew included in Jewish cookbooks of the early 20th century to acknowledge its presence.

The Irish mothers in this study group urged their daughters to go to school, and most dressed them very carefully. Kate Wiggin describes them as nifty little girls in starched white aprons (Wiggin 1889:19; see Figure 4.13). Each would have had many responsibilities at home, helping her mother by peeling potatoes, watching younger children, washing dishes, ironing, and doing other housekeeping chores. Some left school to work in local factories, but not at as great a rate as their brothers. In part, local prohibitions against female workers in factories benefited the daughters whether or not families knew so at the time (Locke 1990; Yung 1995). Few, if any, second-generation daughters connected to these archaeological features are listed in later censuses as domestic servants; most became dressmakers, milliners, copyists, teachers, nurses, and factory workers as did their sisters across the city (Sparks 2006:64–65). The rate of literacy among school-aged or older, second-generation residents was high.

Gradually assimilating Irish immigrant communities near Chicago, as described by Deirdre Mageean, had much in common with Baldwin Court. Simple cottage-style homes were reminiscent of rural Ireland; they were heated with wood or coal. Families depended on salt pork, beef, cabbage, bread, and potatoes. They planted kitchen gardens. Neighborhood saloons, where people drank in the back of the building, offered groceries in front. Dances celebrated some life events; well-attended wakes in the deceased’s home marked others (Mageean 1997a). Consumption of sugar, beer, and whiskey would have ebbed and flowed with wage fluctuations. No one living on Baldwin Court was rich or even well-to-do, but Irish women beat their poverty with humor, with stories, with fiddle and dance, and emphatically, with hard work and faith. What Kate Wiggin wrote of their children could be said of the mothers as well: “Some were lovely and some were interestingly ugly; some were like lilies growing out of the mud” (1923:126).
Chapter 4: Tracing Immigrant Women

IRISH WOMEN FROM BLOCKS 10 AND 11

Mary Jane Dolan

If one thinks of a lily as upwardly socially mobile, hardworking, and strong at its core, then Mary Jane Dolan who lived on Perry Street comes to mind (Privy 857/858). She exemplifies in many ways, the lives of other Irish American women. Mary Jane Dolan married Michael, at 16. He was only 17 or 18 and had more dreams than marketable skills. It is noteworthy that both Mary and Michael were literate. Michael was canny about business and finance. He started as a cart-man, hooking his short, stocky workhorse or horses to a delivery wagon, picking up packages and passengers at the docks or shops, and delivering them in the city. Michael’s days were long; a 12-hour workday was the norm. Then, he had to care for the horse(s). Sometimes Mary Jane felt as if she never saw him from dawn to dusk. But, he was a good provider, who had squirreled away $550 in personal wealth by 1860 ($86,460 in modern currency\(^1\)), money later used to buy the home on Perry Street.

The Dolans were married in California or arrived soon thereafter. Their oldest son, James, was a native-born Californian (born in 1855). Mary Jane watched the city grow, knew its openness, its vices, it sounds, its muddy streets. They first lived downtown in the heart of the city. Michael was listed in the 1861 City Directory residing north of Market Street at 11 Leidesdorff, close to his wagon stand near the New World Market building. Here, Mary Jane gave birth to Jennie and John. Many Irish in this area lived in single-room dwellings or above a shop (Kinnaird 1966[1]:445). Leidesdorff Street lay only a block behind Montgomery Street, with its shops, houses of prostitution, and bars. Despite the convenience for Michael, the family could not stay. Mary Jane and Michael made two moves before purchasing the newly built, two-story duplex on Perry Street. The children liked it because it had a backyard. Mary Jane also liked it because it was away from the overcrowded streets of the center city. Michael liked it because he could rent out the second flat to cover the mortgage.

In 1870, four years after moving into the duplex, Michael’s real estate was valued at $10,000 ($1,107,000.00) and his personal wealth at $1,000 ($110,700.00). This equals $11,000 or eight times the 1870 national average for foreign born citizens ages 30–39 which was only $1,267 (Soltow 1975: Table 3.4). Michael’s home was worth ten times the national average of $911 (Soltow 1975: Table 3.3), but only five times more than most Californians if one limits the comparison to real estate holdings for adult men in the Northwest which averaged $1,948 (Soltow 1975: Table 3.5). The modest number of toys among the Dolan artifacts is perhaps a combined result

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1. The conversion from 19th-century dollars to modern equivalencies comes from measuringworth.com. This Web site offers five ways to compute the relative value of the dollar. The one used here is The Unskilled Wage Rate, which “is a good way to determine the relative cost of something in terms of the amount of work it would take to produce, or the relative time it would take to earn its cost.” It is difficult to measure worth. The consumer price index is not used here because the cultural value, the availability, accessibility, popularity, and consumer consumption needs for many items is vastly different now than it was in late 19th-century San Francisco as were expectations of what it was reasonable to purchase. We can’t assume that prices changed the same percentage as the average price change over time. The same can be said of the GDP index. Expectations and needs also changed between the different ethnic groups represented in this sample. It is this writer’s impression that although the unskilled wage rate does produce valuations that seem high, use of the consumer price index would not provide comparable valuations. The unskilled wage rate also permits comparisons across the data base while lessening disparities (among the sites and between past and present) due to cultural factors. (Samuel H. Williamson, “Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790–2006,” MeasuringWorth.Com, 2007.)
South of Market: Historical Archaeology of 3 San Francisco Neighborhoods

of parsimony and an emphasis on education. Since most of Mary Jane’s married life was spent either pregnant or nursing a baby, the family continued to grow. Thomas arrived shortly after the move; Elizabeth came in 1867. The next year Mary Jane gave birth to little Michael, who lived just eight months. Kitty was born in 1871 and Robert in 73. Two years later Mary lost another son. Adelaide, arriving in 1877, was the last baby; Mary Jane was 49, entering menopause, and surely glad to leave childbearing behind, but her ‘mitherin’ of children would last well into her sixties.

By this point, her two oldest sons had married and started their own families. John had gone through high school and St. Mary’s College, graduating at 19. Three years later, still single, he was admitted to law practice by the Supreme Court. James, the eldest son, died in 1886; Michael died in 1887; and John had already run for public office when he died in 1888. James had lived to see his son grow into a feisty toddler; John’s son was born posthumously. Mary Jane may have been delighted to be a grandmother with wee grandsons, but she also mourned her husband and sons. On nearby Silver Street, Kate Wiggins, well aware of the high mortality rates among the Irish community, wrote: “these poor mothers! They bite back the cry of their pain, and fight death with love so long as they have a shred of strength” (1889:15).

Many Irish American women do not appear with greater clarity when one digs deeper into the historical records. One reason for this is the large concentration of Irish in the city and the use of similar naming patterns: Mary Murphy, Susan Taylor, Catherine O’Connor, Mary Sheridan. There are simply too many Murphys, Taylors, Fegans, Clarks, and O’Connors to sort them all out. Another reason they were hard to track is that their lives revolved around their parish church, and Catholic parish records are not readily available. Some aspects of Mrs. Dolan’s life were clearer because the activities of her husband and children were newsworthy; they entered the political sphere, worked actively in the church, gained positions of influence and the roles these demanded on St. Patrick’s Day. One can read about them in the *Alta California*. Not regularly, but often enough to pick up different aspects of their lives.

The Widow Mary Moynihan

Other Irish American women stand out in small, individual ways. As social historians recognized, most Irish American women outlived their spouses (Diner 1983). Mary Jane Dolan and Catherine Fegan were widows for more than 10 years; Maggie Donnelly for more than 20. Tom Boreen died, leaving Mary Moynihan’s sister, Maggie Boreen, with two young sons (Privy 813). Mary’s husband, Andrew Moynihan, also died young; Mary was a widow for almost 40 years. She took in her widowed sister, her Boreen nephews, and another niece. The two women brought up their young sons alone, taking in boarders and doing laundry.

In the beginning, before Andrew died, the two-story duplex, with basement, had ample space for a young couple with two small children. It boasted a long, narrow veranda on the street side and a slightly wider front yard than other working-class homes. One flat was approximately the same size as other houses in the neighborhood, but its one-story rear extension effectively made it the equivalent of two Baldwin Court homes. It also contained a store, however, which cut back the availability of domestic space. The second flat was almost identical to the first but its rear addition was only 5 feet in depth. However, when you divide this fairly spacious area—slightly larger than that normally used by two single working-class families—into one occupied by four, the overcrowding increases the intensity of social interaction tenfold. Take into consideration Mary’s home-based laundry and you can see that she made almost every spare bit of the property an income-producing resource. Once the young boys reached their teens, they joined the work force, as cord workers, and Mary’s niece apprenticed to a dressmaker. In addition, Maggie went
to work as a housekeeper where, according to Harriet Levy (1996), women worked a 13-hour day. Thus, every member of the family was also an income-producing unit—it was how they got by.

Mary and her oldest boy outlived her sister, her nephews, her younger son, and possibly her niece. When John Moynihan married Elizabeth Lynn, Mary made her welcome. When Mary died at 63, she even left her home to Elizabeth, perhaps because she was literate while John was not. Nor was he a successful businessman, but he had learned from his mother about caring for others. During his marriage, at one time or another and often simultaneously, John had four generations of his wife’s family living with him. This was the way the young took care of older generations.

**The McEvoy Women**

Sometimes wives died before their husbands. Eliza McEvoy died at 50; her husband lived another 13 years (Privy 1316). Their home had no boarders when the family was young, but as the years went by, the McEvoyes packed them in, 12 to 17 male lodgers at a time. Their home eventually became a hotel for working men. Running it was a demanding job. In a letter dated 30 June 1850, Mary Jane Megquier complained about running a large San Francisco boarding house: “I am obliged to trot all day and if I had not the constitution of six horses, I should have been dead long ago” (Kaufman, ed. 1994). After Eliza died, the responsibility for feeding these firemen, seamen, and laborers fell on daughters Anne and Mary. The work involved makes one shudder (see Psota’s sidebar; Figure 4.14). All washing was done by hand; ironing was cumbersome. Oil lamps left a smoky residue, while pollution from the factories filtered in and settled down in ever-accumulating dust. Large breakfasts and dinners needed preparation; marketing required
KEEPPING UP APPEARANCES

Sunshine Psota

Each generation of Americans has had its own idea of what is acceptable to wear. During the mid- to late-1800s, Americans and Europeans “loved to keep up appearances, but they could not tolerate waste” (Walkley and Foster 1978:11). Victorian mores favored those who were clean and disdained those who were not. But the requisite level of cleanliness varied. The advent of mass production of undergarments in the 1870s brought about a practice of changing these garments weekly, coinciding with the new practice of weekly washing (Doyle 1999:39). Since clothing purchases consumed a significant portion of a household’s budget—even with the alternative choices of second-hand clothing and hand-me-downs—clothing maintenance was a constant part of a family’s housework. Items related to cleaning clothes therefore constitute a small, but regular presence in most Bay Area archaeological features.

Clothes seen by the public were worn over layers of undergarments, so the body never directly touched and dirtied most elements of clothing. The exceptions, such as collars and cuffs, often detached for easier cleaning and replacement. This practice limited soiling from the inside, but not from the noxious air and dirty streets outside, or the smoke and fumes from coal-burning stoves and heaters in the home. Keeping an eye on the condition of clothes was a daily task for most of the women of West Approach households. Clothes were inspected before being hung on pegs, laid on shelves or in drawers, or hung over one of the various innovative clothes hangers of the day (Deen 2004; Des Plaines 2005). Outergarments, dresses, and trousers were daily checked for mud, dirt, and other spots. Wool and silks could be brushed clean, especially at the hemline, which was most subject to soiling. Rain also took its toll on these clothes: woolen clothes lost their shape and sagged when wet, and silk became spotted from each rain drop.

