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Publication Date

2009

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In the Public Interest:
Space, Ethnicity, and Authority in San Francisco's Mission District, 1906-1973

by

Erik Ocean Howell

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Architecture

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Greig Crysler, Chair

Professor Paul Groth

Professor David Henkin

Fall 2009

Abstract

In the Public Interest:
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This project examines the role of neighborhoods in the making of the twentieth-century American city. Using San Francisco's Mission District as its case study, "In the Public Interest" demonstrates that the city cannot be explained without reference to neighborhoods—neighborhoods considered not as mere backdrops for processes like "ethnic transition," land use, and inter-generational conflict, but rather as units of authority whose interests often prevailed over those of municipal, state, and federal agencies. The Mission was an economically diverse, multiethnic neighborhood, and a site in which all of the twentieth century's major urban planning programs were contested, including the City Beautiful, the New Deal, the highway acts, urban renewal, and Model Cities. The neighborhood was also the site of many struggles for authority, both within the neighborhood—among Anglos and Latinos, unions and merchant groups—and in larger political and economic structures like municipal government, regional economies, and state and federal agencies.

This project begins in 1906 and concludes in 1973 because within that frame can be traced two arcs of neighborhood authority: in the wake of the earthquake and fire of 1906, local merchants and unions secured a semi-official authority to make urban planning decisions for the neighborhood, but that authority was stripped from the neighborhood by San Francisco's postwar planning regime; an official neighborhood-based planning authority was restored through the Great Society's Model Cities Program, but was stripped again when the Nixon administration halted funding for the program in 1973. While the influence of neighborhood-based groups ebbed and flowed in larger political and economic structures, contests over who would be permitted to speak on behalf of the neighborhood persisted throughout the period under study.

Within the neighborhood, the ideas of "the public" and the "public interest" furnished the conceptual terrain on which access to neighborhood authority was contested. For the key actors in this story, the public was composed firstly of those people and institutions who were allowed to make decisions, and secondarily of the broader collection of individuals and institutions who were intended to benefit from the

decisions made. The public interest was not what was good for everyone, but rather the specific benefits that were to redound to those who counted as the public. In the early twentieth century, neighborhood-based merchants and unions agreed that the public interest was served by ensuring continued economic prosperity and by maintaining the (white) racial homogeneity of the neighborhood. In the postwar period, a growing Latino population formed coalitions with predominantly Irish institutions—Catholic parish churches and merchants groups—to insist on racial and economic equality as criteria for determining the public interest. In so doing, these coalitions untethered the public interest from the processes of production, and aligned the concept with residence, without regard to productive capacity, consumption patterns, class, or ethnicity. In the process of telling the local history of a single neighborhood, this study makes interventions into many national stories, including redlining, race in federal public housing policy, the freeway revolt, urban renewal, Model Cities, Third World Defense organizations, Latino urban history, multiethnic alliances and the making of urban America.

This project draws on reportage (English- and Spanish-language), mayoral papers, and the records of key institutions like labor unions, federal agencies, municipal departments, and the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco. The project also draws upon historical photographs, fire insurance maps, tourist maps, architectural renderings, urban plans, novels, and popular films.

For Thea

Acknowledgments

During the process of writing this dissertation I have received support, guidance, and inspiration from many people and institutions. Greig Crysler has shepherded me through my entire graduate education—from application to dissertation—with great intelligence and kindness. He has always understood when I needed to be challenged, and when I needed to be encouraged, and he has shaped my thinking and my writing in more ways than I can list. Paul Groth has shown me that it is often the humblest artifact of the built environment that has the most profound story to tell, and he has helped me to refine my writing at every stage of the process. David Henkin has consistently pushed for conceptual clarity; I always walk away from our conversations with a better understanding of my own work. Many other people have seen smaller pieces of this dissertation, in various stages of completion. For their comments and encouragement, I wish to thank especially Richard Walker, Eric Avila, Casey Nelson Blake, and Barbara Berglund. There is a much larger collection of people who have not read this work, but who have nonetheless helped to shape it, in ways large and small, through conversations and by force of example. Though there are too many of them to name here, I must at least acknowledge the influence of Kathleen James-Chakraborty, Paula Fass, Andy Shanken, Mark Brilliant, Bill Littmann, and Allan Pred.

Allan served on my master's thesis committee, and on my dissertation committee when this project was still in its infancy. Having distinguished himself as one of the most rigorous social scientists and as one of the most creative theorists in his field, Allan modeled the kind of thinker I wanted to be. Like so many other young scholars at Berkeley, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work with him, and I keenly felt his absence after he passed in 2007. Only a few months later, the Berkeley community also lost Stephanie Kim, a doctoral candidate in the Department of City and Regional Planning. I had known Stephanie for ten years, and she was one of my dearest friends. I have accepted that I will always feel a sense of injustice at having lost such an amazing person at such a young age.

Thankfully, I had many colleagues and friends who not only helped me through such challenging times, but who were also there to celebrate little victories along the way, and to provide good company on the day-to-day. Special thanks go to Pete Allen, Sarah Lopez, and Elihu Rubin. Recognition is also due to my mother, Kathleen Leavitt, my stepmother, Loral Johnson, and my father, Kip Howell, who set me on this path long ago, and who have provided unwavering support every step of the way. It is deeply gratifying to know that I have made them proud.

This project would not have been possible without the support of a number of institutions. UC Berkeley's Institute for the Study of Social Change (ISSC) provided a two-year dissertation fellowship, through its New Metropolis Initiative. More importantly, the ISSC provided an intellectual community that helped me refine my ideas and develop professionally. I thank Christine Trost, Deborah Lustig, David Minkus, and all the staff and fellows at the ISSC. The University of California's Labor and Employment Research Fund provided much needed support at a crucial stage of my research. I regret that the Fund has become a casualty of the current budget crisis, and sincerely hope that the State Legislature will reconsider the wisdom of slashing funding for research on the history and future of labor in California. A Foreign Language and

Area Studies grant from the U.S. Department of Education, as well as a grant from the UC Berkeley Graduate Division, both helped me to refine my Spanish. UC Berkeley's Department of Architecture also provided much needed material and administrative support; thanks are due especially to Lois Koch.

Over the past five years, I have spent countless hours in archives in the Bay Area and beyond, where I met many dedicated librarians and archivists who gave generously of their time. I thank Jeffrey Burns at the Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco for helping me to navigate the collections, and for sharing his own research on St. Peter's Parish in the Mission District. At the California Historical Society, I thank Mary Morganti, Debra Kaufman, and Alison Moore. I also wish to thank the expert staffs at the California State Library, in Sacramento; the California Military History Museum, in Sacramento; the San Francisco History Center, at the San Francisco Public Library; the Labor Archives and Research Center, at San Francisco State University; and the Bancroft Library, at UC Berkeley.

For all of the institutional support that I received, my greatest debt is a personal one. Thea Chroman has been with this project from the very beginning: her patience has never failed to amaze me, and her intelligence and curiosity have never ceased to inspire me. I dedicate this work to her, with all my love.

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List of Abbreviations

BART – Bay Area Rapid Transit
BTC – Building Trades Council
FHA – Federal Housing Administration
HOLC – Home Owners' Loan Corporation
HUD – Department of Housing and Urban Development
MCO – Mission Coalition Organization
MCOR – Mission Council on Renewal
MHDC – Mission Housing Development Corporation
MPA – Mission Promotion Association
OBECA – Organization for Business Economic and Community Advancement
PWA – Public Works Administration
SERA – State Emergency Relief Administration
SFDCP – San Francisco Department of City Planning
SFHA – San Francisco Housing Authority
SFLC – San Francisco Labor Council
SFRA – San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
SPUR – San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association
USHA – United States Housing Authority
WPA – Works Progress Administration

Introduction: On Neighborhoods and the Public Interest

In recent decades San Francisco's Mission District has gained national attention as a bohemian and working-class Latino neighborhood that has become a battleground over gentrification. Real estate values inflated rapidly with the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s, pricing out many low income residents. At writing, tensions over displacement have persisted for almost a decade beyond the bust, as the neighborhood's more established residents have employed legal and sometimes even physical tactics for turning back the flood of capital which they fear will sweep them out. An extreme expression of this tension came in the form of an anonymous campaign called the "Mission Yuppie Eradication Project" which advocated vandalizing the cars and residences of well heeled newcomers.¹ Both scholarly publications and popular outlets such as the *New York Times* have asked: Whom does the neighborhood "belong" to?² Whose interests should local government serve? In other words, who constitutes "the public" in the Mission? But while gentrification has brought new attention to the neighborhood, the question of who counts among the public has a long and contentious history in the Mission District, as it does in comparable neighborhoods across the country, neighborhoods like New York's Lower East Side, Seattle's Central District, or Chicago's Lincoln Park, among hundreds of others. To fully appreciate the prospects and challenges that face neighborhoods like the Mission, those histories must be told.

In spite of calls for such work from prominent historians, neighborhoods have continued to play only a bit part in the historiography of American cities, an oversight that leaves us with a picture of urban life and urban politics that is at once fragmentary and overly tidy.³ San Francisco's affluent Nob Hill neighborhood is separated from Chinatown by a single street, only thirty five feet wide, yet the two neighborhoods were and remain worlds apart. Both neighborhoods exist within the same street grid and the same municipality, and both rely upon much of the same infrastructure; yet because they occupy different social and political positions within those broader systems, there is little that can be said about one neighborhood that holds true for the other—many issues affect both neighborhoods, but rarely in the same way. Even so, the stories of both neighborhoods have been told primarily from the perspective of the entire city of San Francisco, subsuming myriad variations under one urban entity. Neighborhoods are not standardized puzzle pieces that add up to an urban whole; rather they vary widely in their physical, socioeconomic, and cultural characteristics, as well as in their standing and

¹ See Jaxon Van Derbeken, "Battle Over Gentrification Gets Ugly in S.F.'s Mission: Anarchist arrested, charged with making threats," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 7, 1999.

² Evelyn Nieves, "Mission District Fights Case of Dot-Com Fever," *New York Times*, November 5, 2000. Also see Bill Hayes, "Artists vs. Dot-Coms: Fighting San Francisco's Gold Rush," *New York Times*, December 14, 2000; and Evelyn Nieves, "In Old Mission District, Changing Grit to Gold," *New York Times*, Jan 21, 1999. For recent scholarship addressing this question, see Kelly Jean Freidenfelds, "This Ain't Mister Rogers Neighborhood: The Making of the Mission District, San Francisco," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2006.

³ Jon Teaford, "Review of *Local Attachments*," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4, October 1995, 1311. See also Steven J. Hoffman, "Review of *Local Attachments*," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Autumn 1995, 207-209; and Clay McShane, "Review of *Local Attachments*," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 4, December 1995, 681-683.

influence with respect to broader political structures, like municipal governments, regional economies, or federal agencies. More than simply receptacles for processes such as land use, "ethnic transition," and inter-generational conflict, neighborhoods are dynamic social processes in and of themselves. Like cities, neighborhoods are physical and administrative realities, but also imagined communities, loose collectivities which are forged through media and representation (from campaign speeches to architecture) rather than only through face-to-face contact. Like cities neighborhoods are unified in some moments (around some issues) but riven with internal conflict at others. The meaning and even the geography of neighborhoods vary widely depending on who is speaking, and where that person stands in the sociopolitical and cultural network of which a neighborhood is a part.

For a project which considers the role of neighborhood in the history of American urbanism, the Mission District is a rich case study. The Mission was an economically diverse, multiethnic neighborhood, and a site in which all of the twentieth century's major planning programs were contested, including the City Beautiful, the New Deal, the highway acts, urban renewal, and Model Cities. While most of the area that would later become San Francisco was covered with windswept sand dunes in the eighteenth century, the area that would become the Mission (in the eastern central portion of the city) was shielded from the northwesterly winds by Twin Peaks, and endowed with a supply of fresh water. (See Figure 1.) The Yelamu people, a tribe of the Ohlone language family, hunted and fished in the area, and when Spanish missionaries arrived in the temperate valley they recognized it as the ideal site for their mission.⁴ In 1776, Fathers Francisco Palou and Pedro Cambon established *la Mision San Francisco de Asis*, the structure from which the neighborhood and the larger city would later take their names.⁵

The Mexican government secularized all the California missions in 1834, and after California became American in 1848, the mission complex became a kind of rowdy resort—complete with "bars, gambling dens, and 'fandango' dance halls"—which serviced the nearby port of Yerba Buena (downtown San Francisco today).⁶ After the gold rush began in 1849, Anglo settlers began to squat on the ranch lands of prominent Californios, the Mexicans who had stayed after California became American in 1848.⁷ In the second half of the nineteenth century the city's new elite built resorts and two horse racing tracks in the sunny valley to the south of the mission. (See Figure 2.) By the 1880s, the area had become a country suburb of San Francisco, where many of the city's leading citizens built mansions, including James Duval Phelan and John D. Spreckels.⁸ (See Figure 3.)

It was around this time that newspapers first began referring to the area as the "Mission District." The earliest uses of that term are to be found in the summer of 1890

⁴ City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, "City within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District," 2007, 14-15.

⁵ See Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), "A Plan for the Inner Mission, Book 1," March 1974, 7; San Francisco Planning Department, 15; and Bernard L. Fontana, *Entrada: The Legacy of Spain and Mexico in the United States*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994). Today the Mission is known as the Mission Dolores.

⁶ MHDC, 8.

⁷ San Francisco Planning Department, 21-23, 29.

⁸ MHDC, 10-11; San Francisco Planning Department, 37.

in real estate advertisements, and reports on real estate sales, in the *San Francisco Call*.⁹ The boundaries of the Mission District never did conform to any official mapping, like ward or assembly districts, or census tracts.¹⁰ Rather, the boundaries seem to have been defined by environmental features, Twin Peaks to the west, Bernal Hill to the south, Potrero Hill to the east, and a built-environment boundary to the north: the curving streets which linked the South of Market grid to the Mission grid. (See Figure 1). These boundaries were unofficial, having been used originally for the purposes of advertising real estate, but judging by newspaper articles and municipal publications, the boundaries were soon widely agreed upon by San Franciscans.¹¹ As the Mission District became a more popular address through the 1890s, small-scale merchants and skilled laborers began moving with their families to the neighborhood.¹² By the turn of the twentieth century the Mission had been transformed from an elite country suburb to a streetcar suburb for merchants and upwardly mobile laborers, mostly first and second-generation Irish and German immigrants.¹³

The earthquake and fire of 1906 destroyed much of downtown, but spared most of the Mission. (See Figure 1.) As the neighborhood rebuilt, it largely shed its dependence on downtown, expanding its own zone of industrial employment as well as its retail and services areas, which now included the Mission Bank. The neighborhood became less of a streetcar suburb and more of a "city within a city."¹⁴ The fire also drove many working-class residents out of the adjacent South of Market District, and into the Mission, bringing with them more than half of the city's unions, including the powerful San Francisco Labor Council and the Building Trades Council. These institutions both complemented and competed with the neighborhood's established business elite. Within the Mission the right to participate in decisions that affected the life of the neighborhood, and even the right to live in peace, was contested between and among businesspeople and unionist residents, an Anglo majority and a small Chinese minority. In broader post-fire San Francisco, the right to determine how the entire city would be rebuilt and reimagined was up for grabs, and the Mission was a unified and formidable participant in that contest.

Over the coming seven decades, the Mission would be the site of many more contests over decision-making power, both within the neighborhood—among Anglos and Latinos, unions and merchant groups—and in larger political and economic structures including the municipal government, the regional economy, and state and federal

⁹ "Real Estate: A Quiet Business Week, But Good Prices Prevail," *San Francisco Call*, June 14, 1890; "Mission District French Flats" advertisement, *San Francisco Call*, September 12, 1890. By the fall of 1890, the term "Mission District" was being used in the *San Francisco Chronicle*; see "St. Mary's College: The Old Mission Road Structure to Be Removed," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 12, 1890.

