



PANORAMA

July-September, 2020 Vol. 32, No. 3

THE STORY OF FERRYBOATS ON SAN FRANCISCO BAY

See page 6



Courtesy of OpenSFHistory/wmp27.2744.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The pandemic may have kept our museum shuttered the past four months, but the Society’s staff and board have been busy not only planning the museum’s reopening, but also bringing you San Francisco history digitally and recording the San Francisco history that is happening daily.

When we reopen—and we hope it will be mid-August—you will see the museum has acquired beautiful display cases, the gift of Union Bank from its Bank of California museum that used to repose in the basement of the grand banking temple at 400 California Street. The cases are being filled with historical objects that have been in the Society’s possession for years, or given to us recently by many people and entities, including Union Bank.

Because we cannot hold our monthly meetings, walking tours, and events, we have been bringing Online History Adventures to the comfort of your home. We hope you have enjoyed these offerings—but also hope you will come to the monthly meetings and programs at the SFHS museum when the world reopens.

History is being made in San Francisco almost every day, and the Society has been planning to record and preserve it. San Francisco and other Bay Area communities (notably Santa Clara County) were national leaders in the fight against COVID-19, beginning with the shelter-in-place order that went into effect St. Patrick’s Day. While San Francisco has thus far been spared the worst of the pandemic, thanks in large part to determined civic leadership, still the economic losses from the closed businesses and the exacerbation of homelessness have been of historic dimensions. Too, the cold-blooded police killing of George Floyd and of other unarmed Black men have ignited protests throughout the country, including San Francisco of course, on a scale not seen since the early 1960s before the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Sadly, looting and violence have interrupted peaceful protests, and a wave of vandalism of public statues and monuments has spread across the world, the country, and San Francisco. In our city vandals destroyed several statues

in Golden Gate Park, including one of Ulysses Grant, the Union general who defeated the Confederacy’s attempt to preserve the institution of slavery, and who later as president worked to secure the civil rights of freed African American slaves. What message does such an act of wanton destruction bear?

China’s is much older than Western civilization. The Yellow Emperor, said to have been greatly enlightened (writing, medicine, martial arts, and sericulture all arose under his rule), reigned approximately 4,700 years ago. But we have scant knowledge of China’s history for that period and for the next two and a half millennia. That is because in 213 BCE the first emperor ordered the burning of all books not held in China’s imperial libraries. His order was carried out, but the populace revolted, and in their fury burned the emperor’s libraries. So virtually no written record of the time before 213 BCE exists (Confucius’s books are a blessed exception). Six hundred years later, Alaric and the Goths sacked Rome, and then much of the rest of Rome’s Empire. As a result, of Sophocles’s more than 120 plays, we have 7; of the perhaps 80 plays of Aeschylus we have, again, only 7.

Peaceful protest is not only protected by the First Amendment; it is a cherished part of our heritage. Lawless vandalism is, alas, also part of our heritage. When is the vandal the True Believer, in San Franciscan Eric Hoffer’s phrase, meaning his motivation is an ardent belief that some statue, some symbol must come down violently and unlawfully because of what it represents? When, on the other hand, is the motivation simply the perverse thrill of destroying something? And does the difference, in a civil society, matter?



John Briscoe
President, Board of Directors

SFHS CONTRIBUTIONS – JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31, 2020

We gratefully acknowledge all contributions received between January 1 and March 31, 2020. Our listings include all levels of membership dues payments, in addition to year-end appeals, tickets for fundraising events, and other contributions. Gifts totaling \$100 or greater are presented here.

We apologize for any errors or omissions, and thank you in advance for bringing them to our attention so that we may correct our records.

Please note: A number of year-end appeal donations that were postmarked in 2019 were not received until 2020 and may not have been credited in 2019. We apologize for having overlooked postmarks when processing these donations.

LEGACY GIFT

\$10,000 and up
Shirley Albright Trust

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SFHS PROGRAMS

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, SFHS monthly programs will continue to be held virtually (online), at least through September. There is no program in August.

We hope to hold our October and November programs at the SFHS Museum at 608 Commercial Street. Please check the website for information on the September 8 program during late August.

Monthly programs are held online on the second Tuesday of each month, except August and December. Programs are subject to change, so please check for updates at sfhistory.org.