Cotton shirts and undergarments required washing to maintain their white color and freshness. If clothes were not sent out to a washerwoman, then the process of washing at home was time-consuming and laborious. Most women considered this one of the worst household tasks and so it was done as infrequently as possible (Tarrant 1986:45–46). Cotton clothes would be boiled, bleached, and starched in the kitchen. Dressed in old clothes and an apron, women would start by boiling large amounts of water. While water was heating, a bar of soap was cut up, creating soap flecks that would dissolve in the tub of boiling water; others might choose to purchase laundry soap powder (Doyle 1999:39–40; Draznin 2001:53). Next the clothes were soaked, sometimes overnight, and then scrubbed before boiling. Washboards, like the possible one from Privy 808 at 120 Silver, were used to scrub dirty clothes. The last tub of rinse water might contain bleach, vinegar, or—as eight households at West Approach used—bluing balls to ensure whiteness. Once washed and rinsed, everything was...
wring clean, either by hand or through a wring device. These clothes were boiled, bleached, and scrubbed to oblivion.

More fragile garments, like cotton dresses, were washed separately and with more care. These clothes might have been hung outside on a clothesline using some of the 42 wooden clothespins recovered from six West Approach features; more often, they were hung inside over a dry rack. The indoor method was a common practice during the rainy winter months, but it was also used to prevent the dirty city air from soiling the clean clothes. Once clean and dry, then the task of ironing this mountain of clothes began. Two West Approach features contained an iron, while a third contained four. All but one, are sadirons, with “sad” referring to the solid portion of the iron that flattened the clothes from its weight, along with the heat. These four irons attest to the countless hours spent lifting and pressing the hot heavy implements to create a polished, smooth appearance for the 1870s William and Catherine Cadigan and Martin and Mary Fuchs families.

Spots were cleaned as soon as they were noticed. Each household likely had its own arsenal of proven cleaners, but here are some of the common ones (Doyle 1999:12; Walkley and Foster 1978:32–38). Rubbing a cut raw potato on black clothes would remove dirt, whereas stale bread was used for surface grease spots. Gin and other cheap alcohol, such as vodka, were used as cleaning fluid for fats and oils, and acid-based stains, like body oils and perspiration. Diluted liquid ammonia was used in the same way. Turpentine cleaned velvet. None of the more dangerous solutions, including Oil of Vitriol (mainly sulfuric acid) or Spirits of Salt (hydrochloric acid) for rust spots and for early dry cleaning, were found in the West Approach features.

If these efforts were not successful, alternatives were considered. Dresses could be paired with strategically placed jewelry, accessories, or trim. Clothes could be dyed a darker color to make the spot less noticeable. The other main reason for dying clothes was as an inexpensive alternative to buying mourning clothes. One dye bottle from the Boston company of Howe and Stevens was recovered from Well 6, the mid-1880s Dent or Hannan household at 12 Perry Street.

While shoes and boots could be polished and brushed to keep up their looks, footwear and stockings were far less important to maintain than gloves or other more visible accessories. Only 1 bottle of shoe polish—a Miller, Frank and Son item thrown into Privy 1600 at 207–209 Perry Street during the 1880s—was recovered on this project, in contrast to the 22 bottles recovered from 13 features for the Cypress Project in West Oakland. Hollow, white glass darning eggs for mending socks and stockings were common; a total of six were identified for the West Approach project, while many more were found across the bay on the Cypress Project.

These interminable chores were all part of the behind-the-scenes effort to keep up a presentable facade. Home laundry was time-consuming, exhausting, and necessary for most West Approach women to maintain their own appearance and that of their family.
careful planning. Meals had to be filling. The lodgers, all had hefty appetites, grubby clothes to wash and torn ones to mend, socks with holes to darn, and beds with grimy sheets to change. Their meals left stacks of dirty dishes plus pots and pans to scrub. Two years later, Anne ran off and married a young Italian boy; Mary died single two years later. The McEvoy women were not long-lived, yet there is nothing in the food remains, or in the food-consumption vessels from 1868 that suggests a less nutritious life style from their neighbors, although their eating patterns were slightly different: more rabbit, more chicken, and more wildfowl. The Irish families, as a whole, did not eat as high on the hog as other families did—that is, if butchers’ complaints were based on reality and it was truly hard to “find customers for the coarser cuts of meat” (Brooks 1868:466). But then, neither did the Jewish families in this sample.

**POINT OF ORIGIN: EUROPE’S JEWISH COMMUNITIES**

**ASHKENAZIM IMMIGRANTS (HANNAH AARON AND LENA STRAUSS)**

There were five Jewish families living in four households in the study group; four were Ashkenazim, while the Martins (originally Martinez) were Sephardic Jews. We can picture what they might have looked like from an 1896 description in “The American Jewess in San Francisco” provided by Rebecca Gradwohl, “always well dressed, sometimes a little dashing in her apparel; with dusky flashing eyes, brilliant cheeks, and a figure that moves along with the swinging motion that indicates perfect health” (Gradwohl 1896:10). Inexplicably, these families were more visible in the documents than the Irish families. Three stood out: the Strauss, Aaron, and Martin families. There are distinct differences between the assemblages of the two Ashkenazi women when compared to the McIver/Martin deposit. Lena Strauss and Hannah Aaron were 20 to 30 years older than Hannah Martin. They were of a different generation and had grown up a world apart. Age/generational differences, point of origin, and the distinctive character of Sephardic foodways are tentative explanations for the contrast in the assemblages. Another difference is the degree of anti-Semitic persecution each encountered in their homelands.

In Charlene Aker’s introduction to the 1996 edition of Harriet Levy’s reminiscences, she notes the difference between German Jew and Polish Jew: “Highly assimilated German Jews considered themselves intellectually and culturally superior to Polish Jews who clung to the traditional Jewish culture of Eastern Europe” (Levy 1996:ix). A rigid social stratification characterized these two factions of the Jewish community, although occasionally a Polish Jewish girl was fortunate enough to marry a man from the German sector. This was more frequent within the Gold Rush camps and boomtowns, when men outnumbered women to a great degree, than it became later in the century. There were further distinctions as Harriet Levy noted; ashmen and butchers held a lower rank within the order of “Baiern” or Bavarian Jews and within the Polish communities as well based solely on their occupation (1996:151). The Jewish homes and life that Levy describes were rooted in communities north of Market Street whereas Lena Strauss and Hannah Aaron lived far south of this dividing line. Among the former enclave, “variation was perversity” and everyone strove to behave appropriately in Levy’s “starched society” (1996:vii). Whether this characterized the street where the Aarons and Strausses lived almost side by side isn’t known. But, one would be willing to bet families in both neighborhoods took advantage of their bay windows to watch everything that took place on their street. They offered unbroken communication and allowed all members of a family to gather gossip and report news within the home (Levy 1996:1–4).
Lena Strauss (Privy 849) came from Germany, Hannah Aaron (Privy 814) from Poznan. One lived at 131 Perry; the other at 115 Perry. The Widow Moynihan lived near door to Hannah Aaron; the Irish Dolans were next door to Lena Strauss and her Ackerman nieces and nephews. The block was ethnically diverse. Perry Street was packed with tiny two-story houses, usually duplexes, four- to five-foot deep front yards, and small back yards, which families soon filled with one and two story additions that either enlarged their living space or provided rental income—more often the later based on census records. A separate building directly behind the Aaron residence was reached through a side alley running beside the house; its occupants at the time the Aarons lived on the lot are unknown. Lena Strauss's home was approximately the same size as Hannah's, but two families resided within it. As on the Aaron property, a separate structure occupied a goodly share of the back lot along with a corner privy. The Strauss family moved to Larkin Street in a neighborhood close to Harriet Levy's home at 920 O'Farrell—an area described by Benjamin Levy as possessing prestige and a comfortable closeness to the commercial activity on Van Ness, a neighborhood where friends and acquaintances in the Jewish community also lived (Levy 1996:1). Hannah Aaron went to live with her daughter and prosperous son-in-law, Wolf Levy, in Yolo County.

In their assemblages, toys were few; the debitage from sewing was sparse; the china was well made, yet plain, simple, and sparsely present. Their artifacts indicate they wore perfume and used cold cream to soften their skin. There were few articles of clothing represented, but remnants of silk dresses were found. Mary Wills wrote that everyone in San Francisco dressed gaily (1889:103); there was no reason for these two women not to wear fine garments at appropriate times and every reason to do so; clothing was a coded, visual message telegraphing that they too were part of the city's culture and busy assimilating into American society (Heinze 1990:90). This is not to say they did not also behave in old-fashioned ways, especially in the kitchen. The two deposits differ primarily in the artifacts associated with liquor, but not overwhelmingly so. Traditionally, Jewish families spent less money on drink or in saloons (Heinze 1990).

There is every indication of frugality. Frugality, of course, was a tenet of the early Jewish experience in America, spartan living a virtue. First-generation families had less money to spare and were also less receptive to culture change, especially inside the home (Hyman 1995). Their material life “was nearly medieval” (Heinze 1990:33), which translates to minimal household goods, bare essentials, making do. The next generation and those who immigrated later (e.g., Wolf Samuel, Hannah Martin, the Belasco children) were more amenable to change: “I have shifted my mode of living more in fifty years than my ancestors did in a thousand” wrote Louis Borgenicht (quoted in Heinze 1990:33.). From their assemblages, there is little indication that either the Strauss or the Aaron families responded to California’s abundance by substantially acquiring household goods. Perhaps if one could see inside their homes, there would be more indication of material possessions. French visitor Daniel Levy, in 1858, described Jewish life in San Francisco as charming, serene, composed of “young and happy households living in affluence.” He stressed that their homes “contained all the conditions necessary for comfort and even luxury” (Kahn 2002:411; Rosenbaum 2000: 40–41). The question is whether he spoke for a few or had made careful observation of many.

With the Aaron family, there is every indication that the second generation succeeded greatly and multiplied. A San Francisco writer, Emma Wolff drew on local knowledge to describe the city’s typical Jewish mother, who “sank her life interest in family. . . . Her resources were her daughters. Her dominant ambition was to husband her resources” (1896:279). She did so through arranging successful marriages, a venture wherein Hannah Aaron excelled. None of
South of Market: Historical Archaeology of 3 San Francisco Neighborhoods

The Marsh sisters in Louisa May Alcott’s 1868 novel *Little Women* turned to embroidery as a welcome diversion from the constant chores involving sewing and knitting. At that time, the trend in such needlework was based on the German artistic expression, now called Biedermeier, which presented romanticized images of middle-class life (Vincent 1988). Coupled with the Victorian focus on families, idyllic images of families engaged in various tasks were printed onto paper or canvases for women to create needlework; the results were functional items such as bookmarks, pincushions, suspenders, and slippers, as well as decorative hangings for the walls of their homes. Small pieces were frequently given as tokens of affection to special friends and family members. A type of canvas work is called Berlin wool work, with different colors of fine wool stitched using the same basic stitch; the result was the production of very durable pieces of embroidery that could be used as furniture covers, cushions, and bags. This widespread style stands in contrast to the earlier focus on silk embroidery, whose high cost had limited it to only the wealthy.