¹⁰ See ward and assembly maps in William Issel and Robert Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Power, Politics, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1986), 121, 191, 232 n. 16.

¹¹ The San Francisco Fire Department also began using the "Mission District" in 1890. See San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Reports, Fiscal Year 1889-90, Ending June 30, 1890*, 1890, 242-243.

¹² Issel and Cherny, 63-66; San Francisco Planning Department, 36-38.

¹³ San Francisco Planning Department, 29-31. In this respect, the Mission was not unlike the Western Addition District, except that the latter neighborhood had a more upper-middle class character: more businesspeople and professionals, fewer laborers and foreign born. Issel and Cherny, 66-68.

¹⁴ San Francisco Planning Department, 1. See also Peter Booth Wiley, *National Trust Guide to San Francisco*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 303.

agencies. Those contests are the subject of this dissertation. In the process of telling the local history of a single neighborhood, this dissertation makes interventions into many national stories, including the defeat of Daniel Burnham's Plan for San Francisco, the lending practice known as redlining, the role of race in federal public housing policy, the freeway revolt, urban renewal, Model Cities, Third World Defense organizations, Latino urban history, multiethnic alliances and the making of urban America.

Historians of U.S. urbanism typically take cities and federal agencies/jurisdictions as their unit of study. Neighborhood is the scale at which many federal and municipal policies have been implemented, so it is right and proper that neighborhood history should be told from federal and municipal perspectives. However, the view from the ground up also offers many insights into American urbanism, including insights into the federal policies which have been of primary concern in scholarly urban histories. To take just two examples, the Federal Housing Administration's 1938 lending guidelines and the postwar urban renewal program are often thought to have produced uniform outcomes in cities across the country. But the view from the neighborhood shows that neither set of policies had the rigidity or the determinative force that we often ascribe to them. They were two among many other factors which conditioned a range of possibilities, but the final outcomes were determined locally.

In the field of municipal politics, the influence of neighborhood has been profound. The participants in the urban politics of cities tended to discuss neighborhoods as singular entities, endowed with their own character and volition: homeowners' groups in San Francisco's Mission District spoke not of the planning initiatives that they wanted but that *the Mission* wanted; parent groups from other areas of the city complained that *the Mission* ran the school board; recreation officials objected that *the Mission* extracted more than its share of resources from the Parks Department.¹⁵ Many American neighborhoods were regarded as actors, standing alongside elected officials, elite families, chambers of commerce, railroad companies, and political machines as entities which exercised influence over urban planning and politics. Their influence was not confined to the activities of elected supervisors or councilmen and women, but was wielded by parish churches, merchants' groups, social service providers, improvement clubs, and other territorially based actors, all of whom derived a moral authority to act from the claim to represent their neighborhood. In short, neighborhood was a unit of authority, one that was sometimes latent, particularly in the immediate post-WWII period, but which nevertheless helped to shape the physical, social, and political aspect of twentieth-century urban America in ways that have yet to be appreciated.

The importance of neighborhood has been recognized in some literatures. Many public policy studies in the 1980s and 1990s documented how specific economic regimes served to underdevelop some neighborhoods so that others might flourish.¹⁶ But as with most urban historical literature, those studies have tended to consider individual neighborhoods only along a single dimension, like housing or transportation, and only at

¹⁵ See for example, "Mission Wants Playgrounds: Campaign for Open Spaces for Residents of District Is Begun," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 13, 1909, 11; Victor Shrader, "Ethnicity, Religion and Class: Progressive School Reform in San Francisco," *History of Education Quarterly* vol. 20, no. 4, Winter 1980, 389; "Metson Answers Mission Charges," *The San Francisco Call*, November 15, 1910.

¹⁶ For a survey of this literature, see Paul Gottlieb, "Neighborhood Development in the Metropolitan Economy: A Policy Review," *Journal of Urban Affairs* Vol. 19, No. 2, 1997, 163-182.

a decisive moment, like the period immediately before and after an urban renewal project.¹⁷

Neighborhood has also featured prominently in the literatures that deal with the history of race, ethnicity, and, increasingly, homosexuality.¹⁸ The history of marginalized groups is difficult to tell without neighborhoods, because in many contexts studies of minorities from the perspective of municipal agencies—like city councils, police, and health departments—only yield evidence of discrimination and exclusion. Such conditions cannot and should not be overlooked, but taken alone they rarely tell the whole story. To comprehend the experience of marginalized groups, one must look at the spaces where those groups found room to build their own lives; these often include retail corridors, saloons, theaters, churches, parks, street corners, local real estate and rental markets, and a variety of other physical and institutional spaces that were constituted at the scale of the neighborhood. The history of Chinese immigrants cannot be told without Chinatown.¹⁹

However, studies of race, ethnicity, and sexuality have tended to treat neighborhoods only as containers for processes like identity construction and employment discrimination, and typically do not consider neighborhoods as social processes in and of themselves.²⁰ The historiography of Harlem is a case in point. Focusing overwhelmingly on the Harlem Renaissance, the literature on this New York City neighborhood is rich with analysis of migration and assimilation, cultural production and appropriation, gender and race relations, among many other processes.²¹ However, with the exception of Gilbert Osofsky's 1966 study, this scholarship rarely gives sustained attention to Harlem as a physical space with a long history of development, or as a unit of political authority.²²

¹⁷ For more on this point, and for a detailed historiographic survey of scholarly literature on neighborhoods, see David Garrioch and Mark Peel, "Introduction: The Social History of Urban Neighborhoods," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 32, July 2006, 663-676.

¹⁸ Horatio Nelson Roque Ramirez, "Communities of Desire: Queer Latina/Latino History and Memory, San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s – 1990s," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2001.

¹⁹ For more on North American Chinatowns, see especially and Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2001); Jan Lin, *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclave, Global Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

²⁰ This point has also been made by Alexander von Hoffman, *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850-1920*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), xviii; and by Thomas Jablonsky, *Pride in the Jungle: Community and Everyday Life in Back of the Yards Chicago*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1993, xv.

²¹ For a recent sample see Paul Allen Anderson, *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); Daylanne K. English, *Unnatural Selections: Eugenics in American Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996); Mark Helbling, *The Harlem Renaissance: The One and the Many* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 1999); David Krasner, *A Beautiful Pageant: African American Theatre, Drama, and Performance in the Harlem Renaissance, 1910-1927* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

²² Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, Negro New York, 1890-1930* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

The one notable exception to this pattern remains Alexander von Hoffman's *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Urban Neighborhood, 1850 to 1920*. In this 1994 study von Hoffman takes Boston's Jamaica Plain as his object of analysis, tracing the neighborhood's physical and social development from peripheral village to streetcar suburb to dense urban district. Paying special attention to neighborhood-based associations and clubs, von Hoffman argues against the historiographic tendency to portray life in the emerging industrial city as alienating. Scholarship influenced by Ferdinand Tönnies's dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society) had suggested that the transition from village life to urban life meant the loss of community and connection to place.²³ Von Hoffman demonstrates that residents of Jamaica Plain felt a strong sense of community which was rooted in the space of their neighborhood and found expression in debates about urban development.

Along with many other reviewers, Jon Teaford regarded *Local Attachments* as "a model neighborhood history that should inspire further work on the subject of urban districts."²⁴ The continuing dearth of research on neighborhoods is surprising given the increasing interest in ordinary landscapes and everyday life; neighborhood is, after all, the principal arena of the ordinary and the everyday for most people. The fact that such work has not been done means that the present study suffers from the same limitation as *Local Attachments*, namely that there is insufficient scholarly basis on which to determine whether all of my findings are representative.

I can confirm, however, that the Mission District had much in common with von Hoffman's Jamaica Plain. In the mid-nineteenth century both were outlying preserves of the elite. Both became streetcar suburbs by 1900, and then became dense, diverse urban neighborhoods by 1920. Like the residents of Jamaica Plain, "Missionites," as they referred to themselves, felt a loyalty to their neighborhood that trumped many other modes of identification.²⁵ Like Jamaica Plain, the Mission had many working-class residents, but it also had its own elite Progressive reformers.

It is around the activities of these reformers that my findings depart from von Hoffman's. The Progressives of Jamaica Plain and broader Boston "declared war on political and governmental localism," centralizing power in City Hall and diminishing the ability of neighborhood-based groups to demand local improvements.²⁶ The Progressives of the Mission District did just the opposite. Rather than marginalizing the neighborhood-based improvement clubs, Mission-based elites formed their own—the Mission Promotion Association (MPA)—which they billed "The Mission's Progressive Club." The MPA not only continued to lobby successfully for municipal largesse, it also established itself as the entity that would make decisions about what would happen in the physical and social space of the neighborhood, reinforcing local power and local attachment. While Jamaica Plain lost much of its influence with citywide institutions by 1920, the Mission would not experience a comparable loss of authority until after World War II.

In the period between the great disaster of 1906 and World War II, the complementary ideas of "the public" and the "public interest" furnished the conceptual

²³ Von Hoffman, xvii.

²⁴ Teaford; Hoffman; McShane.

²⁵ See Issel and Cherny, 66; and Chapter One of this dissertation.

²⁶ Von Hoffman, xxiv

terrain on which access to neighborhood authority was contested in the Mission District, as well as in broader San Francisco and the Bay Area metropolitan region. In the minds of the key actors in the story that follows, the public was internally stratified, composed both of those people and institutions who were allowed to make decisions—which I refer to throughout this dissertation as *authority*—and secondarily of the broader collection of individuals and institutions which were intended to benefit from the decisions made—which I refer to as *beneficiaries*. The category of beneficiaries generally includes the category of authority, but also often describes a broader range of actors.

So, for example, when the MPA decided to pressure the State of California to site a National Guard Armory in the Mission District, it acted as an authority on behalf of the neighborhood. As I show in Chapter One of this dissertation, the leaders of the MPA believed that this prominent building would benefit them by raising property values and by raising the Mission District's stature in the city, thereby attracting further investment. Yet they also intended for the armory to benefit a broader set of people, namely the unionist residents of the neighborhood who could use the armory as a social center. By considering the needs of these ordinary residents, the MPA earned good will and also successfully stimulated small businesses on the blocks adjacent to the armory, businesses that were very likely customers of the banks affiliated with the MPA. So while the unionist residents and small businesses had no authority to decide anything about the siting of the armory, they were still counted among the public because they were intended to benefit from the decisions that the MPA made. The public interest, by extension, was not what was good for everyone, but rather the specific benefits that were to redound to those who counted as the public. Publics were not singular or mutually exclusive; rather they were overlapping, and constituted at a variety of scales, along a number of dimensions, and reconstituted around every important decision that was made.

The actors analyzed in this study did not see the public as standing in binary opposition to the private. Rather, they viewed the public interest as standing against special interest, or sometimes "selfish interest," which is not the same as private interest.²⁷ Indeed, the private economic interests of neighborhood businesspeople and homeowners were regarded as the very model of the public interest in the early twentieth century Mission District. No statement I encountered suggested that Missionites regarded downtown economic interests as any more or less private than the economic interests of neighborhood residents; the actors I researched simply did not think in those terms. The people and entities who were excluded from membership in the public were never thought of as private; rather, those excluded from the public were thought of with reference to the specific terms of their marginalization, variously, across the period under study, as scheming foreigners, greedy capitalists, racist cops, and often simply "downtown."

After World War II, key actors in the Mission continued to invoke the terms public and public interest, but not always in the same sorts of contexts that their predecessors had, and not always with the same intended meanings. By the 1960s the term public, in particular, was more often used as an adjective, a synonym for governmental, as in "public policy." In the discourse of a 1960s organization, called the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO), which I analyze in depth, the word "public" was often used to modify descriptions of various programs or agencies that were to be treated

²⁷ See "Bitter Dispute Over Islais Creek Measure," *The San Francisco Call*, November 19, 1907.

with suspicion. But in spite of this linguistic slippage from the pre- to the post-WWII period, the contest to determine who would be allowed to make decisions, and who would benefit from those decisions, continued as it had before the war. Where the MPA might have used the word public, activists in the 1950s and 1960s often substituted "community" or "the people"—but the underlying meaning was the same.²⁸ Because the present study is primarily a history of how a sociopolitical category operated, rather than an historical discourse analysis, I have not attempted to smooth over these rhetorical rough edges.

The test of who decides and who benefits can be used to determine who belongs to the public in many arenas, including education, military defense, health care provision, and immigration law, to name just a few. This study focuses on space: what would be built where? How would the resulting spaces be reused and reimagined? Who decided? Who benefited? They were the public.

It was not always neighborhood-based institutions and residents who made, or even who benefited from, land use decisions in the Mission District. Indeed the conceptions of the public interest that emerged from local merchants' groups, parish churches, homeowners, and other neighborhood-based actors were sometimes diametrically opposed to the public interest as defined by entities like the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, or the State Highway Commission. Eschewing a sentimentality that is sometimes associated with discourses about neighborhood or local community, at no point does this study attempt to identify the genuine public interest—it is one of the overarching aims of this work to argue that such a thing does not exist, that the public interest invariably depends upon where one stands, and how one draws the boundaries of a community. In those instances when the neighborhood's own conception of the public interest was not respected or acknowledged by external actors, I do not attempt to arbitrate, but only outline the contours of the contest.

In all but the most homogeneous neighborhoods, a focus on the public requires a multiethnic and multi-class approach, an approach that foregrounds the relationships among different groups, rather than the experience of a single group.²⁹ Rather than use a neighborhood as a backdrop for a study of ethnicity and class, this work looks at ethnicity and class through the lens of neighborhood, considered in terms of its physical development and its status as a unit of authority.

Public status in the Mission District was negotiated among workers and businesspeople, and among Anglos, Latinos, and Chinese immigrants. Though the Chinese population in the neighborhood was never large in the period under study, its presence provoked much consternation among white unionists concerned with maintaining the racial boundaries of publicness in the first three decades of the twentieth

²⁸ To further avoid confusion, I have also scrupulously avoided using the word "public" in any of its other meanings. I do not, for example, use the word public to mean "open to everyone," as in "publicly accessible"; nor "governmental," as in "public agencies"; nor "in an open forum" as in "public statement"; nor "widely disseminated," as in "public knowledge"; nor, in the sense often employed in architectural discourses, "widely visible," as in "public building." In the context of this study, "public" means only the collection of people and institutions that decide and the collection of people and institutions that benefit.

²⁹ For a model of historical multiethnic studies, see Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

century, a subject which I address in depth in the first chapter of this dissertation. By the early 1930s the Chinese residents, mostly businesspeople who ran laundries, had been driven out of the neighborhood. Around the same time, Latinos began moving to the Mission, and while they were not initially welcomed, nor did they ever experience the kind of legal and physical violence that the Chinese endured. In the post-WWII period, Latino groups began to form coalitions with Anglo-dominated institutions, particularly the Catholic parish churches, a subject that I address in Chapter Three.

This dissertation's focus on a multiethnic neighborhood that was comparatively stable, economically speaking, helps to complicate the prevailing view of postwar American urbanism as a black and white story: black cities, white suburbs; "inner city" decline, white flight. The historiography of postwar urban America is largely the story of the "ghetto," a term I avoid in this study, not least because it is freighted with assumptions—about racial and ethnic relations, real estate practices, and city services, among many others—only some of which described conditions in the Mission.³⁰ Many studies have demonstrated that white suburbanization and black urban segregation were indeed pervasive in the postwar decades, but the full stories of urbanite Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and indeed of Anglos, among other groups, have yet to be told for this period.³¹

Although this study takes a decidedly multiethnic approach, focusing on the conflicts and coalitions among Anglos, Latinos, and Chinese, this work also engages the historiography of Latinos in United States, a body of literature which is dominated by studies of Los Angeles. Manuel Castells's *The City and the Grassroots* is one of the only books that discuss the Latino Mission District before 1973 and, surprisingly, there are no books at all that contain a sustained discussion of Latino life in San Francisco before 1968.³² "In the Public Interest" endeavors to begin filling this gap in the literature, drawing many contrasts between the Angeleno Latino experience of overt racial bias at the hands of city agencies and in the housing market, and the San Franciscan Latino experience of invisibility.