STARTING TUESDAY, JULY 14

LOST DEPARTMENT STORES OF SAN FRANCISCO

ANNE EVERS HITZ

San Francisco's 19th-century merchant princes built grand stores, each with its own niche. I. Magnin attracted upper-class clientele, middle-class shoppers loved The Emporium's Bargain Basement and rooftop holiday rides, Gump's defined good taste, City of Paris offered French finery and edgy Joseph Magnin ensnared younger shoppers. Many San Franciscans have fond memories of the old stores and the "downtown experience," which might include a visit to the City of Paris to look at the sky-high holiday tree or stopping at Blum's for a slice of Coffee Crunch Cake. Author Anne Hitz looks back at the colorful personalities behind these major stores and includes reminiscences from former employees and shoppers.

Proud to be a fifth-generation San Franciscan, author Anne Evers Hitz is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and a writer, editor, and project manager who has had her own communications consulting firm in San Francisco for more than 25 years. Anne is the author of *Lost Department Stores of San Francisco (2020)*, *San Francisco's Ferry Building (2017)* and *The Emporium Department Store (2014)*.

There is no monthly program in August.

RECORDED VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

SFHS has produced special programs and exhibits to give you historical gems in this time when we can't all get together. The list, which is always growing, is on page 4.

SFHS ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

Every year, SFHS holds a short Annual Meeting during the first 10 minutes or so of the April monthly program. The Annual Meeting provides a short summary of what SFHS has accomplished over the previous year, an introduction of new board members, and an opportunity for SFHS members to confirm those new board members. This year's Annual Meeting was scheduled for the April monthly meeting at Roosevelt Middle School, but that program was cancelled due to the COVID-19 shutdown. We hope to hold the Annual Meeting at the monthly program on Tuesday, October 13, provided city health guidelines permit gatherings of this kind. Due to uncertainties regarding the reopening of San Francisco's public schools, we plan to hold our monthly presentations in September, October, and November at 608 Commercial Street. Please stay tuned for updates.

City Guides Walks Return

*San Francisco Historical Society offers these two walks in association with SF City Guides. Reservations are required for each walk, and the cost is \$15 per person. Please make your reservations by calling (415) 537-1105, ext. 2 with credit card information; mailing a check to SFHS, P.O. Box 420470, San Francisco, CA 94142; or going online and using your credit card on our website. When you register, we will give you the meeting place. These walks are given rain or shine. **Note: These tours might need to be canceled because of coronavirus. If that happens, SFHS will notify all registrants in advance and refund their money.***

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 2 P.M.

MISSION BAY: HIDDEN WATERS

Guide: Rob Spoor

Before the Gold Rush, Mission Bay was a simple, shallow inlet where ducks were the major residents. When the city filled in the bay, San Francisco built its largest railroad yard and a bustling industrial district. The "bay" has mostly disappeared, but the future of Mission Bay looks bright and beautiful. You'll see what has become a new, active residential, business, and entertainment hub of the city.



CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 11 A.M.

OLD SOUTH PARK

Guide: Paul Fisher

Take a walk through South Park, the London-inspired planned community sitting just south of Market Street. In 1852 South Park was developed as a residential neighborhood featuring a large oval park. Hear about the ups and downs, the fortune and romance, and the "Second Street Cut" that changed everything. It's a taste of London you can't find anywhere else this side of the Atlantic.



CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

SEEING THE ELEPHANT

People traveling to California in the 1800s would tell others that they were going to “see the elephant,” and many who were part of the Gold Rush were happy that they “had seen the elephant.” The elephant symbolized the great risks and often great rewards of traveling west in the 1800s. Below is a partial listing of exhibitions and events in San Francisco in the coming months.

Note: Many of us have been staying at home since March because of the coronavirus. Below are activities—most online—that various history groups have devised to keep us learning about San Francisco history during the pandemic.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

SFHS Online Tours, Lectures, and More

The San Francisco Historical Society offers a variety of online programs. See the list below. Go to sfhistory.org and scroll down the page. And don't miss our [Facebook](#) page.