In the late 1860s, the next wool-needlework trend was even more popular, sweeping into American homes in the form of written mottoes, sometimes coupled with cross-stitched quaint houses or stylized flowers. Among the first of these phrases was “Home Sweet Home.” These simply stitched mottoes were hung above a door or on the walls of less formal rooms. This creative outlet reinforced important moral and social values, while mottoes were easier to execute than Berlin wool work. For the first time, American companies produced the printed backings, significantly dropping the initial cost. Some were available in stores for only a penny, or they were packaged as incentives to subscribe to particular magazines. These remained extremely popular through the 1870s, when the mottoes were moved into workrooms and kitchens. The trend’s popularity and resulting demise is summed up in the 1884 decorating manual, *How to Make Home Happy: A Housekeeper’s Handbook*: “If mottos are used on dining room walls, which is by no means to be advised, do seek one different from ‘Eat, Drink, and Be Merry,’ and other conventional platitudes which are so common in the cheap boarding-houses” (cited by Vincent 1988:81). By the mid-1870s, decorative needlework, once the domain of the affluent, was now practiced by middle-class women and even some working-class women, who had more time to spend with this leisure activity since they no longer needed to hand sew everything for the family.

The craft-oriented needlework in the West Approach collection came primarily from Well 6. A chain stitch of fine-quality brown wool was likely part of a piece of needlework. Another piece of similar quality wool yarn of a different color may have been paired with it. The needlework could have been used on clothing or for decorating some household item. Mary Hannan is the most likely creator. This feature also contained a ball of yarn. Fragments of uncrimped, good-quality wool yarn were retrieved from the Donnelly and...
them, however, were from the Baiern who, according to Harriet Levy’s mother, never “marries a Pole unless he is krüm or lahm or strum [crooked or lamb or dumb]” (Levy 1996:152–153). Still, Hannah had more than a dozen grandchildren at her death, all of them living in prosperous upwardly mobile homes within the Russian/Polish Jewish community. Since mothers acquired prestige with each advantageous betrothal, Hannah had done well.

Lena Strauss, however, continued to live with her single sons, single daughters, and their single cousins. Among the full set of cousins (11 individuals), only 1 daughter and 3 sons were wed. For whatever reason, marriage in this family was not something its women chose. In this they went against the norm despite an urgent demand among the predominantly male members of the Jewish community for Jewish wives. The women in the Ackerman/Strauss household who remained single did so out of choice, which was unusual—both that they were permitted to do so and wished to do so. Articles in the American Jewess, however, indicate that other women held similar positions: “[I] would be quite content to go husbandless if only Public and Maternal Opinion had not set up a contrary decree,” Emma Wolff wrote in “One-eye, Two-eye, Three-eye.” “It matters not how you marry, but marry. . . . oh, for that glorious independence day when spinsterhood will be honored . . . meanwhile there is the placard, ‘Not wanted,’ which Public Opinion stamps upon the front of every woman who had not achieved matrimony” (Wolff 1896:281).
Lena Strauss

Lena Strauss left Bavaria as a teenager, leaving behind a Yiddish culture in which social and economic conditions were rapidly deteriorating. Perhaps she was already married to Bernard Strauss. Perhaps not. State law mandated a listing of all Jewish households in every Bavarian community. One had to be on the list (the *Matrikel*) to set up a household, yet could only be placed on the list if another household was taken off (through death or outward migration). Jewish newspapers noted that marriage was virtually impossible (Diner 1995:15–16, Diner and Benderly 2002:73); one option was to emigrate as a newlywed couple or as a prospective bride for a Jewish man living in America.

The family settled in a Gold Rush town in the Sierra Nevada by 1854. How did they get to this remote spot? Eastern European merchants, tradesmen, and peddlers arrived in California by 1849 backed by funds from home and access to overseas supplies. Accustomed to trade, procurement, and distribution at small scales and large, they had the skills to set up supply networks in outlying regions (Kahn 2003:29). Bernard, arriving in 1850, was among them, one of various Strauss men who were working in and around the gold-mining towns, and in market-supply nodes of Sacramento or San Francisco. In 1860 Bernard sold goods and food in Angels Camp, a boom town jammed with miners working surface gold. There Lena gave birth to Ida. Arthur was born two years later. On one side their neighbor was a young English blacksmith, on the other an Italian merchant, Joseph Perano, with his 14-year-old wife. The Peranos had kin folk living nearby. While the Italian families lived in better dwellings, valued at 7 to 20 times that of the Strausses’ home, Bernard had more money ($4,000 in personal estate, or $674,680.00 in today’s currency). The value of the Strauss home was not based on old age, for a catastrophic fire swept the town in 1855, burning almost all buildings. Imagine it as insubstantial and temporary.

Lena undoubtedly helped her husband in his store. The cash on hand testifies that he was doing well. Still, the family had to travel 20 miles to attend a synagogue only open during High Holy Days (Kaufman 2003:41). Crowded with people of different nationalities, with men of good repute and bad, a few women of none, Angels Camp was a colorful place to live, but not a peaceful one. Life was hard on women. In “Brown of Calaveras,” Bret Harte put words in the mouth of one character that might have entered Bernard’s mind: “sell out all you’ve got, take your wife with you, and quit the country. It ain’t no place for you, nor her. Tell her she must go; make her go, if she won’t” (Harte 1885:n.p.).

Family life in Angels Camp could not have been more unlike Lena’s childhood home. The ideology of family solidarity was pervasive in central Europe, where Jewish people, despite living in different countries, shared cultural traditions, expectations, options, and values. According to Kaplan, husbands sought self-denial and thrift from wives. Long-term savings—for a daughter’s dowry, a son’s education—were expected and maintained. Major holidays meant family reunions and traditional meals. Entertainment took place within the family or on family outings among family members. Ties within families were intimate, and this domestic closeness was seen as a reward in itself (Kaplan 1991:76–86). Life in a mining camp allowed little time for family virtues; children saw rough, raw living among all social classes. The number of Jewish residents was minimal. Exposure to *goyim* (non-Jews) and their differing cultural beliefs was constant. The cultural pluralism, in fact, may have made it overwhelming for some. As mines played out, the Strausses had fewer customers and, like many, they resettled in the city with its synagogues and larger Jewish population.
The analysis of dietary remains from the West Approach Project produced dozens of examples of butcher cut refits. The refits fall into three distinct categories. The first, and most common, are consecutive steak cuts from a single element (i.e., humerus, femur, sacrum, or scapula) or articulating elements (i.e., pelvic acetabulum and proximal femur). When reassembled, the steaks (usually of very similar thickness) have corresponding and matching butcher cut marks (usually handsaw marks) that allow reconstruction of that portion of the element. Some of the refits that fall into this category comprise as many as three or four consecutive steaks.

The second most common type of butcher cut refit is in the form of roasts. By their nature, roasts usually are a larger cut of meat and can involve several consecutive articulating elements. The most frequent example of this cut is a reconstructed leg of mutton (femur and tibia, sometimes including part of the innominate and patella), a ham (innominate, femur, tibia, and fibula), or a loin roast of several lumbar vertebrae that articulate. In most cases, these bones exhibit numerous parallel knife scores, confirming the style of preparation and serving.

The final type of reconstructed meat cut is the soup bone, of which there are two varieties. One type can be identified when conjoining and articulating elements are reassembled to form a complete joint. A common example of this type is the distal humerus, the proximal radius and ulna, or consecutive cervical vertebrae. Another form of soup bone refit occurs when an element or group of elements appropriate for a soup or stew has been split, shattered, or disarticulated. Some recurrent examples of these soup bones would be an astragalus, calcaneus, and centrale; a shattered or split tibia, sometimes with articulating split distal femur; a distal humerus; or pig skulls. The tool of choice for this type of meat reduction is most frequently the ax/cleaver.

Seven features from the project have identified butcher cut refits (see table). Four features from Block 10 and three from Block 4 fall into this category. Three of the features (801, 1304, and 1305) have minimal numbers of refits. The other four features have quantities that are quite significant (from 16 to 31 each), and when compared to the paucity...
of this evidence for the dozens of other collections studied, the emphasis appears to be more than just a coincidence. These come from only two of the six blocks studied.

Evidence of this phenomenon may speak to several different topics. One of these is the method of disposal and/or deposition. Another topic questions whether the presence of these refits is an artifact of consumerism, home-butchering, or the methods of a particular butcher or butcher shop. Lastly, does the presence or quantity of refits appear to have any correlation to the feature’s overall character in terms of meat cost?

To address the first topic, the faunal material has to be seen as just another artifact category in the catalog. When the other artifact types, such as bottles and tableware, are observed as whole or large fragments that represent a relatively low minimum number of items (MNI), one can envision a pattern of gradual breakage and disposal over a relatively long period. In contrast, the presence of these refits—along with a large number of bones from individual birds, fish, and pets—suggests fast, all-encompassing disposal and fill events with relatively little post-depositional disturbance.

The second question is perhaps the most difficult one, but there are a few likely scenarios that can be considered. It is certainly possible that the individual purchasing the meat may have had particular requests. The consumer could order a larger piece of meat to be reduced for steaks of a specific quality or thickness, or have a chunk of meat split up for the soup/stew that was going to be prepared.

There could also be a matter of convenience involving butcher-shop density. The consumer may have timed his or her visit to the meat market first thing in the morning, when the steaks or soup bones were being produced by the butcher and were still relatively intact. It is interesting to

<table>
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<th>Block</th>
<th>Feature</th>
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<th>Association</th>
<th>TPQ</th>
<th>NISP*</th>
<th>Market Price</th>
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<td>Soup bone</td>
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<td>801/802</td>
<td>142 Silver</td>
<td>Irish</td>
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<td>114 Silver</td>
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*NISP* = number of identified specimens
In San Francisco by 1870, the family’s wealth had decreased considerably; they lived at 115 Perry Street in a duplex shared with the six Ackerman orphans and Henry Strauss—a retired butcher like Bernard—plus David Ackerman, also a butcher. Almost none of the Strauss men recorded on the 1860 census, including three other butchers, could be found on later California censuses. If they were relatives, they had come and gone. Yet the presence of collateral relatives among both the Ackermans and Strausses indicates that the two families immigrated in a chain-linked fashion similar to other European Jews, both supporting and drawing on a tight-knit set of kin. Lena enjoyed the company of her nieces and nephews, who mixed easily with her own children. It was sometimes confusing to have her son Arthur and her nephew, Arthur/Adolph, both born in 1859, her Ida (1857) and her niece, Ada (1855), living under one roof. The two Edwards, at least, were seven years apart. In Ashkenazi tradition, both she and her brother Joseph had named their offspring for friends or relatives who had passed away, not anticipating that their two families eventually would form one very crowded household.

The bitter words of another immigrant (not Jewish) shed some light on why the Strausses left Germany: “It was my desire to bring my children . . . to a place where they could find work and bread, as long as they would work hard and be frugal,” wrote Michael Friedrich Radke, “where each of them could prepare for a happy and calm future” (1848:n.p.). Increasing harassment of Jews throughout Germany shed doubt on the future; whole communities from Bavaria, Bernard’s home principality, migrated to America (Toll 1978:9). Radke used a graphic metaphor to spell out how the lower ranks were treated: “In Germany the poor man compared to the rich man is like a despised creature, or like a scarcely noticed creeping worm, who must slither and creep along

note that, when the locations of retail butchers listed in the 1879 San Francisco City Directory were mapped, Blocks 4 and 10 each had a large number of butcher shops within a one-block area.

The topic of home-butchering is not easily addressed. Only the Privy 1305 collection had a number of indicators that suggest residents at this address might have been purchasing larger cuts of meat at a lower cost, then reducing the meat themselves. Among this evidence is the presence of a number of elements from the forequarter of a veal cow. Also contributing to the argument are a reconstructed pig skull, with axe to break marks, an amateurishly reduced beef thoracic vertebra, and other less than consistent butcher marks.