Over the last two decades, the analytical lens of gender has been of particular interest to scholars who are concerned with questions of publicness.³³ Much of that work

³⁰ See, most notably, Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

³¹ For some prominent examples of studies treating (and often problematizing) the subjects of white flight and urban decline see Hirsch; Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, ((Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

³² Manuel Castells, "City and Culture: The San Francisco Experience," in Ida Susser, ed., *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, [1983] 2002), 144.

³³ For more on the subject of women and publicness in urban life, see especially Jessica Sewell, "Gendering the Spaces of Modernity: Women and Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2000; Amy Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Mary Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1998); Mary Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

has focused on how the experiences of women affected, and were affected by, the shifting of boundaries between *public and private spheres*. While this focus has produced much valuable work, the present study is concerned with a different question: the *public interest*, as it was defined through contests over land use decisions. Because this project pays special attention to decision-making authority, in the early- and mid-twentieth century, the actors analyzed here are overwhelmingly male. This study does discuss gender-related subjects—such as the construction of masculinity and the changing roles of women as laborers, homeowners, and housing advocates—but only at moments when those subjects are most visibly pertinent to the construction of the public interest. That means that this project does not engage in any systematic analysis of the subtler ways that gender structured urban life. It is my intention to undertake such an analysis in future versions of this work.

For the present study, I have drawn insights from my own surveys of the extant physical geography of the Mission District, but my method was primarily archival. This research focuses on reportage (both English- and Spanish-language), mayoral papers, and the records of key institutions including labor unions, citizen groups, federal agencies, municipal departments, and the Catholic Archdiocese. But this project also draws upon historical photographs, fire insurance maps, tourist maps, architectural plans, novels, and popular films. Many of these sources had yet to be analyzed by historians, including the Home Owners' Loan Corporation's 1937 residential survey of San Francisco (the original redlining map); the original texts of Paul Radin's extensive 1935 ethnographies of Bay Area Latinos, funded by the California State Emergency Relief Administration; the early twentieth-century San Francisco Spanish-language newspaper, *El Imparcial*; and, surprisingly, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's 1966 urban renewal plan for the Mission District.³⁴ To determine who counted as the public and who did not, I have asked the same two questions of all of these sources, questions which are related, but discrete: who decided what would be built where and who benefited from those decisions?

I have chosen to begin my study in 1906 and to conclude in 1973 because within that frame can be traced two complete arcs of neighborhood authority: in the wake of the earthquake and fire of 1906, the neighborhood secured a semi-official authority to make planning decisions for itself; that authority was stripped from the neighborhood by San Francisco's postwar planning regime; an official neighborhood-based planning authority was restored through the Great Society's Model Cities Program, but was stripped again when the Nixon administration halted funding for the program in 1973.

Chapter One opens with the question of how the space of the Mission District would be reimagined in the aftermath of the earthquake and fire of 1906. The MPA was formed in order to assert control over precisely these questions. The neighborhood's powerful unions did not challenge the authority of the Association to make those decisions because their memberships benefited from construction jobs, improved services, and increased municipal investment. The Association was not officially recognized by any government agency, yet the municipality and even the state treated it as an entity with the authority to plan not only the space of its home neighborhood, but also the space of the entire southern half of San Francisco. Through the 1910s, MPA

³⁴ Castells mentions the existence of this plan, but does not describe it in any depth. See Castells, 172.

regulars moved into the highest offices in city government, and were instrumental in the establishment of the city's first city planning commission. Considering its status as an extra-legal authority, I argue that the MPA is best described as a kind of "Progressive political machine."

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the neighborhood's powerful merchants and business owners were regarded as the public, with the right to make decisions about the built environment, while the neighborhood's unionist residents were members of the public only insofar as they were beneficiaries of the MPA's planning initiatives. By consensus, the public interest was the economic prosperity of merchants and unionist residents. Because the unions viewed the neighborhood's Chinese laundries as a foreign element, and a threat to the goals of a living wage and the eight hour work day, they mounted a campaign to explicitly and often violently marginalize the Chinese laundrymen from the public and its benefits. Though the MPA did not drive this campaign, it did support its political allies. The alliance between unions and Progressives was based narrowly on the question of improvements in the built environment, and was dependent upon continued economic growth and the maintenance of racial homogeneity. All of these arrangements would become unsustainable with the onset of the Great Depression.

Chapter Two documents the ebbing of political power from the Mission District in the 1930s. Once adept at winning a disproportionate share of municipal largesse, neighborhood groups now found that there was no longer any municipal largesse to be lobbied for. As the Mission's aging leadership passed away, the détente between neighborhood-based businesses and unions eroded. Unions now began to demand not only economic benefits but also economic equality. Into the power vacuum stepped New Deal Agencies, with a series of built projects—like public housing and a vocational school—which heavily favored the interests of workers over those of local businesses, effectively stripping the neighborhood-based business community of its authority to plan for the neighborhood. However, I show that the specific interventions in the Mission were not determined by federal administrators, but were in fact guided by San Francisco's largest banks and realtors, who had long sought to guide planning for the entire city and the Bay Region. In other words, New Deal interventions did not move authority to Washington D.C., but rather to downtown San Francisco. Federal interventions also reinforced the neighborhood's racial mores by condoning exclusionary practices in the new school and housing complex. However, New Deal agencies also promoted the principles of non-discrimination in ways that began to resonate with local labor.

Also in the 1930s, Latinos began to move into the Mission District, but their presence was systematically overlooked by agencies concerned with the built environment. In the racial covenants of the 1910s and 1920s, as well as in the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporations' official categories, it was only "Mexicans of mixed Indian extraction" who were regarded as an "inharmonious" racial group. Latinos of "Spanish" or "Latin" heritage were regarded as European, and even as white. In spite of the growing Latino residential concentrations in the Mission, the agencies concerned with the built environment continued to describe the neighborhood as white because to acknowledge a "racial concentration" would be to damage business prospects related to real estate in the neighborhood. Because Latinos could be regarded as white or as a racial minority, depending on the circumstances, they might be described as having an

ambiguous racial status.³⁵ While their invisibility protected them from the overtly racist, often violent treatment that Chinese laundrymen had endured, it also meant that their specific needs would not be addressed in the built environment, and that they would be marginalized from the public.

Chapter Three concerns the period immediately following World War II, and documents a growing rift between the way that the public was conceived within the Mission District, and the way the public was conceived at the municipal, state, and federal levels. Within the neighborhood the unions, merchants, and particularly the Catholic Church increasingly embraced the concept of economic equality, and broadened the concept to include racial equality—projecting an expanded set of beneficiaries in the public. The Mission did not experience the precipitous sequence of disinvestment, white flight, racial infiltration, and decline so familiar from the historiography of postwar American “inner cities”; many Anglos and Anglo institutions remained in the Mission, where they continued to promote and expand the vision of an egalitarian urban life that had prevailed in the neighborhood during the New Deal. Unions did not fully integrate, but did create minority caucuses. Merchants began advertising in Spanish. Catholic parishes began conducting Spanish language services and funding Latino social service organizations. However, this vision of a public at the scale of the neighborhood ceased to be recognized by municipal, state, and federal government. In San Francisco an urban planning regime, led by downtown corporations, began to imagine radical spatial revisions—including freeways and urban renewal projects—for the purpose of making neighborhoods profitable to the municipality. Neighborhoods did not have the authority to even protest, much less to contribute to the formulation of these plans. So while the Mission District continued to elaborate a concept of the public interest which revolved around economic and racial equality, the municipality did not recognize the existence of a public at the scale of the neighborhood, and reasserted a concept of the public interest that revolved around prosperity, this time at the scale of the entire city.

Chapter Four analyzes the multiple conflicts that erupted in the 1960s over the questions of who would count among the public. In 1966, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency drew up a plan for the Mission District. Contrary to prevailing interpretations, the plan would not have cleared the entire neighborhood, but would have focused overwhelmingly on the rehabilitation of existing structures. Still, because the neighborhood would not have final say over what would happen to the built environment, the neighborhood's most influential entities organized to form the MCO, a coalition that included parish churches, merchants, homeowners' groups, Latino civic participation associations, and unions. Through a series of legal and political challenges, the MCO won recognition from City Hall as a legitimate planning authority at the scale of the neighborhood. Under the auspices of Model Cities, a Great Society program, the neighborhood group undertook a physical and social renewal of the Mission, clearing aging industrial structures, building public housing and recreation space, and also

³⁵ The ambiguous status of Latinos in the San Francisco housing market parallels their legal (but not actual) status in the educational system of the State of California: the case of *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946) established that “Mexicans” could not be segregated in public schools because they were legally white. African Americans and Asians, however, could be legally segregated. See *Mendez v. Westminster School District*, 64 F.Supp. 544 (C.D. Cal. 1946), *aff'd*, 161 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1947) (en banc).

instituting social programs like a hiring hall, vocational training, a health clinic, and child care.

The MCO claimed to act on behalf of a more inclusive public, or "community," which was more racially and economically diverse than the public as it had been defined in the Mission before World War II. Yet not all of the Mission's residents wished to be a part of this public. As racial attitudes towards Latinos hardened in citywide agencies, particularly in the police department and the school district, Latino youth in the Mission were radicalized. Finding intellectual and material support from the Black Panthers, the neighborhood's self-described "Third World defense" organization began to advance a critique which portrayed the Mission as a colonized space. In the postcolonial future envisioned by this group, there would be a new public, composed of formerly exploited peoples who would now be both the authors and the beneficiaries of any decisions made, not only in the Mission, but in colonized spaces the world over.

This dissertation concludes with a comparison between the two Mission-based entities that wielded the most influence in land use decisions within the neighborhood: the MPA, in the 1900s and 1910s, and the MCO, in the late 1960s early 1970s. In winning the right to plan for the neighborhood, the MCO won an authority that the Mission District had not enjoyed since the days of the MPA, only now the authority was official. Both entities defined a public at the scale of the neighborhood, and both claimed to act on behalf of that public, but the groups had different ideas about who belonged to the public, and about what constituted the public interest. While the Progressive association had defined the public as only white residents, the new coalition defined the public as all residents, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or class. While the MPA promoted the material advancement of the neighborhood, the MCO was motivated by a desire to allow current residents to remain in the Mission, and to have a say in how the neighborhood would be planned.³⁶ While the MPA had equated the public interest with prosperity, the MCO equated the public interest with a right to be present.

³⁶ Mission Promotion Association, "Constitution and Bylaws," 1909, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society, unpaginated.

Introduction Figures:

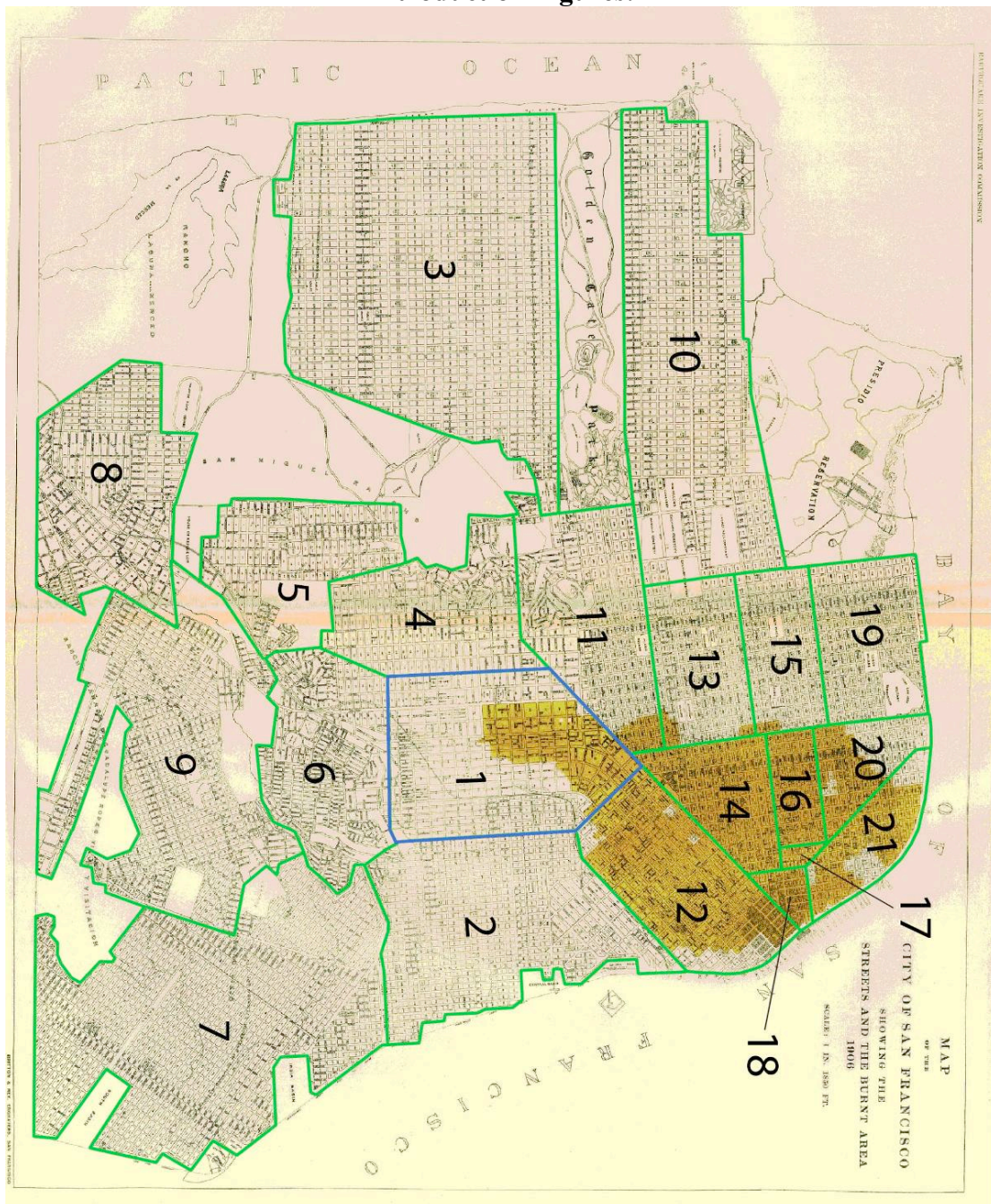


Figure 1: California State Earthquake Investigation Commission, "San Francisco Burnt Area," 1908. Orange indicates the area destroyed by the fire of 1906. Overlays show early twentieth-century neighborhood boundaries (adapted from Wiley, xiv; and Wirt, 26): 1 – Mission District, 2 – Potrero Hill/Mission Bay, 3- Sunset District, 4- Castro/Noe Valley, 5- Glen Park, 6- Bernal Heights 7- Hunter's Point/Bay View, 8-Ingleside, 9- Excelsior District, 10- Richmond District, 11- Haight Ashbury, 12- South of Market, 13- Western Addition/Fillmore, 14- Tenderloin/Civic Center, 15- Pacific Heights, 16- Nob Hill, 17- Chinatown, 18- Downtown/Financial District, 19- Marina District, 20- Russian Hill, 21- North Beach. Source: David Rumsey Map Collection.

