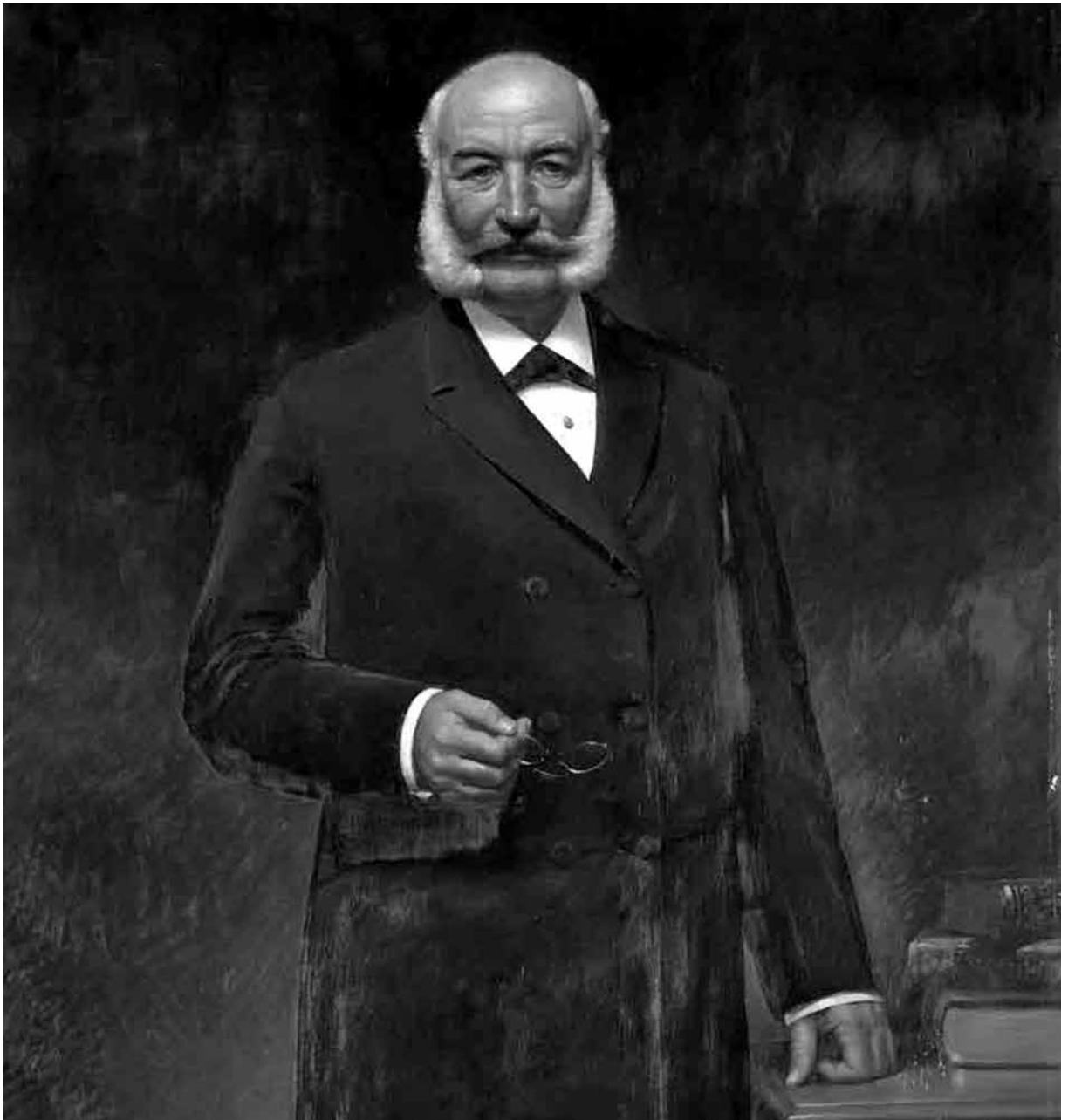


THE ARGONAUT

JOURNAL OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE ARGONAUT

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THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

in San Francisco, 1850–1924

by Stefanie E. Williams

The German community of San Francisco reached the apex of influence between 1890 and 1914. In a continuing effort to leave a permanent and lasting cultural legacy, the German immigrants within the city organized a large number of different social, fraternal, and community organizations. Today, their communal and economic contributions are visible within the urban landscape of San Francisco through the many halls, churches, and businesses that were built in the German community's most prominent years. All of the aforementioned are examples of German immigrants and their descendants continuing to set down the framework for a strong, well organized, and vibrant community, determined to perpetuate the culture and language of their former homeland in a new city.

Many of the first German pioneers to settle in San Francisco arrived in the years following the Gold Rush. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the German element of San Francisco had grown into the largest non-English-speaking population living within the city. These people found themselves with increasing economic and social influence beyond their community, and many German immigrants and their children developed a common identity—a cross cultural blend of both German and Anglo-American influences. Their ability to maintain this identity can be seen through a rich social life that was organized around a variety of associations (*Vereins*) and churches.

After the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, a new German Empire was established. A different sense of what it was to be a German soon developed, and this too was felt by the German diaspora living in North America. At the turn of the 20th century, nothing could stand in the way of the German immigrant's version of the American Dream, a dream in which there was plenty of room to cultivate and develop an amalgamated German and American way of life. This identity would be challenged when the United States entered the First World War against the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy) in 1914. Overnight, German-Americans were put on the defensive, forced to choose between the United States and Germany.

Ultimately, German-Americans sided with their adopted homeland. Within just a few short years, the anti-German war hysteria of the time had resulted in a process of accelerated assimilation. Much of what had made up German life in America went into a full retreat, and never fully recovered.

To gain a better understanding of the German community in San Francisco between 1850 and 1924 it is important to have an idea of what the German-American position was demographically during those years. Immigration from Europe to the United States between 1820 and 1900 resulted in more than 20 million immigrants arriving on American shores.¹ Beginning in the 1840s and continuing over the course of the next eighty years, some 5,335,000 Germans settled in both urban and



Eleven-year-old German Boy Erick Leiszner, who smuggled himself on to the steamer Lake Fray at Hamburg, is now at Hull. He told the captain that he wanted to leave Germany, as his parents were destitute; and that he had an uncle in San Francisco, which he thought was about a day's walk from New York. 1919. Courtesy of the author.

rural communities throughout the country. By 1850 the number of Germans immigrating to the United States surpassed even that of the Irish, with 952,000 Germans settling in America from 1850 to 1860 alone.²

Among the many thousands of Germans who arrived during the late 1840s and early 1850s was a relatively small, but culturally significant, group of political refugees that historians call the Generation

of 1848, or the Forty-Eighters. Having faced the failure of the democratic reform movements in Germany in the year 1848, many of these political exiles fled to the United States to avoid persecution. This assemblage of mainly intellectual elites was a minority within the German immigrant community; around 10,000 would leave for the United States.³ The great majority of German immigrants coming to America at this time were from small towns and

villages. They had left their homeland with the idea of improving their circumstances economically and without political limitation.

This increase in German immigration occurred as the Gold Rush was taking place in California. On January 24, 1848, gold was discovered by James W. Marshall at John Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. People from all over the country, and around the world, set off for the Far West with hopes of striking it rich. Carl Blümner, a German immigrant from Freisack, a town in Brandenburg, describes his journey toward golden opportunities Out West in a letter to his mother:

I am sure you have read in the public papers about the immense gold mines that have been discovered in California in the last 1½ years, namely on the Sacramento River and the small tributaries, where gold sand stretches along the banks, and many miles into the interior, that can be washed and cleaned easily and without much work. It is very lively here in the big cities on the coast. Here you hear people speaking English, Spanish, German, French, Polish, Italian, and many different Indian languages. All are going to the Far West to dig for gold.⁴

This perception of "easy access" to riches created not only a mass migration within the United States to California, but also contributed to the large boom in the foreign-born populations, as indicated by the variety of languages Blümner heard during his travels.

By 1860, the foreign-born population in California spiked to 38 percent of the total population, with thousands of immigrants arriving from many different countries. The German contribution to the foreign-born population ranked as the third largest in the state, just behind the Chinese (34,935) and the Irish (33,147), with 20,919 Germans living in California in 1860.⁵ According to Robert W. Lotchin's monograph *San Francisco 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City*, a majority of the foreign born who settled in San Francisco had arrived directly from their homelands; however, this was not the case among the Irish, Italians, and Germans. More than half had lived elsewhere in the United States for a period of time before arriving in San Francisco.

For the Germans, this meant that many had arrived from well-established older German communities in the Midwest and the Northeast. After 1869, when the Transcontinental Railroad was completed, the United States was better able to facilitate a westward expansion. This provided an opportunity for immigrants living in the Midwest and on the Eastern Seaboard to travel easily by train to California.

By 1880 Germans made up 20.8 percent of the foreign-born population of San Francisco and this number was steadily growing.⁶ German immigration to the United States had reached a historic peak, with more than 1.4 million Germans arriving in America during that decade. Yet it was not until 1900 that a significant increase in the German population became apparent on the Pacific Coast. According to the U.S. Census report for 1890, California's German-born population was the largest of any of the western states, with a total of 72,449 people born in Germany. The disbursement of German-born populations living in the major cities of California was: San Francisco, 26,422; Los Angeles, 2,767; Oakland, 2,301; and Sacramento, 1,583. San Francisco had become the most important and influential city in the state. It was also the nucleus of German life on the West Coast.⁷ Combined with the increased numbers of Germans settling in the city, there followed a measurable growth in their social, cultural, and economic influence during the years leading up to World War I.⁸

San Francisco has always been known for its diversity. In 1890 the City by the Bay had the largest proportion of foreign-born residents of any city in the United States. At that time a full 40 percent of the population had been born in another country. Large numbers of Irish, Germans, Italians, French, and others had come to call San Francisco their new home. Within these national groupings established linguistic and regional diversity often existed. Among Europeans, perhaps no group was more diverse than the German-speaking immigrants. Not only did Germans, Austrians, and Swiss-Germans speak many different regional dialects of the German language, they also came from regionally distinctive and diverse areas within Central Europe.

The Germans who settled in San Francisco during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from a number of different regions, including



Stereoview of Temple Emanu-El on Sutter Street in 1868. Established in 1850 by a congregation of Jewish Bavarians, it was the largest temple in San Francisco at the time. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

large numbers from north, south, and southwest Germany. Germans from the eastern parts of the country were not as well represented in San Francisco until the post-World War II German immigration of the 1950s.⁹ In addition to this regional variety, there were also distinctive Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, and Jewish communities among German immigrants, each group having its own religious identity. The common link among these immigrants was a Central European cultural heritage and the valuable ability to speak and understand standard German, or *Hochdeutsch*. Regional associations, or *Landsmannschaften*, were popular among the German community, but soon a common German identity would become more important in America than the strong regional identities they had left behind.

In 1900 the population of San Francisco was 342,782. Among its citizens 94,130 persons were of German birth or parentage. The German population of San Francisco had reached its peak as the predominant foreign-born immigrant group in the city at 30.1 percent, exceeding both the Irish (13.6 percent) and the Italians (6.4 percent) and showing an increase of 9.3 percent over the previous



Interior of Temple Emanu-El. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

decade.¹⁰ Among U.S. cities with large German-born populations, San Francisco was the only city in the western United States to be included among the ten cities with the largest German-born populations, ranking just behind Buffalo, NY, with its German born population of 149,822.¹¹



Interior of the German Savings & Loan Society, located at 526 California St., San Francisco. From the author's collection.

Germans grew to be 22.9 percent of San Francisco's total population and comprised the largest non-English speaking ethnic group in the city (this figure includes people of "German parentage": i.e., the American-born children of German immigrants). As a percentage of San Francisco's total population, the German population had become comparable to a number of other important German communities throughout America.¹²

Meanwhile San Francisco continued to flourish, and ethnic neighborhoods grew; but, with the exception of Chinatown, they were generally on a smaller scale than those in larger American cities like New York and Chicago. These concentrations in San Francisco were significant enough, however, to give a general impression that a particular nationality inhabited a specific neighborhood. Germans were also more heavily concentrated in strategic areas, establishing many businesses, including retail stores, restaurants, delicatessens, bakeries, and breweries.

And districts with higher concentrations of Germans usually had a German social hall or church.

Among the historiography of Germans in San Francisco very few monographs acknowledge any indication of where in the city higher concentrations of Germans and German-Americans lived. Monica Clyde's *Building a Civil Society in San Francisco: The German Contribution from 1850 to World War I*, is one of the few articles to pinpoint a "German Town" neighborhood during the mid- to late-19th century. Clyde notes that the concentration of German settlement in the city was in what is known today as Belden Place. Specifically, she mentions a concentration of Germans "between Kearny and Montgomery Streets and south of Sacramento, north of Market, close to the wharves, and adjacent to the lively French quarter along Commercial Street."¹³

Carole Cosgrove Terry's dissertation, *Die Deutschen in Kalifornien: Germans in Urban California, 1850–1860*, uses census data collected



Exterior of the German Savings & Loan Society in 1896, located on 526 California Street. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

in San Francisco's voting districts for the year 1860 to pinpoint where German immigrants resided. Her research shows the percentage of the German-born population in each district. Voting District VII had the highest percentage of German-born residents: 30.41 percent of the German-born population of the city. District VII comprised the area bounded by Grant Avenue, Market Street, Pine Street, and Montgomery Street. This was a neighborhood of heavy commercial activity. A large number of Germans lived in the area toward the end of Montgomery Street (near Market Street), presumably to be in close proximity to many of their businesses.¹⁴

The largest of all German events in America, known as *Deutsch-Amerikanischer Tag*, took place once a year. The first fully organized "German-American Day" celebration in San Francisco took place in October of 1891. German-American Day commemorates the arrival of the first thirteen German families from Krefeld who founded Germantown, Pennsylvania on October 6, 1683, marking the first organized settlement of Germans in North America. As a result of the celebrations that took place in 1883 (the bicentennial of the founding of Germantown), an increased sense of what it meant to be both German and American began to take shape. The *San Francisco Chronicle* describes the growing popularity of the German-American Day as one that "no village in the Union containing German citizens will fail in providing a due observance."¹⁵ A developing German-American culture with its own celebrations and traditions was a step toward the process of assimilation into American life. This was further reinforced by the more than 1.4 million German immigrants arriving on American shores during the 1880s.

For the Germans of San Francisco, the annual German-American Day celebration was the social highlight of the year. It was also an opportunity for the community to showcase the unity of the many different German associations, societies, and lodges that came together to put on the annual event; this was the bond that connected them to both German and American heritage.

The second annual German-American Day was held at Woodward's Gardens in the Mission District on Sunday, October 9 and Friday, October 21, 1892. The souvenir program for the event contains an extensive schedule. The event included a concert consisting of thirty-six different musical pieces; gymnastic demonstrations (presented by various *Turnverein* groups); singing societies; and literary exercises, which included speeches and poetry readings. From the late afternoon to the late evening a grand ball was held with dancing to Von der Meiden's German band. Several essays were printed in the program, and prizes were awarded to those who wrote the best essay, including a first-place prize winning essay by Dr. Richard Schultz of Cottonwood, California. He best explains the ways in which the German people viewed their relationship between



Woodward's Gardens, 1866–1892. The second annual German-American Day was held at Woodward's Gardens in 1892.
 Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

their new home in America and the home they left behind in his essay entitled, “The German as American Citizen”:

He (the German) attaches himself warmly to the country of his choice. He makes it his home and gives it his heart and hand, true and undivided, however tender the sentiment may be, that he preserves for the land of his fathers. The German identifies himself with all the interests of his new home and becomes a citizen as soon as the law “permits” conscious of both his rights and his duties.¹⁶

An air of romanticism existed among the Germans when describing their homeland. Yet, German-American Day in particular was also a way to show mainstream America the German-Americans’ loyalty to their adopted country while maintaining a connection to the land of their forefathers. German-American Day was an opportunity for the community to reflect on the historical impact

that the German diaspora had brought to America during its 200-year history.

In 1892 *The Settlement of Germantown, Pennsylvania: And the Beginning of German Emigration to North America* by Samuel W. Pennypacker, was also excerpted in the San Francisco German-American Day program, with an essay entitled “Some Reasons for Our Celebration”:

If you want to see the work of American Germans today, look around you. The president of your university, the most enterprising of American merchants, and the chief justice of your state are and were alike of German descent. The Germanic tide which began to pour into Europe has now reached the Pacific. In its great march covering twenty centuries of time, it has met no obstacles with which it has not overcome; it has been opposed by no force which it has not overthrown, and it has entered no field which it has not made fruitful.¹⁷

Pennypacker presents a picture of a victorious German community whose contributions to American society are as great as they are extensive in their influence and reach.

Shortly after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, Germans began to gain a unified view of themselves as German states came together to form a newly established nation. This shift toward a more national rather than regional identity fit well into the consciousness of Germans in America. As mentioned in an article by the *San Francisco Chronicle* detailing the excitement throughout San Francisco at the time of Germany's victory over France in January 1871: "From all parts of the city they flocked to their social halls to celebrate the victory. The crowds of Germans in the streets were hailed as cheering Teutons, mad with delight."¹⁸

In the United States the German immigrants of the 1870s and 1880s felt "forced" into using standard German. As a result of similar experiences in America, they soon found common ground among themselves. For the first time, they were seen as a united people. This was also the case across the Atlantic in the newly formed Second Reich. The new chapter for Germany in Europe was also one for the majority of German-Americans in the United States. Many had come to think of themselves as promoters of all things cultured and civilized. The German word for this was *Kulturträger*, or cultural ambassador. German-Americans promoted one another as vehicles and carriers of a culture that would be passed down from one generation to another, upholding the standards and values of their homeland, regardless of where they settled in the world.¹⁹

A hybrid culture emerged in North America and a new kind of national solidarity, based on the achievements and history of America's German element, were the foundation for this new identity. This was the birth of the "hyphenated Americans," proudly claiming for themselves their adopted homeland, while at the same time perpetuating the spirit and traditions of the country they left behind. This same trend occurred across the country as immigrants from other nations began to express a cross-cultural outlook that integrated the old country with the new. As the twentieth century approached, the future looked bright for most Germans in America, and it

seemed as if nothing could get in the way of their ongoing success and prosperity. This, however, would inevitably shift with the events that would later take place in Europe—events that would forever change the influence that the German element had on its host country.

German-Americans were consistent in organizing social events and annual festivals throughout the years. At many of the larger events, souvenir programs were a way to celebrate and commemorate a special day, but advertising helped offset costs and give back to the community itself. Business owners utilized advertising to market their businesses to the local German community and in turn gain new customers. This also was a way to encourage newly arrived Germans, as well as longtime residents, to continue doing business with one another. The souvenir program from 1892 was in both English and German, giving the impression that this celebration was neither distinctly German nor American, but a combination of the two.

In analyzing the works of Clyde and Terry from the 1850s and the 1892 German-American Day celebration program, we are able to gain an understanding of where Germans in San Francisco lived and worked at the time. In 1892, 103 San Francisco Germans who owned businesses placed advertisements. By using the addresses of the businesses listed in the program, we can create a representative sample of German businesses in San Francisco. Certain neighborhood patterns and concentrations quickly become apparent. For example, in the vicinity of Belden Place, fifteen German businesses operated near Bush and Kearny Streets, showing clearly that there was still a concentration of German-owned businesses in the area even some forty years after the Gold Rush.²⁰ In visualizing the locations of this sampling, an idea of where the community was located commercially and residentially emerges. This sample displays geographical trends, which, when combined with the more than 185 German businesses advertised in Philo Jacoby's *Californischer Staats-Kalander* (1917) twenty-five years later, highlight where San Francisco's Germans settled and operated their businesses during the period of the last decade of the nineteenth century to the era of the First World War.