Finally, do these data have any impact on the percentage of meat weight by market price? While the current sample size of butcher cut refits is fairly small, some trends are evident that may start the dialogue on this topic until other data sets become available. For example, Privy 1326 had the highest proportion of soup bone refits to steak cuts that contributed to a character of moderate to low cost. In addition three of the four large samples (Privies 810 and 851 and Well 853) ranked at the high end of the spectrum for quality and cost of meat consumed. The residents associated with these features may have had the financial means, and a demanding concern for quality, to make these kinds of choices. Also, the counts of roasts (especially as hams and leg of mutton, both of which are expensive cuts of meat) and steaks have an obvious impact on cost analysis.

Tens of thousands of bones were examined from dozens of features in order to arrive at the examples detailed here. It is quite arduous to identify and record cut refit examples during analysis. It takes a patient, detail-oriented eye, as well as a very methodical processing of the faunal material. Like elements and conjoining elements must be processed and observed at the same time so that mates and mends can be noted. Matching butcher marks must also be confirmed, and if elements are found to articulate, the articular surfaces have to fit and match exactly. In turn, firm historic-association data are key. The interpretation of these results and the conclusions based on the evidence are not definitive, but the discussion and examples are certainly relevant and interesting.
in the dust in order not to be stepped on to death” (1848:n.p.). The Aarons experienced this and more in their home near Poznan.

The Aarons, Strausses, and Ackermans could not return to their homeland; few of their fellow exiles carried with them fond memories of a mother country. Heinze (1990:106) writes that many Jewish women felt great nostalgia for the countryside and rural homes of their youth, hanging paintings of rustic farms in their homes as reminders. They also shared memories of similar ways of preparing food (e.g., De Silva 1996) and of rare foods. But, neither had ever seen grapes, cherries, pears, or strawberries in December markets, or the “reckless wealth of melons, grapes, oranges, and undried figs” offered in California’s fruit stalls (Brooks 1868:468; Elliott 1868:564). Their cooking was defined by Ashkenazi traditions, by the stipulations of Kashrut, by the cycle of Jewish holidays, and individual family celebrations (i.e., circumcision, bar mitzvah, burial, and weddings). Its origins lay in the cold European environment, one that created a “world of chicken fat, onion and garlic, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, freshwater fish, especially carp, and salt herring” (Roden 1996:16). The names of their foods are familiar ones: lox, bagels, latkes, kugel, matzo balls, goulash, gefilte fish, noodle soup, golden yotch (or chicken soup), and cheesecake. Most leave no trace in the ground.

Lamb or mutton was not forbidden, but it was expensive and hard to find in eastern Europe and hence unimportant in Ashkenazi cuisine. The Heimsche Kitchen Cookbook (2002), compiled by the Ladies Auxiliary of Nitra, and A Taste of the Past (Koerner 2004), as well as The Book of Jewish Food (Roden 1996:41–210) have no recipes for lamb or mutton. Thus it is unsurprising to see that sheep meat comprises such a modest percentage of the faunal remains from the Strauss/Ackerman assemblage (Table 4.5). Mutton was, however, so commonly served in 19th-century California that it must have been both cheap and readily available. David Phillips wrote in an 1876 letter, “Mutton in California is of universal use. It is either roast mutton, broiled mutton, fried mutton, boiled mutton, mutton stew or stewed mutton” (1877:Letter XII). No frugal housewife could avoid its use.

Faunal experts tell us that the family did not eat roasts, which is puzzling; but they did eat more of the better meat cuts than of the middling or lesser, more steaks than stews. With the butchers in the family and reputations on the line, Lena Strauss could be sure of getting the best pickled tongue, the tenderest steaks, the best prime rib, and the most flavorful beef remnants for her beef stew and vegetable soup. According to Jewish cooks, she might have roasted breast of beef, brisket, deckle, rolled breast, top of rib, minute roast, French roast, chuck roast, end steak, or rolled roast. Some of these cuts might have been unfamiliar to Christian butchers, but Lena wouldn’t have patronized them. If she needed a bit of pork, her husband or sons would buy it.

Jewish farmers maintained some of the large farms in outlying areas. The poultry they sent to market was “fine in quality and nicely prepared” (Wills 1889:102). One can be sure Lena bought the best of these. She would pick out a hen, a turkey, or duck and have it butchered by a ritual slaughterer (a shochet), who said a brief blessing as he quickly cut its throat. The bird would be hung so its blood could drain, and thoroughly koshered by additional steps. One of her girls would pluck it, clean it thoroughly, salt it to drain out the blood, and soak it. The next step was washing off the salt and a thorough rinsing, three rinses at least, ending with a final wash after which the meat was left to drain (Koerner 2004:57–58). At that point it was ready to roast or to use for soup. For soup, Lena tossed it into a pot, covered it with water, added its feet to intensify the flavor, and simmered it slowly while removing the foam. After an hour, a carrot, some celery and onion would be thrown in along with salt and pepper. Some cooks added a leek or turnip,
and others parsley. Eastern Europeans favored garlic. After several hours of slow cooking, the soup was ready to be cooled and the fat drawn off (Kann 1993:49). Without air conditioning, with open windows and an ocean breeze, the aroma of simmering chicken soup would disperse among nearby buildings. Every neighbor knew what the Strauss family was eating that day unless it was rainy and cold.

There are pig bones in the faunal assemblage as well, although it is difficult to know how the meat was cooked. Pork was a forbidden meat, yet a tiny portion in a variety of cuts (including pig’s feet) is present. The percentage of pork among the Jewish assemblages is significantly small (about 5 to 13%), but it is there nonetheless (Table 4.5). It should be noted that Rabbi Julius Eckman wrote to the Daily Herald in 1854, publicly berating a Jewish butcher for eating non-kosher meat—presumably pork, for living in a non-kosher boardinghouse, and for working on the Sabbath (Rosenbaum 2000:21).

Other faunal deposits, from Arkansas (Stewart-Abernathy 1986; Stewart-Abernathy and Ruff 1989) and New York’s tenement district (Yamin 2001:165) further testify to pork’s consumption by Jews. Roden (1996) acknowledges it was occasionally eaten, while Koerner confirms this in a description of his uncles, who bought sausages from a Christian butcher, and stored them in an outbuilding their mother would not enter (Koerner 2004:60, 76).

Hannah Aaron

This Jewish woman grew up either in a rural household or an urban ghetto; a matchmaker or her father arranged her marriage. Hannah and Isaac immigrated the same year as Lena’s husband, Bernard—it is not clear whether from Russian-controlled areas of Poland or from Prussian controlled Poznan. According to the U.S. Census, Hannah’s parents never taught her to read and write. She would have grown up speaking Yiddish in a closed community fenced in by tradition. Presumably, Hannah’s mother kept a kosher kitchen. This meant that she kept meat and dairy separate, never cooked them simultaneously on the stove, used two sets of dishes for each, and carefully cleaned the kitchen counter so that no contamination could occur (Koerner 2004:76). She cooked the best meal of the week for Friday night, when the family began the Sabbath. Other weekly meals were simpler.

Across Poland, women’s lives were circumscribed by their family networks and the larger community; they were dependent not pro-active, although some Jewish women became skilled bookkeepers and shop assistants. By and large, their work fell within a labor category that was unrecognized (shop work) and, in some cases, paid but hidden (washing, sewing, or catering done within the home; Kaplan 1991). They were enculturated to value thrift and industriousness, to be good mothers. Many families lived in wattle-and-daub homes with earthen floors. Kitchen stoves and chimneys did not appear until the second half of the 19th century. Women were adept

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assemblage</th>
<th>Beef</th>
<th>Mutton</th>
<th>Pork</th>
<th>Fowl</th>
<th>Rabbit</th>
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<tr>
<td>McIver/Martin</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strauss/Ackerman</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>63</td>
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In the 1880s household of Albert and Katie Rowe, shoes were rarely thrown out, especially if they belonged to either of the couple’s two daughters or son, or to Albert’s sister and her daughter (U.S. Census 1880). This all changed after Katie died and the house was given a thorough cleaning some time before Albert married his second wife in 1888. Among the items thrown into Well 8 at 16 (37) Perry were various sizes of infants’ and children’s footwear. Twelve are “booties,” or shoes from infants and toddlers. Among the older children’s and boys’ footwear are wooden-pegged shoes and a pull-on boot. This boot style was popular for a long time, but the type of machine construction is typical of that used from the 1850s to 1870s. All but one are cracked and worn. One of these worn soles bears a stamped portion of a maker’s mark. It probably was a circle or an oval, with the only two legible letters and a symbol, “S&D,” stamped into the arch; this company could not be further identified.

The bulk of the youngster’s footwear consists of turned soles from shoes, or what we now call “booties.” Here, “turned footwear” refers to a technique in which uppers and lowers are machine-sewn together inside-out, then reversed, or turned back, so that the sewing is protected inside. This technique is most often used on infant shoes or indoor shoes and slippers. Manufactured for economy and comfort, and not durability, none of the turned footwear retained any signs of wear. These tiny shoes were probably not worn very long before the child outgrew them. What remains are portions of similarly stamped maker’s marks on three different pairs ranging in size from an Infant’s 1 to a Toddler’s 2-1/2. Most of the mark can be discerned: “A. Seiber . . .” above a line, with “PHILADA” underneath.

The shoe was likely manufactured by Anthony Seiberlich, who was born in Baden (now southwestern Germany). While not listed in the 1840 U.S. Census, the next (U.S. Census 1850: Philadelphia District, page 64) places him and his family in Pennsylvania by 1842, when his eldest son was born. The bootmaker and his wife had five children, while five young women ages 14 to 22 listed with the family may have been their domestic help, lodgers, or, more likely, employees who lived with the family while hand-sewing footwear in their shop. In 1860 the successful 42-year-old had $10,000 in real estate and $30,000 in personal worth. His French-born wife, Victoria, was two years younger (U.S. Census 1860: Philadelphia, Ward 2, page 150). They had nine children spaced two years apart, beginning with the eldest: Anthony, age 20, who worked as a clerk; John, who also worked as a clerk; followed by Frank, Augustus, Anna, Thomas, Edward, Benedict, and Powell.
By 1870 the 28-year-old Francis Seiberlich (aka Frank) lived in San Francisco with his Pennsylvania-born wife, Mary, and their 1-year-old daughter, Mary, who had been born in California (U.S. Census 1870: San Francisco, Ward 8, page 203). Like his father, Francis was successful, working as a wholesale boot and shoemaker with $7,000 in real estate and an additional $30,000 in personal assets. In either 1870 or 1871, a son was born in California. The Seiberlichs' stay in California was short, possibly only a year or two according to the birthplaces of their younger children (U.S. Census 1880: Philadelphia, ED 58, page 6). The family returned to Pennsylvania by 1875, where three more of their children were born. Five years later, Francis Seiberlich was still manufacturing shoes, probably in the company his father built. The census also documented that he had rheumatism.

By 1890 in Philadelphia, the shoe firm of Louis H. Seiberlich & Frederick Arnold operated at 20 S 4th Street, and Francis X. and Thomas W. sold shoes under the company name of F.X. & T.W. Seiberlich at 413 Dillwyn (James Gopsill’s Sons 1890). While Francis X. was living in Philadelphia, Thomas W. lived and worked in San Francisco; in San Francisco, however, the company’s name was A. Seiberlich’s Sons, probably building on their father’s reputation (San Francisco City Directory 1889–1891). Their relation Benedict J. also worked in the San Francisco area as their traveling salesman. The family tradition continued with two other Seiberlichs, Louis and Joseph F., making shoes in San Francisco at this time, each for a different company, while the two lived at the same address. The Philadelphia–San Francisco connection lasted several decades and is reflected in the tiny, saved infant shoes in the Rowe family collection.

at hearth and fireside cooking. Material possessions were few; prized plates were displayed on cupboard shelves; cooking utensils were earthenware vessels or iron pots (Knothe 1997).