Presentations

- Lost Department Stores of San Francisco (Anne Hitz) Beginning Tuesday, July 14 at 7:30 p.m.
- [A Romp into Gold Rush History](#) (Thom Jackson)
- [Sutro's Glass Palace](#) (John Martini)
- [Bret Harte's Gold Rush](#) (Chris O'Sullivan)

SFHS Movie Nights and Other Films

- [Shelter in Place](#) (a drone film)
- [The History of Saint Ignatius Church](#) (Peter Devine)
- At Home with Charles Fracchia [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#)
- [Charles Fracchia on DNA of San Francisco](#)
- [The Englander House](#) (an old SF house)
- [Sunken Ships, Hidden Treasures \(Gold Rush history\)](#)

Photos and Writings

- [Golden Gate Park](#) (Photos by Ron Henggeler)
- [2019 Fracchia Prize Winning Essays](#) (online pdf magazine)
- [San Francisco at Play!](#) (special edition of The Argonaut)
- [50 Years of Pride in SF](#) (Photos by Ron Henggeler)

Tours and Android/iOS apps

- [Bohemians, Beats and the Barbary Coast](#)
- [Virtual Tour of Chinatown](#)



VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Society of California Pioneers (SCP)

• SCP offers a variety of online historical presentations and exhibit.

Programs include:

- Golden Gate Park's Gilded Age
- Wish You Were Here: Golden Gate Park in the Gilded Age, an Online Exhibition of Colorized Postcards
- Old Pioneer Hall in Photographs by Isiah West Tabor
- Subject Unknown: Portraits without Provenance
- For online exhibits from the SCP archives, visit:

<https://www.californiapioneers.org/onlineexhibitions/>

California Historical Society

In April 2020, the California Historical Society initiated “Tell Your Story: California in the Time of COVID-19,” an online project to document the personal experiences of people across the state as they face a historic crisis. Go to the CHS [website](#). Click on “Selections from the Tell Your Story Project” to read the stories. Click on “Tell your story here” to tell your own story.

VIRTUAL TOURS

Tours of the FoundSF Archive

FoundSF has compiled stories from its archive into 27 online historical tours about San Francisco. Find out more about all areas of San Francisco. These fascinating titles, include “McFrisko,” “Animals of the Dunes,” “Why Is It Called ‘Richmond?’” “Non-Native Invasive Species,” “Cyclers Ride in Gay Attire,” “The First Grab,” and “What Do San Franciscans Do All Day?” Go to foundsf.org and click on “Events.” These tours are organized into 12 categories: Water, Shoreline, Historic Habitat and Wildlife Species, Transit History, Labor, Food, Redevelopment, Dissent, Ten Years, Anti-Nuclear, Anti-War, and “Ten Years that Shook the City.”

SFHS Awards Luncheon 2020 Canceled

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the annual Awards Luncheon has been canceled this year. Join us next year at the Mark Hopkins on Friday, September 24.

TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Adriene Roche is a third-generation San Franciscan currently serving as Controller and Senior Business Development Director with The City POS. Adriene has 20 years of nonprofit board experience. She currently serves on the board of Little Sisters of the Poor, as executive board member on the Irish Business Chamber of California, and co-president of the Irish Israeli Italian Society. Adriene resides in Marin County with her husband Steve and their dog Boomer. Their daughter lives and works in Dublin, Ireland.

Their son is a recent graduate of the University of Mississippi.



Rick Lenat is President of Lenat & Partners Communications, Inc., an advertising agency that specializes in travel, tourism, and entertainment. Rick has been active in a number of nonprofit organizations serving as board member and president. He is currently a member of the board of trustees for the Theodore Roosevelt Association and president of SF Hillel. Rick holds a BA from the University of California and an MSJ from Northwestern University. Rick and his wife Ally live in San Mateo. They have a married daughter residing in Bend, Oregon and a son living in San Francisco.

New Faces, New Roles at SFHS

Please welcome **Darlene Plumtree-Nolte**, SFHS's new Chief Development Officer. Darlene assumed this role in May. **Lana Costantini** continues to manage SFHS's publications, online resources, and education initiative. **Rachel Torrey** joined the SFHS team on July

1 to manage SFHS membership services and support Darlene and Lana with development, programs, education, and museum exhibits. Also meet **Annette Burns**, a graduate student in Museum Studies at USF. Annette is taking part in the SFHS Summer Internship Program.