Printer and publisher Philo Jacoby (1837–1922) was a German Jewish immigrant of Polish origin, born in the Prussian Province of Pomerania. He founded the weekly newspaper *The Hebrew* (1863–1922), which was printed in both German and English. Jacoby was also well known in the German community for his active membership in the *Schuetzenvererin*, or Sharpshooter's Club. He became one of the best sharpshooters in California, winning an international title in Berlin in 1868. As the editor for *The Hebrew*, Jacoby was accustomed to advertising German-American events such as *Maifests*, *Turnfests*, and most especially *Schützenfests*. Jacoby's enthusiasm for German-American social life propelled him to publish a directory and calendar listing all of the local German clubs, their events, and extensive information about many German businesses. This directory was called the *Californischer Staats-Kalander*. It was published at the end of 1916 for the 1917 calendar year, just as the United States was on the verge of entering into the war against Germany and Austria-Hungry. *Californischer Staats-Kalander* was the last printed example of how large the German community in San Francisco had become before a period of increased decline.

In 1916 there were 185 businesses listed in the *Californischer Staats-Kalander*. When placed on a current map of San Francisco, certain geographical shifts come to light. This is especially apparent when compared to information after the twenty-five-year period since the German-American Day program was published in 1892. In the 1916–1917 directory seventy German businesses were located in areas north along Market Street and in the well-established downtown business district. These appear to be rather evenly spread out among many other businesses. Also listed in Jacoby's directory are twenty German-owned businesses located in neighborhoods west of Van Ness Avenue, with a marked concentration of businesses in the Fillmore District. The directory also no longer shows the presence of German businesses in the vicinity of Belden Place. By 1917 larger numbers of German immigrant workers had settled in the expanding Mission District (south of Market), in the more middle-class Western Addition, and Fillmore neighborhoods.²¹



Pioneer and publisher Philo Jacoby (1837–1922) poses wearing the many medals he won as a master sharp shooter in 1870. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

It is best to keep in mind that these two sources clearly do not list every German-owned business in the city from 1892 to 1916, but based on the many addresses listed, one can make a fairly accurate determination of where a stronger German presence existed in the city. German businesses tended to be heavily centered in the commercial areas north of Market Street, east of Union Square, and along Market Street, where higher concentrations of commerce and trade were located generally. By 1917 a large presence of Germans could be seen in the working-class areas south of Market, continuing farther south into the mixed industrial and residential Mission District. Also, as previously mentioned, there were marked concentrations in the neighborhoods west of Van Ness Avenue, particularly in the Western Addition and Fillmore Districts. The Hayes Valley and Lower Haight neighborhoods should also be mentioned as important residential districts that contained a large middle-class German population.



Wieland's Brewery, 1905, located at 2nd Street between Howard and Folsom Streets.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Socio-economic differences between these neighborhood concentrations show a German presence in class and job orientation. The South of Market and Mission Districts were more closely connected to one another economically and displayed an industrial and working-class atmosphere as evidenced by established German workmen's lodges, occupational associations, and German-speaking union locals. The brewing industry, for example, was well established in both of these districts. In the residential Western Addition, and areas west of Van Ness Avenue, the tone was decidedly more middle class and business oriented. By 1917, more German businesses and offices were located in the Financial District than in 1892. This combination of Germans working in the South of Market area, as well as in the Financial District, shows that Germans were found within different levels of the workforce, whether it was in the higher or lower tiers of the job market.

In 1900, the Mission District was predominantly made up of first-generation European immigrants and their children. Along with people of Irish and German birth and ancestry occupying the neighborhood, smaller numbers of Italians, Slavs, and Anglo-Americans could also be found there. The Mission District developed into a distinctly working-class residential and industrial area that developed rapidly after the 1906 earthquake and fire. A good portion of the neighborhood had been spared from much of the fire and quake.²² Among the thirty-plus German businesses and cultural institutions listed in both the *Californischer Staats-Kalender* and the national *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Vereins-Addressbuch* (1914), the inner Mission District had a greater concentration of German businesses, social halls, and churches than any other neighborhood in San Francisco in the years before World War I. That part of the Mission District had the largest number of

German businesses, social halls, and churches, which were found in the area of the inner Mission from 14th Street, south to 19th Street, and from Dolores Street east to Folsom Street.

In the years between the 1890s and 1914, the Mission District had six different German-speaking churches representing Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and Calvinist denominations. There were also five social halls offering a variety of different cultural and athletic activities popular among *Vereinsdeutsche*, or those Germans that were more oriented toward joining clubs and lodges than church congregations.

For the *Kirchedeutsche*, or the more conservative “church Germans,” there were also a number of different congregations to choose from. Lutheran and Evangelical (a union of Lutheran and Reformed) churches were well represented in the Mission. German-speaking Protestant congregations, including St. Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran (1895), Salem Evangelical, United Evangelical, St. Johannes Evangelical, and Lutheran Mission, were well established in the neighborhood by 1905.²³ A German Roman Catholic parish, St. Anthony’s of Padua, located on Army Street (today Cesar Chavez Street), was founded in 1893, along with its own parochial school. Both the church and school still stand, now serving the predominantly Spanish-speaking community in the area. The other German Catholic “national parish” in San Francisco was St. Boniface Catholic Church, which had been located on Golden Gate Ave. in the Tenderloin since 1900. The above-mentioned St. Matthew’s Lutheran is the only church in northern California to still offer weekly services in German, a legacy rooted in the days when the Mission District still had a prominent German presence.



St. Johannes Lutheran Church, or St. John’s, was located on 22nd Street near Howard.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

True to the working-class atmosphere of the Mission, German-Americans also formed German-speaking workmen’s locals and lodges. These occupational *Vereins* included large numbers of German brewery workers, butchers, meatpackers, bakers, and carpenters. They held their meetings and social events at the Brewery Worker’s Hall (Brewer’s Hall) at 117 Capp Street near 16th Street. Other Mission District German halls included the Mission *Turnverein* Hall (1910–1935) on 18th near Valencia Street, the Germania Hall located at 15th and Mission Street, Auer’s Hall at 20th and



St. Boniface Catholic Church, circa 1900s, located on Golden Gate Avenue in the Tenderloin. Courtesy of the author.

Folsom Street, and the *Arbeiterbildungsverein* Hall (Workmen's Educational Association) at 141 Albion Street (1913–1965). The *Mission Turnverein* Hall (gymnastics club) was also used by a number of other German associations that did not have their own facilities. Other groups included the *Deutsches Baeckerverein* (baker's association), the *Metzgerverein* (butcher's association), and several different *Order of the Hermann Sons* fraternal lodges.²⁴

The area west of Van Ness Avenue includes several neighborhoods: the Western Addition, the Fillmore, Hayes Valley, and the Lower Haight. The neighborhood known as the Western Addition was a decidedly middle and upper-class area of town throughout the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. From its earliest beginnings, the German-American community was well represented in merchant trades, creating their own businesses while building up a white-collar community in the city. A young resident of the neighborhood in 1900, Harriet Lane Levy, describes these German businessmen and early mornings in the Western Addition:

At nine o'clock every morning the men of O'Farrell Street left their homes for their places of business downtown. Dressed in brushed broadcloth and polished high hats, they departed soberly as to a funeral. All the men were united by the place and circumstances of their birth. They had come to America from villages in Germany, and they had worked themselves up from small stores in the interior of California to businesses in San Francisco.²⁵

In comparison to the working-class Mission District, the Western Addition had greater numbers of professionals and business owners among its residents. It was also where the largest concentration of Germans was found at the turn of the last century.²⁶ The neighborhood also had a large population of Jewish residents living both there and in the nearby Fillmore District, which had a Jewish population as high as 24 percent in the years after the 1906 earthquake, mostly eastern European Jews, but German-speaking Jews as well.



St. Paulus German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1899, located on Eddy and Gough Streets. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

The Western Addition was home to religious congregations like the German-Jewish reform congregation Emanu-El established in 1850 by Bavarian Jews. This was the largest temple in San Francisco at the time. Two German-speaking churches, each one block west of Van Ness Avenue, were built by Lutheran congregations during the 1890s: St. Paulus (1893–1995) and St. Markus (1895–present). Also located in the Western Addition was a large hall that was opened in 1911 by the San Francisco *Turnverein* on Sutter Street, near Divisadero. This hall was sold in 1940 to the growing white Russian community living in the neighborhood and is known today as the San Francisco Russian Center.

From the time of the Gold Rush, many Germans had careers as retail merchants, trades people, manufacturers, bankers, and saloon or restaurant owners; this trend continued well into the early 1900s. One additional occupation that stands out as “particularly German,” was the brewing industry. By 1900, 80 percent of the brewery workers in San Francisco were of German ethnicity.²⁷

Many in the merchant class had originally sold their goods and services to a growing population of prospectors and adventurers who had arrived in San Francisco determined to make “a one day killing of between \$300 to \$500 dollars worth of pure gold” on the banks of the Sacramento River.²⁸ From the beginning of San Francisco’s existence there seemed to be a greater tolerance and acceptance of European immigrants than in many other cities. The English and Germans were the most acknowledged and accepted within the mainstream of Anglo-American life. When these more favored immigrant groups expressed their capability and desire to contribute to society, they were welcomed and at times even admired for their strong work ethic. A German Prussian resident commented:

The Germans had obtained the good will of the natives by their soberness, honesty, and industry, which qualities the real Yankee the more admires, as he sees in them the fundamental principles of a great nation. They are orderly and intelligent people and show fewer criminals than the proportionate number of other class of citizens. They learn the English language very readily, and many of them are naturalized citizens.²⁹

Individuals who made moderate successes in the gold mines took their gains and often invested in their own business ventures. The most successful and



*Group shot of truck drivers from Wieland's Brewery, located on 2nd Street between Howard and Folsom Streets.
Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.*

notable businessmen who prospered in developing San Francisco were self-made men, involved in a multitude of different entrepreneurial endeavors. One such businessman was Adolph Claus Spreckels (1828–1908), who was born in Lamstedt, which at the time was part of the Kingdom of Hannover. He arrived in San Francisco from New York in 1856 and was initially involved in the grocery business. He also started his own brewery for \$75,000 by the time he reached thirty-five years of age. In the mid-1860s, he had entered the sugar trade and built his first sugar refinery at Eighth and Brannan Streets in San Francisco. As his business expanded, Spreckels experimented with sugar beets on his ranch in Aptos, California. In 1888 he created the Western Beet Sugar Company in Watsonville. As a means to efficiently transport sugar beets to his factory, the Pajaro Valley Railroad was constructed to better facilitate Spreckels' growing business. His combined efforts created the largest sugar beet factory in the United States.³⁰



Claus Spreckels, "The Sugar King." Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Spreckels intended the Call Building to be “the finest building ever erected for a newspaper office.” It was built on the corner of Market and Third Streets in 1897. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Claus Spreckels reached great success with his own business ventures, yet it was through his work as a philanthropist that he derived the most joy: uplifting his community and the city of San Francisco were some his greatest achievements.

In May of 1895, two days after the dedication of St. Anthony’s German Catholic Church in the Mission District, St. Markus German Lutheran Church held its re-dedication ceremony at the newly constructed church located on O’Farrell, near Gough Street. The church, with the first German-speaking congregation on the West Coast, and cost \$56,000 to build. It was funded through proceeds via the congregation’s old church, which was originally founded in 1852.³¹ At the time of the opening of St. Markus, Claus Spreckels donated to the church a massive chandelier imported from Germany. Over the years the chandelier survived a number of earthquakes, including the largest one in Californian history in

1906, but sadly it was destroyed in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989.

In September of 1895, an enterprising Claus Spreckels made an investment of \$300,000 for a downtown corner lot that would be the future site of the *San Francisco Call* building. Later known as the Central Tower, it was located at Third and Market Streets. At the time of completion, it was the tallest building west of the Mississippi. High esteem radiates from an article in the *San Francisco Call* detailing the first ceremonial ground breaking of the monument commissioned by multimillionaire Claus Spreckels:

The San Francisco Call is to have the finest building ever erected for a newspaper office. It is to be built on the corner of Market and Third streets, of granite and white marble, and will be fifteen stories—310 feet high, the tallest building this side of Chicago. Unlike

the *Chronicle* building, it will be a beautiful building and a credit to its owner, Claus Spreckels, and worthy of the great paper to be printed within its walls.³²

The completion of the *San Francisco Call* Building also indirectly maneuvered Spreckels into the public utility business. By 1897, dirt and grime had accumulated on the side of the two-year-old skyscraper, caused by emissions from two San Francisco Gas and Electric Company plants located in the vicinity. Joseph B. Crockett, president of San Francisco Gas and Electric, was not interested in correcting the problem. Disgruntled by Crockett's inaction, Spreckels developed his own electric and power company in direct competition with his uncooperative neighbor. Within a few years, competition from Spreckels' company, the Independent Gas & Power Company, had driven down San Francisco Gas and Electric stocks, forcing the company into a series of mergers with other power companies.

Spreckels refused to merge with any of them, and when he finally decided to sell in 1903 it resulted in a \$1,214,000 profit. California's Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) is the direct descendant of the combination of those merged public utility companies that incorporated Spreckels' company.³³

Another important contribution made to the city by Spreckels was the Music Bandstand (music concourse) in Golden Gate Park. On September 9, 1900, 30,000 California residents arrived at Golden Gate Park to receive the deed and title to their new and most elaborate music stand, a donation from their "fellow friend and citizen" Claus Spreckels. During the festivities, the grand audience cheered for Spreckels as he gave a speech declaring his love not only for the city of San Francisco but also for California. He described with great enthusiasm how the completion of the bandstand coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of California's statehood, and his nearly fifty years as a citizen in the Golden State.



Music Stand at Golden Gate Park in 1900, donated by Claus Spreckels. Courtesy of the author.

He further illustrated his devotion and loyalty to his adopted city and state by declaring:

I have never wished for any other home nor longed for anything on earth that California could not give. Recently I went abroad [to Germany] with the intention of staying a year. You see I have returned before the time I had fixed upon. My heart was here with my home and friends, and nothing that Europe or the Eastern States could furnish was sufficient enough to charm away the desire to get back to the land I love.³⁴

Claus Spreckels truly achieved what one would call the “American Dream.” He found great opportunities and flourished in California. His great admiration for San Francisco also led to great economic and architectural contributions.

In addition to Claus Spreckels, another important pioneer devoted to the improvement and development of the City of San Francisco was Adolph Sutro (1830–1898), a German-Jewish immigrant born in Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) in what was then the Rhine Province of the Kingdom of Prussia. His father was a prosperous cloth manufacturer and by the age of sixteen, Sutro was in charge of the family factory. In 1847 his father died, leading to hard times economically for the Sutro family. Sutro immigrated

to the United States in the fall of 1850 at the age of twenty, initially settling in Baltimore, Maryland. It wasn’t long, however, before news of gold on the Pacific West Coast enticed young Sutro to make his way to California via the Isthmus of Panama. He arrived in San Francisco in November 1850 and began his career in mercantile pursuits with varying success. At one point he became a tobacconist. His store was located on Montgomery Street, between Sacramento and California Streets.

As a young man in Germany, Sutro had studied engineering; thus, when the discovery of silver ore in Comstock Lode in Nevada was made in 1859, Sutro set off and started working as an engineer in local mining operations. The *San Francisco Chronicle* details Sutro’s achievements in an article dedicated to his career stating that, “after looking over the field, Sutro established a small metallurgical works (Sutro Metallurgical Works) on Market Street near First, and later built a mill in Dayton, Nevada, on the Carson River. By working over the tailings of other mills he laid the foundation of his future fortune.”³⁵ He designed the Sutro tunnel, which was essential for draining water from and ventilating the mines to better extract the silver ore.

After making upwards of \$3 million from business pursuits in Nevada, and selling the tunnel in 1879, Sutro devoted much of his time to the predestined “commercial greatness” of San Francisco. In 1881, he purchased property in an area near Golden Gate Park in what was called the “outside lands,” known today as Sutro Heights. Through additional real estate investments, the acreage he accumulated eventually amounted to one-twelfth of San Francisco.³⁶ In 1883, he purchased the Cliff House restaurant and also built his own personal residence in Sutro Heights. He also built Sutro Baths and the Sutro Electric Railway. Sutro worked diligently to rehabilitate and beautify his new home and property. Proud of his accomplishments, he opened his private park and grounds to the general public.



Adolph Sutro in 1886, surrounded by his books and art. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Deutsches Altenheim von San Francisco, 1909, (German Old Folks Home of San Francisco) was actually located in the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland. This postcard states “Wer Das Alter Nicht Ehrt, Ist Des Alters Nicht Wert,” which translates to “Those who do not honor their elders are themselves worthless.” Courtesy of the author.

In October of 1890, a meeting was held among the representatives of the recently formed *Altenheim Association* (senior association) to discuss where the *Deutsches Altenheim von San Francisco* (German Home for the Aged of San Francisco) should be built. Adolph Sutro had specified that he was willing to offer land for the home near the San Francisco Industrial School, the juvenile detention center. His offer was that the *Altenheim Association* could have the lot free of charge if they built the home on that land. However, the building committee for the project did not think the area would be suitable, and offers from Oakland and Alameda were more promising (daily weather conditions being a factor). The committee stated that Sutro’s offer was “only made in order to compel the organization to purchase some land adjoining the lot to be donated.”

After a vote of 46 to 12, Sutro’s proposal was turned down.³⁷ The *Deutsches Altenheim* instead was built in the Fruitvale District of East Oakland. Dedicated in 1894, it still stands as an affordable senior housing facility. Despite the rejection of Sutro’s offer, his name can be found among the inscribed bricks of the *Altenheim*’s original foundation, showing that he contributed financially to the construction of the home, along with other prominent Bay Area German-American families and organizations.