Life was especially difficult in Poland’s Jewish communities under Russian control. Czar Nicholas I, who ruled during Hannah’s childhood, sought the annihilation of Jewish citizens and encouraged anti-Semitism. His tactics—designed to coerce assimilation, to kill or displace the population—were harsh. Families were forced out of towns and villages, except in agricultural areas of southern Russia or the pale of settlement (Russian Poland), and persecuted wherever they lived. Jewish boys (by 12, but sometimes at age 8 or 9) were conscripted into the Russian military and made to serve 25 years (Sachar 1965:309–315). Elite families were able to purchase dispensations for their sons.

By the mid-1840s, a ban on men’s traditional hair styles and clothing was in place. Assimilation was emphasized in new schools that Jewish families were forced to support. Shortly afterward, Jews learned they were to be classed as either useful (merchants, craftsmen, and agriculturalists) or not useful (small tradesmen, hucksters, and poorer families). This order was to become law in 1851 (Eisenbach 1991; Sinkoff 2004). Given both systematic persecution and political tension, Hannah’s early years of married life had to have been filled with concern for the future. Hannah gave birth to Joseph (1846) and then to Pauline (1849). The Aarons left before the 1851 order (above) began. Certainly worries over increasing ethnic tension, economic discrimination, their son’s future, and falling under the ‘not useful’ category would have been among their motives. If, however, they lived near Poznan then radical restructuring or revolt might have been the impetus to move. It is hard to tell since the family reported both Russia and Poznan as their origin on different documents.

The situation in Prussian areas was different, but there were still good reasons to leave, especially for those who rose up against the Hohenzollern king in 1848. While some Jews sided with the Polish elite and others helped organize and fought with the Germans, it mattered little in the end. There was dissension in the Jewish communities, particularly among the intelligentsia,
and 1848 saw the start of sustained outward migration. This coincides with the Aarons’ departure. A number of these men and women gathered eventually in San Francisco, where they formed an exile community that included Rabbi Elkan Cohn, whom Rosenbaum (2000:44) believes fought in the rebellion.

When Isaac and Hannah left, they were among a small number of emigrants (approximately 6,000 Polish Jews between 1830 and 1875) consisting primarily of intellectuals and political exiles, although the volume of Polish and Russian emigration grew rapidly thereafter (Zubrzycki 1979:61–62). Why ever and however they went, the passage was long and they took it knowing they could not return. Isaac and Hannah arrived in New York with an infant and a young boy who needed Hebrew schooling. Sarah was born in 1853, followed in another three years by Amelia. The Aarons now had one son and three daughters. Marx once wrote that Polish Jews “multiply like lice,” (quoted in Kaplan 1991: 44), but the family size and spacing between births suggest that Hannah used some form of birth control. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish faith did not prohibit family planning (Kaplan 1991:43–45).

Isaac struggled to make money and earned less than he wished. Further, living conditions in New York were deplorable. Somehow the Aarons financed the move to California, and once in San Francisco, Isaac peddled cigars. Peddling was a classic Jewish occupation in eastern Europe, one many immigrants took up in New York. A generation later, peddling for Hannah's sons-in-law, was a first step towards prosperity, a path that included clerking, peddling from wagons across rural California, purchasing small stores, networking between city and country. But they began at an early age utilizing family networks and a broader, supportive ethnic community. Isaac and Hannah were among the very first wave of eastern European migrants when they arrived in California, and without a strong support network. Hannah came from a region where a number of wives were active participants in their husband's commerce; it is likely she took up a similar role in San Francisco.

In Hannah's mind, education was important; all her children attended school well into their teens despite the early death of their father. The youngest daughter, Amelia, worked at the Eighth Street Grammar School before she married Alexander Rummelsberg, a merchant from Poznan. Three of Hannah's children and possibly a fourth married Polish Jews—a hint that the family's social networks were enmeshed in the exile community. Hannah's sons-in-law became highly successful merchants in the rich farming counties of Yolo and Colusa.

This family was exceedingly frugal, but they were not poor. In 1860 Isaac had $350 in personal property ($55,020). In 1870, 1 to 2 years after his death, Hannah owned their home on Perry Street appraised at $6,000 for taxes ($943,200.00) and had $1,000 in personal property ($157,200). Son Joseph had an additional $1,500 ($235,800), despite being only 23. Often an investment in real estate makes a family wealthy on paper, yet without much cash on hand for day-to-day living. This was not so with this family whose total wealth was almost three times the average for men in the Northwest (Soltow 1979: Table 3.5). However, this affluence is not reflected in their artifact assemblage. It does tell us, however, how they accumulated it, namely by being parsimonious. The family was thrifty in their purchases. But, consider Hannah's background. Think of her growing up without a kitchen stove living in very modest housing. Think of her mother as a woman who used every bit of food that came into the house, using meat for seasoning more than bulk, and conserving wherever she could. Thrift was Hannah's childhood legacy. The only frivolous artifacts in the assemblage from her home consisted of pieces of a child's ABC dish, a porcelain vase, a marble, a doll, and three pieces of a miniature tea set.
There is nothing known about the meats eaten in the Aaron household because too few bones were recovered to justify analysis. The presence of a lovely Staffordshire bowl, however, indicates that ceremony did attend certain meals. In fact, their religious beliefs dictated it. Heinze wrote that the acquisition of luxuries, particularly for dining, “sanctified oneself and one’s household” (1990:83). Jewish families in New York annually redecorated their small apartments at Passover, tossing everything they didn’t want out into the street. This was not as wasteful as it sounds, because others selected from the discards to get things they wanted or needed. The Aaron and Strauss/Ackerman assemblages contain no hints of this practice. Their assemblages also stand as counterpoints to a biased view held by many Americans that Jews “flaunted their riches” (Diner 1995:191).

While there are few signs of luxury among the Aaron and Strauss/Ackerman artifacts, the situation changes when we consider young Hannah Martin and her stepdaughter, Esther.

San Francisco’s Sephardim

The Sephardic community in San Francisco included a few families from Mexico and a larger number from London’s Anglo-Jewish neighborhoods near Whitechapel. When Spain exiled its Sephardim, many became successful merchants based in Amsterdam, who extended their reach into London once British Laws allowed Jews to enter the country. The London Anglo-Jewish community became another bridgehead in the Jewish Diaspora. They remained a small, distinct ethnic enclave until a number of Ashkenazim, drawn by the business opportunities funneled through London, sent relatives to Britain in the early 1800s. While brilliant financiers created one bridge between the Anglo-Jews and their English counterparts and physicians built another, a more unlikely bridge was forged by boxers, some of them legendary, some famous, some apparently infamous. Among all these were the Belascos, the Harts, and the Martins (i.e., Mendes/Mendoza).

Hannah Hart Martin

Hannah’s life can be teased out from a variety of documents, including census records for different families, newspapers, and a biography of a famous relative (Privy 806). Her parents, approximately the same age as her husband, Abraham Martin, belonged to an Anglo-Jewish community in London. The Harts joined Australia’s Gold Rush and grew, as five more children—including four girls—were born. Australia treated its Jewish citizens well; there was remarkably little discrimination. It is unclear why the family left. But, after 12 years they decided, whether from loneliness or economic necessity, to move to San Francisco. Other Australian-based, Anglo-Jews from London left too (e.g., the Solomon family). The flow of all migrants always moves in response to push and pull factors. For the Martins and Solomons, the pull may have been a small London-born enclave of San Francisco Sephardim. By 1870 the family rented a house next door to Chinese laundry workers in an area north of Market, a few doors down from a Mexican bootmaker. They lived in a neighborhood packed with small craftsmen and tradesmen of remarkable cultural diversity. Hannah experienced none of the persecution that Lena Strauss or Hannah Aaron endured in childhood. Unlike them, she grew up in a more cosmopolitan world and had, even if only at a distance, a much broader knowledge of cultural variation than they possessed at her age.

Abraham Martin, born ca. 1831, came to California with his wife, Fanny, and opened a grocer’s shop. She was 16 and he was 21 when they left London. If he used the route in 1852 that
his twin sister, Reina (Martin) Belasco, took in 1853, then they sailed to Central America, crossed the isthmus, and sailed north (Winter 1918:2). Fanny and Reina had sons within a year of each other. Abe and Fanny’s first son, David, was born at home in 1854. Abraham’s sister, Reina, had five more babies (two sets of twins) before 1859, when Fanny had little Hannah who died in infancy or early childhood. There were no more recorded births during the next five years as there were none between David and Hannah, although this does not rule out miscarriages or stillborn infants. Esther (1864) and Isaac (1865) entered the Martin family in quick succession. Tragically, both were deaf. Subsequent infant deaths become a litany: Charles (Isaac’s twin?), d. 1865; Honora, d. 1866; Mary L. and Rosie, d. 1868. Fanny died too after birthing the twins, while David, then age 14, ran off to Alaska before, during, or just after Hanukah (December 1868). It is hard to imagine the grief Abraham and David felt, or to understand the bewilderment and sorrow of the two deaf youngsters who no longer had a mother or an older brother nearby.

Abraham, Esther, and Isaac do not appear in any census documents for 1870 seen to date. Clearly, this widower needed a woman in his home. Single women remained a minor segment of the city’s population; eager young bachelors were everywhere and young women, or their matchmaking parents, could be choosy. There was a reluctance to intermarry. Whether Abraham went home to London to find a wife or looked elsewhere is not known, although collateral records indicate many immigrants did seek wives from Old World towns and villages. Abraham and his children reappear in texts three years later, when he married 16-year-old Hannah. It had to have been an arranged marriage for Abraham was 40, 24 years older than Hannah. He came from the same London neighborhood as her parents and was also their age. Arranged marriages were still common in the Jewish community.

Hannah tried to follow Jewish tradition and make home a retreat from the workaday world. She prepared for the Sabbath carefully. She welcomed her sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Reina and Abraham Belasco. Reina was a bright, imaginative, yet gentle woman, with shining brown eyes and a love for poetry; she doted on her son David and his passion for the theatre, a passion the whole family gradually adopted (Winter 1918:468). Her genial husband was “a modest, loveable person . . . a pleasant companion and a clever entertainer” (Winter 1918:3). Their children were handsome and talented, but, like Hannah’s stepson, many of Reina’s children were as old or older than the new bride. Her stepdaughter, Esther, drew comfort from them. As a young second wife, Hannah could not have had the same status within this close-knit, cosmopolitan family as Abraham’s first wife.

Heinze (1990:135–136) told how Jewish women gave their parlors an “air of social self-respect” through the careful display of small figurines and vases. These items conveyed their participation in a Victorian aesthetic and bespoke respectability. We find similar items among Hannah’s artifact assemblage: porcelain figures, porcelain vases, and a few of ordinary glass. San Francisco florists sold gorgeous flowers (Dowling 1998; Kaufman 1994: 162), so the vases may have been used both as containers and for display. Hannah also set as graceful a table as she was able (Heinze 1990:68–75). She had porcelain plates for marzipan deserts, almond cakes, sugar cookies, almond-honey pastries; porcelain cups for tea and porcelain demitasse cups for rich, thick coffee; and a glass compote for fruit poached in sugar syrup. There were serving platters aplenty and other serving dishes in a variety of styles and materials. Some of her lamps were plain, but more special ones had little glass tinklers.