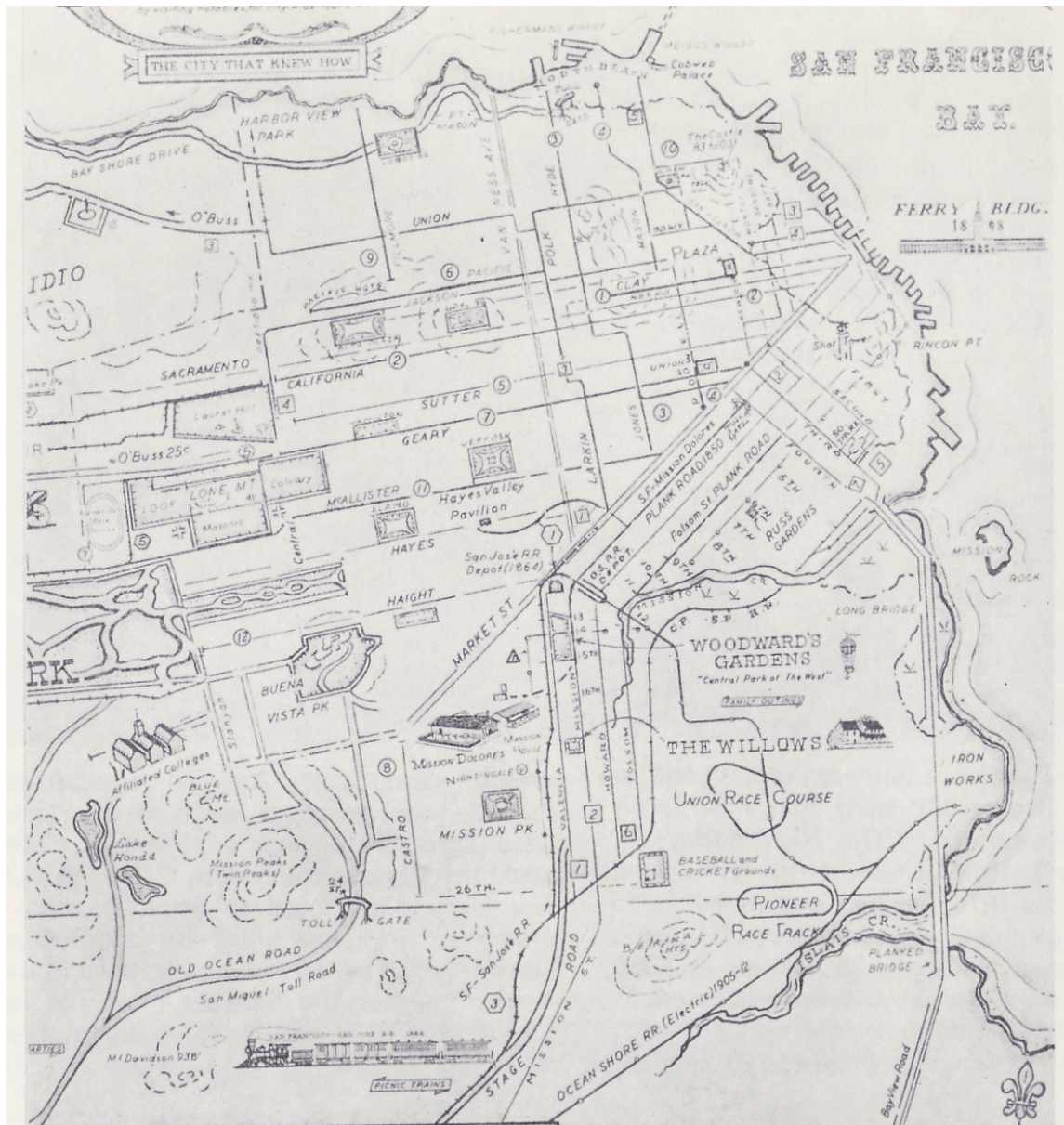


Figure 2: Detail of an 1890 transportation map of San Francisco, showing the northeastern section of San Francisco; the Mission District appears in the center- and lower-right. The Union Race Course and the Pioneer Race Track are visible in the lower right, as are the Mission District's prominent resorts—Woodward's Gardens and the Willows—among other leisure sites. The Mission Dolores appears in the lower center. Source: Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), "A Plan for the Inner Mission, Book 1," March 1974, 10.



Figure 3: John D. Spreckels mansion on the corner of Howard Street (now South Van Ness) and Twenty First Street in 1887. Source: San Francisco History Room, Photo ID Number: AAC-6167.

**Chapter One:
Local, Anglo, Prosperous:
Unions, Progressive Machines, and the Politics of Ethnicity, 1906-1929**

On the morning of April 18, 1906 an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale struck two miles off the coast of San Francisco, rupturing gas mains in the city and igniting a fire which raged for four days, over four square miles. The temblor shook hundreds of buildings to the ground, but the ensuing firestorm did the bulk of the damage, consuming almost 30,000 buildings. More than 600 people were killed. The residents of San Francisco's Mission District had a privileged and terrifying view of the entire event. From the hill above Mission Park they watched the fire destroy their city's most densely built and populated neighborhoods, including the financial district, North Beach, Chinatown, the Tenderloin, Nob Hill, Russian Hill, and South of Market.³⁷ They stood in crowds in the middle of Folsom Street, and watched as the dome of City Hall disappeared behind a wall of smoke. (See Figure 1.) From the northern end of Dolores Street, they watched as the flames finally died at the doorstep of the city's oldest building, the *Misión San Francisco de Asís*, the structure from which the district and the city had taken their names.³⁸

To neighborhood residents who saw Mission Park filling with refugee shacks as April drew to a close, the thought of coming change produced a sense of urgency, a mixture of anxiety and hope. Of the 508 city blocks that burned, only about 40 were in the Mission, but the neighborhood's proximity to downtown all but guaranteed that the hundreds of Mission blocks that had been spared would have to accommodate displaced people and displaced economic activity. (See Figure 2.) Surely the neighborhood would have to be built up, but how would it be built up, and who would decide what would be built where? Who would benefit from these decisions, and who would lose out? Surely any changes to the neighborhood would be made in the name of the public interest, but the definition of the public interest was up for grabs, as indeed was the question of who belonged to the public to begin with.

These debates were particularly contentious in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, but the stage was set for this battle years earlier. In 1893, James Duval Phelan—the future mayor and future U.S. Senator from California—served as the Vice President of California's delegation to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.³⁹ Phelan was so impressed by the White City that he invited one of its principal architects, Daniel Burnham, to make a plan for San Francisco.⁴⁰ Modeled on the 1870s revisions to Paris, made by Baron Haussmann under Napoleon III, Burnham's scheme cut broad boulevards through San Francisco's dense grids. The plan was unveiled just months before the disaster.

³⁷ For an account of the fire from the perspective of a Mission resident, see Dora Landgrebe, "Earthquake, April 18, 1906," 1966, The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection, California Historical Society. Mission Park is known today as Dolores Park.

³⁸ Today the building is known as the Mission Dolores.

³⁹ Phelan was mayor of San Francisco from 1897 to 1902, and U.S. Senator from California from 1915 to 1921.

⁴⁰ Peter Booth Wiley, *National Trust Guide to San Francisco*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 52.

Seeing an opportunity to make the plan a reality, the Union Labor administration of Eugene Schmitz formed a Committee on Reconstruction before the month of April was out. Schmitz and his colleagues quickly drafted legislation which would have expanded the city's authority to expropriate land, raise taxes, issue bonds, and impose strict building codes—all of which would be necessary to complete the plan, in the absence of a Napoleon.⁴¹ Even though City Hall had the backing of prominent citizens and business leaders, like Phelan and Charles Crocker, the plan was defeated. Resistance came from several quarters. M. H. de Young, and the rest of the conservative editorial board of the *San Francisco Chronicle* was loath to expand city authority, particularly when a labor administration wielded that authority. The plan was supported by the Building Trades Council (BTC), which was the driving force behind the Union Labor Party, but other prominent labor factions, like the Seamen's Union, viewed the push for implementation as a power grab by the Southern Pacific railroad and other large corporations which were represented on the Committee on Reconstruction.⁴²

As Judd Kahn's history of San Francisco planning makes clear, crucial opposition also came from the Mission District. Only one month after the disaster, a group of neighborhood property owners and businessmen had formed the Mission Promotion Association (MPA) to represent the interests of their district. A Mission-born attorney named Matt Sullivan appeared frequently in legislative hearings, on behalf of the Association, to charge that the plan was "intended to benefit millionaire property owners in the downtown area north of Market Street," at the expense of all taxpayers.⁴³ The opposition groups prevailed at the ballot, and before 1906 had ended, it was decided that San Francisco would be rebuilt along the same grid of streets and lots.

The idea of the public furnished the conceptual terrain on which this battle was fought: who would make the decision of how the city was to be rebuilt, and who would benefit from the decisions made? According to Phelan and the Committee on Reconstruction, all San Franciscans would benefit from the improvements of the Burnham plan, so all San Franciscans should bear a proportion of the cost.⁴⁴ Invoking a spirit of "public duty," proponents of the plan called on property owners to be amenable to condemnation proceedings and they called on all citizens to be amenable to increased taxation and bonded indebtedness.⁴⁵ In the Committee's conception all of the taxpayers in San Francisco constituted a discrete public. For Sullivan and the Mission residents he represented, the Burnham plan would not serve the public interest; rather, it would serve the special interest of downtown property owners and corporations.⁴⁶ While Phelan and the Committee on Reconstruction projected a civic whole at the scale of the city, Sullivan and the Mission faction drew sharp lines between their own interests and the interests of downtown, constituting a public at the smaller scale of the neighborhood.

⁴¹ Judd Kahn, *Imperial San Francisco: Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897-1906* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), Chapter 8.

⁴² Kahn, 191.

⁴³ Kahn, 192.

⁴⁴ Marsden Manson, "Report of Marsden Manson to the Mayor and Committee on Reconstruction," October 1906, The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 14.

⁴⁵ Phelan writing in Daniel H. Burnham, *Report on a Plan for San Francisco* (San Francisco: Sunset Press, 1905), 208.

⁴⁶ Kahn, 192.

Having won this battle, the Mission property owners and businesspeople curtailed the authority of City Hall to determine how the neighborhood would be rebuilt. Within this power vacuum the MPA established itself as the moral authority over neighborhood development. That an association of local businesspeople and property owners guided the development of their own neighborhood is unremarkable in the history of urban America. More noteworthy is the fact that, for more than a decade after the disaster, the MPA guided decisions about infrastructure, recreation space, zoning, and other development concerns for the entire southern half of San Francisco, as this chapter will show. The Association has furthermore escaped notice as perhaps the most influential entity in the founding and early work of the San Francisco Planning Commission.

While this chapter will outline the Association's influence in citywide politics and planning—and make the case that the MPA is best described as a kind of Progressive political machine—my primary concern is the way that the public was constituted in the built environment within the boundaries of the neighborhood. While the Committee on Reconstruction had projected a unified public at the scale of the city, the MPA projected a unified public at the scale of the Mission. But this public, as with any other, was a political construct which was internally stratified, and which excluded some groups outright.

The realtors, bankers, and merchants represented by the MPA were the members of the public who were allowed to guide decision making, in other words they held authority. The neighborhood's largest unions—the BTC and the San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC)—along with the white unionist residents they represented, were all members of the public, but only insofar as the local business elite intended for them to benefit from the decisions made. The MPA wanted unionist residents to benefit because they were the primary clients of the neighborhood's major businesses—if the unions prospered, then the MPA prospered.

Excluded from the public were ethnic minorities, particularly anyone of Asian descent, specifically because members of the public viewed these populations as a threat to the prosperity of unionists, which, to come full circle, posed a threat to the prosperity of the business community. Exclusionary practices and attitudes in the Mission were driven primarily by the protective labor associations, like the Anti-Jap Laundry League, which were created by BTC and the SFLC—entities which, as this chapter will show, regarded the Mission as "the white man's territory." If the MPA did not lead efforts to exclude racial minorities from any arena of neighborhood life, nor did it have any interest in interfering with the racist policies of its political allies and neighbors, the unions.

The final section of this chapter will move to a discussion of how these ethno-racial and class politics were expressed in the built environment of the Mission District. As with other early twentieth-century boosters across the state of California, MPA-member businesses began to favor a Spanish-colonial, or "Mission Style" architecture.⁴⁷ The MPA employed this style not only as a promotional device to attract shoppers to the Mission's retail district, but also as a strategy for highlighting the District's status as the oldest inhabited neighborhood in San Francisco—the site of Mission Dolores. The use of the Mission Style, I argue, amounted to an assertion of civic legitimacy; it served as

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the roots of this architecture, see Richard Longstreth, *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1983), Chapter 9; and Pheobe Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2006).

symbolic evidence of a venerability which could be traded upon in the inter-district contests for municipal investment in infrastructure, schools, recreation space, and other amenities. Mission boosters employed this foreign architectural idiom only as San Francisco's nineteenth-century status as a barbarous and un-American place faded into memory. The neighborhood's unions, by contrast, felt significantly less secure in their civic and economic position. I argue that this anxiety over material conditions—anxiety which was heightened by the threat of competition from Asian immigrant laborers—goes some distance in explaining why union buildings in the Mission favored emphatically Anglo-European styles, like the Beaux-Arts.

But before I can make this case, it is necessary to begin with a fuller description of the social and physical environment of the Mission District at the turn of the twentieth century.

Country Living in the Mission District

In 1868 a young Scottish woman named Margaret Nicol met a young Londoner named James Rolph aboard a ship which had set sail from Liverpool, bound for San Francisco. Immediately upon their arrival, the couple married and moved into a small cottage on Minna Street, in the South of Market District. Rolph took a job as a cashier at the Bank of California, and by 1873, the couple had realized a dream of starting a family and moving out to the Mission. As recounted in a 1930 biography of their son, James Rolph Jr.—the future mayor of San Francisco and governor of California—a "house at 3416 Twenty-first street was bought and the Rolph family became country dwellers."⁴⁸ James Jr. recalled a childhood spent in a large garden with stables and chicken coops. Neighborhood children hunted blackberries, rabbits, and quail on the gentle slopes which culminated in Twin Peaks. The neighborhood also boasted swimming opportunities for youngsters, with a number of lagoons and easy access to the bay.⁴⁹ A woman named Irene Jensen Stark recalled a similarly bucolic childhood in the turn-of-the-century Mission, but with Danish parents who arrived in the 1890s.⁵⁰ Jensen's father was a fireman who built and sold a series of houses for the family in the Mission.

Census data suggest that the experience of the Rolphs and the Jensens was typical of the Mission. In 1900, 95 percent of the neighborhood's residents lived with family members or spouses, and only a tiny fraction of the women worked for a paycheck.⁵¹ While the Mission was occupationally diverse, it was nearly 100 percent white, with about a quarter foreign-born and three-quarters of foreign parentage. Irish and German were the largest groups, followed by Scandinavians and Italians. Sanborn fire insurance maps mark a handful of buildings as "Chinese laundries," and one large plot was marked as "Chinese gardens."⁵² But every indication is that Chinese (or other non-white)

⁴⁸ Elenore Meherin, "Son Tells Story of Jim Rolph Boyhood," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, December 18, 1930.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Irene Jensen Stark, "Come Walk with Me in My Beautiful Garden of Memory," unpublished manuscript, 1979-1980, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

⁵¹ William Issel and Robert Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1986), 63-64.