In 1894 Adolph Sutro ran for mayor of San Francisco on the Populist ticket. He would win twice as many votes than any of the more seasoned candidates running against him, becoming San Francisco’s first German-born and Jewish mayor, a major achievement for a first-generation immigrant. In February of 1896, during his last year as mayor,



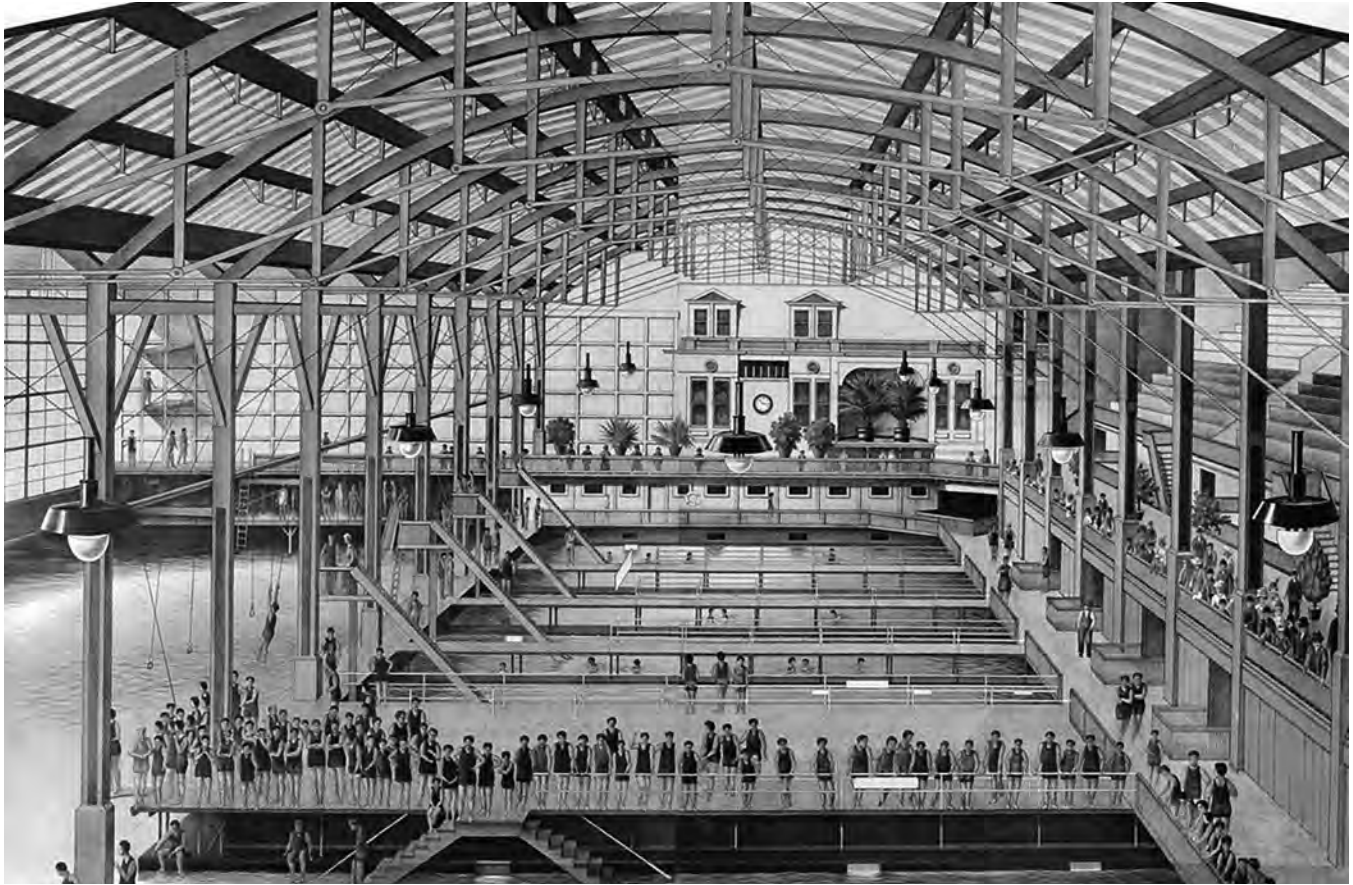
Image of the third Cliff House and Seal Rocks, 1900, from the view up Point Lobos Avenue. We see people riding carriages on the road toward the seven-story Victorian Chateau, also known as the “Gingerbread Palace” in the distance, while a steamship passes. Courtesy of a private collector.

Sutro sponsored a city-wide celebration at the new Cliff House (the first having burned down in 1894), as well as celebrations at Sutro Baths and the Sutro Electric Railway. The *San Francisco Chronicle* highlighted the day in an article, stating that “over twenty thousand people went over the electric line and fully half of them shook hands with Mayor Sutro until his thumbs swelled.”³⁸ Adolph Sutro was called the “people’s mayor” and found ways to enrich people’s lives with lasting monuments for their enjoyment and pleasure.

Another lesser-known character who dedicated his time, name, and fortune as a philanthropist to the beautification of San Francisco was Ignatz Steinhart (1840–1917). Born in Sulzbach, Bavaria, he was, like his contemporary Adolph Sutro, of German-Jewish background. He arrived in San Francisco in 1864 at the age of 24 and set forth to become one of

the leading financiers of California. In 1873 he was appointed manager of the San Francisco branch of the Anglo-California Bank, a well-known financial institution not only on the Pacific West Coast, but throughout the country. At the time, it was one of the most important and prominent banks in the city.³⁹ In 1909, Anglo-California Bank consolidated with London Paris National Bank, creating the Anglo & London Paris National Bank. Steinhart was a director until his death in 1917.

Most of Steinhart’s philanthropic efforts took place during the final years of his career in finance, after having successfully accumulated a net worth of \$3 million. One of his most famous projects began as a result of the passing of his brother Sigmund Steinhart in 1910. Steinhart was compelled to grant what was initially \$40,000 toward an aquarium to be built in his brother’s honor. During the planning



Interior of Sutro Baths in San Francisco, circa 1896. Courtesy of the author.

stages for the new aquarium, Steinhart was focused on establishing one of the best in the country, on par with other first-rate aquaria from around the world. As a noted traveler, he had “made a collection of photographs from which plans were being perfected for an aquarium” that would “combine the best features of those in other great cities,” while showcasing the best expression of marine life on the Pacific West Coast.⁴⁰ During a speech given in January of 1917, Steinhart announced at the San Francisco Club that Golden Gate Park would be the perfect location for the new aquarium. It was his intention to create a trifecta between the Academy of Sciences, Memorial Museum, and the proposed aquarium. This desire to provide enjoyment while educating the everyday citizen of San Francisco was best noted at the end of Steinhart’s speech: “For some time past I have been hard at work with necessary preparations to

bring this project of mine to early completion. . . . In conclusion, I want to say that if persons of means in our community could only realize the satisfaction and pleasure it gives to create and foster projects for the enjoyment of the people.”⁴¹

When Steinhart passed away in May of 1917, the budget for the aquarium immediately turned over to the trustees of the Academy of Sciences and had grown to more than \$250,000. The construction of the future Steinhart Aquarium did not begin until 1922, when the final donation from the Steinhart estate reached \$275,000. The connected park included a swamp, which according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, was “a unique feature, which had not been seen in any other aquariums around the world, and housed snakes, turtles, salamanders, and amphibians.”⁴² On September 29, 1923, the aquarium finally opened its doors, making Steinhart’s dream a reality.



Opening day at Steinhart Aquarium, 1923. Courtesy of the author.

In addition to having donated the funds for the construction of the aquarium, Steinhart's last will and testament gave a substantial \$2 million to relatives, friends, charities, and even to the town of his birth in Germany. Steinhart had previously started a fund for his hometown that annually distributed money to the poor on the date of his parents' wedding anniversary. In an issue of *The Reform Advocate* (a Chicago-based Saturday newspaper that chronicled the interests of Reform Judaism), there was a list of charities that had received donations from Steinhart's estate at the time of his death. Although not all of the charities were of German origin, donations were made in his name to: San Francisco German Hospital (\$10,000), the German Benevolent Society (\$5,000), the German-Jewish Eureka Benevolent Society (\$5,000), and the *Deutsches Altenheim* (\$2,000) in Oakland. He also donated \$20,000 to his hometown

of Sulzbach.⁴³ Ignatz Steinhart contributed philanthropically to both his adopted city as well as directly to institutions within the German community.

Having achieved excellent financial positions during their lifetimes, all of these men found themselves in the favorable position of being able to assist not only the local German-speaking community, but also more generally the city and citizens of San Francisco. Their common goal in assisting these German-American associations, while at the same time leaving their mark economically and physically across the city of San Francisco, demonstrates the interconnection between their identities as both Germans and Americans.

In the process of organizing their own clubs, lodges, and associations, German immigrants developed a common voice within their newly adopted communities. Working and middle-class

Germans showed an interest in a variety of different types of clubs, associations, and fraternal lodges that fell primarily into six major organizational categories that included a number of local organizations that were affiliated with larger national (umbrella) organizations: *Turnvereins* (gymnastic and cultural associations affiliated with the national *Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund*), *Schuetzenvereins* (sharpshooter/target shooting clubs affiliated with the National *Schuetzenbund* of America), *Sangerbunds*, and *Gesangvereine* (singing societies for both men and women affiliated with the *Nordamerikanischer Sangerbund*), and *Landsmannschaften* (regional associations based on the geographical origin of the members). Many of these people were also associated with a large number of different “Fraternal Lodges” and “Benevolent Societies” that provided financial, health, and life insurance benefits to their members.

Generations of German immigrants and their families, including large numbers of second- and third-generation Americans of German ancestry, enjoyed this variety of associations. During the second half of the 19th century, and in fact up until



*Image of Bayern Bund of San Francisco, founded in 1890.
From the Glenn Koch collection.*

America’s entrance into the First World War, well organized associational life offered a great variety of different social opportunities for its members. These cultural outlets were often broad in their scope and also ranged from such things as German language theatres that were popular starting in the 1860s, to large south German folk music ensembles such as the “San Francisco Zither Club” (from 1926 known



Image of the Sangerbund at Sangerfest Pacific, circa 1910. From the Glenn Koch collection.



The Alpine Zither Club concert and Ball Invitation at Mission Turnverein circa 1910s. Courtesy of Zither U.S.

as the “Alpine Zither Club”) under the direction of Max Maier, a Bavarian, who for more than forty years led an Alpine zither orchestra that regularly gave well attended concerts. Maier also offered zither lessons, and did retail sales of the instrument from his store at 304 Turk Street.

Each category of associational life facilitated the creation of a unique German-American identity, with the benevolent and fraternal societies fulfilling both the social and financial security needs of their members. German immigrants living in larger urban communities often held their clubs and associations in high regard, as these groups provided not only familiar cultural expressions of their homeland through cultural and leisure time activities, but also aided their members with guidance and emotional support during the immigrants’ transition into everyday American life.⁴⁴ The well-organized array of clubs and associations found in American cities with large German populations was important for developing and establishing a uniquely German-American social life among people brought together through common cultural experiences. San Francisco was no different; despite regional differences, members

of the German community here recognized their similarities through common language and similar cultural backgrounds. By 1914 Germans living in San Francisco organized themselves into more than 150 different clubs, lodges, and associations.

One of the oldest *Vereins* in San Francisco was established in 1854. Known as the *Allgemeine Deutsche Unterstuetzungs-Gesellschaft*, or General German Benevolent Society (1854–1914), the society played an important role in the German community for sixty years. Benevolent organizations for many ethnic communities in San Francisco facilitated the needs of fellow countrymen by providing them with employment, shelter, food, and medical care. *The Hebrew Benevolent Society* was one of the first of these institutions established in 1850, with the German, French, Chinese, and Irish communities forming similar associations shortly thereafter.⁴⁵

Historian Robert Lotchin best explains the ways in which these ethnic benevolent societies provided for their communities by establishing medical facilities that were essential relief for both new as well as more established immigrants:

The origin of these institutions was urban as well as ethnic, for San Francisco simply did not supply many of the services that its people needed, especially medical ones. The complaint that foreigners were not allowed into the city hospital was not true; but they, along with everybody else, got pretty mediocre care. Sometimes the language barrier further compounded their discomfort, and these deficiencies encouraged the founding of new establishments.⁴⁶

In 1856, the German Benevolent Society made plans to build the German Hospital with the laying of the cornerstone on Brannan Street (between Third and Fourth Streets) in 1857. Unfortunately, due to a factory fire in August of 1876, the thirty-room hospital was completely destroyed, causing nearly \$700,000 worth of damage. In the early years of the German Hospital, its founder Joseph N. Rausch M.D. proposed “one of the country’s first pre-paid health plans; for a dollar a month, German-speaking immigrants qualified for a private hospital bed if they

ever needed it at a dollar a day.” By 1895 the German Benevolent Society would open its membership to all citizens of San Francisco, catering to them regardless of their background or language ability.⁴⁷

The German Benevolent Society continued to experience growth as larger numbers of German immigrants arrived in the city during the late nineteenth century. In 1870 the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauen-Hilfsverein*, or German Ladies Benevolent Society (1870–present), was formed as a woman’s branch of the General German Benevolent Society. By 1890, membership had grown to more than 250 people who met weekly at 312 Post Street to discuss matters regarding their mission to aid poor and distressed women and children of German descent.

In 1889, when the German General Benevolent Society was celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary, it had 3,600 members and owned up to \$500,000 worth of property, making San Francisco’s German Benevolent Society one of the top six benevolent societies of German origin in the nation.⁴⁸ In 1876, two years after the fire had burned the first German



The German Hospital. The book, Hospital of the German Benevolent Society, San Francisco, was published in 1870 for the benefit of the German Hospital. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



The "New" German Hospital, shown here in 1901, stood on the corner of 14th and Noe Streets. Courtesy of the author.

hospital to the ground, a new hospital was built at 45 Castro Street (at Duboce). In 1904 a decision was made to completely re-build the hospital. The *San Francisco Chronicle* hailed that the hospital would be "the finest institution of its kind in the West," costing an astounding \$400,000. Due to the devastation of the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906, construction of the new hospital was delayed. By 1908 the new German Hospital was rededicated and opened its doors, representing the culmination of the German Benevolent Society's contribution to the city of San Francisco and symbolizing the strength of the German-American community during these years. The hospital has had various names over the years: the German Hospital, Franklin Hospital (a name change during World War I), and Davies Medical Center. Today it is known as California Pacific Medical Center, Davies Campus, and is still located at 45 Castro Street.



Group image of nurses at the German Hospital, circa 1900s. The German Hospital was a main source of employment for immigrants who did not speak English. Courtesy of Doris Linnenbach of the German Ladies Benevolent Society.

German-speaking fraternal lodges and orders were also an important aspect of what was a very well organized community life. Fraternal organizations assisted German-speaking families with financial benefits, while at the same time remaining dedicated to the upholding of German cultural and social values. The primary objective of the fraternal lodges was to provide aid for their members and families in case of sickness, distress, or death.

Der Orden der Hermann Soehne, or Order of the Hermann Sons, was one of the largest and most popular among the many German-speaking lodges in San Francisco, with ten active lodges in the city and an additional sixty elsewhere throughout California by 1914. The Order of the Hermann Sons was named after Arminius (Hermann is the German translation of *Arminius*), a Cheruscan who united the German tribes as far back as 33 B.C. Hermann liberated the German people from Roman domination at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (*Hermannsschlacht*) in 9 C.E.⁴⁹ The Order of the

Hermann Sons was originally founded in 1840 on the Lower East Side of New York City as a reaction to the anti-immigrant prejudice many Germans were experiencing at the time. The first Hermann Sons lodge in California was established in San Francisco in 1870, with a Grand Lodge organizing in 1878. As of 2014, ten of these lodges were still active in California.

Athletic associations such as the *Turnverein* (gymnastics association) were also outlets for many German immigrants and their families to derive the benefits of “a sound mind in a sound body.” A letter describing the origin of the Turner Movement stated:

The Turner Association, which has now become so large and so important among our German citizens, was a political one. Germany is divided into thirty-six different States, with as many Governments of a despotic nature, and many of them hostile to each other. Young Germany, deeply imbued with the spirit of freedom, has been for a long time



Turnverein Hall on Turk Street. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



San Francisco Turnverein Hall, 1907, located on Sutter Street.
 Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

anxious to throw off these yokes, and unite under one liberal, consolidated government; but the rulers, in order to prevent this, have forbidden all assemblies or associations for political purposes, under heavy penalties.⁵⁰

The same letter mentioned the bond of loyalty felt among the Turners themselves, regardless of where they came from, the United States or Germany. A special camaraderie was formed as “there is no secrecy about the association, a Turner of any one city considers himself, to all intents and purposes, a member of the *Turnverein* of any other city.”

In 1806, Turner movement founder Friedrich Ludwig Jahn declared that it was necessary to unify the German states, create democratic reforms, and encourage future generations of Germans to train and participate in vigorous physical exercise, which would result in greater freedom among the German

people through the Turner motto *Frisch, Froh, Frei, Treue* (Bold, Cheerful, Free, Loyal).

The first *Turnverein* in the United States was established in Cincinnati in 1848. As German immigrants moved west with the Gold Rush, the Turner movement came to San Francisco. On August 14, 1852, the San Francisco *Turnverein* was dedicated by Charles Krug. Established along with fifty-three other German immigrants, it became one of the first German organizations on the West Coast. By 1914 four separate *Turnvereins* were active in the city: San Francisco *Turnverein*, Mission *Turnverein*, *Turnverein Eintracht*, and the *Arbeiter Turnverein*.⁵¹ The *Turnverein Eintracht* hall stood for many years at 12th and Folsom Streets. It was damaged in the 1906 earthquake and rebuilt soon after. After the earthquake, the San Francisco *Turnverein* erected its reconstructed hall in the Western Addition in 1911, and the Mission *Turnverein* opened a new

hall in 1910. Both the Mission and San Francisco *Turnverein* buildings are still standing and in use today; however, the days of Turners in San Francisco are a faded memory.

An article by historian Roberta J. Park, titled, “German Associational and Sporting Life in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area, 1850–1900,” states that the Turner movement in San Francisco, as in other cities, strove to “promote gymnastics exercise, morality, improve health, encourage music, and to entertain and cultivate free religious and political sentiments.”⁵² Their motto, “Bold, Cheerful, Free, Loyal,” originally contained the word *Devout*, but, as Park explained, many of the Turners were of the “Forty-Eighter Generation” and were critical of religious constraints, opting to support individual religious freedoms—a behavior not readily supported back in Germany. This placed the more conservative religious Germans (*Kirchedeutsche*) on a high alert, as their religious leaders warned them to disassociate themselves from the *Turnverein* groups for fear they might weaken the religious faith of church-going



Greetings from the German Theater at Mission Turnverein, 1909, another example of the variety of activities held at the German club venue. Courtesy of the author.



“Active Turner” posing with a statue of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (father of the Turner Movement) on the opening day of the Mission Turnverein, November 1910. From the Glenn Koch collection.

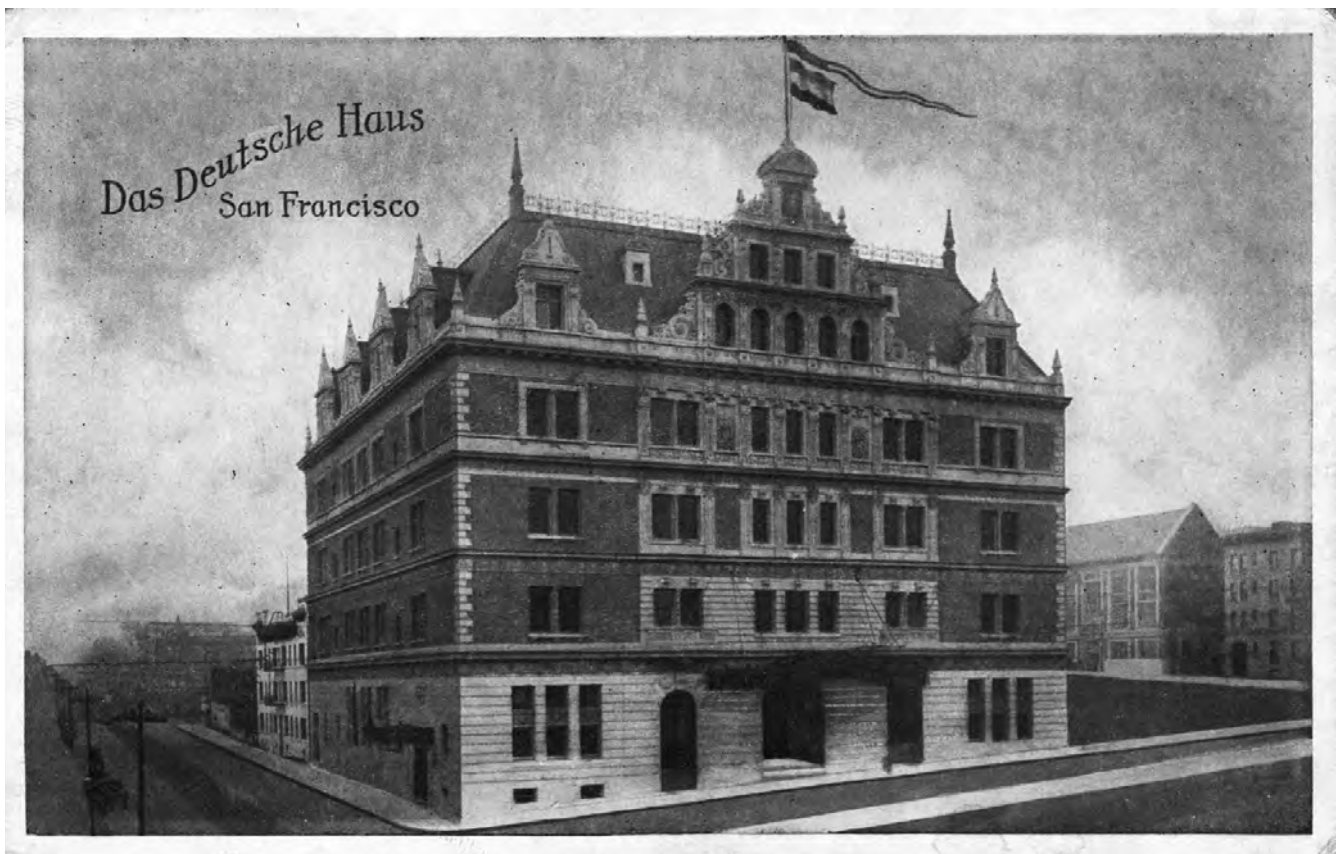
Germans. Members of the *Turnverein*, being associated as *Vereinsdeutsche*, were known to drink alcohol, dance, and engage in social activities on the Sabbath. The idea of the “Continental Sunday,” which by the 1860s was well established in San Francisco, was not only frowned upon by German religious congregations and parishes, but also by those of non-German origin, particularly Anglo-American Protestants, who often found such behavior disruptive and sacrilegious. On many Sundays, the *Turnvereins* were known to march noisily past the doors of German churches on their way to a *Turnfest* or a local beer garden, in complete disregard for a congregation’s need for peace and quiet as they worshiped.⁵³

In December of 1912, the new five-story German House (*Deutsches Haus*) was completed. The opening of the German House in many ways represented the culmination of sixty years of organized German associational life in San Francisco. Many German associations had lost their meeting halls in the earthquake of 1906, and the idea developed to build a new home for all the German associations and lodges in order to centralize the club life (*Vereinsleben*) of

the community in one location. The laying of the cornerstone for the new German House at 624 Polk Street (between Turk and Eddy Streets) was widely reported in the mainstream media. It was certainly a major project, a huge endeavor undertaken by the local German community, reflecting the strong physical presence they had at the time.