Like Lena Strauss and Hannah Aaron, Hannah Martin would have served traditional foods on holidays or religious occasions (Figure 4.15). Like them, she also used meat for seasoning,
or in small savory Sephardic pies. Unlike them, she would have selected her spices, pickles, fruits, and vegetables from the wider, hotter array used in Sephardic homes. She was familiar with tropical fruits, thought nothing of finding strawberries or raspberries in December, and saw the availability of mushrooms as expectable. Oriental spices and curries were as common in Australian markets as Asian faces; thus Hannah may have had some knowledge of these exotic cuisines. Hannah also cooked with aromatic herbs, and prepared zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, and artichokes. Her deserts were flavored with grated orange zest, chocolate, and vanilla. Lamb, like saltwater fish, was a traditional food, cooked with a variety of fruits or nuts, sometimes stuffed with rice or mixed with eggplant. Most of the lamb her family ate was from high-priced cuts, in contrast to the less expensive beef pieces she chose. Her cooking drew from a different cuisine than that of eastern European women. Ashkenazi and Sephardic cooking styles never fused, although the Ashkenazim did ‘borrow’ recipes for sweet deserts, and fish fried in batter (Roden 1996:17). But the fact that the bones from Hannah’s kitchen were mixed with those from a Scots-Irish family makes it difficult to know precisely what she did.

It is impossible to identify which artifacts came from Hannah’s household and which from the McIvers, but the two families did not have the same socioeconomic status. The McIver home was filled with small motherless children, who constantly outgrew their shoes (over two dozen were recovered). Miss Mary, the eldest daughter, had charge of their care. She had to balance a weekly budget and make ends meet while her father, a skilled rigger, drew a good salary, but not a stupendous one. One can only hope that he appreciated all his daughter did and expressed it both verbally and tangibly.

The little figurines in the assemblage would have been an appropriate way to do so, whereas the 14 perfume bottles (Figure 4.16) speak of a different type of intimacy as does a luxurious silk-and-glass-beaded hairnet. We can more reasonably assume they were Hannah’s. Taken together with the remnants of a parasol, a fan, various fake gemstones, ornamental pins, and silk garments, the array suggests an indulgent lover, a man who wanted to please his wife or perhaps one who couldn’t. A female syringe speaks to both sexuality and birth control. Hairpins, hairbrushes, combs, and porcelain jars for cosmetics indicate someone paid attention to their appearance, whereas medical syringes, two dozen medicinal bottles, painkillers, and a urinal indicate a focus on health. The picture is fragmentary but also suggestive of a May–December union.

Were there times when Hannah Hart Martin wished Abraham's first wife was still alive? Did she sometimes wish she hadn't married so young? In many California families, girls of 16 were exploring the outer world through their jobs. But, not Hannah. In some ways her life had been better during childhood; in fact, from a 21st-century perspective, she was not much more than a child herself when she married. The next 10 years were filled with sorrow and death.
Her first daughter (b. 1872) died young, her twin daughters (b. 1872), her first son (b. 1875) died young, and her third son (b. 1883) died too. Her father passed on in 1877 at age 45. Then David, a single man of 26, came back and went into business with his father. There was trouble in the home, although its source isn’t known. Angry words were said. Abraham moved down the street to 152 Perry, and was out of town (in Alaska?) when the 1880 census was taken. He died in 1882, aged 51 years and 7 months.

Hannah spent half of her young married life pregnant, and became a widow at 28. Her mother, brothers, and sisters lived a block away (236 Perry Street), close enough to provide company and comfort. As reminders of her marriage Hannah had her daughter, Bella, and her two stepchildren. By 1900 Hannah’s mother was gone, her siblings married; she lived with Bella and her husband, Max Fleischman (Flushman), and their two daughters. Hannah and Bella were not listed on the 1920 census, and Bella’s husband had remarried.

Esther Martin

Both Hannah Aaron and Hannah Martin spent their married lives living in nuclear households (husband, wife, and children), whereas many Jewish immigrants in New York lived in households comprised of aunts, uncles, and cousins in addition to the nuclear family—small homes literally filled to the brim with family. Rooms did double duty (Heinze 1990:135). Esther Martin’s home life changed when her father died. She moved from a small household run by her stepmother to the Belasco domain—with its diachronic extension (the generations) and synchronic additions (siblings, spouses, in-laws, and oriental servants); its involvement with the theater (primarily the Alcazar), its actors and actresses, its focus on night life and the stage. Rooms here may have done double duty, too, as the Belasco sons cycled in and out, going on the road with various stage groups.
Esther’s Aunt Reina was Abraham’s twin, a charitable soul known in the city’s poor neighborhoods as the “Good Angel” (Winter 1918:469). She mothered a large and unusually eclectic family. They changed names; they anglicized names. It is sometimes difficult to be sure who was who. David occasionally went under the stage name of William Kingsley. Abraham (Jr.) appears most often as Walter, occasionally as Abraham W. His father, “Humphrey,” is listed as Abraham in city directories, censuses, probate records, and this essay.

According to family sources, Reina died in 1899 at 69; she wasn’t listed on the 1900 census. But all the other indications of a close-knit family, one which sheltered its own were there. Abraham Belasco was providing a home for 17 people: for his bachelor son and namesake, an actor; for son Edward, single and in merchandising; for son Frederick, a theatrical agent, and his actress wife, Julia; for son Henry, the Alcazar’s ticket collector, his Irish wife, and their two boys; for his daughters, Hannah and Sarah, their Jewish husbands (both in merchandising), and their children; for a niece (Esther); and for a 12-year-old Chinese servant and a German maid. His other married sons and daughters also lived in the city. The family divided their life between the theatre, mingling with the many actors and actresses who appeared on the San Francisco stage, and the world of small-scale merchandising.

Esther’s life in the Belasco home must have been very different from her early childhood and from the years she lived with her stepmother. Esther continued to live with the Belascos up to and after 1910. An aging Abraham turned control of the household over to Edward. This didn’t break apart the family’s closeness, however, since many of Edward’s siblings either lived in the same building or next door. The household added new members, including another cousin and Frederick’s 60-year-old mother-in-law. Sarah and her son continued to share a home with her father. Two Japanese servants, one a cook, waited on this complex family. But, some had moved out. Henry and his family lived next door to his brother, Solomon, and down the street from another brother, Isaac. Walter, the actor, lived with his wife and small son in their own home. Julia, the actress, and Sarah’s husband, Maurice, were gone.

As the older generation died, the younger continued to set up their homes. Esther, age 57, outlived her parents, her brothers, her half sister, stepmother, aunt and uncle, and moved to a boardinghouse. Her cousin David was famous, a well-known playwright, innovative stage manager, and Broadway producer. The other Belascos carried on. Any archaeologist would be eager to analyze the archaeological record produced by this household, to examine and compare its artifacts with those of the Martins.

It also would be gratifying to link the small porcelain tea set or one of the half-dozen china dolls in the McIver/Martin assemblage to Esther (Figure 4.17), to think of her playing in the sun and smelling fragrant flowers on the wind. Artifacts don’t come with name plates and it is impossible to glean any concrete details of her life from the small things left behind. One can, however, make the logical assumption that the bottles of expensive Parisian perfume, identical to those found at the Strauss/Ackerman home, belonged to her stepmother. It simply seems likely that the large McIver family also would have indulged in children’s toys, in children's clothes, in better food for their family with their spare funds.
Mary McIver never actually lived in the duplex with Hannah Martin, but her influence could
be seen in the way her eldest daughter, Mary, ran the household. Sara had spent her entire married
life either pregnant, nursing young babies, or changing diapers for her 12 infants. Complications
from a late pregnancy probably ended her life. Her husband grieved for her and placed much
of the burden for childcare on Mary’s shoulders. Murdock did, however, move the family to a
better neighborhood, renting a duplex shared with the Martin family. The large number of dolls,
marbles, and a dozen children’s shoes in their assemblage suggest he both indulged his family
and kept them well clothed. “Miss Mary,” a title the census taker gave his daughter, and her
sister may have made good use of a nearby rummage store, of its second-hand dresses, trousers,
hats, and its marvelous scraps of cloth in their sewing (see Psota in Chapter 5).

Kate Wiggin, well known in this neighborhood, wrote of its children, boys particularly, who
came to school in ingenious creations, blending ragged trousers and velvet blouses (Wiggin 1923;
Figure 4.18). Reading this, one wonders how Mary’s brothers dressed. Kate visited the homes
of her pupils, entered backyards littered with bottles and cans, and walked past fences where
children hid behind and swung from each picket. She knew of families with an abundance, if not
an excess, of tiny family members; of children who were angelic in the morning only to change
tune late, observing that sometimes “the divil is busy wid them the whole of the day” (Smith
1925:210). She would have sympathized with Mary, knowing full well the toil, the patience, the
ups and downs of raising your brothers and sisters. Yet, it was a daughter’s duty to do so when
no one else could. Michael Friedrich Radke spells this out: “Then I had to work for myself, my

Figure 4.17. Toys from Privy 806; associated with the Martin and McIver families
who both resided in the duplex at 125–127 Perry Street. Widower Murdock McIver
had eight children (ages 7 to 24); and Abraham Martin lived with wife Hannah and
their four children (ages 4 to 16).
mother, and 4 brothers and sisters . . . to take care of their livelihood because I was the oldest . . . and had to take care of them. I [did] what is a child’s duty towards his elders and brothers and sisters” (1848: n.p.). Mary’s duty was even larger, four brothers and four sisters to feed morning and night. She had peace to bestow and lunch pails to fill for her father and the younger ones in school.

Murdock McIver had more children and less money in 1860 than Abraham Martin. By 1870 McIver lived in the 2nd Ward in an enclave of families whose men worked the docks, as longshoremen, riggers, and stevedores. Murdock McIver relished his ancestry and was a “celebrated Scotchman of his day”; he participated in all the different Scottish societies and was a famous Quoits player, competing at various gatherings (Roxburgh 1927a:14). Murdock rose from dockworker to rigger, a skilled job with the strength of a union behind him. But he had all those little children to feed, while meat was expensive. As his income rose and his children began to contribute their earnings to the household, Mary had more to spend on beef or mutton (see Table 4.6). Corned mutton, mutton pies, and lamb’s blood pudding were the traditional ways that Scotsmen ate lamb. The first was difficult to make; the last grew less appetizing to many immigrant families as the 19th century progressed. The most likely way the McIvers ate mutton was in savory pies or as ground meat. For this reason, it seems best to allocate the expensive cuts from the McIver/Martin site to the Martin family. On the other hand, given the Martins’ religious background and Abraham’s involvement with the Sheth Israel Congregation, it might be safest to allocate the larger than usual amount of pork among the McIvers and assert that both families ate beef in all its different forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Beef Cuts</th>
<th>Lamb Cuts</th>
<th>Pork Cuts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mod.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mod.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mod.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beef formed 61%, Lamb 20%, Pork 13%, Bird 5% and Rabbit 1% of the faunal remains.

Figure 4.18. Teacher from the Silver Street Kindergarten and her students as shown in Wiggin’s The Story of Patsy.
MARINER’S WIVES

As one considers the archaeological record of the more cosmopolitan residents of the project area, sea captains and the larger merchants (e.g., Duisenberg) come to the fore. Both material possessions and visibility in the archaeological record increase. The three mariners—Gee, Metcalf, and Michelson—and their wives close out this section. Captain Gee may have traveled far and wide. Captain Metcalf ranged closer to home, sailing between San Francisco and small port towns to the south. Captain Michelson went further away, normally sailing north along the Oregon or Washington coast.

POINT OF ORIGIN: NORWAY

Aletta Michelson

Mariners along the West Coast exemplified the cultural diversity seen in San Francisco. According to Bjork (2001), Scandinavians handled almost the entire coastal trade. Norwegian sailors were especially prevalent in the Pacific’s “Scandinavian Navy” (Benson 1974:fn 18), but only a few (6%) commanded vessels. Many ship-owners or captains were men of considerable means. Jacob Michelson owned his own coastal schooner, which enabled the family’s fortunes to grow modestly.