⁵² Sanborn Fire Insurance map, San Francisco 1899-1900, vol. 2, 1899, Sheet 202. This plot was the future site of the Recreation Park baseball stadium, and finally the Valencia Gardens public housing project.

presence was scant. White ethnic groups did form some small concentrations, but there is nothing about the settlement pattern of the Mission that could be described as segregated among white ethnicities. Though churches and social clubs tended to serve particular national backgrounds, there is no evidence of tension among these different groups. Indeed, neighborhood residents recalled that intermarriage between ethnic groups was commonplace and uncontroversial, and that marrying outside the faith was much more likely to produce tension.⁵³ The lack of stratification among white ethnicities in the Mission made the neighborhood typical in San Francisco. In the city as a whole, and unlike many Eastern cities, no white ethnic group necessarily occupied a higher social position than any other.⁵⁴ The Irish in San Francisco, for example, were not only laborers, "machine" politicians, and union officials, but also old money elites, Progressive politicians, and prominent businessmen.⁵⁵

In addition to being ethnically diverse, the Mission was also occupationally diverse. White collar workers mingled with artisans and skilled laborers, all of whom mingled with a handful of the city's elite residents who were drawn to the Mission for its country amenities and because it was the warmest area in a windy city. Hubert Howe Bancroft, the historian and publishing magnate, built a personal library on Valencia Street near Army Street (today Cesar Chavez Street). While he was mayor, James Phelan lived in a mansion on Valencia and Seventeenth Streets. The Spreckels family mansion was located on Howard (now South Van Ness) and Twentieth Streets. These established elites were, however, a minority. The corridor that ran down between Howard and Guerrero Streets, from about 14th south to 26th Streets, was occupationally the most diverse area of the neighborhood. Mayor Rolph's substantial piece of property in this corridor was surrounded by as many flats as single-family houses.⁵⁶ Phelan and the Spreckels family lived here among not only lawyers and pharmacists, clerks and conductors, but also foremen and superintendants, boilermakers and even a few day laborers.⁵⁷

The low hills around Guerrero and Twenty-second Streets formed a distinct residential area which would later be known as Liberty Hill. This area was home to many blue-collar workers, but it was also home to a concentration of white-collar immigrant families who produced much of the future leadership of the city. Among the children raised in this area were Matthew Sullivan, who would become Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court; Timothy Pflueger, who by the 1930s was an internationally recognized architect in the Art Deco idiom; and James Rolph.

The Mission was a streetcar neighborhood. By 1902 there were rail lines running down almost all of the neighborhood's north/south thoroughfares, including Mission, Valencia, Howard, Folsom, Harrison, Bryant, and Guerrero Streets as well as a number of

⁵³ William J. Dunne, interview by Frederick Wirt, August 5, 1977, transcript, "Growing Up in Cities" collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 21.

⁵⁴ See Berglund, 10. For a discussion of the relative weakness of anti-Catholic and anti-(white) immigrant groups in San Francisco by the late nineteenth century, see Philip Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900*, (Berkeley: UC Press, 1994), 324-326

⁵⁵ Compare, for example, the figures of James Phelan, the Democratic mayor and U.S. senator, and P. H. McCarthy, the president of the BTC and the Union Labor Party mayor (1910-1912). Phelan was a prominent Progressive reformer and McCarthy was a union leader, and both were Irish Catholic.

⁵⁶ Sanborn Fire Insurance map, San Francisco 1899-1900 vol. 6, 1900, Sheet 636.

⁵⁷ Issel and Cherny, 64.

cross-town lines. Heading south down either Mission or Valencia, a visitor would have found that nearly every lot was built up, for several blocks in either direction, until one arrived at about 25th Street, and the buildings thinned out. But from 14th Street down to 25th Street, visitors could walk five or six blocks to the east of Mission Street or to the west of Valencia Street and soon find themselves cutting through the middle of blocks that had more vacant lots than improved ones.⁵⁸

North of 14th Street, land use became more light industrial, with a concentration of garment factories and food processing operations, particularly breweries. Sanborn fire insurance maps show that if an average residential block south of 14th Street contained about 80% single-family houses and about 20% multi-unit dwellings, north of the 14th Street threshold the proportion was closer to 50/50. As one traveled further northeast on Mission, past 12th Street and into the South of Market District, single-family dwellings gave way to multifamily units and light industrial buildings, until one arrived at Second Street and the bay, where there were virtually no single-family houses. Fewer residents in the South of Market held managerial positions, and more were unskilled laborers; fewer residents were women, and more were young bachelors; fewer were the children of immigrants, and more were themselves immigrants. Though many of the Mission's residents were unionists, the union halls clustered in the South of Market District, on or near Market Street. In the area near the docks, South of Market was intimately tied to the downtown flows of capital and people.⁵⁹

The Mission, on the other hand, was "highly self sufficient."⁶⁰ Rolph remembered that by the turn of the century, "the Mission had a complete shopping district. It could clothe and feed you from the cradle to the grave. No need to spend carfare going to the Market and Grant Avenue stores. Prices were lower in the Mission and merchandise just as satisfactory. The district was like a town within a town."⁶¹ Local historians have reported that the Missionites, as they were known, had an accent all their own: a sort of Irish Brooklynese.⁶² No recordings have survived to confirm this, but there are abundant accounts confirming that residents of the Mission identified as a distinct group, and that they took an almost "clannish" pride in that identity.⁶³ William J. Dunne, who was born in the neighborhood in 1897, recalls identifying as a "Mission Boy."⁶⁴ James Rolph Jr.—known affectionately as "Mission Jim"—had pet cocker spaniels named Mission Champion and Mission Prince. He recalled a horse in the neighborhood named "Mission Lightning," which his family later purchased.⁶⁵

At the turn of the century, the retail corridor that ran down Mission and Valencia Streets, from about 14th Street to Army Street, was the neighborhood's main economic

⁵⁸ See Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, San Francisco 1899-1900 vols. 2 and 6.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Elenore Meherin, "Neighbors Honor Rolph as Banker," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, December 29, 1930.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Randolph Delehanty, *Walks and Tours in the Golden Gate City, San Francisco*, (New York: Dial Press, 1980), 154; Wiley, 303.

⁶³ See Dunne, 23; William Bauer, interview by Frederick Wirt, July 26, 1977, transcript, "Growing Up in Cities" collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. See also Meherin, December 29, 1930.

⁶⁴ Dunne, 1.

⁶⁵ Elenore Meherin, "Rolph's Spaniels Pride of Boyhood," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, December 23, 1930.

motor. The only thing keeping the neighborhood from being totally self-sufficient was the lack of a bank. By now Rolph was in his early 30s, and had established himself as a shipbuilder and successful entrepreneur. Leveraging his reputation, in 1902 Rolph convinced the Bank of California to sponsor a residential branch in the neighborhood, San Francisco's first, with himself as president and with prominent Mission citizens, including his childhood friend Matt Sullivan, as board members.⁶⁶ The Mission Bank opened in 1903 on 16th Street between Mission and Valencia Streets. (See Figure 3.) So successful was the institution—sometimes referred to by residents as the "Rolph bank"—that two years later Rolph and Sullivan opened a second financial institution, the Mission Savings Bank, to serve residents in the southern part of the neighborhood.

When disaster struck on April 18, 1906, Rolph and his close associates were, in the eyes of residents, the Mission's leading citizens. They were also at the center of an institutional network which had resources to distribute to the needy, and which had the capacity to secure and distribute outside aid. On April 20 Rolph, Sullivan, and more than a dozen of the neighborhood's businessmen and church leaders convened a meeting in the barn behind Rolph's house, on San Jose Avenue at 25th Street, almost a mile south of the fire line.⁶⁷ The group formed the Mission Relief Association, and for weeks it distributed aid to the victims who lined up outside Rolph's barn. (See Figure 4.) There are accounts of the Association and their members using their influence to obtain cots, blankets, and other provisions from disorganized city agencies.⁶⁸ In the weeks that followed, tens of thousands of people were fed out of Rolph's barn, more than any other relief effort in San Francisco.⁶⁹ While the response of city government was largely viewed as incompetent by Mission residents, Rolph and company were regarded as neighborhood heroes. When he was later asked who had given the Relief Association "authority to organize and govern the Mission during the panic days," Rolph replied "Nobody gave us authority. We took it."⁷⁰ In the months and years that followed, the organizations created by Rolph and Sullivan would expand their claims on a moral and even quasi-official authority: though these organizations were unelected, unappointed, and held no regulatory powers, their claim to decide what would happen within the neighborhood was respected by city and even state government, as I show in the following section.

"The Parliament of San Francisco": The Mission Promotion Association and the Authority of the Business Public

Seeing a need for long term guidance through the period of neighborhood reconstruction, the leaders of the Relief Association formed an improvement club—the Mission Promotion Association—on May 20, 1906.⁷¹ In the nineteenth century improvement clubs in San Francisco and around the country were composed mostly of local homeowners who taxed themselves to carry out infrastructural and other physical

⁶⁶ Meherin, December 29, 1930.

⁶⁷ Elenore Meherin, "Rolph Tries to Aid Fire Stricken City," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, January 1, 1931.

⁶⁸ Meherin, January 1, 1931; See also *San Francisco Examiner*, April 29, 1906, 4; and *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 29, 1906, 2.

⁶⁹ Meherin, January 1, 1931

⁷⁰ Elenore Meherin, "Rolph Gives Plea and Food Rolls In," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, January 2, 1931; emphasis mine.

⁷¹ Elenore Meherin, "Rolph Tells Love for City, Friends," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, January 3, 1931.

improvements—sidewalks, grading of streets, and so on—over small areas, sometimes just a couple of blocks.⁷² San Francisco's first such organization, the Point Lobos Improvement Club, was formed in 1884; by 1890, there were around ten clubs.⁷³

At the turn of the century, San Francisco, like many other US cities, initiated charter reforms that brought increased tax and bond revenue which in turn supported more comprehensive citywide governance. In this new environment, the clubs became lobbying bodies, competing for public largesse which would be delivered in the form of sewer systems, new parks, library branches, rail connections, paved streets, and other local improvements.⁷⁴ Writing in the journal of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs and Associations in 1916, the president of the League, Robert Roos, stated that "from the business man's standpoint the Improvement Associations are a business proposition . . . they help to make streets more passable and to improve his property, they bring him light, water, fire and police protection and enhance the value of his neighborhood, in direct proportion to the amount of their efficient work."⁷⁵ The business proposition was that improved properties meant higher property values.

In some respects the MPA was a typical improvement club. Its bylaws state that its objectives were to stimulate business activity; to obtain a variety of public amenities; to secure the enactment of local and state laws favorable to the neighborhood; and to "unite the residents and taxpayers of the neighborhood for their material, social, and moral advancement."⁷⁶ But while most improvement clubs sought to stimulate business and unite residents by lobbying government for infrastructural investment, the MPA also mounted a private sector strategy to accomplish these ends. In addition to sharing the same leadership (Rolph and Sullivan) as the MPA, the Mission Bank and the Mission Savings Bank also shared the same goals: the Savings Bank advertised that "practically all the loans of this bank have been made on Mission property, thereby keeping the money in this community for its advancement."⁷⁷ While the MPA lobbied the local and state government, the affiliated banks financed the real estate market and the commercial geography of the neighborhood. The leadership of the MPA led not only a campaign for improvement, but also a coordinated effort to cultivate and capture local markets, in real

⁷² Terrence McDonald, *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860-1906*, (Berkeley: UC Press, 1986), 177-180.

⁷³ Alexander Russell, "The Civic League of Improvement Clubs and Associations: Its Origin and History," *Newsletter of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs and Associations of San Francisco*, March 1916, 2; McDonald, 177.

⁷⁴ For an analysis of how this competition looked in Baltimore, see Joseph Arnold, "The Neighborhood and City Hall: The Origin of Neighborhood Associations in Baltimore, 1880-1911," *Journal of Urban History*, 1979, vol. 6, 3-30; for Boston see Alexander von Hoffman, *Local Attachments: The Making of an American Neighborhood, 1850-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 168-169 and 193-195. For an analysis of how improvement clubs collaborated in Cincinnati, see Patricia Mooney-Melvin, "Before the Neighborhood Organization Revolution: Cincinnati's Neighborhood Improvement Associations, 1890-1940," in Robert Fairbanks and Patricia Mooney-Melvin, eds., *Making Sense of the City: Local Government, Civic Culture, and Community Life in America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001).

⁷⁵ Robert Roos, "Our Duty to Civic Associations," *Newsletter of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs and Associations of San Francisco*, March 1916, 7.

⁷⁶ MPA, "Constitution and Bylaws," 1909, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society, unpaginated.

⁷⁷ MPA, "Picnic Program," June 20, 1908, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society, unpaginated.

estate, retail, services, and finance: if people never needed to leave the neighborhood for goods and services, then their capital would not leave either.

But if the MPA was uncommonly enterprising, what made the Association unique, at least in the context of San Francisco, was the scope of its political ambition and geographic influence. In Figure 5, the blue line indicates roughly the boundaries of the neighborhood as it was defined in municipal documents, real estate advertisements, and—judging by newspaper accounts—in residents' mental maps.⁷⁸ But the MPA claimed dominion over an area much larger than the Mission: the red line in Figure 5 indicates the boundaries of the neighborhood as the MPA defined it, street by street, in its bylaws. This, according to the MPA, was "the Mission District proper"—an area which contained 40,000 homes and 55% of the city's population by 1909.⁷⁹

The Association was almost as active and effective in this broader area as it was within the more commonly accepted, narrower boundaries of the Mission. In 1909, for example, the MPA appeared "before the Board of Supervisors to ask that the property known as the House of Refuge lot, at the junction of Ocean and San Jose Avenues, consisting of 100 acres, now under a nominal rental as a vegetable garden be set aside for the purpose of a city park."⁸⁰ By 1915, this space would become Balboa Park, second in size only to Golden Gate Park.⁸¹ In 1912 alone the MPA pushed through road improvements in the southern half of San Francisco totaling half a million dollars worth of work—"improvements [which] have been provided for through the demands of the Mission Promotion Association."⁸²

The leadership of the MPA lived, and ran their businesses, in the core of the Mission (within the blue boundaries in Figure 5). So why did they expend political capital fighting for improvements in far-flung districts, many of which already had their own improvement clubs? A first layer of explanation must refer to the Mission business community's desire to challenge the economic dominance of downtown, and to a lesser extent, the retail concentration on Fillmore Street in the Western Addition. This motivation was at the heart of many of the MPA's campaigns, like the drive to pass a \$1,000,000 bond issue which would allow the city to transform Islais Creek into a harbor. Though the Creek was well outside of the narrower boundaries of the Mission, Army Street provided a direct connection between the Creek and the neighborhood (See Figure 5). The MPA reasoned that if the Creek were developed into a harbor, the Mission would have an opportunity to challenge the downtown harbor to the north for shipping and nearby manufacturing.⁸³ The MPA prevailed, after a bruising battle which I discuss in more detail below, but the resulting harbor at Islais Creek never did rival downtown.

⁷⁸ "Real Estate: A Quiet Business Week, But Good Prices Prevail," *San Francisco Call*, June 14, 1890; "Mission District French Flats" advertisement, *San Francisco Call*, September 12, 1890. By the fall of 1890, the term "Mission District" was being used in the *San Francisco Chronicle*; see "St. Mary's College: The Old Mission Road Structure to Be Removed," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 12, 1890.

⁷⁹ MPA, 1909, unpaginated; "Mission District Enters Carnival with a Vim Equal to the Portola Revels," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 17, 1909, 10.

⁸⁰ "Seeks Widening of Army Street," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 7, 1909, 24.

⁸¹ "What Mission Club Has Accomplished," *San Francisco Call*, August 13, 1910.

⁸² Robert Roos, "Club Notes: Mission Promotion Association," *The Improver*, August 1912, 11.

⁸³ "Pioneer History, Rapid Strides and Great Prospects of City's Important Section," *San Francisco Call*, July 18, 1908; "Bitter Dispute Over Islais Creek Measure," *The San Francisco Call*, November 19, 1907.

The desire to compete with downtown also explains the MPA's many lower profile campaigns to provide better rail and road connections between the Mission and the rest of the southern half of San Francisco.⁸⁴ In some instances the MPA courted Mission-based union support for these projects by arguing that the connections would facilitate laborers' trips to work.⁸⁵ The more important purpose, though, was not to carry unionist residents to outlying districts, but rather to bring outlying capital into the Mission. This was also the principal purpose of the neighborhood's large public celebrations, like the weeklong 1909 Mission Carnival. According to the organizers and local merchants the idea was to challenge the citywide Portola Festival from earlier the same year, and "to show all the people residing south of Ninth Street that our merchants are able to meet all their needs."⁸⁶ The MPA fought for improvements in these outlying areas—"the Mission District proper"—because it regarded them as a commercial hinterland.