In order to raise the eventual \$500,000 needed, the German House Association sold shares to various clubs, societies, and individuals within the German-speaking community. Certainly, the most positive purpose of the construction of the hall was to give a home to the many dozens of clubs and societies that did not have their own hall or clubhouse and have a place that they could finally call their own. As San Francisco landmark #174, the old German “Castle” was the social center and “heart” of San Francisco’s German community. That was until it was sold in 1984 and converted into a culinary academy. Today the building is the Fashion School of the Academy of Art University.

The cornerstone-laying ceremony was held at Polk and Turk Streets, and many noteworthy political



The completed German House between Turk and Eddy Streets, 1912. From the Glenn Koch collection.



Image of the Hermann Son's Association in the 1912 grand parade after the cornerstone-laying ceremony of the German House.
 From the Glenn Koch collection.

figures were in attendance, including German Consul General Bopp, who read a message of greetings from Kaiser Wilhelm to the German-American community; and James Rolph, the mayor of San Francisco. Even the governor of California at the time, Hiram Johnson, made an appearance that day.

An extensive musical program was presented, incorporating harmonious musical pieces from both the United States and Germany. The opening ceremony was very patriotic in nature, reflecting a parallel society and culture within the larger mainstream American society. The German and American flags were hoisted next to each other as a German chorus produced a musical acknowledgment of the communities new and old. The events that day in San Francisco came only two years before the outbreak of World War I in Europe.

The grand parade was described as “one of the greatest ever seen in the city.” The “contingents” that participated in the seven-division parade

were from most German associations in northern California. The mass presence, along with the notable politicians who gave the German House their blessing, expresses one of the high points in the history of the German-speaking community in San Francisco. The opening of the hall would be a symbol of the strength of the community and a culmination of its unity. German-Americans were finally able to devote their time and money to an establishment that would fully promote their cultural contributions to their adopted city.

Only “the most prominent architects of San Francisco competed in the contest for making plans for the building,” with members of The German House Association choosing architect Frederick H. Meyer, son of German immigrants. The interior of the hall would be made from the finest and most lasting materials. Inspired by the look of the famous Heidelberg Castle, the five-story German House was to last for many generations to come.

German-Americans strove to preserve fundamental aspects of their German identity by also establishing larger national and statewide umbrella organizations that brought unity and coordination to the thousands of German clubs, lodges, and societies that had been established by the turn of the twentieth century across America. On April 16, 1899, the German-American citizens of Philadelphia formed the umbrella association known as the German-American Central Alliance of Pennsylvania. The constitution they enacted included the following statement of purpose:

The Alliance strives to awaken and promote a feeling of unity within people of German ancestry here in America and to turn it into a useful and wholesome entity, which once centralized, can draw upon its inherent force for a united and energetic guardianship of justified wishes and interests, which are not contrary to the common good of the country and the rights and duties of proper citizens. It strives to defend against nativist encroachment, and to foster and secure friendly relations between America and the old German fatherland.⁵⁴

The German-American Central Alliance of Pennsylvania (GACAP) constitution was written in the German language and followed the Alliances' demand to maintain aspects of German culture that were distinctly their own. Members of the GACAP strove to promote attributes related to German heritage, while at the same time continuing to maintain their status as citizens of the United States. If anything, this alliance was an institution meant to bridge the gap between the two countries, allowing its members to be ambassadors of both. With the establishment of such a movement in the United States, the hyphen in identifying oneself as German-American became much stronger: "Forever true to the adopted fatherland, ever ready to do its best for the common good, honest and selfless in the exercise of the duties of citizenship, obedient to the law—these too are hallmarks of the Alliance!"⁵⁵

The GACAP also viewed the establishment of its Alliance as a blueprint for other German associations and clubs in other states to join together to form statewide umbrella organizations like the GACAP.

Statewide organizations affiliated themselves directly with a strong and centralized national organization that would work on behalf of the interests of German America, and most importantly promote the preservation of the German language and German-American cultural traditions.

On October 6, 1901, the GACAP under Dr. Charles J. Hexamer joined with delegates from twelve different states, including the District of Columbia, to establish the National German-American Alliance of the United States (*Deutsch-Amerikanischer Nationalbund*) (1901–18). In the alliance's infancy, only representatives from the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, and Minnesota had taken part in the first organizational meeting (June 19, 1900) which began the process of organizing and building the National German-American Alliance of the United States (NGAA). Within a few years German communities in other states were organizing their clubs and associations into statewide branches (*Staatverbänden*) and affiliating these state branches with the national organization in Philadelphia. At its peak the NGAA had forty statewide branches or leagues and more than one and a half million members.

Discussions for a California branch of the German-American national body began as early as September 24, 1901. The *San Francisco Call* reported the great interest that the San Francisco German community had in bringing all the German associations and lodges together into one united statewide organization. The intention of these German-Americans was to be affiliated with the national organization in Philadelphia.:

There is also a benevolent feature connected with the organization. Each state body is affiliated with the national body, which has its headquarters in Philadelphia. In San Francisco there are 140 organizations of German-Americans. Thirty of these were represented at last night's meeting. After the matter had been thoroughly discussed it was voted to have a committee of seven to stimulate interest among the local German-Americans.⁵⁶

Within two years the German-American League of California (*Deutsch-Amerikanischer Staatsverband von California*) officially affiliated itself with the

NGAA in Philadelphia and established the state league's headquarters in San Francisco. Delegates from sixteen states were in attendance at the annual NGAA convention in 1903. By 1905, the California League requested that the German associations and lodges in southern California coordinate to form a regional branch of the state league; thus, the still existing German American League of Los Angeles was born. Other regional branches of the state league were organized in Oakland, Sacramento, San Jose, Stockton, and San Diego.⁵⁷ Regarding the San Francisco branch of the league, when the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed much of the city, the NGAA expressed its benevolent ambitions by quickly donating \$300 to local German families. By July this had been increased to a total of \$2,420.75 to assist families affected by the catastrophe.⁵⁸

At the time of the California League's annual statewide convention in 1908, the regional branches of the league represented 155 affiliated German associations with a total statewide membership exceeding 30,000. The corresponding secretary for



Studio image of German born bartender Adolf Delabar and his two children Genevieve and Viktor a year after arriving in San Francisco, 1915. Courtesy of the author.

the German-American League of California, Carl W. Mueller, stated with pride:

Our league is affiliated with the German-American National Alliance, with branches in 38 states with over two million members. The league seeks to bring about a full and honest recognition of the merits of the Germans in our population and an acknowledgment of the public services rendered by them, and the share they have contributed to the advancement of the spiritual and economic development of this country ever since the landing of the first Germans under Pastorius in Germantown, PA two hundred and twenty-five years ago.⁵⁹

With the organization of the statewide leagues, an attempt was made to bring German-speaking immigrants and their American-born children and grandchildren together as a united community from coast to coast, reflecting the feeling of cultural pride that the German population in America had during the early years of the twentieth century. Not every German-American supported this concept, but many during these years were supportive.

Large-scale organizing efforts were made with the reasoning that should the community ever come under attack or be "endangered by political matters," a larger, more united front would be in place to defend the interests of the German community on a national level.⁶⁰ One of the ways to achieve a unified national consciousness among German-Americans was through the publishing of books and pamphlets on German-American history.

In the spirit of early twentieth-century German-America, the NGAA was determined to chronicle German-speaking immigrants' contributions to their adopted homeland. Initially, the NGAA refrained from participating in party politics. They were primarily promoters of German language and culture and strongly supported efforts to encourage the teaching of the German language in schools, as well as being in line with the Turner's in advocating for physical fitness and gymnastics instruction. There was also considerable support by the NGAA to encourage and help newly arrived immigrants acquire United States citizenship in order for them to take a more active role in American political and civic life.⁶¹

In September of 1908, more than three hundred delegates met in San Francisco for the fifth-annual statewide convention of the German-American League. This was considered at the time to be one of the most “notable gatherings” of Germans ever held in the city. This was also when the future construction of the large and modern German House was seriously discussed.

Since the German House was not completed until 1912, the statewide convention of the German-American League that year was held at the Eagles Hall in Sausalito. League President John Hermann opened the convention by encouraging the delegates to continue the fight against those political elements that would promote laws outlawing the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. It had been widely believed by many German-Americans that consumption of alcoholic beverages was a personal right and freedom not to be infringed upon by any government.

By 1912 the number of German associations (including fraternal lodges) in California had risen significantly to 225, with 50,000 members throughout California.⁶² The city of San Francisco alone accounted for 150 of these groups, the largest concentration of German organizations in any city west of the Mississippi.

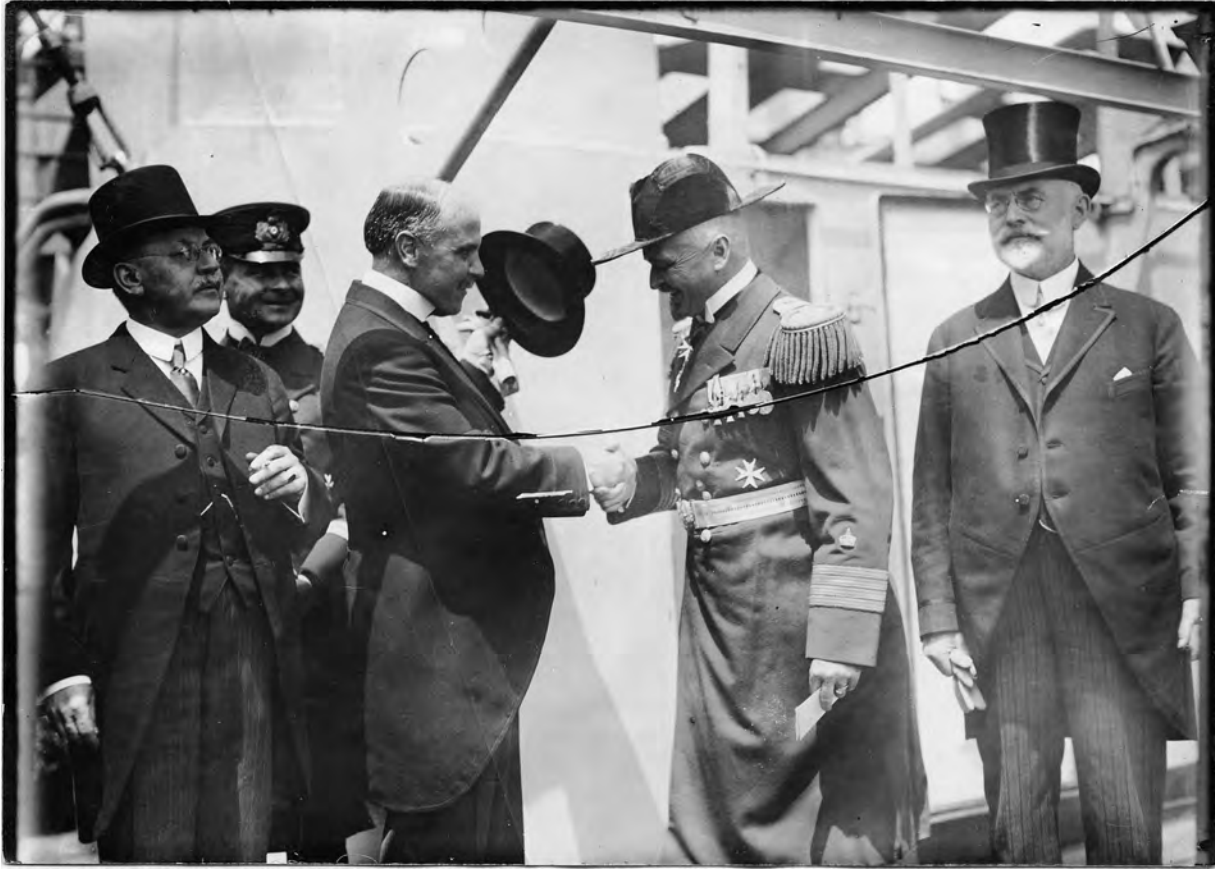
On July 15, 1914, the German cruiser S.M.S. *Nürnberg* arrived in the Port of San Francisco. The captain and crew were greeted with much enthusiasm by the citizens of the city. The arrival of the cruiser was a major social event for the local German community, coordinated by the German Veterans Association (*Deutscher Kriegerverein*) in association with the Wives of Veterans Association (*Krieger Frauenverein*). The printed program for the event was filled with patriotic songs that were presented in both German and English by the singing society (*Gesangverein Harmonie*), followed by a ball held in the evening after a parade through the streets that had welcomed the German officers and sailors. The *Nürnberg* was docked for six days, anchored off of Meiggs Wharf, much to the excitement of the locals, especially the German-American community, which considered the ship a “great motif” to the numerous receptions they held in honor of the crew. Mayor Rolph also made an appearance, personally greeting Captain von Schoenburg on the dry dock.⁶³

On July 18, 1914 a number of influential and distinguished visitors attended a luncheon at the German House, organized by the German-American League of San Francisco. Two thousand guests arrived and packed the auditorium. President of the League, John Hermann, hosted the celebration and made a speech exclaiming “Three cheers for the German Kaiser!” No sooner were those cheers heard, when the group was requested to cheer for “our President Woodrow Wilson.” Captain von Schoenburg was impressed with the spirit and pride of the German-Americans in San Francisco and “congratulated the members of the league of Germans, who while being good Americans had not lost their German spirit or their remembrance of the Fatherland.”⁶⁴

On July 21, the crew of the *Nürnberg*, having been so well-received in San Francisco, continued their journey into the Pacific and on to their base at Tsingtao (Qingdao), China. However, within seven days of the cruiser leaving the port of San Francisco, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia as a result of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The fate of the cruiser would be sealed with the outbreak of World War I. The *Nürnberg* would be sunk by the British on December 12, 1914, at the Battle of the Falkland Islands, less than five months after visiting the port of San Francisco.

As tensions increased in Europe with the start of the Great War, German-Americans across the country found themselves caught in an ambiguous situation. The events occurring in Europe were beginning to have an effect on the German-American community in California, as many found themselves temporarily torn between two countries. During the second half of the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of them contributed to the development of a new cultural identity in the United States, which up until the start of the war was in many ways still in its infancy. For the German-Americans of San Francisco the years before the United States’ entry into the war against Germany would be a critical moment in their history.

It was while the United States was neutral, between July of 1914 and April of 1917, that the German-American community strongly defended Germany’s position in going to war against Great Britain, France, and Russia. As a community during these years they held functions in honor



Mayor James Rolph greets Captain Von Schoenberg of the German cruiser S.M.S. Nürnberg, upon its arrival at the Port of San Francisco, 1914. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

of German political figures, expressed great pride in their cultural heritage at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915, and facilitated a major fundraiser in 1916 for the suffering widows of soldiers and children of Germany. This charitable fundraiser would be the last time the community in San Francisco would organize itself on such a large scale, asserting themselves to such a degree during a time of great political uncertainty.

In March of 1915, a two-day celebration was held to honor the 100th birthday of Otto von Bismarck, founder of the German Empire. The function was held at the German House. Many speeches were given, some of which included optimistic outlooks regarding Germany's war against the Allies. Speakers included Counsel-General Franz Bopp, a professor from the University of California; Hermann Weber; and many others who credited Bismarck for bringing the former independent states of Germany together into one empire.

Out of all the speakers present that evening, an exchange professor from Harvard University named Professor Eugene Kuehnemann expressed the most hope for the future, stating that "the present war will give to the world a greater Germany and through that experience, there will be attained a new German ideal of unity in Europe."⁶⁵

The Panama Pacific International Exhibition was a World's Fair held in the city of San Francisco between February 20 and December 4, 1915. The celebration was meant to commemorate the completion of the Panama Canal and in turn to display not only to the American public, but also to the entire world that San Francisco, much like a great Phoenix emerging from the ashes of the 1906 earthquake, was stronger than ever and the crown jewel of the West Coast. Various ethnic groups within the city mobilized to show and represent their unique contributions to the city and the entire country. Due to the outbreak of the war in 1914, both

Germany and Britain did not have pavilions at the fair. Yet, that did not stop the German community from collaborating together. With the help of local members, money was collected from individuals and businesses. Donations were then used toward the construction of a Bavarian “village” and restaurant, thus ensuring that Germany would be represented at the nine-and-a-half-month event that attracted almost 19 million visitors.

On May 1, 1915, midway through the exposition, tragedy struck when the British ocean liner R.M.S. *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine. Despite warnings from the German authorities of the waters being unsafe, the *Lusitania* departed from the Port of New York for Liverpool. Of the 1,959 people on board, 1,198 died, including 128 Americans. The United States continued to remain neutral, but tensions built significantly with Germany. Despite unforeseen circumstances, the German-American community had been planning to represent their former homeland at the exposition for more than six years. They moved forward with their plans and utilized this time of great tragedy to show solidarity with the United States via their distinctly German-American celebrations. Thus, it was concluded that during the week of August 1–8 of 1915, a “German Week” (*Deutsche Woche*) theme would be included at the fair with activities planned for each day, including the annual German-American Day festival. On August 1, 1915, 550 delegates attended the eighth annual national convention of the National German-American Alliance (NGAA) at the German House. They ended the convention with a celebration commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Order of the Hermann Sons. Five days later on August 5, German-Americans from all over northern California assembled at the German House and marched 35,000 strong in a



The Alt Nurnberg “German Village” at the Panama Pacific International Exposition, 1915. Courtesy of the author.

magnificent parade to the exposition fairgrounds in celebration of German-American Day. The *San Francisco Chronicle* stipulated that, “there will be no floats and no military displays, the idea being merely the numbers and loyalty of the Germans to this country.”⁶⁶

Dr. Charles J. Hexamer, president of the National German-American Alliance, arrived from



German-American Day Parade at Panama Pacific International Exposition, 1915. From the Glenn Koch collection.