Aletta Michelson was a youthful bride, 16 or 17, when she sailed from Norway in 1858 with Jacob, her new husband, his brother Michael, Michael’s daughter Selina/Selma (age 9, b. 1852 CA), Michael’s new wife Jensina, and their daughter Aquata (Augustina, b. 1857 Norway). Aletta and Jensina would be two of the very few Norwegian wives who accompanied their husbands to California (Benson 1974). In fact, San Francisco was so overwhelmingly male that Aletta’s husband and her brother—in-law, who arrived in California in 1848, had returned to the old country to find wives. Michael’s young daughter, from a previous marriage, accompanied them.

In 1860 there were few Norwegians in San Francisco—only five Norwegian families, and no Scandinavian community per se (Bjork 1950). Thus the city did not have the same social lure for the two couples as it did for the Jewish Martins and Irish Mahoneys. The families turned their backs on San Francisco; Michael purchased a duplex in Oakland (worth $4,000.00) to share with his brother. Here Aletta had Addie and William, 18 months apart. Jacob hired an Irish maid to help out; he could afford to, given the personal property he reported on the 1860 census ($2,000.00). The families anglicized their surname from Mikleson/Myklesen to Michelsen/Michaelson over the next decade and moved across the bay.

Aletta and Jacob lived on Clary [Clara] Street, within walking distance of the docks, yet outside the rougher streets. Their next home at 442 Third Street kept them within walking distance of Michael’s and Jensina’s home. Jacob’s older brother was temporarily driving a laundry cart, but by 1870 Michael was a steamboat captain once again living in Oakland. By 1880, he and his wife had retired to a farm on the Russian River, where he could enjoy steelhead and salmon fishing and perhaps turn a hand to making wine. Jacob, in contrast, never fully retired from the sea.

In 1880 there were still fewer than 500 Norwegian families living in California, a striking contrast to the Irish (over 80,000 including second and third generations) in San Francisco alone. The Jewish families in San Francisco numbered 1,000 in 1857–58; their numbers grew to
between 20,000 and 30,000 in the late 1860s (Levy 1996). The Scandinavian population stayed small (Benson 1974; Rosenbaum 2000: 40). Norwegians saw no reason to have overlarge families. Demographic analysis reveals families averaged just under three children (Benson 1974), a sharp contrast to the Irish families in the study area. Small families necessitate some form of family planning. Here is what Aletta did. She had two children close together, waited four years until their dependency lessened, had two more in quick succession, and waited another four years before giving birth to her last child in 1870. Aletta had advice if not actual help from her lodgers: an East Coast midwife, a Norwegian dressmaker, a widowed Prussian nurse and her son. One spoke Aletta’s native language, the other two were health-care givers—one with skill in caring for pregnant women.

The 1870s were tough times for all city residents, but especially for those, like Jacob, involved in shipping. Few Scandinavian families could afford to rent a house during this depression (Bjork 1950). The Michelsons went against this tide. Of all the people uncovered by this archaeological study, they moved most frequently, without ever leaving Perry Street. If one takes into account that something always breaks whenever one moves, it is no wonder the family ate from a piecemeal set of dishes united primarily by their simple lines and white color (Figure 4.19). At the start of the 1870s, the Michelsons lived up Perry Street from the Dolans, the Strausses, and the Ackermans. Six years later, they resided at 110 Perry across the street from the Dolans. In 1880 the family moved into the Dolan duplex, leaving it after three years to move to 167 Perry. By 1900 the Michelsons owned the duplex at 141 Perry, renting one-half to an Irish widow, her sister, and two bachelor brothers (36 and 32). Aletta was the same age as the Widow Flanagan; her two sons (40 and 30), still living at home, were close in age to the Flanagan men. Do their compatible ages suggest social camaraderie? George was unmarried, while William was a widower who had moved back home with his boys, Henry and Edward. Jacob, at 71, still owned a schooner.
Jacob died between 1900 and 1910; George married and moved away. Edward continued to live with his grandmother and uncle. All had moved from Perry St. Aletta’s married daughters had children of their own. Jacob and Aletta, Michael and Jensina outlived their peers by close to 30 years.

Ancillary information suggests some parameters of Norwegian American life. Aletta was literate and might have drawn upon Hannah Winsnes’ (1845) popular Norwegian housekeeping manual for guidance. What is surprising in this text (and is NOT found in American cookbooks) is the emphasis on home butchery and a wife’s participation in the process. There is evidence of home butchery in the Dolan/Michelson assemblage, including a suckling pig, an animal Norwegians traditionally served for Christmas. There are also game birds in the deposit, another winter delicacy in Norwegian homes. There were also almost a dozen pipes and some were in very good condition, unlike the stumpy remnants found in many assemblages (Figure 4.20). Normally, this would indicate men's leisure activities—women were more apt to smoke little cigars—but pipe smoking was not gendered behavior among Norwegians. Traditionally, older women smoked pipes while younger girls eagerly offered to light them for their moms, sneaking whiffs as they did (Grindal 1990). Neither home butchery nor pipe-smoking women were typical in American communities.

The seasonal cycle of American housekeeping dictates major cleaning in fall and spring. The Norwegian custom was to clean a house from top to bottom the Sunday before Christmas, which Aletta may have done. It was traditional to decorate a home for a wedding, for the bride to wear a tinkling silver crown, for friends and families to feast and toast the bride with strong drink. Both Aletta’s daughters were married while the family lived at 111 Perry Street. Mrs. Winsnes’ manual gave instructions for serving different beverages at festive events, including a punch made with red wine, orange juice, orange peel, and water. Its ingredients were readily available.

Beverage glasses of various types in a variety of forms were well represented in the Dolan/Michelson assemblage, bringing to mind a variety of beverages including the punch. The Reverend Christian Hvistendahl, who served as pastor of a Lutheran mission in the 1870s, discovered that California Scandinavians were fond of their liquor. To his dismay, men both cursed and drank, some immoderately so during Scandinavian Society meetings (Bjork 1950). Men brewed wine or beer at home, and liked their schnapps which they called aquavit but made with wormwood—the basis of absinthe—a common plant in eastern Norway. Schnapps, too, could have brought back memories of home, male kin, and male friends. Archaeologists noted its rarity elsewhere and its presence at the Dolan/Michelson site.

Hvistendahl groused that many Scandinavians didn’t feel the need to attend church as other groups did. He attributed this to a dispersed settlement pattern and lack of neighborhood
churches. He also observed other Sabbath distractions: tramcars to the breweries, the parks, and other pleasure spots. Some were particularly suited to men: baseball clubs, cricket clubs, and rifle clubs (Elliott 1868:563). Hvistendahl notes that when Sunday dawned bright and clear, warm with the scent of roses, no one wanted to be inside (Bjork 1950). As a minister, this was discouraging, but to a family like the Michelsons it meant a day at the beach collecting shells or an opportunity to visit Michael and Jensina in Oakland. Irwin noted San Franciscans were extraordinarily fond of expeditions into the country, and spent as much time out of doors as they could (Irwin 1906). When Michael retired, visits to his farm also gave Jacob and Aletta an opportunity to bring back fresh produce and meat, perhaps bringing meat back, in fact, as large cuts that were then reduced in size.

If expanding the historical record to include further information on Norwegian Americans shed a little more light on the Dolan/Michelson assemblage, the next example both opens wide the barn door yet keeps the artifacts inside, for despite the context enabled by documentary research, the Metcalf assemblage is almost as enigmatic and puzzling as it was initially. The three women the assemblage represents were much like other women in San Francisco: they enjoyed fancy clothes and loved their jewelry (Elliott 1868:566). Yet, look past the clothing and the assemblage speaks most cogently of domestic relationships during a tumultuous time, and suggests several motivating events that might have led women to “clean house,” tossing out both clothes and jewelry. Still, the how and the why of doing so remain elusive.

**Catherine and Henrietta Metcalf**

Alfred Metcalf (Privy 851) was a mariner, born in Ohio of Connecticut parents, who did not find the Midwest to his liking. He left the farm, his 81-year-old grandmother, his parents, six brothers and four sisters and went to sea. Catherine/Katharina, a German immigrant, met her husband in New York, their home when first married. Both were in their early twenties. Daughter Katie was born in 1856 and Hattie (Henrietta) in 1859.

Alfred was a bright, capable, educated man who soon learned his way about a ship. Between 1860 and 1864, he brought his family west, presumably sailing from New York to Panama, then overland, and finally, by steamer, up the coast to San Francisco. For Katie, age 7, it may have been one great adventure. By 1864 her father was mate on the steamer *Salinas*, in charge of loading coal, ship’s gear, and cargo. Three years later, he was its captain. Metcalf was responsible both for passenger safety and conduct of the crew. The route he followed was a familiar one, heading south and offloading supplies at places such as Santa Cruz, Pigeon Point, Moss Landing, and Monterey. The journey was not without danger; Metcalf lost a mate overboard in December of 1874. The body eventually washed ashore.

Metcalf made good money; his family could afford nice things, although there is no evidence of conspicuous consumption in the artifacts. The 1870 population census shows that his real estate was worth $10,000 and there was $6,000 in personal property (equivalent to $11,070,400.00 and $664,230.00 respectively). Yet, Metcalf always took in several boarders: a male boarder: a German carver who could speak his wife’s language; a mechanic from New England; an Irish boilermaker; an American carpenter; and, ca. 1880, an Irish mariner—John Swanton—working for the same steamship line as Captain Metcalf. The difference was that John captained the bay ferries, which meant he slept at home every night. Alfred did not and, for whatever reason, Catherine’s marriage was rapidly disintegrating. Alfred moved into a sailor’s boardinghouse to
live with other sea captains and their crews. It was just around the corner; Catherine couldn’t escape seeing him from time to time.

Catherine’s oldest daughter, Katie, copied documents for a business firm. However, Henrietta (Lottie/Hattie) stayed home, which put this “young and pretty” (as she was later described in a newspaper clipping) girl in closer proximity to John than her mother might have wished. John had emigrated from Ireland in 1847 as a small boy accompanied by three sisters, from whom he learned much about girls. Hattie (18 to 19) and John (28) began a liaison that ended in a stormy marriage. She had three children by Swanton. John spirited his oldest son, John Henry (born July 1881), away, taking him to Napa and leaving little John with his Irish grandmother and aunts. This insured the boy would be brought up Catholic, and possibly, in a more stable home since Hattie, despite her youth, appears to have been already married and divorced before she began her relationship with John. But John couldn’t stay away. Soon, Hattie was pregnant a second time. The couple’s arguments—which could have been over anything, from the strength of tea, fish on Fridays, cursing, drinking, infidelity, abuse, or religious beliefs—drew them apart. This time she gave birth to a daughter named Edith (1883–1884). The couple fought over Edith (even as Hattie became pregnant for a third and last time)! Finally, in late December 1884, John ran off with Edith in his arms, dashing into Alice Banahan’s home. It wasn’t far; according to census records the Banahan’s lived next door to Capt. Jacob Michelson, just four doors down the street.

Hattie chasing after him, pounded on the door; Alice opened it, saw Hattie and slammed it shut. Edith, seeing her mother, began to cry. John picked her up and hurried out the back door to a nearby hack. Furious, Hattie knocked again, begging Alice to let her in, and accidentally breaking a window. Alice had Hattie charged with malicious mischief. A very pregnant Hattie tearfully explained to the court in January what happened; the Judge quickly dismissed the case. Son Herbert Stuart, born two months later, was raised by his mom.