But the Association also regarded this area as a political hinterland. The MPA's campaigns were always focused on promoting the prosperity of Mission-based businesses, but to do so the Association often had to insert itself into citywide, and even state and Western regional governance and economic structures. The MPA had a clear interest, for example, in securing lower fire insurance rates. But it would have lacked the moral authority to directly challenge the Board of Underwriters of the Pacific, on the grounds that artificially high rates "retarded the development of the Mission," had the MPA represented the Mission as only a small geographical area.⁸⁷ The MPA was able to win this and many other battles at least in part because it had built good will in the outlying neighborhoods, demonstrating that its support was not parochial.⁸⁸

The outlying districts, which were brand new and almost entirely residential, also had much to gain from this arrangement. Even though many had their own improvement clubs, they lacked the kind of established business community which often translated into a more broad-based claim on municipal resources. The MPA, on the other hand, did have access to city government. By 1908 the *Call* reported that "all the improvement clubs on the south side of San Francisco look upon it [the MPA] as a sort of central body to be called upon whenever assistance is needed to promote a local improvement. To these

⁸⁴ See, for example, "Mission Improvement Plans Include New Railroad Like," *San Francisco Call*, January 30, 1907; "San Bruno Road May Be Closed," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 16, 1909; "Mission Would Join Sunset, Project for a Street Railroad Past Twin Peaks Is Advocated," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 10, 1909; "Mission Association Wants Roads Improved," *San Francisco Call*, December 7, 1909; "Army Street Will Be Bituminized," *San Francisco Call*, January 8, 1910; "After Tunnel For Mission District," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 11, 1910. "Want Good Roads to County Line: Mission Association Urges the Improvement of Arteries of Travel in City," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 27, 1912, 8;

⁸⁵ MPA to SFLC, March 5, 1918, SFLC Collection, Carton 12, MPA Folder, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

⁸⁶ *Chronicle*, December 17, 1909, 10. See also "James Rolph, Jr. is Re-Elected: Mission Promotion Association Again Selects Him as President," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 4, 1909, 9.

⁸⁷ See clipping, "Insurance Bill Higher Than That for City Taxes: MPA Listens to a Startling Array of Facts and Figures," April 18, 1908, Box 8, Folder 43, McCarthy Papers, California Historical Society (name of newspaper missing from clipping); "Mission Citizens Want Lower Insurance Rates," *San Francisco Call*, September 8, 1907; *Chronicle*, April 10, 1909; "Mission Demands Cheaper Insurance," *San Francisco Call*, February 12, 1910.

⁸⁸ "May Erect Armory in Mission District," *San Francisco Call*, September 29, 1909.

demands upon it the association never fails to respond."⁸⁹ The MPA, in turn, called upon these clubs to support its own campaigns—whether or not they had a direct impact on the outlying districts—as it did, for example, in the effort to transform Islais Creek into a harbor.⁹⁰

In its capacity as a "central body," the MPA was not unlike the Civic League of Improvement Clubs, which also served as a kind of association of neighborhood associations. The two entities even collaborated on occasion, as they did on a citywide beautification campaign in 1912. This project carved San Francisco into twelve geographical districts, "City Beautiful Districts," then assigned jurisdiction for each to a number of organizations, mostly improvement clubs.⁹¹ The idea was to coordinate improvement efforts and foster a more comprehensive view of city planning among individual neighborhoods.

Though the MPA was similar to the Civic League of Improvement Clubs in that it represented and coordinated organizations across the city, it also differed from the League in several key respects. The League did not initiate improvement campaigns, but only supported those of its member organizations. Furthermore, the League regularly deferred to the MPA, which it regarded as the founder of the improvement club movement, and as "one of the most powerful organizations," of any kind, in the city.⁹² In 1916 the League's president wrote "We regret that the MPA is not affiliated with the Civic League, but we have the most earnest hope that some day soon they will be."⁹³ Between 1906 and 1920 the MPA was mentioned in 537 articles in the *Chronicle*, while the Civic League of Improvement Clubs was mentioned in 199 articles.

The MPA's savvy negotiations with municipal and state agencies is exemplified by the planning debates surrounding San Francisco's National Guard armory. The original armory on Van Ness Ave and Pine Street was destroyed in 1906. In 1909 a siting committee—composed of California Governor, James Gillette; San Francisco Union Labor Party Mayor (and President of the powerful BTC), P. H. McCarthy; and State Attorney General, U. S. Webb—selected a site on Van Ness and Bay Street, at the foot of Russian Hill, for the new armory. The MPA objected that the site was too far from the center of the city, and that the armory should instead be located in the Mission. The Association's objection provoked a fight with the San Francisco Real Estate Board, which played out in public hearings and newspaper columns.⁹⁴ The MPA prevailed in 1910 when the siting committee agreed to build the armory on a lot at Mission and 14th Streets, on the site of the Southern Pacific hospital, which had been destroyed in 1906. In so doing, the MPA secured for the district not only a \$420,000 investment from the state legislature, beating out the wealthier neighborhood of Russian Hill, but also a promise

⁸⁹ "400 Are Working for Improvement," *The San Francisco Call*, July 18, 1908

⁹⁰ "Islais Creek Project Object of Big Meeting," *The San Francisco Call*, November 25, 1908.

⁹¹ City Beautiful Campaign to Rolph, May 18, 1912, Box 71, Folder 1, Rolph papers, California Historical Society; *San Francisco Examiner* with Civic League and MPA, "Map of the twelve City Beautiful districts," Case D, Map Collection, Earth Science Library, University of California, Berkeley.

⁹² Russel, 2.

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ See, for example, "Wants Objection to Armory Site Removed," *The San Francisco Call*, December 14, 1909.

from the National Guard that the armory would serve as a community center in the evenings and on weekends.⁹⁵

The planning debates surrounding the armory illustrate not only the MPA's agility in the competition among neighborhoods, but also its vision of the Mission's place in the city. In the early twentieth century, armories were still elite social clubs—symbols of prestige—as much as they were strategic military assets. As Robert Fogelson's study of armories shows, the convention on the East Coast at the time was still to site armories in "the most fashionable neighborhoods possible."⁹⁶ The MPA's armory campaign was an attempt to bring architectural and social distinction to the Mission (and, no doubt, to boost real estate values) but it was also an attempt to symbolically establish the Mission as a site of civic power. Though most aspects of the Burnham Plan had been rejected in 1906, Burnham's Civic Center was still under discussion in 1910. The armory is a mile from where the Civic Center was finally built in 1915, but in Burnham's original plan, the armory site sat on a *place* at the terminus of a new Mission Boulevard, on axis with the Civic Center, with a new Mission Arcade extending to the south. (See Figure 6.) While the grand arcade had been abandoned by 1910, the MPA put forward an alternative plan to connect Mission Street with Market Street, "bringing it into connection with the Civic Center."⁹⁷ This plan replaced the large *place* at Mission and 14th with a plaza at Mission and 13th which would have visually framed the armory, maintaining some of the visual drama of Burnham's axial connection to the Civic Center.⁹⁸ So while the MPA fought the post-quake effort to implement the Burnham plan, on the grounds that it was designed to benefit downtown property owners, the Association pushed forward on those aspects of Burnham's vision which would monumentalize the Mission, symbolically tying the neighborhood into the center of San Francisco power.

The armory episode serves as a case study of the MPA's political aspirations, but also of its real power in a political arena that was much broader than neighborhood competition, in this case the arena of state agencies. Having already impressed upon the California State Engineer, M. F. McClure, that it expected the design of the armory itself to tie in visually with the Civic Center, the MPA publicly confronted the State when in 1912 it proposed a design that was not to the Association's liking.⁹⁹ Under McClure's direction, the State Architect—John Woollett, of the firm Woollett and Woollett—proposed an austere building, in keeping with the idea of a military function.¹⁰⁰ In a meeting at City Hall, the Adjutant General, E. A. Forbes, and State Attorney Webb indicated that they were "inclined to support the Woollett plan."¹⁰¹ No image of this

⁹⁵ "Board Selects Site for Armory: State Building to Be Erected on Grounds of Old Southern Pacific Hospital, *San Francisco Call*, July 7, 1910.

⁹⁶ Robert Fogelson, *America's Armories: Architecture, Society, and Public Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 85. See especially Fogelson's Chapter 3.

⁹⁷ "Mission Street to Join Market and 12th Is Plan," *The San Francisco Call*, December 31, 1910.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ "Armory to Harmonize with City's Buildings: Exterior Plans of the Militia's Home Will Be Changed," *San Francisco Call*, April 10, 1912. See also Mayor's Office to McClure, April 1, 1912, Box 64, Folder 1, Rolph Papers, California Historical Society.

¹⁰⁰ McClure to Mayor's Office, April 4, 1912, Box 64, Folder 1, Rolph Papers, California Historical Society; "Exterior Plan of New Armory to Be Changed," *San Francisco Call*, August 22, 1912; National Park Service, "Nomination to National Register: San Francisco National Guard Armory and Arsenal," 1978, available at San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library, 5.

¹⁰¹ *Call*, August 22, 1912.

initial design made it into any public archive (including that of the California Department of General Services) but Matt Sullivan painted a vivid picture when he “declared that the big brick structure prepared by Woollett looked like a carbarn.”¹⁰² When Forbes and Webb argued that work was already underway, Sullivan responded with an assertion that could not be interpreted as anything other than a challenge to the authority of the State. As the *Call* reported it, Sullivan announced “that the contract already let by the State Engineer's office for the foundations of the armory was not worth the paper it was written on.”¹⁰³

The State relented and the San Francisco City Architect John Galen Howard was brought in, at the behest of the MPA, to collaborate with Woollett and Woollett on another revision of the building. Less than two weeks later, State Architect Woollett came back with a design which he described as a Spanish/Moorish fortress. (See Figures 7 and 8.) The more decorative scheme—with clinker bricks, turrets, and terracotta medallions—provoked a sarcastic response from critics: for example, a *Call* article, subtitled “Architectural Frills Cause the Armory Plans to Assume Acceptable Form,” called the new building “a little more frolicsome, as befits the rigorous service of the National Guard of California.”¹⁰⁴ But the opinion that mattered was that of the MPA. The *Call* reported that the Adjutant General again signaled that he “was inclined to favor the [previous design's] warlike front, but he capitulated” when “J. B. Zimdars, for the Mission Promotion Association, declared that everybody in the Mission would be pleased with the changed plans.”¹⁰⁵ That the MPA drove the siting and design process illustrates how the Association wielded at least veto power over the details of public projects in the Mission, even on a property slated for a federal institution, in a building paid for by the State.¹⁰⁶

The case of the armory demonstrates that the MPA was uncommonly powerful for a neighborhood group, but the range of its influence was so broad that the term “improvement club” does not adequately describe its activities and functions. Because the MPA regularly intervened in planning discussions at the highest levels, I argue that the Association is best thought of as a kind of proto-planning authority. Consider, for example, the question of the city's water supply. Speaking in early 1931, Rolph asserted “that the Mission Promotion Association was the first to agitate for the purchase of Hetch Hetchy,” a valley near Yosemite that was finally dammed by San Francisco in 1923.¹⁰⁷ Considering that the project had been under discussion in the city since the 1890s, and that the MPA was not formed until 1906, Rolph's claim to have been an initiator of the Hetch Hetchy campaign was almost certainly an exaggeration. However, it is true that in

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ “Mission Club After Armory,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 7, 1910, 5; “Improvements Given Districts in Mission; Promotion Association Secures Many Favors From the Municipality,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 19, 1910, 12; “New Armory to Be Built In Mission: Governor, Mayor and Attorney-General Recommend Site at Fourteenth and Mission,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 22, 1910, 9; “Ambitious Programme to Improve Mission: Promotion Body Looks Ahead for Betterment of Its District,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 27, 1910, 41; “Want All Temporary Buildings Removed: Armory to Be Built This Year--Urge Purchase of Spring Valley Properties San Francisco Chronicle,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14, 1911.

¹⁰⁷ Meherin, January 1, 1931.

1906 the MPA, acting alone, purchased crucial water rights to the Hetch Hetchy valley and presented them to the city; the Association was reimbursed only years later.¹⁰⁸

In 1915, when the future of Hetch Hetchy was uncertain, the MPA sponsored a scheme to purchase not only Lake Merced but also the surrounding land. The lake was the principal water source of the Spring Valley Water Company, a private concern whose monopoly had sent San Francisco looking for water in the Sierra Nevada mountain range, hundreds of miles from the city, in the first place. In addition to securing water for San Francisco at a fraction of the cost of Hetch Hetchy, the plan devoted all of the land, and almost half of the lake, to recreation. This would have amounted to about 823 acres, which the MPA billed "The Mission's Big Park," in the southwestern corner of the city, miles beyond where most residents conceived of the Mission District's boundaries (See Figure 9).

The plan fizzled in the end. The city did not begin acquiring the land surrounding Lake Merced until the 1920s, and it did not acquire the water rights until 1930. But the effort illustrates the amount of influence that the MPA enjoyed. The City Engineer, M. M. O'Shaughnessy, conducted numerous surveys of the land and lent his authority and credibility to the plan.¹⁰⁹ With the documentation available, it is difficult to tell if the plan originated with the MPA and was supported by the city, or the other way around. But the very uncertainty testifies to the MPA's status as a quasi-official entity. The effort also testifies to the MPA's status as a proto-planning authority, integrating a water supply plan with a parks plan, in a city where water, recreation, and transportation were still treated as strictly discrete concerns, under the purview of discrete agencies. If the Burnham plan marked a moment when San Franciscans began to think seriously about comprehensive city planning, the MPA marked the emergence of an effective planning entity: a single organization which focused on the interconnections among fire insurance rates and sewer systems, playgrounds and the port.

The MPA was, in fact, a key player in the foundation of San Francisco's City Planning Commission. The initial draft of the legislation establishing the commission specified that the MPA would have at least one appointee, along with the Chamber of Commerce, the local chapter of architects, the BTC, and other citywide entities.¹¹⁰ The final legislation from 1914 dropped language specifying organizations, but when the commission was finally appointed in 1917, the presidency went to none other than Matt Sullivan.¹¹¹

Over the course of the 1910s, the MPA gradually made inroads into city government. Rolph had been mayor since 1912; Sullivan was made President of the Planning Commission in 1917; and Father D. O. Crowley, another MPA board member, was appointed president of the Playground Commission in 1912.¹¹² It is also around

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* The MPA was also one of the largest contributors to the fund to purchase Hetch Hetchy in 1908; see "Many Give Aid to Hetch Hetchy Fund," *San Francisco Call*, June 16, 1908; "Dedicates its Hall in Mission," *San Francisco Call*, August 11, 1908.

¹⁰⁹ MPA, "The Mission's Big Park," 1915, broadside, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society.

¹¹⁰ "City Planning Commission" (draft), n.d., Box 71, Folder 1, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹¹¹ "San Francisco City Planning Ordinance, as adopted March 6, 1914," 1914, Box 71, Folder 1, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹¹² D. O. Crowley to Rolph, January 7, 1924, Box 76, Folder 14, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

1920 that the MPA's paper trail runs cold. Because there is no record of the dissolution of the MPA, it is impossible to know precisely why it dissolved when it did. What is clear, though, is that the dissolution coincided with the ascension of MPA regulars to government offices, and with the formal establishment of city planning in San Francisco. Perhaps the association dissolved because it was no longer needed. After all, the leadership of the MPA had, in large measure, become the leadership of San Francisco city government.