Mayor James Rolph gives a speech during German Day at the Panama Pacific International Exposition, 1915.
From the Glenn Koch collection.

Philadelphia and made a speech describing the achievements, aspirations, and hopes of millions of German-Americans toward the United States, appealing to their honor and national pride during a period of growing tensions. As reported in *The Fatherland*, a weekly periodical written in English, Dr. Hexamer indicated that the National German-American Alliance was in essence the crystallization of the German-American movement, and reminded his audience that the inspirations for German-American Day were “the German language, German ethics and philosophy, German song and German habits, having been planted here for two centuries, permeating the masses of our people with ennobling influences and serving as a blessing for an entire nation.”⁶⁷ While some non-Germans were entertained by the public function, others viewed the event with the idea that “the Kaiser Boosters are at it again.” Dr. Hexamer’s speech was not presented in English, and non-German-speaking Americans were unable to

understand the points he was making on behalf of the German-Americans and their position on the war.

Periodicals across the country sensationalized this moment as nothing more than an embarrassment for citizens of German heritage. Had Hexamer considered making his points in English, onlookers could have potentially considered his arguments. Public opinion for German-Americans might not have been judged as harshly. Despite the fact, a leading Wisconsin newspaper, the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, covered the event, and maintained a stance against the German-American community by stating:

The *Deutschland Uber Alles* shouters are passing resolutions galore; condemning whatever does not appear to be favorable to the short-sighted vision of Germany first. The various attacks made on the American government by Dr. Hexamer are enough to cause one whose ancestors were Germans to feel a keen sense of shame at the thought of apparently

having come from a people so apparently lost to the general American idea of standing by the chosen executive, and not placing the love for any foreign country above that of the United States.⁶⁸

The following day, August 6, one hundred automobiles were placed at the disposal of the German-Americans as they gathered in Golden Gate Park for the unveiling of the Beethoven monument. *Milwaukee Journal* described the bust as having been “concealed by a multi-colored curtain of both German and American flags.” This was a gift presented to the City of San Francisco from the *Beethoven Maennerchor* (a men’s singing society) of New York City. *Beethoven Maennerchor* president George Altstadt spoke. He concluded his remarks as his ten-year-old daughter Carrie pulled the cord to unveil the new monument dedicated to the great German composer. Representatives of affiliated *Sängerchors* in New York and Philadelphia were also present among the 1,000 people who attended the ceremonies, which were similar to those held in Golden Gate Park fourteen years earlier for the unveiling of the Goethe-Schiller Monument.



Unveiling ceremony of the Goethe-Schiller Monument in San Francisco, August 1901. Courtesy of Alamy Limited.

To finish off the *Deutsche Woche*, the community sponsored the “National *Schuetzenfest*” (target shooting competitions) at Shellmound Park in Emeryville. August 8 also marked the conclusion of the final meetings of NGAA. When officers finished their afternoon round of meetings, *Milwaukee Journal* reported, they walked into the French Pavilion and were escorted out by security for wearing their German flag lapel pins in the French pavilion!⁶⁹

As anti-German sentiment became more prevalent in the years leading up to U.S. involvement in the war, German-Americans found their patriotism constantly being tested. Yet their connection to the Fatherland continued to strengthen as they defended Germany’s actions and reasons for fighting in the war. With so many well-established German organizations in the United States, it is interesting to note the ways these institutions reacted to the war. Essentially, they utilized themselves in a new and different way. Instead of throwing a festival or a fundraiser in the name of building up their own local communities, they were now using similar methods to help those in need back in Germany.

This was the case with regard to the German Relief Bazaar “for Humanity’s Sake,” which was a fundraiser held in May of 1916 at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. Considered to be the last major German-American event held in San Francisco before the United States entered the war against Germany and Austria-Hungry, the event was held in partnership with the American Red Cross. Proceeds from the event were sent to Germany to help support war widows, wounded soldiers, orphans, and dislocated families who had become the casualties of the war. The theme of the five-day event was “Arabian Nights,” with two hundred young boys and girls dressed in costumes to recreate the city of “Old Baghdad.” More than 1,500 volunteers spent months planning and preparing for the festivities and 10,000 people would attend. The festivities officially commenced when president of the bazaar committee, George F. Volkmann, concluded his opening day speech by saying, “I bid you welcome in the name of human virtues, charity. A few short months ago a group of German men and women of German birth or parentage came together determined to make some extraordinary efforts to swell the fund of relief for the innocent war victims in the Fatherland.” The



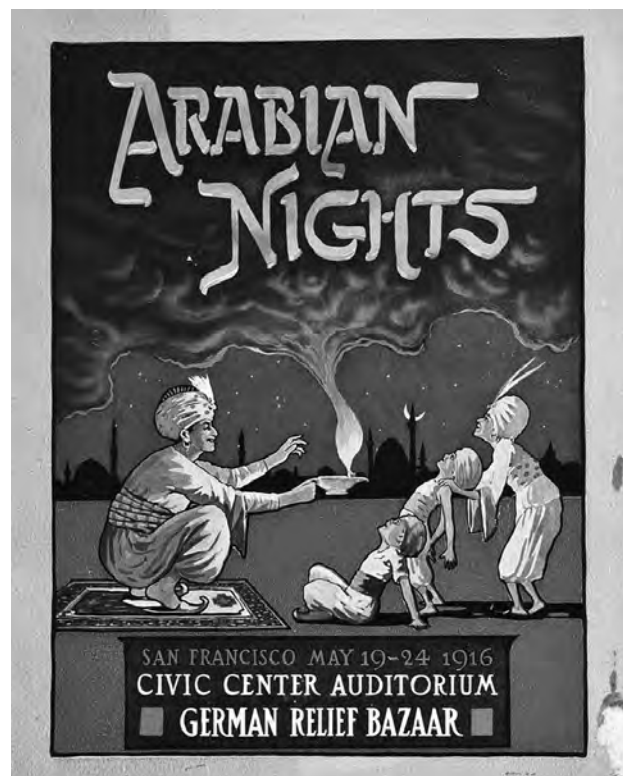
Event postcard of a guardian angel overlooking a mother and child for the German Relief Bazaar, May 1916.
From the Glenn Koch collection.

cost of the bazaar was upwards of \$15,000, a true spectacle of the times. The *San Francisco Chronicle* mentioned an item auctioned during the bazaar, a “peace trumpet,” which was to be given to the German House and was to be blown from the roof of the structure to celebrate peace in Europe once the leaders and diplomats had come together and agreed to end the war.⁷⁰ Further hope of peace was confirmed when the governor of California, Hiram Johnson, agreed to be honorary chairman of the event. In his opening statement he praised: “...every effort to alleviate the pain and anguish, to care for those whose losses have left them bereft, to aid the brave who have responded to the love of country in wars not of their making, commands itself to all right-thinking people; and the German Charity Bazaar, with its spirit of helpfulness, and its tender, generous impulse of

servicing the afflicted and assisting the suffering has my hearty cordial best wishes for success.”⁷¹

The German Relief Bazaar proved to be a great success, and thousands of people donated. Initially, the goal was to raise \$100,000; yet, at the end of the event, the committee had raised twice the amount they had anticipated, donating \$200,000 to the American Red Cross for the relief of families in Germany.

Since the beginning of the war in Europe in August of 1914 the NGAA had advocated for American neutrality. On April 1, 1917, John Hermann, president of the German-American League of California, sent the following telegram to President Wilson and representatives of California in the Senate in one last final effort to keep America out of the war against Germany. The telegram said, “We again appeal to you to keep the country out of the war or at least submit this question to the referendum vote of the people. Do not force our innocent sons to be slaughtered. Let them have their rights as American citizens, to cast their votes in this hour of danger.”⁷²



Arabian Nights German “Relief Bazaar Program” at Civic Center Auditorium, San Francisco, May 1916.
Courtesy of the author.

The United States officially entered World War I on the side of the Allies three days later, April 4, 1917. From that moment on, the majority of German-Americans banded together with the rest of the country to support the American cause. Surprisingly, editorials from newspapers such as the *San Francisco Chronicle* did not over sensationalize the situation by depicting German-Americans as horrendous people for having defended their former homeland during the period of American neutrality. In fact, the well-read newspaper showcased empathy for what they called the largest and most loyal ethnic minority to uphold American ideals. The citizens of San Francisco were reminded readers that: "A majority of our older German residents came, or perhaps fled, to this country to escape the clutches of the *Hohenzollern* man, for whose descendants we are now at war with. And our country is full of the descendants of those refugees, who love the memories or the traditions of Germany, but hate the name of the Prussian tyrant."⁷³

The *Chronicle* presented a much different perspective than was expected among such high tensions to its readers to better understand and empathize with their local German-American neighbors. Yet, throughout the rest of 1917 and into 1918, pressures on a national level as a result of anti-German war hysteria would prove to be a major factor in a reduced amount of cultural activity among German-Americans; the worst outcome was the dismantling of the National German-American Alliance. Although no act of disloyalty on the part of the national body had yet to be proven, it was decided on April 11, 1918 that it was best for the Alliance to dissolve. A Senate investigation into their loyalty was a major factor in their demise, with \$30,000, the nucleus of their funds, being turned over to the American Red Cross shortly thereafter.⁷⁴

Despite the loss of their national umbrella organization, German-Americans continued to remain loyal to the United States, the nation that had given them so many opportunities to thrive. One of the best ways for them to show their loyalty was through the purchase of Liberty Bonds or having a son serve in the armed forces. In the case of Liberty Loans, the city was divided into districts. Each district had a captain in charge of making sure the citizens of that sector bought as many Liberty Bonds necessary

to make its quota. In San Francisco, the community compiled the lists with assistance from the foreign language division of the Liberty Loan committee of all Germans in the city. All German residents were to be interviewed and asked how many Liberty Bonds they had purchased during the Liberty Loan drive, as well as the total number of bonds they had acquired since the start of the war.⁷⁵

The status quo for an American citizen came with specific responsibilities. In honoring the request to buy Liberty Bonds citizens were fulfilling their duty as Americans, or in the case of German-Americans and other immigrants, showing a display of loyalty and gratitude to their adopted country. Justice M. C. Sloss of the California Senate Supreme Court took this a step further, specifying that the responsibility of proving their loyalty had generational effects: "You (Germans) came to this country because you sought opportunities that did not exist for you elsewhere, and I doubt if one of you has been disappointed. The duty of loyalty that you owe is not only in the country to which you have given your allegiance, but also to yourselves and your children."⁷⁶

In order to display unwavering allegiance to the United States, this loyalty was achieved by suppressing any aspect of cultural heritage. Examples included name changes, reduced activity in club and associational life, and little to no acknowledgment of German-American historical achievements past, present, or in the years to come. The celebration of German Day had now become a thing of the past, and it would be well into the late 1950s before such celebrations would be revived in San Francisco. As a result of displaying their devotion to the United States during the war, the suppression of German-American identity had taken its toll on the community and was felt in some cases for generations.

On November 11, 1918, several notable changes occurred. The most apparent was the changing of street names in the city. Most American streets are named after numbers, a geographical feature, or simply after a person who might have been of rather modest influence. The various names of streets in any given town or city can also represent the cultural and historical presence of different communities, or of an individual who was so honored to have had a street named for them. In San Francisco during

WAR WITH GERMANY VOTED BY REPRESENTATIVES 373 TO 50

RESOLUTION PASSED IN EARLY MORNING AFTER LONG DEBATE

President to Sign Document After Vice-President Marshall Signs in Senate, and Hostilities Will Then Officially Be Commenced; Army and Navy Appropriations Are Rushed

Late War Bulletin: Understood that orders for the sale of all German ships in American ports were not given until the resolution was passed.

NEW YORK (Special), April 6.—The House today passed a resolution declaring that a state of war exists between the United States and Germany.

BILLIONS NEEDED FOR YEAR OF WAR

Secretary William Taft announced today that the government will have to raise \$10,000,000,000 for the year of war.

STRIKE OF BOATMEN TIES UP FERRIES

AMERICAN VESSEL, UNARMED, IS SUNK WITHOUT WARNING

Colonel Ziegler Forced to Quit Island Militia

CHIEFS GREET ANNOUNCEMENT OF VOTE: FIFTY VOTERS

FRENCH HURLED BACK BY GERMANS

WARSHIP DESTROYED BY TORPEDO

RECEIVED AND PASSED BY ARMY COMMISSION



Newspaper heading "War with Germany Voted by Representatives 373 to 50," April 1917. Courtesy of the author.

(and shortly after World War I) we find that Berlin Street was changed to Brussels Street, Bismarck Street became Wilson Street, and Hamburg Street was changed to Ridgewood Avenue. A process of physically removing the presence of German influence was reflected in these types of name changes.

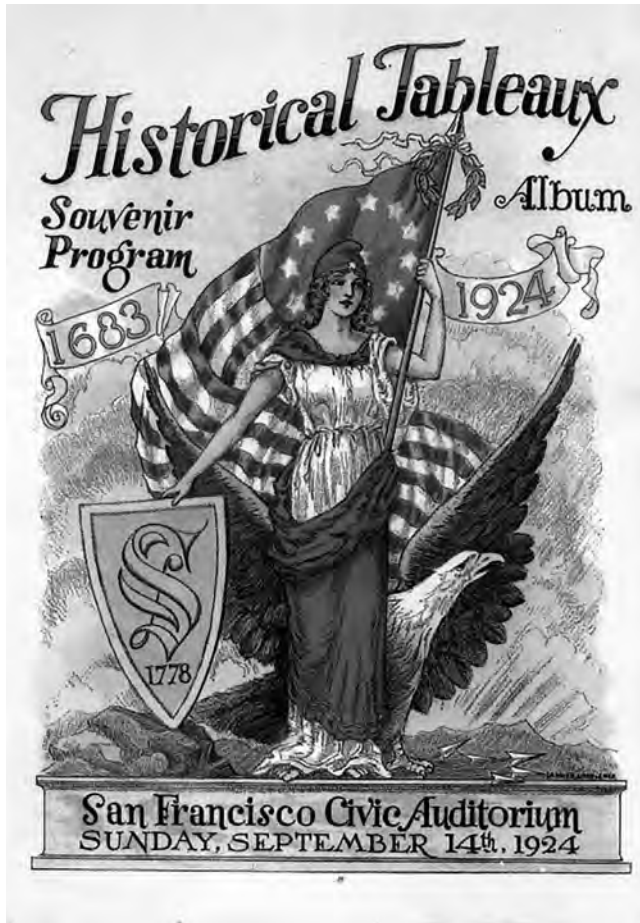
The German Hospital had its name changed to Franklin Hospital, the German Savings Bank became Franklin Savings and Loan, the San Francisco Turnverein briefly changed its name to the San Francisco Gymnastic Society (shortly after the war), and the most deliberate, the German House became the California Hall. With this change, the greatest physical symbol of the German-American spirit, vigor, and success on the West Coast was tested by the war and in turn unable to sustain its own identity.

In most of these cases, German-Americans took it upon themselves to eliminate their named cultural contributions to the city, which proved extremely difficult at times for those who had watched the community grow and thrive over the previous sixty years. What was once a group of robust and proud people was now more focused on finding personal peace and becoming "100 percent American." Some Germans continued to keep and maintain the old traditions after the war, but many of them, along with their children, used this period as an opportunity to fully assimilate into the American mainstream.

The larger components of German-American expression, that which had bound and kept the community together, were lost. By 1922, a significant drop in the number of active Vereins in San Francisco, certainly representative of the German-American dilemma, was of no real surprise. Clubs and associations had been reduced by one-third of what they had been at their peak of 150 associations just before the outbreak of the war in 1914 to 100 by 1922.⁷⁷ The hardest

hit appears to have been the *Schuetzenvereins* or sharpshooter clubs, which perhaps for obvious reasons (German men armed and in uniforms) had only one active club left in San Francisco by 1922 out of the ten that had been active in the city before the war. The community had stagnated. Accelerated assimilation as a result of the first World War had taken its toll on the Germans of the city by the Golden Gate. But the community would not altogether give up. By the mid 1920s activities were starting again to see the light of day, even if they were presented on a smaller scale.

On September 14, 1924 in a rare form of recovery, a sort of "comeback" was organized around a "Von Steuben Day" celebration; the veneration of General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben



Historical Tableaux, Von Steuben Day Souvenir Program Album from the San Francisco Civic Auditorium, 1924. Courtesy of the Hermann Sons Museum Petaluma.

(1730–94), had volunteered to fight alongside George Washington during the Revolutionary War. He instructed Washington’s troops on “close-order drill” at Valley Forge in 1778, and in the eyes of many Germans-Americans he was a hero they celebrated with great pride. The event held at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium was made possible through the efforts of the San Francisco branch of the national *Steuben Society of America*. The Steuben Society (SSA) had formed in May 1919, after the collapse of the National German-American Alliance in 1918. Much like the NGAA, the mission of the SSA was to educate the public on the history and contributions of Germans in America, to promote American citizenship, and preserve the German language and culture in the United States. The society had units in states throughout the country.

In California its headquarters was at the California Hall (formally the *Deutsches Haus*).

According to the souvenir program, the net proceeds of the one-day event were for German war relief, similar to the bazaar of 1916. At first glance, the cover of the program did not give the impression that it was an event put on by the German-Americans. It is only within the contents of the program that things become clearer as to the intention of the celebration. The cover shows Lady Liberty holding an American flag, bald eagle by her side, with no expression of Germany nor German national colors. The only German connection was the shield she carried in her right hand with an “S” etched in German Fraktur with the year von Steuben was at Valley Forge. The entire program is in the English language, with only a few German words scattered throughout its text. The preface begins with, “No country on our globe has made such magnificent progress as ours since the time of the discovery of the American continent.” Despite the passivity of German-Americans in fully expressing their heritage visually, the program details the beginnings of Germans in America, contributions to the city of San Francisco, and many essays by Germans of American descent throughout the country. Further into the program, the SSA does in fact respond to the effects that the war had on the German-American population in America:

The German element was harshly aroused by the events of the war. It found itself ostracized and boycotted; its homes invaded by spies and informers with badges, supplied by the government, privileged to bully and browbeat American citizens. The German element bore its affliction with a fortitude that was almost divine. But it has not forgotten, and it is not likely to forget those responsible for its humiliation. Yet, it needs intelligent direction to take steps such as will forever prevent a recurrence of the events of war; and not only that, but to rehabilitate the German element and re-establish the supremacy of the Constitution as the essential condition of personal security and equality. This medium exists in the Steuben Society of America.⁷⁸

The national and civic interests of German-America were a top priority for the Steubenites and are most apparent in this excerpt. Never again did German-Americans want to feel the guilt and humiliation associated with being of German ancestry. They wanted to once again express themselves freely, and in having associations such as the Steuben Society of America community members had a new optimism to achieve such liberties. The overall tone of the Von Steuben Day festivities were completely different in comparison to other events held in the past. No longer were the flags of both the United States and Germany combined together as a symbol of friendship and understanding. This was the dawn of an era in which America was first and last. German-Americanism had become but a shadow of its former self.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stefanie Williams is a graduate student in the Department of Library and Information Science at UCLA with a focus in archival studies. Inspired by her mother's journey to the United States, her interest has been in developing collections that document the emigration experience of Salvadoran women to California in the 1980s. She received her B.A. in history from UC Berkeley and also studied at *Freie Universität Berlin* in 2015, where her concentration was in film studies and art history. She is an active member of the German-American community and dedicated to promoting traditional Bavarian folk dance in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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SUTRO'S SAN FRANCISCO—

What's Left?

by William R. Huber

From 1895 to 1897, Adolph Sutro was mayor of San Francisco, the first Jewish mayor of a major American city. These were the most frustrating and least successful years of Sutro's life. Disputes with the powerful board of supervisors consumed Sutro's time and energy and prevented him from accomplishing any of the ambitious goals he enumerated upon assuming office.