Herbert told the story again and again; a tale passed down to subsequent generations and reported on the internet (www.ginnisw.com; look under other Swanton family trees for John Swanton of San Francisco) with other genealogical information on Swantons. John, together with his cousins and probably his older brother, was raised by his grandmother and three widowed aunts as one large family. John, with his elder brother and cousins, worked in Napa and then returned to San Francisco where he registered for the draft. His father continued to live with the sisters, ran a steamboat until he retired, and never remarried. Harriet got a divorce, one not recognized by the Catholic Church, remarried and moved back to the house on Silver Street where it all began.2

Did any of these actions leave a trace in the archaeological record? One might think not, however, archaeologists (with little knowledge of the tangle outlined above) found the reasons for tossing out some items enigmatic (specifically a gold ring, a Virgin Mary pendant, two signet rings; Figure 4.21). Others—little dolls and miniature tea sets, perfume bottles, and hair care items—were fully explainable and similar to artifacts found across a range of sites. The reasons for the breakup of the mother’s and daughter’s marriages remain, however, in the realm of the imagination.

What we do know is that Capt. Swanton placed his son, and probably his small daughter, with his closest kin. The aunts raised their brother’s children. Diner (1983) notes a special

2. This information is drawn from Family traditions <http://www.ginnisw.com/SWANTON%20FAMILY%20TREES/Swanton%20Trees%20John%20Swanton%20San%20Francisco.htm> (accessed 2 September 2007).
closeness between Irish brothers and sisters; the Swanton siblings and their living arrangements are an example. They each left San Francisco to live in Napa Valley where the eldest sister owned a home. In later life, John stopped working the river and became a stonemason, carefully and patiently building walls and fences that became part of Napa’s wineries.

John and Hattie's two sons grew up separately and registered for the draft in World War I as did the third Swanton boy, Benjamin Elias. The two brothers were medium height, medium build, one with gray eyes and the other with blue. Both had light brown hair, unlike the third, who was dark-haired and dark-eyed. It is likely that John knew Ben through the aunts and that Ben grew up in the same house; it is unlikely that John and Herbert ever met or the Swanton Family History would have had a different ending to this episode.

It was not necessarily the mix of Irish and German that caused the Metcalf women’s domestic lives to sour, although culturally based ideas of appropriate gender behavior might have been one factor. Violence also occurred in the neighborhood, as one boy informed his teacher, Miss Kate Wiggin: “My father he got fightin mad when he was drunk and pitched me down two flights of [stairs]” (Wiggin 1889:15). Arguments over religious upbringing also made their way into court, as Jacob Michelson discovered when he tried to “adopt” a German orphan and Catholic nuns demanded her return for religious reasons—assuming she would get better care in a Catholic orphans’ home.

There were ethnic divisions in the city. Italians patronized their special restaurants; Germans went to ones where “Germanesque” food was prepared (Irwin 1906). Churches too were split down both denominational and ethnic lines, as were men’s societies and women’s charitable organizations. Henry George (1880) saw “a greater mobility of society than in older communities,” and believed it might “give rise to certain excitability and fickleness.” But, the hints of this trend in the archaeological record are as elusive in San Francisco as they were in Oakland (Praetzellis and Praetzellis eds., 2004). For example, take the home of Isabella Gee, a German sea captain’s Irish wife.
ISABELLA GEE

Although married to a German sea captain, Isabella was Irish, a mother at 20, and living in San Francisco at 123 Perry Street (Privy 807). Her older husband, a northwest coastal trader, was often away. It was worrisome at times. She knew, from what Ferdinand said; that the waters he sailed, from Humboldt Bay to Alaska, were both beautiful and sometimes deadly. Her husband split the proceeds of his voyages, using some to support the family, some to build his schooners, investing on the side in the Alaska Packer’s Association (whose members opened the trade in canned oysters, canned salmon, and other ocean produce). Converting the value of his estate as shown on probate records to an amount comparable to today’s wages (over $3 million), indicates he was very successful. The family’s lifestyle, while not ostentatious, reflects this.

Yet, Isabella knew the meaning of hard work (she had no live-in servant) and how to stand on her own. When her husband was at sea, she made decisions daily that other women expected their men to make. She managed the home and was a productive partner in their marriage. One of her rewards was a beautiful, flowered basin and pitcher (Figure 4.22); others included gilded cups and platters, and a ruby red-stained, etched grape-and-leaf-patterned decanter set. And, all the accoutrements to set a proper dining table (Figure 4.9).

Whenever Captain Gee was home, the family feasted, drank various liquors, and ate well. They may have entertained. In the Block Technical Report, archaeologists note that, “Every cooking and serving need seems to have been met, and tableware was sufficient to serve a family two to three times their size.” There were more than 20 glasses, mainly tumblers, 2 decanters, 2 dozen ale bottles, half a dozen wine and champagne bottles. There were as many cups as glasses, plus 3 teapots. Isabelle had relish dishes, berry dishes, 2 celeries, 4 or more platters, 5 oval serving dishes, other plates ranging from 7 inch to 10-1/2 inch, a dozen soup plates, totaling more than a gross of different dining-related chinaware.

The faunal assemblage indicates the Gee family frequently ate rump roasts, leg of mutton, ham, and roast pork, as well as more poultry and wild fowl than most of their neighbors (Table 4.7). There were almost a dozen chickens, half a dozen turkeys, and more than 2-1/2 dozen wildfowl, as well as two rabbits. Sometimes these meats were roasted, sometimes, they were boiled. Isabella's dozen flower pots may have held the sweet herbs that flavored them or her houseplants. Her bean pot would be familiar to anyone who grew up before electrical slow cookers. Such pots were an essential part of American cookware; one was found in Amanda Scales’ assemblage (Privy 1326). These pots are virtually indestructible, yet almost identical ones were recovered from two other Irish-American features (e.g., associated with the Noonans and an unidentified family, Privy 20). Isabella's baking dish would have been as useful for making savory pies as it would for fruit pies, cobblers, or custards (Figure 4.23). Her kitchen was well-stocked. She made use of condiments; she offered varied meals. One longs to know what cookbooks Isabella owned and which she liked best.
Isabella remained in her spacious two story home, raising her small family until her death in 1882. By today’s standards, she was too young; by those of turn of the century San Francisco, she was approaching the average age (48) at death for women. Her family lamented her passing: “Oh mother, dear mother, a down in the grave.” They were alone; they wept, saying “sorrow is our guest.” Her oldest boy was almost 20, her second son was 17, already a mariner, and her youngest, Anne, was 13.

Anne was too young to assume oversight of the household. Soon, the family split up. Captain Gee bunked at the Master Mariner’s Benevolent Association when he was in port; Ferdinand, Jr., had a room. George stayed with his sister Anne in the family home. He married by age 30 and had a son, named for his father, born one year and died the next. Anne may have lived with him or with other relatives until she wed John Rodgers, a shipping clerk, in 1890.

Isabella knew her family would mourn her death, and she may have hoped that her husband would take a second wife, a kind woman to care for Anne. He did remarry, and they were living in Oakland when he died in 1905, leaving an estate worth somewhere between $50,000 and $100,000. It included a building in San Francisco at the corner of Ellis and Van Ness, stock, and numerous schooners. Oddly, the fate of some of these ships (Emma D., Emma Utter, and Elvinia) can be traced more easily than Isabella’s sons, who seem to have disappeared. Anne, however, continued to live in Oakland with her family. She inherited, 3. http://victorian.squarespace.com/vital-statistics/

Table 4.7. Type of Meat and Price Range for the Gee Faunal Sub-assemblage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Beef Cuts</th>
<th>Lamb Cuts</th>
<th>Pork Cuts</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beef formed 62%, Lamb 24%, Pork 5%, Bird 9% and Rabbit >1% of the sub-assemblage.
with her German stepmother, Captain Gee’s considerable estate. As it was settled, the estate was worth $38,000.00, or in 2005 currency, $3,804,840.00. The family built this wealth through prudent shopping and diversified investments.

**CONCLUSION: FINDING WOMEN IN THE ARTIFACTS**

In this essay, readers can see women who lie about their age (e.g., Lena Strauss), women of all shapes and sizes (as demonstrated by their clothing and their shoes): single women, just-married brides, childless women, women with many children, women whose infants died, handicapped women, widows, old and young, and girls who became “little mothers,” caring for their brothers and sisters when death took their mother. Their lives were far from identical, but they all lived in a region that provided virtually everything a cook needed, and abundantly so. The bay was a gigantic fishing pond, mined by Chinese and Italian fishermen, where even East Coast oysters grew; fruit farms came up to the edge of town, and the surrounding hinterland produced in an abundance fine meats—especially beef and wild game—all cereals and all vegetables.

As historians note (Campbell 2002; Kaufman 2003), Irish and Jewish immigrants had a much better life in San Francisco than in eastern cities. Henry George wrote of this as the potent charm of California: the sophistication, tolerance, and openness that came from living in a culturally diversified environment where habit and tradition eroded. The result was a belief in the future, self-reliance, and an abundance of hope that gave women the opportunity to express themselves in individual ways to a greater degree than one saw in the tradition-bound communities they left behind. Some of this new freedom was expressed in the world of visible objects that marked status (jewelry and fans plus pet birds), ethnic identity (vases, flower pots, teapots, and figurines), femininity and sexuality (perfume bottles, cosmetic containers), and personal identity (a multitude of sewing paraphernalia and wearing apparel). Some can still be seen in the archaeological record.

This was brought to the fore by combining the archaeological data with a series of data sets based on the family and, specifically, women’s roles within it. Anthropologists speak of universal life events—birth, puberty, marriage, death—that surround an individual’s life and often dissect lives through the analysis of demographic data. These are biological events that take on cultural forms. Both the family and the household are amenable to similar dissection; however, among archaeologists it is generally the site itself, an ethnic group, or a site’s male occupant who holds center stage. Laurie Wilkie broke through this paradigm to consider how the internal dynamics of the family might affect a child’s behavior towards her toys (Wilkie 2000). In a sense this is the path this essay has followed. Women are considered within the context of their families and known family events. The initial objective was not to look at women as private individuals visible only within the domestic sphere. However, time and the availability of sources made it easier to associate women with household assemblages than to take a deeper look at the San Francisco women whose lives were rooted in more public domains (Kate Wiggin at the Silver Street Kindergarten; St. Mary’s Hospital and the Sisters of Mercy; teachers and students at the California Collegiate Institute for Young Ladies) and who might also be visible within the institutional assemblages. Ethnographic analogy provided by parallel documentary sources (i.e., Irish women’s history, women’s lives in America’s ethnic neighborhoods, the contours of Jewish women’s lives abroad and in the United States) also had a central role. Its use can easily be read between the lines.
In this analysis women are central, men peripheral, which turns topsy-turvy the usual form of archaeological reports. The focus is intensely local, inching down to the level of street blocks and individual homes, so one must ask if this information can be useful in a broader framework. The data come from privies or deep deposits, not from sheet refuse (such as the cans and bottles that littered some yards, according to Wiggin [1889]) nor from streets filled with piles of garbage and trash (another sight that she also observed [Smith 1925; Wiggin 1894]). Thus association is both tight and reliable. In some cases it is the absence of expected household goods that is remarkable. Primarily, it is the small things that are the most telling—the children's toys, perfume bottles, a baby bottle, women's syringes, corset stays, scraps of silk, hairnets, hairpins, and combs and brushes. They help us delineate women's lives within their homes, making them refreshingly visible and hard to resist. And what we see is that none of them were alike; that through their individual activities and personal choices, they created lives that were wholly their own.