Darlene Plumtree-Nolte
Chief Development Officer



Rachel Torrey
Executive Development Associate



Lana Costantini
Director of Education and Publications



Annette Burns
Summer Intern

To reach us, please call (415) 537-1105 and choose one of the following extensions:

- Extension 1: Education and Publications
- Extension 2: Membership, Online Services, and Upcoming Events
- Extension 3: Museum Rental for Special Events
- Extension 4: Donations and Development
- Extension 5: Finance and Billing

The Bay Area's Ferryboats

by Lana Costantini

Ferries of all kinds have ploughed through San Francisco Bay for nearly 200 years. In 1826, while waiting for a land grant, Irish pioneer John Reed established a fledgling ferry service using a sailboat. It made one or two trips a week and didn't last long. Thomas Gray started the first regular ferry service in 1851. It ferried passengers from the Oakland estuary (then connected by a tidal creek to Lake Merritt) to San Francisco. This was called the "Creek Route." By 1866 a network of mighty ferryboats connected San Francisco, Oakland, Marin County, and Sonoma County.

Before bridges connected San Francisco, the East Bay, and the North Bay, ferries were essential for travel in the greater Bay Area. Early ferries were mostly riverboats from the Sacramento River not designed for trans-bay travel, but they did the job. The first boat built specifically for bay crossings was the *Clinton* in

1853. The *Clinton* was a 194-ton side-wheel steamer that ran first on the Creek Route and later to San Rafael.

The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1876 ushered in the age of railway ferries. These were designed to transport freight trains and passenger cars over the bay. One gigantic railroad ferry, the *Contra Costa*, could carry an entire train of 36 freight cars or 24 passenger cars, plus their locomotives, and offered a café and bar on the main deck. At the time, the *Contra Costa* was the largest ferryboat in the world. Eventually, railroad ferries connected the western rail terminus of the Pacific Railroad in Oakland with rail lines in Petaluma, Vallejo, Sausalito, Tiburon, Santa Rosa, and other communities. The side-wheel paddle steamer *Eureka*, which is part of the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association's collection of historic vessels on the Hyde Street Pier, was originally built as a



Ferryboat Oakland passing steamer boat Washoe, circa 1867. Martin Behrman Negative Collection/Courtesy of GGNRA Park Archives and OpenSFHistory/wnp71.0033.



Ferryboat leaving Sausalito, 1910. Angel Island in background. Courtesy of OpenSFHistory/wnp15.1038.

railway ferry called the *Ukiah*. It hauled people during the day and railroad freight cars at night. Railway ferries were used until 1930, when a railway bridge was built over the Carquinez Strait.

The first auto ferry, *Melrose*, began service in 1906. Its lower deck could accommodate about 100 cars; the upper deck held 400 people. Ferry traffic increased as population grew; by the mid-1930s, all manner of ferryboats ruled San Francisco Bay. More than 150,000 passengers rode the ferries daily. During the ferries' "Golden Age," from the 1870s through the mid-1930s, more than two dozen ferry lines served 29 destinations around the bay.

Ferry use changed dramatically with the building of the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges. Once people could drive across the bay themselves, ferryboats seemed slow and old-fashioned. Within four years of the Golden Gate Bridge's completion in 1937, the once-thriving ferry service between San Francisco and Sausalito stopped completely—for the next 29 years. Regular ferry service connecting San Francisco, the East Bay, and the North Bay steadily declined and finally ceased in 1956, with the completion of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. For nearly

a decade after that, just a handful of ferries carried shivering tourists to places where the bridges didn't go, like Alcatraz.

Finally, in 1964, the Red and White fleet started regular service between Tiburon and San Francisco. As cars increasingly jammed the roadways, commuter ferries began to make a comeback. Between 1964 and 2012, ferry service was expanded to include Sausalito, Larkspur, Vallejo, Alameda, Bay Farm Island, San Mateo County via Oyster Point, and other bayside communities.

The popularity of ferries is on the rise. Each day, thousands of Bay Area commuters say "no to the roll" and ride the ferry instead. More and more commuters choose a brisk, stress-free trip across open water over an exhausting commute on gridlocked freeways. The San Francisco Bay Ferry, one of several ferry services on San Francisco Bay, provides service to ten locations around San Francisco Bay. In 2018–2019, more than three million Bay Area commuters rode the San Francisco Bay ferries to and from work.

What's in store? More ferries. The Port of San Francisco is planning to build a new ferry terminal at Mission Bay. The

Mission Bay Ferry Terminal will be in easy walking distance of Chase Center and the UCSF Mission Bay hospital. It will have the capacity to berth two ferries at once and carry up to 6,000 riders a day. Other ferries may soon connect Antioch, Hercules, Treasure Island, and Martinez.