Prior to becoming mayor, Sutro built the Sutro Tunnel to drain the mines of the Comstock Lode. He also built amazing structures, such as the Victorian Cliff House and Sutro Baths. But his management style—dictatorial and micro-managing—was ill-suited for political office.

While his name remains well known, few of Sutro's structures have survived. Many reasons account for this lack of monuments: hostility from political conflicts, natural disasters such as the 1906 earthquake and fire, another fire that was most likely arson, and over-ambitious projects that proved uneconomical to operate and maintain. But the ghost of Adolph Sutro can be seen if we take the time to look closely.

SUTRO HEIGHTS

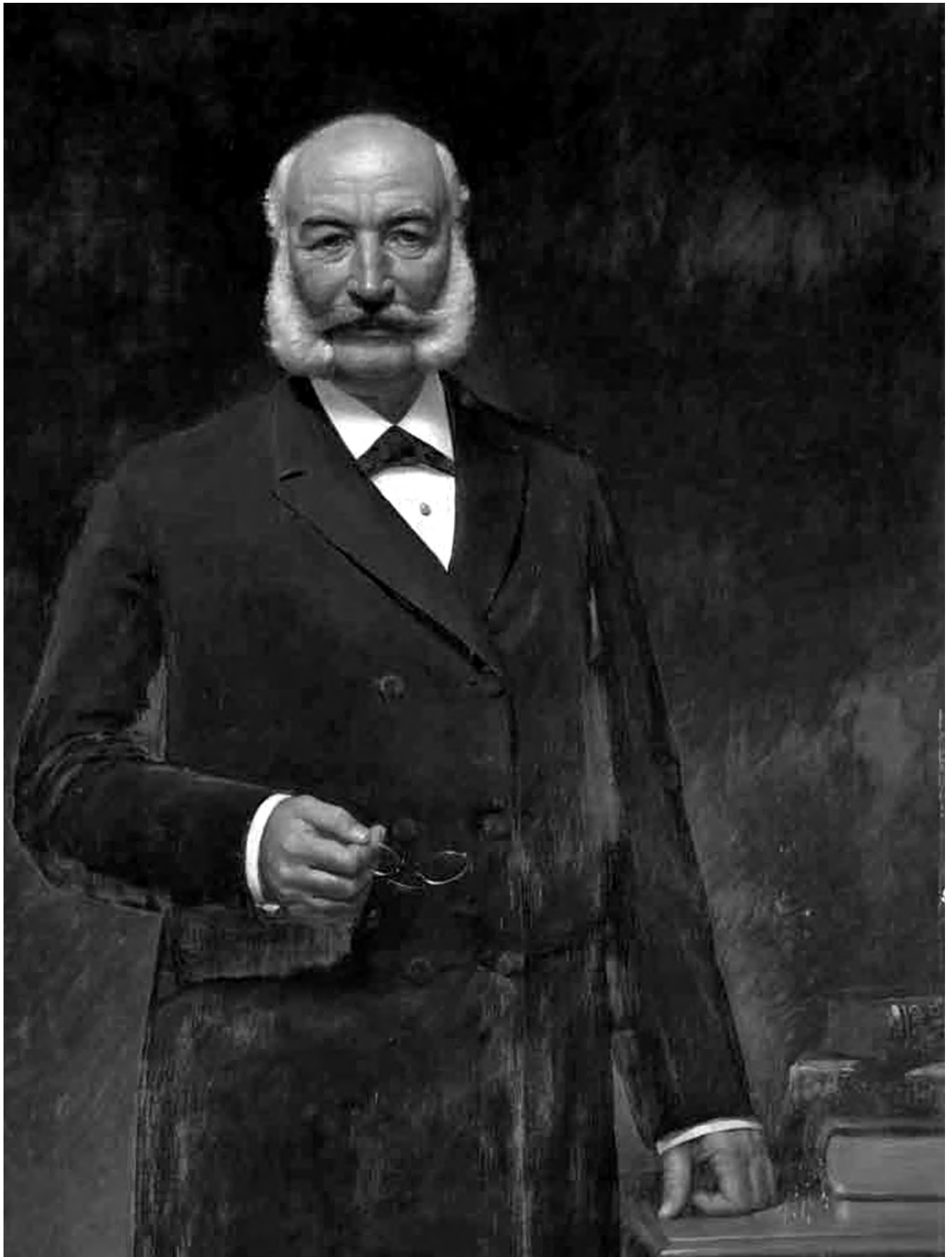
On March 2, 1881, Adolph Sutro and his daughter Emma explored the Outside Lands (generally the area west of present-day Divisadero Street) during what became a fateful carriage ride. Such excursions had become popular with San Franciscans since

the development of Golden Gate Park, starting in the early 1870s. When Adolph and Emma reached the Pacific Ocean, near a place later appropriately called *Lands End*, they were overwhelmed by the sight. Standing on a promontory, they saw below them a restaurant called the Cliff House; Seal Rocks with a resident population of sea lions; the Pacific Ocean; and, to the north, the Marin Headlands and Mt. Tamalpais.

Sutro was entranced. When he turned around, he saw a small frame, four-room cottage possessing that breathtaking view. He knocked on the front door, and the owner, Samuel Tetlow, invited Adolph and Emma inside. Tetlow was the owner of the Bella Union Music Hall, located in the notorious and dangerous Barbary Coast section of San Francisco. His cottage at Lands End, bought from Charles Butler in 1860, was physically and emotionally as far from his business as possible.

Just three months before the Sutros' visit, Tetlow had shot and killed his business partner but was acquitted based on a plea of self-defense. He was anxious to sell his property and move on, and Sutro was anxious to buy. After a brief negotiation, he gave Tetlow \$1,000 as a deposit to buy the property for \$15,000.¹

Unlike other rich men such as William Ralston of the Bank of California, James Fair of the Comstock Bonanza Kings, and Mark Hopkins of the Central Pacific Railroad, Sutro did not build a many-gabled, turreted mansion. Rather than tearing down the



Adolph Sutro. Courtesy of Sutro Library, California State Library.

modest four-room cottage he had bought from Samuel Tetlow, he added rooms, glassed-in the porch, and installed statues by the front door. Instead of spending millions on an enormous new house, he invested in the property around the existing house. Under Sutro's guidance, the grounds would feature a rich mix of flower beds, gardens, forests, broad walkways, hedge mazes, and parterre [sic] gardens.^a Open areas within the forest featured specific ornamental plants, a piece of sculpture, or a scenic view. Flowering shrubs included hydrangeas, roses, and rhododendrons. Annual and perennial flowers such as geraniums, salvias, chrysanthemums, and violas added varying colors.

Adolph opened Sutro Heights to the public in 1885. Visitors from downtown San Francisco paid twenty cents for a round trip to the Heights, and their enthusiastic descriptions made it clear that such a trip was worth the cost. A reporter from the *Salt Lake City Daily Tribune* wrote the following appraisal:

There are two very massive gateways with lodges, the first being guarded by two huge sphinxes, and through which is a narrow drive leading to the private gardens a quarter of a mile up the Cliff House Road, and nearer town in the main entrance, even larger than the lower or private one. This is guarded by two enormous lions couchant, copies of Sir Edwin Landseer's lions at the base of the Nelson Column, Trafalgar Square, London. The main drive is very wide, perfectly level, and forms a junction with the lower drive in the center of the grounds, and extends round the bluff rock overhanging the sea, and from which you look down on the seals. Above you to the right, the bluff still rises about twenty feet, and on the extreme summit is built a massive stone wall, castellated in true Norman style, that resembles a piece of the terrace at Windsor Castle, or the battlements of Northallerton, and much admired, especially by those who have seen it from the ocean. The gardens are laid out beautifully, in the center of which is a very large conservatory, and to which, an addition is being made, and at every turn, or junction of roads,

or foot paths, is placed some piece of statuary, rustic chairs, tables, and in fact everything that luxury or comfort can demand. There are several hundred chairs and not less than one hundred pieces of fine statuary.²

Sutro welcomed everyone from U.S. Presidents to kindergarten students to his Sutro Heights. After Sutro's death, his eldest child and executrix, Emma Sutro Merritt, moved to Sutro Heights with her husband George and lived there until her death on October 17, 1938.

In 1920, Emma transferred ownership of Sutro Heights to the city of San Francisco with the proviso that it be "forever held and maintained as a free public resort or park under the name of Sutro Heights."

Between 1920 and 1933 the Merritts continued to allow visitors access to Sutro Heights, which by this time was starting to show its age and lack of maintenance. In 1933, at Emma's request, the city of San Francisco agreed to take over maintenance of Sutro Heights. However, little work was done by the city.



DR. EMMA SUTRO MERRITT WAS CALIFORNIA'S FIRST FEMALE PHYSICIAN.

Dr. Emma Sutro Merritt.

a. A parterre is a formal garden consisting of plant beds, typically in symmetrical patterns that are separated and connected by paths.

In 1937, the city submitted a proposal to the Works Progress Administration for the rehabilitation of the grounds at Sutro Heights. Some repairs were undertaken, and staircases were constructed at both ends of the wall to provide access to the Parapet Terrace.^b When Emma died in 1938, the city directed the WPA to demolish the old home, which had fallen into severe disrepair.

In 1976, San Francisco transferred ownership of Sutro Heights to the National Park Service, to be managed as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.³

Visiting Sutro Heights is a study of what is no longer there. We will take a quick tour, highlighting the “Then and Now” appearance of the Heights.

Starting with the main entrance, here is the Then and Now:



Main entrance to Sutro Heights, then and now. Today, replicas of the lions stand at the entrance. Top image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Dennis O'Rorke. Bottom image by the author.



Proceeding along the entrance road, the Statue of Diana is on the left.



Diana, then and now. The now version (below) is a replica, and the lion on the base has been vandalized. Top image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Dennis O'Rorke. Bottom image by the author.



b. Sutro's Parapet Terrace provided exquisite views of the Cliff House, Seal Rocks, and the Pacific Ocean. It was bordered by a crenellated wall topped with statues, and also included two cannons.

A conservatory once stood at the end of the entrance road.



*The conservatory and statuary are gone. Only a single basin remains.
Left image courtesy of the National Park Service. Right image by the author.*

The parapet provided great views of the Cliff House and the Pacific Ocean below.



*The statues and cannon are gone, but the view is still magnificent.
Left image from Cliff House Project, courtesy Gary Stark. Right image by the author.*

The *Dolce far Niente* balcony provided a place for “pleasantly doing nothing.”



*The decorative wooden frames on Dolce far Niente have been replaced by a chain link fence.
Left image courtesy of OpenSFHistory/wnp27.2550. Right image by the author.*



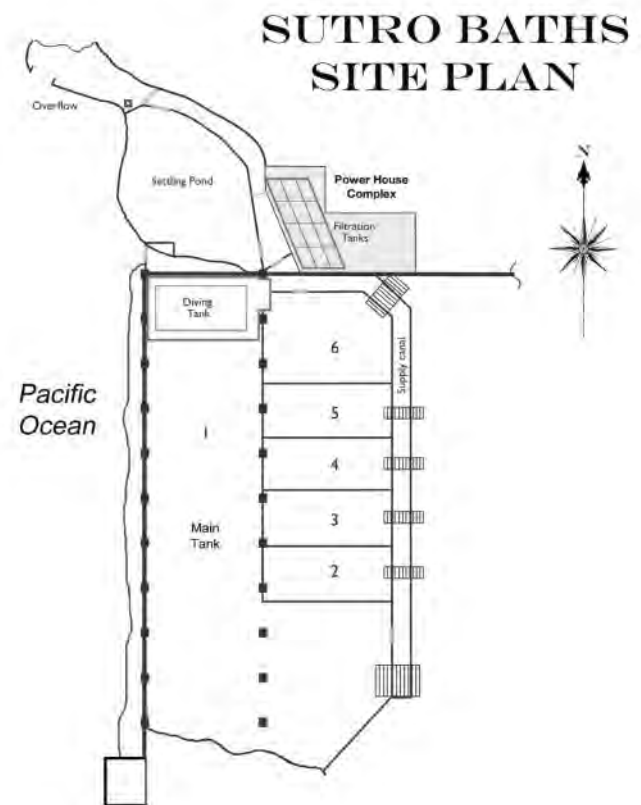
Sutro Baths looking west. From the author's collection.

SUTRO BATHS

Sutro Baths started as a modest saltwater aquarium to display sea creatures for the enjoyment of Adolph Sutro and his guests. But Sutro was never content with small projects, so the aquarium evolved first to a single open swimming area; then to six separate pools, each with different water temperatures; and finally to a three-acre wood, steel, and glass swimming complex, the largest in the world. From 1884, when aquarium construction started, until the official opening of the Sutro Baths to the public on March 14, 1896, Adolph continually expanded his plans until he achieved a massive structure containing more than 1.8 million gallons of saltwater.

Sutro Baths was wildly popular at first, but by 1900, it averaged only 500 paid attendees on weekdays and 8,000 on Sundays and holidays.⁴ Assuming 8,000 swimmers per week at twenty-five cents each, the weekly gross would have been just \$4,625. Sutro himself once claimed that the building had cost him “over a half a million dollars.”⁵ As unique and amazing as Sutro Baths was, it had been a poor investment.

After Adolph died, Sutro Baths was a source of aggravation for the Sutro Estate executrix, Emma Sutro Merritt, as well as a drain on resources. She



Sutro Baths Site Plan. Courtesy of John Martini.

PROBATE SALE--SUTRO BATHS

At Auction
Thursday, November 20, 1913
 At 12:00 O'Clock Noon
 AT OUR SALESROOM
318-324 Kearny St., San Francisco
 Subject to confirmation by Superior Court
 of City and County of San Francisco

**THE WORLD FAMOUS
 SUTRO BATHS**
 INCLUDING 9 ACRES OF LAND FRONTING
 ON THE PACIFIC OCEAN ADJACENT
 TO THE CLIFF HOUSE AND
 SUTRO HEIGHTS

Sutro Baths is a Money Maker Now. They are offered at auction only because such a sale is necessary to close the Estate of Adolph Sutro, deceased. The fortunate purchaser at this sale will doubtless secure the property at a bargain, and the cost of the property will be more than returned in the annual profits during the next two years.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE
 as per legal notice to be read at the time of sale
 SEE MAP OF PROPERTY INSIDE THIS CATALOGUE

For Further Particulars Apply to

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PROBATE SALE -- SUTRO BATHS



A circular logo for Baldwin & Howell Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers, featuring an illustration of an auctioneer holding a gavel and a flag that says 'AUCTIONEERS'. The logo also includes the address '318-24 KEARNY ST. S.F.' and the firm's name 'BALDWIN & HOWELL REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND AUCTIONEERS'.

Sutro Baths auction poster.

Courtesy of Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

repeatedly tried to sell the baths. In 1912, a referendum permitting the city of San Francisco to buy the baths for \$687,000 failed at the polls. A probate sale was attempted in 1913 (see poster, above⁶) but failed. In 1919, Emma reduced the price to \$410,000, but still there were no buyers.

Only minimal changes were made to the baths until 1934. Then the Sutro estate, under the direction of Adolph's grandson, Adolph G. Sutro,^c made significant changes, including:

- Reconfiguring the main pool (Tank 1) by walling off the north end to form a 28-foot-wide, 60-foot-long, and 15-foot-deep diving tank with four diving boards and two diving platforms;
- Walling off and draining the south dogleg of the main pool, and partially filling it with sand to form a picnic area called Tropic Beach”;

- Covering two of the small pools to form volleyball courts; and
- Hiring noted architect Harold G. Stoner to modernize the entrance with a bright, tropical design.



Tropic Beach exterior. From the author's collection.



Tropic Beach interior, 1934. From the author's collection.

By 1937, it was clear that the Tropic Beach was not popular, so it was converted to an ice rink. Having an ice rink adjacent to heated swimming pools brought many more challenges, only some of which were addressed successfully.

^c Adolph G. Sutro was the son of Adolph's son, Edgar Ernest Sutro and Henrietta Louise Sutro.



*The main swimming pool was converted to an ice rink in 1937.
From the author's collection.*

In 1952, the Sutro Estate gave up and decided to close Sutro Baths on September 1. At the last minute, George Whitney, owner of nearby Playland at the Beach and the Cliff House, offered \$250,000 for the baths, and the estate gratefully accepted. Whitney immediately cleaned house, disposing of many of Adolph Sutro's exhibits, which had deteriorated badly over the years. Whitney, like Sutro, was an inveterate collector, so he had no trouble filling the exhibit spaces in the baths with his own "stuff." Part of the housecleaning involved the pools themselves. The concrete walls had deteriorated, the locker rooms were moldy, and people now went to newer facilities for swimming. On January 1, 1954, Whitney closed the pools forever. He consolidated activities into the southern half of the building and partitioned off the northern half with a plywood wall.

On January 25, 1954, Whitney announced an effort to attract thrill-seekers by installing an 850-foot-long aerial tram from the observation deck at the Cliff House to a new overlook constructed on Point Lobos. The tram would carry an operator and twenty passengers on cables suspended above the surf. The round trip would take about twelve minutes. Whitney opened the sky tram on May 2, 1955.

But the ride took just four minutes, not the twelve that Whitney had promised. And it was one-way; the tram riders had to walk back. Most

importantly, the Sky Tram designers did not contemplate the problems inherent in suspending a steel tram with steel wheels on steel cables above saltwater spray. Predictably, everything rusted, and sometimes the tram stopped midway through the ride. The novelty of the tram soon wore off, and it was never profitable. It closed in May 1966.

George Whitney died in 1958 at age 67. His family continued to operate his holdings, including Sutro's (no longer "Sutro Baths," as the pools had closed in 1954), until 1964.



*The Sky Tram from Point Lobos to the Cliff House.
Image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Frank Mitchell.*



*The Sky Tram approaching saltwater falls at Point Lobos.
From the author's collection.*



Close-up of the Sky Tram.

Image from Golden Gate National Recreation Area archives.

Realizing that maintaining the massive glass, steel, and wood building was impossible, the Whitneys sold part of the baths and the Cliff House to a Berkeley real estate developer, Robert Frasier. Frasier later bought the remaining portion of the baths and announced plans for high-rise luxury condominiums on the site. After removing the collections that George Whitney had installed, along with the remainder of Sutro's displays, demolition



Golden Gate NRA, Park Archives, Interpretation Negative Collection, GOGA-2216

Sutro Baths during the 1966 fire. Courtesy of National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

of the 72-year-old Sutro Baths building commenced on June 12, 1966. Two weeks later, on June 26, a fire broke out in the partially-demolished structure. In a few hours, the five-alarm fire accomplished what it would have taken wrecking crews weeks of expensive work to do. Arson was suspected. The watchman, who had a past conviction for arson, was questioned, but lack of evidence prevented prosecution.

Robert Frasier never built his condos, and finally sold the property to Mr. Zev Ben-Simon. Public sentiment had turned against any construction at the site. In 1972, Congress formed the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) as a unit of the National Park Service. The GGNRA is a more than 50-mile-long region centered around San Francisco and extending from the northwest to the southeast along the California coast.⁷ The GGNRA included



Sutro Baths burning, June 26, 1966. Image from Golden Gate National Recreation Area archives.

the site of Sutro Baths, but did not own it. In May 1980, after much negotiation, the National Park Service finally purchased the site of Sutro Baths and the adjoining hillsides for \$5.5 million.

The site is open to the public, although many portions are hazardous. The cove has returned to the appearance it had in the early 1890s when Sutro constructed the aquarium and rock wall in front of the swimming area.⁸



Sutro Baths site in September of 2018. Photo by the author.