In the 1920s, the Mission Merchants' Association took up the mantle of neighborhood promotion, but projects that the MPA had advocated in the 1910s continued to move through city government. These included not only new playgrounds and a remodel of Mission High School in 1927, but also more ambitious projects.¹¹³ The Bernal Cut, for example, was an Old Southern Pacific line to the south of the core of the Mission. In 1917, the MPA lobbied the city to purchase the land and convert it to a highway, in order to "remove a large portion of the traffic from Mission Street, thereby relieving congestion on that street."¹¹⁴ It was not until 1927 that a \$1.4 million bond issue passed allowing the project to move forward; work was completed in 1930.¹¹⁵

Undergirding all of the MPA's successes was a claim to a moral authority; undergirding that moral authority was a claim on the public interest. This dynamic is best illustrated in the Association's responses to opponents of any given project. When, for example, the Federated Harbor Improvement Associations suggested that the Islais Creek project be postponed, the MPA pointed to a Federation official's ties to both the Acme Lumber Company and to large property owners who would be affected. The MPA accused the federation official of representing a "personal financial interest."¹¹⁶ When the draymen and the lumber company spoke against the plan, the MPA argued that they were trying "to keep the harbor from spreading south" (nearer to the Mission) because "the lands there might be used for lumber purposes." Their opposition, the MPA charged, "could be due only to selfishness."¹¹⁷ Even though the MPA was alone in its unwillingness to delay the Islais Creek project, the Association insisted that it represented the public interest while its opponents represented special interests.¹¹⁸ This was the

¹¹³ The Folsom Playground on Twenty-first street opened in 1920; the Rolph Playground opened on Twenty-sixth and Potrero in 1923.

¹¹⁴ M. M. O'Shaughnessy, "Improvement of Bernal Cut," n.d., Box 34, Folder 17, O'Shaughnessy papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹¹⁵ In most historical periodizations, the Progressive Era ended conclusively with the election of Warren Harding in 1920. But along some dimensions, such as federal alcohol policy, the Progressive Era was alive and well in the 1920s. Considering that municipal government continued to fund physical improvements at the same pace that it had in the 1910s, and that it continued to finance those improvements with tax revenue and bond issues, it might stand to reason that development politics constitute another arena in which a Long Progressive Era prevailed. Patricia Mooney-Melvin's research on Cincinatti demonstrates that improvement clubs continued to successfully lobby city government for investment through the 1920s, a period when many historians have assumed that these Progressive neighborhood groups had all but vanished. See Mooney-Melvin, 95-118.

¹¹⁶ "Wagoner Shifts Blame on Magee," *San Francisco Call*, September 19, 1908; "Wagoner Replies to His Accusers," *San Francisco Call*, September 12, 1908.

¹¹⁷ "Bitter Dispute Over Islais Creek Measure," *The San Francisco Call*, November 19, 1907

¹¹⁸ John Flynn, President of Seaboard Engineering and Construction Company to MPA, September 28, 1910, Box 9, Folder 48, P. H. McCarthy mayoral papers, California Historical Society; "In Its Own Hall It Celebrates the Beginning of Its Fourth Year with Speeches and Goodfellowship," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 19, 1909, 11; "Act May Modify Islais Project," *The San Francisco Call*, March 18, 1909; "Fight

rhetorical strategy that the MPA employed whenever it met resistance to a plan that it supported.

The MPA can be described as proto-planning authority not only because it was pushing for comprehensive planning, and not only because it led the creation of the City Planning Commission itself, but also because the MPA understood itself as a quasi-legal representative of the public. In 1910 the Secretary of the Association, F. L. Churchill, described the MPA as "the parliament of San Francisco." He asserted that

no great public step is taken in San Francisco or California unless the Mission Promotion Association is previously consulted . . . It has given evidence that an association of civic workers can be non-political, public spirited, disinterested in personal aims and only striving after the greatest good to the greatest number. Its *greatest* effect, however, has been to place the Mission on the map and to make it an integral part of San Francisco.¹¹⁹

Churchill's statement illustrates a belief that it was the MPA's duty to represent the public, but it also illustrates a certain slippage in the scale at which that public was defined—from California to San Francisco to the Mission. Elsewhere Churchill expressed the transposition more succinctly: "[W]hat benefits the Mission benefits the other portions of the city."¹²⁰

But while the MPA viewed the Mission's interests as identical with the public interest, the Association's critics were well attuned to the fact that "its greatest effect" was to benefit itself and its home neighborhood. That is to say that its critics regarded the MPA itself as a special interest. When in 1910 the MPA asserted that the Mission was not receiving its share of the Parks Department's budget, Commissioner William Metson protested that the MPA's campaign was "based on distortion of facts and untrue statements so that the district which is represented by said association may get more than their share of the public funds and thereby cripple the other districts of San Francisco. . . . Leave it to the Mission get their share and then some of any public funds that are to be distributed."¹²¹ In 1920 a Haight-based citizen group calling themselves the Public Schools Defense Association mounted a drive to dislodge what they viewed as the Mission's control over the San Francisco School Board. The group charged that the Board was "besotted with politics," and that members of the Board were "appointed because the appointment of 'so-and-so' would please the people of the Mission."¹²² As far as the Defense Association was concerned, the Mission's domination of the school board was the result of vulgar patronage.

Rolph's mayoral papers (1912-1930) are brimming with correspondence which could have provided fodder for those wishing to demonstrate that the Mission benefited from patronage. Smaller improvement clubs from the Mission regularly requested and received favors from public agencies; comparable requests from other neighborhoods

Reopened at Islais Creek: Matt Sullivan Asserts Move Is in Bad Faith and Promises Fight," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 2, 1912.

¹¹⁹ "What Mission Club Has Accomplished," *San Francisco Call*, August 13, 1910.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ "Metson Answers Mission Charges," *San Francisco Call*, November 15, 1910.

¹²² Quoted in Victor Shrader, "Ethnicity, Religion and Class: Progressive School Reform in San Francisco," *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 20, No. 4, Winter 1980, 389.

were rare.¹²³ Businesspeople affiliated with the Mission Merchants' Association, as well as light-industrial concerns from the neighborhood, wrote to ask for zoning variances or outright re-zonings and were apparently accommodated.¹²⁴ Not only were MPA regulars appointed to prominent government positions, but ordinary Mission residents regularly received less prestigious posts. On March 19, 1924, for example, one George F. Kelley wrote the following to the mayor: "Our dear little friend Louis Traschler, 331 Capp street [in the Mission], is desirous of becoming an engineer at the new Municipal Swimming Pool. I had a conversation with the Secretary of the Board of Park Commissioners, Captain Lamb, whom I found a wonderfully clever gentleman and understanding the game, and a line booster for James Rolph, Junior."¹²⁵ Handwritten on the letter is a note reading "Bennie, The Mayor wants you to do anything you can for him." Handwritten notes to this same effect appear on many of the letters from the Mission, giving the impression that "the game" referred to by Kelley was played according to the rules of a patronage system. While political fealty was apparently rewarded, disloyalty was also punished, a fact that was most prominently exemplified by the case of Philomene Hagan, the Secretary of the Playground Commission. Miss Hagan had served on the Commission for thirteen years, and was universally regarded as an outstanding employee.¹²⁶ Yet when she voted for a personal friend, rather than the Rolph candidate, for the position of City Attorney, the Mayor demanded her resignation.¹²⁷ Hagan pled for her position, eventually sending Rolph a four-page report titled "Activities as Evidencing my Loyalty."¹²⁸ In spite of her pleas—and in spite of a public outcry that was expressed in petitions, outraged letters to the mayor, and newspaper editorials—Hagan was eventually removed from her post.¹²⁹

I have argued that the MPA, when viewed through the lens of city planning, can be thought of as a proto-planning authority: it undertook land use planning for the southern half of San Francisco, and was effective in ensuring that those plans were implemented, for more than a decade before the San Francisco Planning Authority came into being, and it was instrumental in the establishment of the Authority. Viewed from the lens of municipal politics, however, MPA might be described as a Progressive political machine: the Association was an extra-official entity that drove many policy

¹²³ See, for example Edward Delger (for Fair Oaks Parking Association) to Rolph, May 1, 1912; and Secretary for the Mayor to Delger, May 2, 1912, Box 71, Folder 1, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹²⁴ See Farrar & Carlin to Mayor Rolph, July 3, 1924, Box 71, Folder 4, Rolph papers, California Historical Society. See also City Planning Commission to Mayor Rolph, July 24, 1923; Mayor Rolph to Gus Lachman, July 24, 1923, Box 71, Folder 4, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹²⁵ George Kelley to Rolph, March 19, 1924, Box 76, Folder 7, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹²⁶ "Poison in Public Service," *San Francisco Daily News*, February 26, 1926.

¹²⁷ "Rolph Linked with Ban on Miss Hagan," *San Francisco Daily News*, February 25, 1926.

¹²⁸ Philomene Hagan to Mayor Rolph, February 19, 1926, Box 76, Folder 15, Rolph papers, California Historical Society. See also Hagan to Rolph, February 15, 1926; Rolph to Hagan, February 16, 1926, Box 76, Folder 15, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹²⁹ See Melvin Cronin to D. O. Crowley, January 27, 1926; Rolph to Melvin, January 29, 1926; Rolph to A. V. Marvier, January 29, 1926; Rolph to Joseph Dryden, February 6, 1926; Rolph to Wallace Bates, February 6, 1926; E. L. Ivy to Rolph, February 20, 1926; Box 76, Folder 15, Rolph papers, California Historical Society. See also "Ban on Miss Hagan," *San Francisco Daily News*; "Poison in Public Service," *San Francisco Daily News*; "Miss Hagan Says Mayor Asks Ouster," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 25, 1926; "Secretary of Playgrounds Discharged by Commission," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 21, 1926; "Mayor Forces Request for Playground Official's Job," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 25, 1926.

decisions, supplied many of the leaders of city government, and drew the bulk of its political support from a neighborhood—a union neighborhood, at that. Furthermore, all indications suggest that this neighborhood benefited from patronage. As if to invite this kind of speculation, the MPA's mapping of "the Mission District proper" corresponded closely to the boundaries of San Francisco's old 11th ward, as they were drawn from 1856-1900.¹³⁰ This line of thinking does not originate with this dissertation; indeed, the question of whether or not improvement clubs were "political" presented an uncomfortable paradox for the Civic League of Improvement Clubs throughout the 1910s. The president of the League asked how the clubs could distinguish themselves from "special interests," since they did represent specific districts.¹³¹ How could they assuage "the fear of our returning to the old boss or ward rule"?¹³²

The answer was to claim universality: clubs had to argue that they were acting not in their own interest, but rather in the public interest, and so were non-political. The masthead of the *Newsletter of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs* contained two slogans: "Absolutely Non-partisan," "For Civic Betterment." As evidence that it was non-political, in 1912 the League pointed to its policy of not endorsing candidates.¹³³ In 1917, however, the League amended its constitution and began devoting entire issues of its newsletter to ballot endorsements. "In pursuing this action," the editors argued, "the Civic League will continue to be ABSOLUTELY NON-POLITICAL, for it will place no candidates of its own in the field" (capitalization original).¹³⁴ The MPA, however, never refrained from endorsing candidates, or from putting its own candidates in the field; by the Civic League's criteria, then, the MPA did indeed qualify as a machine, though of course the League would never have said so.

As a number of scholars have shown, the Progressive vs. Machine model of urban politics obscures more than it explains in San Francisco, at least in the twentieth century.¹³⁵ Terrence McDonald, in fact, makes the case that the normal expectations of

¹³⁰ Compare Figure 5 of this chapter to the ward map recreated in Issel and Cherny, 121. The 11th was by far the largest in the city because it was largely unpopulated in the late nineteenth century. The only difference between the two mappings was that the MPA left the out Sunset District, a decision which was likely driven by the fact that the Sunset was becoming denser and developing influential improvement clubs of its own.

¹³¹ Roos, 1916, 7.

¹³² *ibid.*

¹³³ "Improvement Clubs in Politics," *The Improver*, August 1912, 10.

¹³⁴ "Constitution Amended," *Newsletter of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs and Associations*, September 1917, 1.

¹³⁵ The best known work to apply the Progressive/Machine dichotomy to San Francisco is Walton Bean, *Boss Ruff's San Francisco: The Story of the Union Labor Party, Big Business, and the Graft Prosecution* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1952). As James Walsh has shown, however, Ruff was much better understood as a corrupt "impresario" than a boss, since he had no geographic or ethnic base of support, and no control over the Union Labor Party: the influence Ruff exerted was rooted in his personal relationship with Schmitz. See James Walsh, "Abe Ruff Was No Boss: Machine Politics, Reform, and San Francisco," *California Historical Quarterly* Vol. 51, No. 1, Spring 1972, 3-16. Kazin observes that Bean's narrative describes the Union Labor Party only from the perspective of its political opponents, Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 130-131. Ethington argues that a machine-style Democratic organization prevailed in San Francisco only between 1882-1891, under "boss" Christopher Buckley, Ethington, 26-27. See also McDonald, 97-98.

Progressive vs. Machine politics are reversed in San Francisco.¹³⁶ A key point in McDonald's analysis is the fact that the Union Labor administration of Schmitz (1902-1907) was more fiscally austere—holding down administrative costs and maintaining a low tax regime—than was the Progressive administration of Phelan (1897-1902).¹³⁷ Furthermore, neither Schmitz nor the Union Labor administration of P. H. McCarthy (1910-1912) offered a legislative platform that proposed to aid the working poor; rather, both ran successfully as business administrations.¹³⁸ Whether or not the term political machine is useful, it is clear that the MPA fit the bill better than the Union Labor Party did.

The public that the MPA represented was composed firstly of its own leadership, the business people who formed a *de facto* authority in the Mission. But the MPA also intended for the neighborhood's unions and unionist residents to benefit from the decisions it took: they were the public in the sense that they were beneficiaries. The unions, in turn, supported the MPA's campaigns for improvement. Before explaining in detail how this relationship functioned, it is necessary to provide some background on the union presence in the Mission.

Business and Union Coalition in the Mission

The city's two most prominent labor organizations—the BTC and the SFLC—moved from the South of Market to the Mission in the years immediately following the fire, the SFLC in 1907 and the BTC in 1908. Both organizations built temples in the neighborhood, only a few blocks from one another, and both published newspapers out of those temples. These organizations represented dozens of smaller unions around the city, but the largest concentration of unions was in the Mission. For the week of July 10, 1914, the *Labor Clarion* (published by the SFLC) listed close to 60 meetings, all for different unions, in the Mission: 27 meetings were to be held in the Building Trades Temple, and at least 20 were to be held in different spaces in the Mission, mostly storefront union halls. Such halls were ubiquitous in the northwestern section of the Mission.

San Francisco had the strongest union movement in the country in the early twentieth century; the combined membership of the SFLC and the BTC was at least 40,000.¹³⁹ The BTC provided much of the leadership of the Union Labor Party; even during his term as mayor, McCarthy retained his post as president of the BTC. A critical turning point for union power had come in 1901, when Mayor Phelan allowed city police to escort non-union wagon drivers in the City Front strike. In the business community, this move was widely regarded as a costly miscalculation, having aroused citywide sympathy for the strikers.¹⁴⁰ Later that year, Schmitz and the Union Labor Party rode that sentiment into the mayoralty. From 1901 forward the received wisdom in most quarters of the city's political establishment was that everyone's interests would be best served by cooperating with labor. For its part, labor played the role of business booster—

¹³⁶ McDonald, 18.

¹³⁷ McDonald, 226-233.

¹³⁸ See Issel and Cherny, 157-158; Kazin, 189; and McDonald, 211-212, 326 n. 46.

¹³⁹ Ethington, 414.