Ferries offer a million-dollar view, a stress-free ride, fresh air, snacks, and a bar. Perhaps the second Golden Age of San Francisco Bay's ferryboats is about to begin.

Lana Costantini is a third-generation San Franciscan with a lifelong love of waterfront haunts, obscure urban beaches, and maritime history. She is the Director of Education and Publications for the San Francisco Historical Society and a member of the Board of Directors of Seven Tepees Youth Program and San Francisco Maritime National Park Association.



View west of ferryboats at San Francisco dock, 1890s. Martin Behrman Negative Collection/Courtesy of GGNRA Archives and OpenSFHistory/wnp71.0573.



Ferryboat Newark and Goat Island (now Yerba Buena Island), 1885. Courtesy of OpenSFHistory/wnp71.1165.

We Remember Two SFHS Members

We lost two longtime SFHS members when they recently died. Both were native San Franciscans, and both were generous to SFHS. They will be missed.

Frances Hildebrand died on May 16 from complications related to COPD. She graduated from Lowell High School and University of California, Berkeley. A Legacy.com obituary called her a “lover of all things San Francisco” and added, “Friends will always remember her keen intellect, kindness, and fantastic laugh. She loved books, writing, and a good martini with friends.” Charles Fracchia, founder of SFHS, remembers Fran as “an incredibly resourceful person who was a splendid supporter of the SFHS. Her smile and humor will be missed.”

James Clair Flood, great-grandson of the silver baron by the same name, died of natural causes on February 18. He enjoyed the outdoors: riding horses, hunting, hiking, mountain climbing, skiing, fly-fishing, and more. In 1990 he began working for the family business. He managed the Flood Building at 870 Market Street for many years. According to Charles Fracchia, “Jim Flood typified San Francisco aristocracy. He was passionately interested in local history and was always willing to give valuable advice on enhancing the San Francisco Historical Society.”

A Peek at the Past



In honor of Pride’s 50th anniversary, SFHS looks back to one of San Francisco’s early gay bars and its landmark victory for gay rights. The Black Cat opened on Mason Street in 1906 and moved to Montgomery Street in 1933. Its liquor license was suspended in 1951 because the bar had a homosexual clientele. The bar appealed, and the California Supreme Court ruled in its favor, officially sanctioning the right of gay people to assemble. Raids on gay bars continued, but the fight for Pride had begun.



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SFMHS BOOK REVIEW

This book has been reviewed by Lorri Ungaretti. Please remember that SFHS benefits from your purchase of books at Amazon.com. To use the SFHS benefit, go to sfhistory.org, click on “Shop,” and then click on the Amazon link.

Gold Mountain, Big City:

Ken Cathcart’s 1947 Illustrated Map of San Francisco’s Chinatown

JIM SCHEIN

Cameron Books, San Francisco, 2020

In 1937 photographer Ken Cathcart (1902–1985) moved to San Francisco and started documenting the city, especially Chinatown, through photographs and maps. In 1947 he created and illustrated “San Francisco Chinatown and Environs: A Scrapbook Map,” the subject of this book.

Author Jim Schein is the co-owner of the store Schein & Schein, which sells old maps and prints. He probably knows more about maps than anyone else in San Francisco. His book starts with information about Cathcart’s life and work, featuring photographs, drawings, and maps, and then goes into detail about the Cathcart map—which is more than a map. Its colorful illustrations tell the stories of Chinatown (and San Francisco as a whole). A panel of illustrations surrounds the map, celebrating “one hundred years of Chinese immigration to San Francisco and California.” The book reproduces and carefully describes each illustration on both the map and the surrounding panel.

In addition to a reproduction of the map on pages 14–15, the book contains a folded copy, which readers can display and study closely as they read the book. Anyone who enjoys maps and appreciates the history and culture of San Francisco’s Chinatown will love this book. I wish that it had an index, but even without it, *Gold Mountain, Big City* is an amazing and beautiful book.



Remember Crystal Palace Market?



Former SFHS administrative manager Lorri Ungaretti is researching San Francisco’s Crystal Palace Market for an article in *The Argonaut*. If you or someone you know used to go there and remembers it, or if you ran one of the businesses inside the market, please contact Lorri at lorri@sfhistory.org.