*Sutro Baths after the fire. Photograph by John F. Palmer, Jr.
Courtesy of the Cliff House Project.*

SUTRO RAILROADS⁹

Adolph Sutro built two different railroads in San Francisco; both were started to provide 5¢ one-way service from downtown San Francisco to Lands End.

FERRIES AND CLIFF HOUSE RAILROAD

The “Ferries and Cliff House Railroad” started in 1888 as a steam train that ran on the edge of Point Lobos. (The abandoned route is now a scenic hiking trail.) The western terminal was at 48th Avenue and Point Lobos, across from the entrance to Sutro Heights. However, before the Ferries and Cliff House Railroad was completed, Sutro sold it to the Powell Street Railroad, which was sold to the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1893. In 1905, the Ferries and Cliff House steam train was converted to an electric streetcar line.

Severe landslides in February 1925 destroyed large portions of the streetcar tracks, and service around Land’s End ceased. The streetcars continued to run to Sutro Heights but were re-routed along city streets instead of the unusable cliff route.



Sutro Street Railroad, Depot, and Baths. Image from Cliff House Project, courtesy Dennis O'Rorke.

SUTRO ELECTRIC RAILROAD

On October 26, 1894, construction began on the “Sutro Railroad,” an electric streetcar line south of the Ferries and Cliff House line and north of Golden Gate Park, running mainly along Clement Street, north of Geary Boulevard. Fifteen months later, on February 1, 1896, the Sutro Electric Railroad opened. Its western terminal, near the entrance to Sutro Baths, was a wooden structure called “Sutro Depot.” The *San Francisco Call* reported, “The opening of the new road was an epoch in the history of San Francisco. It punctuated the time when the domination of the Market-street Railway Company (controlled by Collis Huntington’s SPRR) ceased and the rights of the people began.”¹⁰

Ownership of these railroads changed over the years.

- On October 17, 1899, the Sutro Electric Railroad was purchased by R. F. Morrow of the Sutter-street Railroad for \$215,000.¹¹
- In 1902, a new city-wide company, United Railroads, bought both the Ferries and Cliff House Railroad and the Sutro Electric Railroad.

- In 1921, United Railroads was bought by the Market Street Railway.
- In 1944, the San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) bought out the Market Street Railway.
- On February 13, 1949, the Sutro Depot burned,¹² and Muni stopped all streetcar service to Sutro Baths and the Cliff House.

SUTRO LIBRARY

From his childhood, Adolph Sutro had loved books. When he was just seven and living in Aachen, Prussia, he often overspent his allowance at local book sales. Much later, during his many trips overseas to seek financing and support for his Sutro Tunnel in Nevada, he visited bookshops and made small purchases.

In 1882 Sutro started buying in earnest. While work was progressing on the conversion of Sutro Heights from sand dunes to landscaped gardens, Sutro traveled to Europe, the Near East, the Far East, and South Asia.

Purchasing books and other printed materials

was only the beginning. More important but far less exciting were the problems of fumigating, repairing, sewing, binding, storing, and cataloging these publications, which now numbered well over 100,000. With no library building yet in existence, Sutro sent the books first to a warehouse on Battery Street and then, when that facility was filled, to offices on Montgomery Street. But the site of a permanent library remained an open question.

After considering and rejecting a site near his home at Sutro Heights, he decided on a twenty-six-acre site near the geographic center of San Francisco, then called Mount Parnassus (now called Mt. Sutro). In discussing his plans in a *San Francisco Morning Call* article on June 15, 1893, Sutro said,

I consider that security against fire is the most important of all considerations in locating a library that is to last for centuries and is being built for the future. History shows us that libraries have been partly or entirely consumed by general conflagrations from the time of the loss of the great library in Alexandria down to the present day. In this locality, with the large grounds surrounding and the high hills on either side, there will be as much security as can be obtained in any part of the city.¹³

In September 1895, Sutro presented a formal proposal to the Regents of the University of California regarding the Mt. Parnassus site for a library building. The regents accepted Sutro's offer of land, and it was conveyed to them on October 10, 1895.¹⁴ But the proposed library building near Mt. Sutro was never started, and at his death in 1898, Sutro's magnificent collection still had no permanent home.

Clause XXIII of Adolph Sutro's will, written in 1882, stated: "Unto my daughter, Emma L. Sutro, all the books, papers, scrapbooks, manuscripts and pictures contained in my library; also all private papers, letters, accounts and account books, and all other written papers, whether contained in my desk, safes or safe deposit vault or elsewhere."¹⁵ While the language of the clause appears clear and unambivalent, the meaning is inconsistent with

statements made by Sutro in the years after the will was written. He repeatedly stated his intention to leave the contents of his library to the City of San Francisco.¹⁶ After Sutro's death, lawyers fought over the clause for thirteen years with disastrous results for Sutro's book collection.

When Sutro died in 1898, Emma attempted to keep the work on the library continuing, at least on a reduced scale. But most of her five siblings had no interest in the library and wanted to sell it. After a few years, even Emma's low level of activity ceased. Librarian George Moss, who was essential to progress on the library, had died in 1898. His assistant, Fredric Perkins, left San Francisco to return to the East. Thus, no one with knowledge of the operation was left. A custodian, Ella Weaver, was hired to watch over the collection, but she did little or nothing to advance the work of expanding or cataloging the collection.

At 5:12 a.m. on April 18, 1906, disaster struck. The San Francisco earthquake, with a rupture zone of 296 miles and a magnitude now estimated at 7.9, devastated the city and other cities as far away as San Jose and Santa Rosa. Fires fed by ruptured gas lines soon started and caused even more destruction. Within three days, fires destroyed about 28,000 buildings on 470 city blocks in San Francisco.¹⁷ One of the buildings destroyed by the fire was the Battery Street warehouse, which contained about one-half of the Sutro collection, including more than 90 percent of the precious incunabula.^d The other half of the holdings, housed in the Montgomery Street offices, survived. Among the items destroyed in the fire were several rare Bibles, including a German Bible printed by Eggesteyn about 1466; the Plantin of Antwerp Polyglot of 1569, which was printed in Hebrew, Chaldean, Greek, and Latin; and the Puritan favorite, the Geneva Bible, published in 1615.¹⁸ Sutro's concern about the danger of fire to libraries, expressed in 1893, proved tragically prescient.

In 1913, Emma Sutro Merritt's position as heir to the library contents was finally validated. But the question of where the library should reside remained. The University of California continued to express interest, the State Library in Sacramento did the

^d Incunabula are books, pamphlets, or broadsides printed in Europe before 1501, such as the Gutenberg Bible.



On this Sutro Library bookplate the motto reads, “Labor Omnia Vincet”–Labor Conquers All.
 Courtesy of the Sutro Library, California State Library.

same, and some of Sutro’s friends reminded everyone of Sutro’s often-stated desire to give the library to the City of San Francisco. “Emma and the other heirs did none of these; instead, they gave the library to the California State Library. Minimal conditions accompanied the gift:

- The collection must be called the Sutro Library.
- The books must bear the Sutro bookplate.^e
- Rare volumes must not circulate.
- The library must remain in San Francisco.
- Books must be made available to the public by January 1, 1917.¹⁹

The California State Library accepted the gift and conditions and, in September 1913, moved the contents of the Montgomery Street offices to temporary quarters in Stanford University’s Lane Medical Library on Sacramento Street in San Francisco. That move was the beginning, not of a favorable resolution to the fate of the Sutro Library, but to forty-six years of political disputes and neglect.

Bills to provide state funding for a permanent home were repeatedly defeated. Even the paltry sum of \$4,000 to pay two librarians came under fire.



Contents of Sutro Library stored in the basement of the San Francisco Public Library. Courtesy of Sutro Library, California State Library.

^e The Latin phrase is based on Psalm 104:23, “Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening” (KJV).



At one time, the Sutro Library was located at the University of San Francisco. Courtesy of Sutro Library, California State Library.

In August 1923, the trustees of the San Francisco Public Library offered space in the main library. At best, that was a stop-gap solution.

The shameful neglect of the Sutro Library finally neared an end in late 1958, when the University of San Francisco (USF) offered 14,000 square feet on the ground floor of its new library to house the Sutro collection. The term of the offer was one dollar per year for twenty years. But because USF was a Jesuit institution, some people objected, claiming that placing a public library in a religious institution violated church-state separation. Governor Edmund (Pat) Brown appointed a committee to study the issue. The committee unanimously recommended that the USF offer be accepted. Then two of Sutro's daughters threatened to sue to repossess the library if it moved to USF. Their lawsuit never materialized, and in 1960 the Sutro Library moved to its new quarters inside the Gleeson Library at USF.²⁰

By 1980, the Gleeson Library was out of space and wanted to evict the Sutro Library. Fortunately, buildings that had housed the California legislature during the renovation of the State Capitol were no longer needed for that purpose. Gary Strong, then state librarian of California, along with Paul Romberg, President of San Francisco State University, lobbied to acquire those two buildings to house the Sutro collection and to move them to the San Francisco

State University (SFSU) campus. Deconstruction, moving thirty-six truckloads of building materials, and reconstructing the library at 480 Winston Drive preceded the dedication of the new Sutro Library location in 1982, where it remained for thirty years.²¹

The Winston Drive location was composed of two old buildings cobbled together, but the HVAC system was insufficient to maintain the temperature control and humidity required for a library, and mold was a problem. In addition, more space was needed, and the roof had to be replaced. It was clear that a permanent site for Sutro's collection was essential.

The main SFSU library, the J. Paul Leonard Library, was severely damaged during the Loma Prieta earthquake on October 17, 1989. Staffs of the two libraries suggested that space for the Sutro Library be included in the reconstruction of the Leonard Library. Administrators accepted the suggestion for combining the two libraries, but costs escalated. Finally, after changing to a design-build firm and reallocating space, the new J. Paul Leonard/Sutro Library was completed in July 2012. Once again, the massive Sutro collection had to be moved, but this time to a permanent location.²²

The final chapter of the saga of the Sutro Library was written on August 1, 2012, when the collection opened in its new home on the fifth and sixth floors of the J. Paul Leonard Library at San Francisco State University. It is a fitting home for the Sutro Library,



The J. Paul Leonard Library at San Francisco State University now houses the Sutro Library. Photo by the author.



Stacks at the Sutro Library, San Francisco State University.
Photo by the author.



Bust of Adolph Sutro in the Sutro Library
at San Francisco State University.
Photo by the author.

complete with pictures and a bust of Sutro himself and other Sutro memorabilia. And to the northeast is a clear view of Mt. Sutro.

THE CLIFF HOUSE

Adolph Sutro bought more than 100 acres of property, including what would become Sutro Heights, in 1881. The Cliff House, a restaurant directly west and below Sutro's property, had been a favorite of wealthy San Franciscans in the 1860s and early 70s but lost its allure in the late 70s. It gained favor again as a house of gambling and prostitution, but that change did not suit the new neighbor, Adolph Sutro, so he bought the Cliff House and surrounding property from Charles Butler in 1883, reportedly for \$169,000.²³

Sutro soon dismissed the manager of the Cliff House and tried to run the property himself. After just seven months, he realized that he was not suited to day-to-day management of a restaurant, so he hired, and soon fired, a local liquor wholesaler to run the property. Finally, in 1885, he hired James M. Wilkins as manager. The two men became friends, and Wilkins managed the Cliff House for the next twenty-two years. Under Wilkins' management, the Cliff House regained its luster and "again drew

crowds of local people with its renewed focus on families, good food, and entertainment."²⁴

Disaster hit the Cliff House on Christmas Day of 1894. A fire that started about 8 p.m. in a chimney in the building quickly spread. For a while the nearby Sutro Baths was threatened, but the wind blew the fire away from the baths. The combination of a thirty-year-old wooden building and a strong breeze from the northeast doomed the Cliff House. Within two hours, flames consumed the walls and attacked the wooden supports and beams.

When interviewed the day after the Cliff House burned to the ground, a reporter asked Adolph Sutro if he would rebuild. He replied, "Will I rebuild the Cliff House? No, not the Cliff House as it was, but one of the greatest hotels in the land. I think I will build upon the site of the old house, but not immediately."²⁵ Sutro didn't wait long. On April 13, 1895, Sutro awarded the contract for construction to Campbell & Pettus, with a completion schedule of four months and a price of \$42,000.²⁶

The new Cliff House would be spectacular, though nothing like the one it replaced. There would be four main floors each 91-x-140 feet, a twenty-seven-foot square tower, and a basement, all accessible from a fast elevator.



View of ocean from Sutro Height parapet, 1895. Image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Gary Stark.

The second Cliff House had two opening nights, the first during a full moon on January 4, 1896, featuring a masquerade ball. The formal opening occurred on Saturday, February 1. It was a momentous day, as two other major developments reached completion. Sutro Baths was dedicated, and the Sutro Electric Railway opened the same day. It must have been a proud day for Adolph Sutro, who by then was the Mayor of San Francisco.

Despite rumors to the contrary, the second Cliff House survived the cataclysmic April 18, 1906, San Francisco earthquake and fire with less than \$500 in damage. But it was to be a short reprieve. On September 7, 1907, while the Cliff House was closed for renovations, James Wilkins, the former proprietor, and watchman Owen Mulvaney discovered smoke rising from an opening in the floor of the south porch. Within minutes, the wooden structure was engulfed in flames. Despite immediate response by the nearby fire company, the building, after a spectacular eleven-year life, was a total loss.²⁷

With Adolph Sutro gone (he died in 1898), a replacement for the Victorian Cliff House required agreement among his heirs, but they could not agree.

Favored daughter Emma was on one side and siblings Kate, Rose, Clara, and Edgar on the other. Emma was the executrix of the estate but had to obtain court permission to make any significant decisions. Judge James V. Coffey, Judge of the Superior Court for the City and County of San Francisco, had



Victorian Cliff House burning on September 7, 1907. Image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Gary Stark.

jurisdiction over Sutro's estate. On March 9, 1908, Emma obtained the go-ahead from Judge Coffey to use the \$97,000 proceeds from insurance on the second Cliff House to build a replacement.²⁸ A later article, on September 27, 1908, revised the available insurance money to \$40,000 but reported that the Sutro heirs had agreed to take \$10,000 from the estate to pay for the third Cliff House.²⁹ In October, another article said that the new structure would have two floors below the level of the entrance road, both constructed of fireproof concrete, and the main floor above, of frame construction.³⁰

The design of the third Cliff House, by the respected architectural and engineering firm of The Reid Brothers,³¹ was far less ornate than its Victorian predecessor. One critic called the rectangular, neo-classical building a "giant gray shoebox," but others appreciated its simple, clean lines.

The first dinner and celebration at the third Cliff House was held on June 29, 1909, and was a private affair for city officials, public commissioners, hotel men, and press representatives. The public packed the place two nights later on July 1 and celebrated the reopening of a new building at a familiar and beloved location. The *San Francisco Call* reported:

The new Cliff House, under the management of John Tait, was thrown open to the public on Thursday night. The restoration of this attractive feature of the city's life has

been awaited with keen expectancy by the community. Like the Campanile in Venice, the Cliff House forms a famous and distinct physical feature of San Francisco.

Under its new management, the Cliff House is destined to surpass its two predecessors as a place to be sought out by epicures. The facilities far exceed those of the former structures, and provision has been made by which the scenery may be observed to best advantage.

A beautiful promenade has been constructed on the face of the rock, forming a concrete terrace above the breakers, where a brass band will play every afternoon from 3 to 6. On the floors above are located the banquet halls, private dining rooms and a ballroom.³²

In the years after its opening in 1909, the fortunes of the third Cliff House ebbed and flowed. In 1918, as part of the war effort, President Woodrow Wilson ordered that all drinking establishments within one-half mile of a military establishment must close. Without alcohol sales, the Cliff House could not survive, so it closed on July 1, 1918, exactly nine years after it first opened. It reopened as an upscale restaurant featuring entertainment on December 8, 1920, but prohibition was the law of the land. Again with no alcohol sales, the establishment was not viable, so was forced to close in October of 1925.



Third Cliff House, circa 1912. Image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Dennis O'Rorke.



Third Cliff House undergoing remodeling, circa 1950. Image from Cliff House Project, courtesy of Gary Stark.

Charles Sutro, the owner of the Cliff House and the last surviving son of Adolph Sutro, died on April 26, 1936, at age 71. The Cliff House was sold by sealed bid to the Whitney Brothers, operators of Playland at the Beach, a nearby amusement park. The court approved the winning bid of \$200,000 on December 15, 1937. After investing \$100,000 more to refurbish and redecorate the building, the Whitneys reopened the Cliff House on August 5, 1938, after thirteen years of darkness.

George Whitney died in 1958, and his heirs operated the Cliff House until October of 1964, when Robert Frasier, a Berkeley real estate developer, purchased a 50 percent interest in the Cliff House and Sutro Baths.

The Cliff House was acquired by the National Park Service in 1977 for \$3.79 million and became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area

The October 17, 1989, Loma Prieta earthquake caused major damage and sixty-three deaths in the Bay Area. The only impact of the quake on the region around the Cliff House was to cause the sea lion population to desert Seal Rocks. Many of these sea lions moved to Pier 39 in San Francisco. In 2009, a large colony of sea lions returned to Seal Rocks.

In 2004, the long-time Cliff House restaurant operators, Dan and Mary Hountalas, and the National Park Service extensively renovated the third Cliff House, restoring its original neoclassical architecture. They also added a new modernist wing with exposed beams reminiscent of the Sutro Baths. Adolph Sutro was never reluctant to place his name



Sutro's Dining Room at the third Cliff House. Photo by the author.

on whatever he built, so he would certainly approve of the names chosen for the new Sutro Wing and the most elegant of the Cliff House dining rooms. The dining room has two-story, floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Seal Rocks and the Pacific Ocean and is called Sutro's.³³

Adolph Sutro lived an immensely productive life. But his Sutro Tunnel in Nevada was completed too late and has now collapsed. Sutro Heights, which he built from bare sand dunes, is virtually gone, although it is still a beautiful park. His Sutro Baths burned to the ground, and now only foundation walls testify to its existence. Half of his beloved books were burned in 1906; the rest took 114 years to find a permanent home. His Victorian Cliff House also burned to the ground and was replaced by a "giant gray shoebox."

We could be discouraged that the tunnel and buildings constructed by Adolph Sutro are almost entirely gone. But because of his investments and foresight, the city of San Francisco is blessed with incredible scenic views at Land's End; unspoiled forested land in the middle of a densely-packed city on Mt. Davidson and Mt. Sutro; the upscale St. Francis Wood and Forest Hill Residence Parks built on land originally purchased by Sutro; and the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine at Parnassus Heights, built on thirteen acres of land donated by Sutro.

We must be inspired by Sutro's perseverance in doing amazing things in the face of overwhelming opposition. As Marie Curie said, "Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained." Adolph Sutro would have agreed.

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This article is an excerpt from the book, *Adolph Sutro—King of the Comstock Lode and Mayor of San Francisco* by William R. Huber; (West Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing Company, 2020).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Huber's career started at Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1962 and led to his first trip to San Francisco in 1980. The purpose of the trip was to accept the Best Paper Award for his prior year's presentation at the International Solid-State Circuits Conference, but it also led to a love affair with San Francisco. A visit to the Cliff House further focused that love to the Lands End area and its master builder, Adolph Sutro. Dr. Huber's career as an engineer and expert witness in patent litigation cases continued for another thirty-eight years, but he never forgot the incredible achievements of Adolph Sutro. So, when he finally retired from engineering, Huber decided to write about Sutro, his struggle to build a four-mile-long tunnel at the Comstock Lode, and his amazing accomplishments and adventures in San Francisco.

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WORLD WAR I AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

by Alan Ziajka

During the fall semester of 1915, while World War I raged in Europe, life was good for most of the students at the University of St. Ignatius, the antecedent of the University of San Francisco. Although the war had already engulfed Europe for more than a year, and the university's students were increasingly aware of its horrors, the war seemed distant and unlikely to involve the United States.

In 1915, young men from the university's College of Engineering, established in 1912, attended the International Engineering Congress, held in San Francisco's Civic Center Auditorium. Students from the College of Law, also founded in 1912, prepared for moot court competitions against other schools. Science students wrote papers that appeared in the *Ignatian*, the school's literary magazine, on topics related to the scientific exhibits at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The exposition, which opened in San Francisco in February 1915, celebrated the rebirth of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire and the completion of the Panama Canal in 1912. The university's debating societies were also active, and the senior Philhistorian Debating Society prepared for a series of debates with the University of Santa Clara. The University of St. Ignatius orchestra and band performed a number of pieces for the San Francisco community. In athletics, the varsity rugby team became the "undisputed champions" of San Francisco, securing victories over teams from the Olympic Club, the College of the Pacific, and other Bay Area institutions.

There were school picnics during the fall of 1915, reported by *Ignatian*. During one such picnic, a "happy crowd of boys motored down the peninsula bound for Woodside, that enchanting spot nestled among the foothills of Redwood City. Football, baseball, swimming, and racing were the order of the day. It was a tired but happy crowd of boys that returned up the peninsula that evening under the glow of a rich Indian-summer sunset." In two years, however, many of the university's students would find such idyllic picnics, along with the other activities of college life, replaced by trenches, barbed wire, artillery, machine guns, mud, and death on the Western Front of Europe.¹

Beginning in the summer of 1917, 380 students and young alumni from the University of St. Ignatius joined millions of other Americans at war in Europe. The university's young men, mostly first- and second-generation Europeans, would find themselves fighting alongside or against other young men who were also of European ancestry. The university itself would experience a significant drop in enrollment due to the military draft and the call for volunteers. After the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, and the Selective Service Act* was passed by Congress in May of that year, the number of students at the university who were eighteen years of age or older declined to less than 100. During World War I, the University of St. Ignatius established a federally sponsored army-training program on campus, a precedent for the army-training program during World War II and a harbinger for

* Part of the Selective Service Act of 1917 required all U.S. men between the ages of eighteen and thirty to register for military service.



Four University of St. Ignatius students who served in World War I (clockwise, from the top left): Wallace Sheehan, Fred Butler, Mark Devine, and Joseph Sullivan. Their photos appeared in the June 1918 issue of Ignatian. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.

today's ROTC program. In student debates and publications, the institution would for the first time consider issues of war and peace on an international scale. Tragically, ten young men from the University of St. Ignatius would not return from the "War to End All Wars."²

By early June 1917, more than nine million American men had registered with local officials whom the War Department authorized to supervise the draft. Before the war ended, almost three million men had been inducted into the army. An additional two million Americans volunteered for the various

armed services. In August 1918, the president of the university, Patrick Foote, S.J., announced that the United States Commissioner of Education had requested that as many young men as possible stay in college to receive government-supervised military training and qualify as officers. On September 6, 1918, students were informed that the University of St. Ignatius had been accepted as a unit in the national Students Army Training Corps.

Beginning in September 1918, the poignant sound of taps, played by a sole bugler of the University of St. Ignatius Army Training Corps, floated across the campus at 10 o'clock every evening. The notes he played resonated throughout the halls of the labyrinth building on the corner of Hayes and Shrader Streets that comprised the university, then known as the "shirt factory."

(The building was so named because of its resemblance to many actual shirt factories built in San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire.) The sounds of taps also symbolized major changes at the University of St. Ignatius, catalyzed by World War I. The *Ignatian* captured the essence of these transformations when



Ten former students of the University of St. Ignatius were killed during World War I. Many others received the Purple Heart, the U.S. military decoration awarded to servicemen wounded in action. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.

one writer noted, "It certainly is a fact that lively patriotism and the military spirit have come to claim their dominant place at St. Ignatius, where formerly 'school spirit' was the principle of activity. Many of our undergraduates have followed the example of the alumni in joining the colors."³

During World War I, the students and young alumni of the University of St. Ignatius who served in America's armed forces often portrayed their overseas experiences in graphic detail. This depiction of life during the war was frequently in the form of letters that told of their military training, the trip on board ships to Europe, boredom, homesickness, the devastated French countryside, trench warfare, artillery attacks, the use of poison gas, and the death of fellow human beings. Captain Joseph Sullivan, a former star football player at the school, wrote about

his experiences at the front. He described one battle in a letter to his brother: "They threw the picked Prussian Guard divisions against us ... they pounded us with artillery and machine-gun barrages till the very air seemed to be so filled with

flying lead that there was not room for more. And they showered us with gas, so that our breathing apparatus became null and void." Captain Sullivan and his men were bombarded for eight hours in their trenches before receiving orders to attack. When the orders finally came, the battalion rose out of the trenches and charged toward the Germans. The enemy "had direct fire on us with artillery, and it was deadly. He enfiladed us from the flanks and from the left rear as we progressed, and when we reached our objective the battalion was reduced to 200 men under the command of a Lieutenant. The Major was wounded, I was wounded, and Capt. Ed. Leonard, Class of 1917, was dead." Felled by his wound, Captain Sullivan looked around to see men "strewn over the battlefield." Sullivan recovered from his wounds, but he concluded his letter, "I'm sick of war, its havoc, its ruin and destruction."⁴



The cover of the June 1918 issue of the Ignatian, the literary magazine of the University of St. Ignatius, was dedicated to the 380 young alumni and students from the university who served in World War I. Ten of those young men did not return from the war. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.



While World War I raged in Europe, the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition was held in San Francisco in 1915. This photo shows a panoramic view of the Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco, 1919. The Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco is the sole survivor of the thirty-two plaster buildings erected for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

Richard Queen, class of 1912, was also among the University of St. Ignatius alumni who served in World War I. He was in the Second Division of the American Expeditionary Forces, a unit that sustained 10 percent of the total American casualties during the war. Sergeant Queen portrayed the front as a “blasted hell,” where “shattered trees are trying to bloom.” He described how “wild violets, dandelions, and all sorts of summer beauties pop up overnight in shell holes which are not gassed. Every dead soldier pushes up verdure and bloom.” In June 1918, Sergeant Queen fell victim to a mustard gas attack. He survived the gas, spent more than a month recovering in a French hospital, and was sent back into combat. In one battle, he described lying in a trench a few hundred yards from the German line during a massive artillery attack. “Like a San Francisco earthquake,” he wrote, the ground “roared and shook” from the “overwhelming barrage which guns of all calibers from 75s to 355s lay upon the enemy in front of us. None can imagine what the dread barrage is in fact, but one who has fought under it.” Sergeant Queen survived the war and received several decorations for bravery from the French government. Despite these military decorations, Sergeant Queen concluded one letter with, “God grant the world will not soon see again a like nightmare to the war!”⁵

Richard Queen, St. Ignatius Class of 1912 and one of the many servicemen from World War I whose letters were published in Ignatian. The photo of First Sergeant Queen appeared in the June 1919 issue. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.



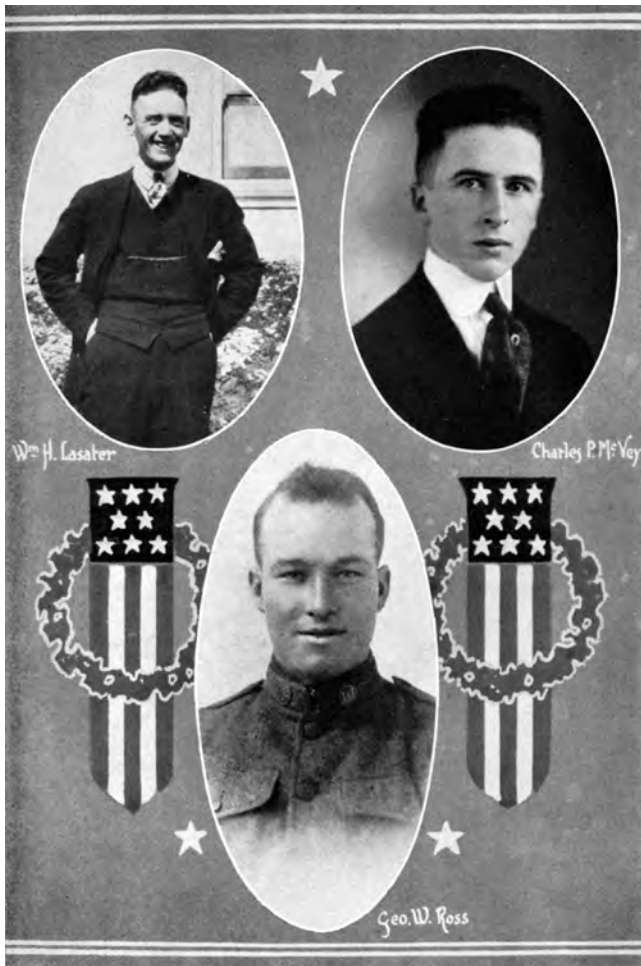


*The exterior view of St. Ignatius Church in 1917, during the nation's involvement in World War I.
Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.*

The illuminated crosses on the steeples of St. Ignatius Church shone brightly through the thin fog that enveloped the surrounding neighborhood on the evening of May 12, 1918. It was the date of a special church ceremony to bless a service flag for those students and alumni of the University of St. Ignatius who were then fighting and dying in World War I. The nearly four-year-old church, on the corner of Fulton Street and Parker Avenue, had celebrated its first Mass on August 2, 1914, two days before the major powers of Europe began hostilities. St. Ignatius Church served during World War I, as it had in the past and would in the future, as the focal point for the extended university community to come together to pray, to offer blessings to those members of the community who were not present,

and to assist people in finding meaning in those events that transformed their lives.⁶

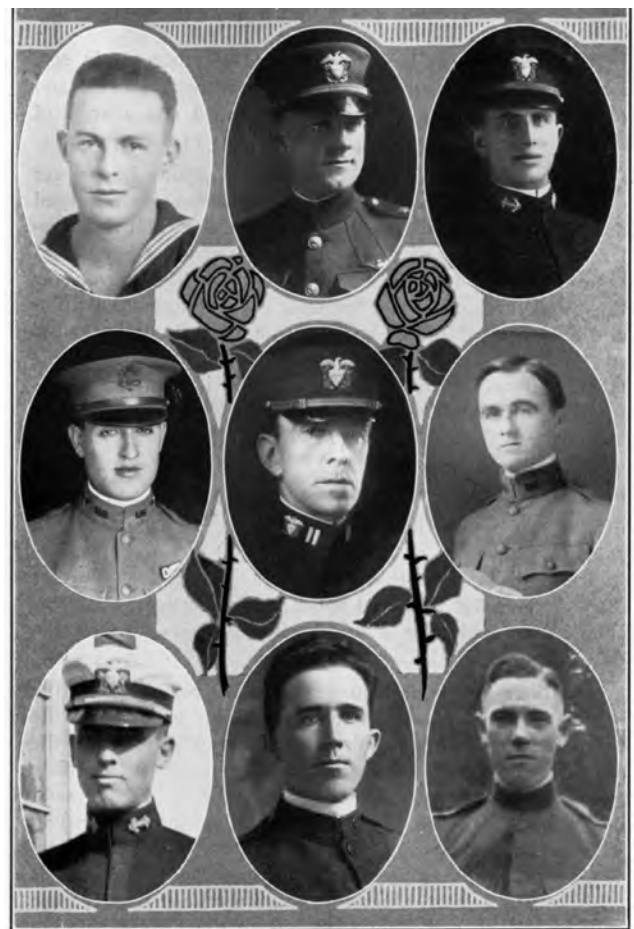
The University of St. Ignatius College of Engineering, which started in 1912 with 29 students, was dramatically affected by World War I, as was the entire university. Michael O'Shaughnessy was the college's founding dean. He also taught classes and served as San Francisco's city engineer. He was joined on the college's faculty by five professors of civil engineering and a professor of drafting and graphics. Among the faculty was Francis B. Lessmann, who had won numerous science awards while a student at the University of St. Ignatius, where he received his bachelor's degree and master's degree in science. Like many of the university's students, faculty, and alumni, Francis Lessmann served in World War I.⁷



Three former students from the University of St. Ignatius, who were killed during the First World War, were memorialized by gold stars on the university's service flag and in the June 1918 issue of *Ignatian*, the school's literary magazine. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.

Despite a promising beginning, the College of Engineering was a victim of World War I and closed its doors in 1918, when enrollment at the University of St. Ignatius, and its College of Engineering, had dropped precipitously. Many students and faculty were leaving for the war, some never to return. With the university's overall decline in student enrollment, and with the closing of its College of Engineering, the school's leadership could no longer justify using the term *university* in its title, and in 1918 it resumed its old name, *St. Ignatius College*. It would be another twelve years before the term *university* was restored. In 1930, at the urging of various alumni groups, *St. Ignatius College* was renamed the *University of San Francisco (USF)*.

On November 11, 1918, Germany and the Allies signed an armistice ending World War I. The human losses from the war were almost beyond comprehension: nearly ten million soldiers died in combat; another three million men were missing and presumed dead; and millions of European civilians died from military actions, disease, and starvation. A pernicious strain of influenza, known as the Spanish flu, began among the soldiers stationed in the United States and Europe at the close of the war. It rapidly spread to the civilian population and became a worldwide pandemic. By 1920, influenza had taken more than twenty million lives. In the United States alone, 500,000 perished, including approximately 3,500 citizens of San Francisco. Among the dead of World War I were 112,432 American servicemen, half of whom died of the influenza that swept through military camps in Europe and America.



Top Row: V. I. Donnelly; Ensign; C. Wagner, U.S.N.; Ensign S. F. Nolan, U.S.N. Second Row: Lieutenant T. P. Tissot; Lieutenant R.C. Tobin, U.S.N.; Major E. J. O'Hara. Third Row: Ensign E. E. Carreras, U.S.N.; Sargent-Major M. J. Riordan; Corporal D. V. Flynn. Courtesy of University of San Francisco Archives.



Following the armistice of November 11, 1918, thousands of servicemen joined parades throughout the nation, including this one in San Francisco. Two million Americans served in the military during World War I, of whom 112,432 died, half from the influenza that swept through military camps in Europe and America. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

With the armistice in November, the Students Army Training Corps at the University of Saint Ignatius began to disband, and by the end of 1918, it was completely demobilized. As the veterans began to return to their university, Dionysius Mahoney, S.J., minister of the Jesuit community, was prompted to note in his diary that the “old order of things is steadily returning.”⁸

Despite the return to normal college life, the editorial staff of *Ignatian* voiced concerns about a just peace following World War I. For example, President Woodrow Wilson’s attempt at the Paris Peace Conference to implement his celebrated Fourteen Points and to establish a League of Nations to ensure future peace was discussed in the pages of *Ignatian*. The publication’s editor-in-chief, Vincent Hallinan, class of 1919, and future St. Ignatius College law student, controversial San Francisco attorney, and candidate for U.S. president on the Progressive Party ticket, addressed the failures of the Paris Peace Conference. For “six months now,” Hallinan wrote, “has the Peace Conference sat in session. Out of its camouflage of philanthropy there

stand only the monuments of perfidy—the greed and avarice of the old nations pitted against the altruism of America.”⁹

President Wilson’s efforts in Europe were largely a failure. Upon his return home, Wilson’s plan for a League of Nations was defeated in Congress, a victim of partisan politics and Wilson’s own inflexibility.

In twenty years, the world would again be plunged into the darkness of a world war. The aspirations for independence by people in many of the world’s developing regions were also thwarted at the Paris Peace Conference. Ho Chi Minh, a young member of a group of

Vietnamese who sought independence from the French, was denied access to Wilson and the other Peace Conference representatives, and his hopes for an independent Vietnam never received a hearing. The French controlled Vietnam for another thirty-five years, until the Vietnamese under Ho Chi Minh defeated them. The United States supported the French, and eventually became mired in the Vietnam War, with disastrous results.

During World War I, two diplomats, Mark Sykes of Britain and François Georges-Picot of France, secretly drew up a plan to carve up the Middle East after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, which was allied with Germany. The plan broke the British promise to Arab groups for a national Arab homeland in exchange for supporting the British against the Ottoman Empire. The division of the Middle East by the Sykes-Picot agreement, which was allowed to stand at the Paris Peace Conference, ignored the region’s quest for independence and its vast ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. The stage was set for decades of conflict, engulfing the Middle East to this day.¹⁰

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan Ziajka is Historian Emeritus at the University of San Francisco, where he held several administrative positions during a thirty-six-year career, including Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and University Historian. He currently teaches a course on the history of the University of San Francisco for the Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning at USF. Ziajka holds a Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University and is the author of five books and numerous articles on history, education, and human development. His most recent books are *Legacy and Promise: 150 Years of Jesuit Education at the University of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Association of Jesuit University Presses, 2005); *The University of San Francisco School of Law Century: 100 Years of Educating for Justice* (San Francisco: University of San Francisco School of Law, 2012); *Lighting the City, Changing the World: A History of the Sciences at the University of San Francisco* (San Francisco: University of San Francisco, 2014); and *University of San Francisco*, co-authored with USF professor Robert Elias (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015). This article is adapted from selected chapters of those books.

NOTES

1. The Panama–Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco was described in numerous books, including Charles Fracchia’s *Fire and Gold: The San Francisco Story* (Encinitas, California: Heritage Press, 1994, 142–143), and in Laura Ackley’s *San Francisco’s Jewel City: The Panama–Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday, 2015). The 1915 issue of *Ignatian*, the university’s literary magazine, provides a wealth of information about life at the University of St. Ignatius during the 1915–16 academic year. The quote about the student picnic in Woodside appeared on page 54 of the 1915 issue. For details on America’s entrance into World War I, see Page Smith’s *America Enters the World: A People’s History of the Progressive Era and World War I* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985) is outstanding. The April 1916 issue of *Ignatian*, page 40, provided commentary on students’ attitudes about the looming war.
2. The impact of the war on the University of St. Ignatius was described by John McGloin, S.J., in *Jesuits by the Golden Gate: The Society of Jesus in San Francisco, 1849–1969* (San Francisco: University of San Francisco, 1972), 103, 104, and in the five issues of *Ignatian* published between 1914 and 1918.
3. The quote about the patriotism and military spirit on campus appeared in the June 1918 issue of *Ignatian*, page 76.
4. Numerous letters from University of St. Ignatius students and young alumni, who served in all branches of the military during World War I, were published in the June 1918 and June 1919 issues of *Ignatian*. The letter from Joseph Sullivan appeared in the June 1919 issue, pages 11–16.
5. The letter from Richard Queen appears in the June 1919 issue of *Ignatian*, pages 33–37.
6. The special church ceremony in 1918 to bless the service flag was described in the June 1918 issue of *Ignatian*, pages 16–18.
7. John McGloin, S.J., discussed the College of Engineering in his book, *Jesuits by the Golden Gate*, page 101. Descriptions of the College of Engineering also appeared in several issues of *Ignatian*, including the December 1912 issue, page 43; the Easter 1913 issue, page 62; and the February 1917 issue, pages 86 and 87.
8. The impact of the armistice on the University of St. Ignatius was described in the June 1919 issue of *Ignatian*. A complete list of all the former students from the University of St. Ignatius who served in World War I, including the names of the ten young men who died, appeared on pages 57–66 of that issue.
9. Vincent Hallinan’s editorial about President Wilson’s peace efforts in Paris at the end of World War I appeared in the June 1919 issue of *Ignatian*, pages 54–55.
10. Among the hundreds of books and articles about World War I, Barbara Tuchman’s *The Guns of August* (New York: Macmillan, 1962) is one of the best. The causes for World War I and the long-term consequences of the Paris Peace Conference are detailed in Margaret MacMillan’s *The War that Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (New York: Random House, 2013) and in *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2002).

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