¹⁴⁰ Kazin, 56.

insofar as business interests did not conflict with the unions' interest—and, when in city office, adhered to Progressive business principles.¹⁴¹ Cartoons from McCarthy's 1909 mayoral campaign advertised that “A business administration along legitimate liberal lines is that which our city needs most. This is what the people want, and I will give it.”¹⁴²

Labor leaders understood that their interests were served by publicizing their coalition with business. That is not to say that industrial peace always prevailed—any attempt to promote the open shop or to bring graft prosecutions would result in bitter political conflict. However, when it came to the subject of physical improvements, labor sounded every bit the part of the booster. The March 23, 1909 headline for *Organized Labor* (the BTC's paper) was typical: “Buy School Bonds: Building Trades Council Recommends Purchase as a Safe Investment and Patriotic Duty.”¹⁴³ A few weeks later, another article entitled “Provide for Schools and Streets” announced that the “community that does not take proper care of its children is committing civic suicide . . . and the person who raises any obstacle against the rehabilitation of the schools and streets is not a true friend of San Francisco.”¹⁴⁴ Both *Organized Labor* and *Labor Clarion* regularly featured not only articles supporting bond issues, but also articles in favor of municipalization of water and rails, and sharp critiques of “the vacant lot industry” where speculators would hold on to vacant lots, waiting for the land values to spike.

In 1916, Robert Roos, the president of the Civic League, wrote that improvement “is the one spot in our civic life where capital and labor do meet on the same footing and join hands for the betterment of their neighborhood.”¹⁴⁵ The suggestion that capital and labor ever met on equal footing was exaggeration—even when in City Hall, the most the unions could accomplish was to advance the business community's agendas in a closed shop environment—but Roos was not wrong in asserting that improvement was the one area that could bring together groups which tended to be mutually antagonistic.¹⁴⁶

Even prominent members of the Chamber of Commerce seemed to understand that building itself could be mobilized to build good will. In 1914 the Palace Hotel Company took out an advertisement in the *Labor Clarion*. The Palace and the Fairmont hotels, it announced, “are two most beautiful results of organized labor.”¹⁴⁷ (See Figure 10.) The management of the Palace and Fairmont—the city's two most expensive hotels—was not hoping to win *Clarion* readers as customers. Rather, this was an artifact of a campaign that the downtown business community mounted in hopes of mending fences with labor as the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition approached: the business community had a vested interest in ensuring that the Expo would be completed on schedule. The management of the Palace and Fairmont was well aware that organized

¹⁴¹ McDonald, 18, 226-233.

¹⁴² Reproduced in Kazin, Figure 7.

¹⁴³ “Buy School Bonds: Building Trades Council Recommends Purchase as a Safe Investment and Patriotic Duty,” *Organized Labor*, March 23, 1909.

¹⁴⁴ “Provide for Schools and Streets,” *Organized Labor*, April 13, 1907. Also see “Provide for the Schools,” *Organized Labor*, April 20, 1907.

¹⁴⁵ Roos, 1916, 7. The Mission was not atypical in the fact that its support for improvement cut across class lines. Similar relations prevailed in Boston, for example. See von Hoffman, 193.

¹⁴⁶ See Kazin's analysis of the McCarthy administration. Kazin, Chapter 7.

¹⁴⁷ Palace and Fairmont advertisement, *Labor Clarion*, September 4, 1914, 5.

labor reviled many of the characters inside their hotels. But they seemed to believe that labor would hold the built environment harmless—after all, improvement meant jobs.

The advertisement taken out by the management of the Palace and the Fairmont also illustrates another dimension, beyond economic self interest, along which even the most conservative elements of the business community could momentarily find common ground with labor: pride in good building. To understand what might have been at work, it is useful to consider the impressions of George Farris, a journeyman carpenter who faithfully paid his dues to the BTC, and faithfully kept a diary from 1879 to 1910. Though he often complained about the conditions in which he worked, Farris took great satisfaction in the work itself. An entry from Tuesday, August 14, 1906 is typical: "My partner don't understand stairbuilding so I cut the stringers and he puts on the risers and treads. [I] Like stairbuilding, it is nice work."¹⁴⁸ Farris's diary is filled with an understated admiration for craft, an admiration that seemed to be uninflected by class ideology.¹⁴⁹

On a number of occasions, Farris expressed admiration for buildings in which he would not have been welcome himself. The most poignant example of this is the entry from August 19, 1906, when Farris described the scene on Nob Hill after the great fire: "Wandering among the ruins of the once aristocratic resident of town, it made me feel sad to see what was once fine homes now only a remnant of a foundation wall. The terrible tragedy is appalling."¹⁵⁰ When Farris visited his own former hotel residences, a week before his visit to Nob Hill, his descriptions were matter-of-fact, thin on adjectives, conveying none of the same emotion.¹⁵¹ Farris did entertain fantasies about upward mobility—as was most plainly visible in his obsession with the stock market—but he was also very critical of class relations. However, he was never critical of the way that buildings expressed these inequities; he seemed to exonerate the built environment.

But while any coalition between the unions and the Chamber of Commerce could only be provisional, a much more durable coalition prevailed in the Mission. The BTC and the SFLC supported the MPA's projects, and the MPA, in turn, was unwavering in its support of the closed shop, home industry, "Asiatic" exclusion, and other union causes.¹⁵² In his capacity as Mayor and siting committee member, McCarthy came to the MPA's hall to announce the decision to bring the armory to the Mission District; there he congratulated the Association on its hard work.¹⁵³ The MPA could be counted on to

¹⁴⁸ George Farris, "George W. Farris diaries, 1879-1910," August 14, 1906, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁴⁹ Farris was of course only one person, but as I discuss below, there are many other examples of workers expressing an admiration for craft which was uninflected by labor politics. See, for example, "Tower of the Metropolitan Life Building, New York," *Organized Labor*, March 9, 1907.

¹⁵⁰ For my quotations of Farris, I have abandoned the convention of noting misspellings and grammatical errors for fear of cluttering the quotations with [sic]s.

¹⁵¹ Farris, August 12, 1906. See also July 14, 1906 and February 24, 1907.

¹⁵² The MPA had a home industry committee, which collaborated with the BTC and the SFLC on legislative campaigns to protect California industry from Eastern manufacturers. See "The Home industry Movement," *San Francisco Call*, June 11, 1910; "News of the Labor World," *San Francisco Call*, June 29, 1910; "Missionites Working for Home Industry: Will Hold Joint Mass Meeting Upon Assembly Floor of the Merchants' Exchange," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 1910.

¹⁵³ "New Armory to Be Built in Mission: Governor, Mayor and Attorney-General Recommend Site at Fourteenth and Mission," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 22, 1910.

reciprocate such gestures, as it did in response to an attack on labor in the wake of the Preparedness Day Bombing.

On July 22, 1916 a bomb killed ten people at the Preparedness Day march on Market Street.¹⁵⁴ Incensed by what they viewed as labor terrorism, the Chamber of Commerce organized a "Law and Order Committee" and an open shop drive.¹⁵⁵ True to its political allies, the MPA issued a resolution which announced "Mission Promotion Association flays Law and Order Committee as follows: Industrial peace is necessary for the welfare and prosperity of every community. Industrial war, with its attendant evils, injuriously effects [sic] not only the immediate parties to the conflict, but also the public at large."¹⁵⁶ Because the Law and Order Committee was responsible for provoking "industrial war," the MPA resolved that "the best interests of the City and County of San Francisco demand a speedy dissolution of said Committee."¹⁵⁷ The resolution laid out the MPA's vision of who belonged to the public: the labor unions belonged, as clearly did the business community represented by the MPA. The Chamber of Commerce, however, did not belong—its Committee was injuriously affecting "the public at large." This was the same conception of the public that had prevailed in the Mission's fight over the Burnham Plan.

Mayor Rolph angrily repudiated the Law and Order Committee on a number of occasions. Over the coming three years he sided with labor in two other strikes, accusing the Committee and the United Railroads Company of stirring "class hatred."¹⁵⁸ But around the same time, the United States Steel Corporation initiated an effective nationwide open shop drive, known as the "American Plan." Bolstered by the successes of the Plan, and by a national shift to the right in the wake of World War I, the sentiment of the San Francisco business community was turning against labor. When the Chamber of Commerce took up the American Plan in 1921, Roph did not fight the tide. For the remainder of the decade, San Francisco was an open shop city. Yet even through the 1920s, labor continued to cooperate with improvement club development campaigns. Physical improvement still meant improved services for union memberships, and it still meant jobs, even if they were no longer on union terms. The local business community, in turn, had a stake in ensuring the continuing prosperity of the neighborhood's unionist residents because those residents were a significant component of their client base.

The defense of the prosperity of unionists also explains another fault line in the composition of the public, one organized not around elite open shop campaigns, but around race.

White Man's Territory: Race, Space, and the Boundaries of Publicness

The Asiatic exclusion movement in the United States began in earnest as a response to the economic slump of the 1870s. With support from Anglo Californians of all classes, California workers led a campaign that culminated in the federal Chinese

¹⁵⁴ Labor leaders Thomas Mooney and Warren Billings were convicted of murder, on paper thin evidence. For more on the bombing and the subsequent trial, see Issel and Cherny, 177-180.

¹⁵⁵ Kazin, 239.

¹⁵⁶ MPA, "MPA Flays Law and Order Committee," n.d., Carton 12, Mission Promotion Association file, San Francisco Labor Council files, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Kazin, 243.

Exclusion Act (1882), which barred all unskilled and most skilled Chinese workers from entering the country. After being extended in 1888 and 1892, the restrictions were made permanent in 1902.¹⁵⁹ A result of these laws was to decrease the Chinese population of San Francisco by more than half, from 26,000 in 1890, to 11,000 in 1910.¹⁶⁰ With significant support from Progressive politicians, the Immigration Act of 1924 extended these restrictions to all Asian countries.¹⁶¹

After the disaster of 1906, the Asiatic Exclusion movement was led, in no small part, out of the Mission District. The present study is concerned less with the broader movement, than with its most local expressions, within in the social and physical spaces of the Mission.¹⁶² Scholars have pointed out that the principal difference between Jim Crow laws and Asiatic Exclusion laws was that the former were aimed at segregation while the latter were aimed at outright exclusion and even deportation.¹⁶³ But anti-Asian legislation was not confined to the federal Exclusion laws. As I show below, a variety of municipal laws, in combination with racist cultural practices, created an environment in which Asian experience in San Francisco was comparable to everyday life under Jim Crow. Sanborn fire insurance maps show a handful of structures marked as "Chinese laundries" in the Mission; oral histories and personal memoirs confirm that there was a small Chinese presence in the neighborhood. But while they may have been present, anyone of Asian descent living in the Mission would likely have understood that they were not members of the public.

Among the groups most responsible for communicating this message were the Asiatic Exclusion League and the Anti-Jap Laundry League. Both of these protective labor associations were founded in the Mission (in 1905 and 1908, respectively), in association with the neighborhood's unions, particularly the BTC, and both held their regular meetings in the Mission's labor temples and union halls.¹⁶⁴ From the perspective of these organizations, Asian labor threatened depressed wages, the open shop, and the dislodging of union power. The principal demand of the Exclusion League was that Japanese and Koreans be covered by the 1882 Exclusion Act. The Anti-Jap Laundry League was also organized around what it called an "unalterable opposition to Asiatic immigration, occupation and competition upon the white man's territory."¹⁶⁵ Even the internationalist wing of the labor movement supported exclusion. As a San Francisco socialist leader named Cameron King wrote, "Our feelings of brotherhood toward the Japanese must wait until we have no longer reason to look upon them as an inflowing horde of alien scabs."¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ Berglund, 13.

¹⁶⁰ Kazin, 20.

¹⁶¹ Because it was a U.S. colony, the Philippines was not covered by the 1924 Immigration Act.

¹⁶² For more on the broader movement, see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1999).

¹⁶³ See Erika Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 21, No. 3, Spring, 2002, 43; Kazin, 21.

¹⁶⁴ See Asiatic Exclusion League, "Proceedings of the Asiatic Exclusion League, San Francisco," February 1908 – August 1910.

¹⁶⁵ Anti-Jap Laundry League to SFLC, February 24, 1911, Carton 2, Anti-Jap Laundry League folder, San Francisco Labor Council files, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Kazin, 164.

Labor was unanimous in its support for exclusion, but the movement could also count on broader support. True as ever to its political allies, in 1909 the MPA issued a statement formally endorsing "Japanese expulsion and exclusion from the entire Pacific coast. . . . A further resolution calling upon the residents of the Mission district not to patronize Japanese laundries was also passed."¹⁶⁷ The formal support of the MPA was particularly significant because every indication suggested that its founder, Mayor Rolph, did not personally support Asiatic Exclusion. In fact, Rolph—whose slogan was "make no enemies"—had a record of promoting more egalitarian race relations. A string of 1924 correspondence, for example, shows that Rolph was vehemently opposed to discrimination against African Americans. After receiving a report of a Park attendant who ejected "two adult colored people and two children" from a public restroom, telling them that "the 'niggers' were not allowed," Rolph demanded the attendant's job. When the Park Commission Secretary, Captain Lamb, suggested that the employee be disciplined instead, Rolph persisted.¹⁶⁸ One Japanese San Franciscan remarked around this time that the mayor "wasn't against" Asian immigrants; "He wasn't against anyone."¹⁶⁹ By the 1920s, Rolph's lack of personal antipathy towards Asians was more manifest. In 1926 he served as the pallbearer at the funeral of George Shima, a prominent Japanese agri-businessman who had led a well publicized campaign against Asiatic Exclusion legislation.¹⁷⁰ In his re-election campaign of 1927, Rolph regularly spoke to large crowds in Chinatown, promising to bring improvements to that neighborhood.¹⁷¹ But if Rolph was not personally willing to make enemies of the city's racial and ethnic minorities, nor was he willing to interfere with his union allies in the Mission.

Phelan, on the other hand, vocally supported the unions, and was himself a leader of the anti-immigration movement, both as Mayor (1897-1902) and as a U.S. Senator (1915-1921). In the wake of Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Phelan and other California Progressives feared that Japan had imperial ambitions on so-called white lands, and that the Pacific Coast was next.¹⁷² Phelan was also concerned that the Japanese, by buying up farmland in the valleys, were discouraging the migration of eastern U.S. Anglos to California.¹⁷³ With unwavering support from labor, Phelan vocally supported Asiatic Exclusion legislation, as well as the Alien Poll Tax (California, 1921) and the Alien Land Laws (California 1913 and 1920).¹⁷⁴ These latter were

¹⁶⁷ "Association Adopts Anti-Japanese Resolution: Mission Promotion Body Favors Expulsion and Exclusion," *San Francisco Call*, June 3, 1909.

¹⁶⁸ Captain Lamb to Mayor Rolph, September 23, 1924, Box 76, Folder 8, Rolph papers, California Historical Society.

¹⁶⁹ Liston Sabraw, "Mayor James Rolph, Jr. and the End of the Barbary Coast," MA thesis, San Francisco State University, 1960, 66; Kazin, 200.

¹⁷⁰ George Shima, "An Appeal to Justice: The Injustice of the Proposed Initiative Measure" pamphlet, 1920, California Ephemera Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁷¹ Jerome Hart, *In Our Second Century* (San Francisco: Pioneer Press, 1931), 64-75.

¹⁷² Grey Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1999), 156-157, 167-169.

¹⁷³ See Masao Suzuki, "Important or Impotent?: Taking Another Look at the 1920 California Alien Land Law," *Journal of Economic History* Vol. 64, No. 1, March 2004, 125-143.

¹⁷⁴ Edwin Ferguson, "The California Alien Land Law and the Fourteenth Amendment," *California Law Review* Vol. 35, No. 1, March 1947, 61-90.

themselves a set of legal mechanisms that used space to restrict access to the category of publicness by barring "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from owning property—the only aliens who were ineligible for citizenship were Asians. Phelan's 1920 senate reelection campaign revolved around the slogan "Keep California White." (See Figure 11.) Figure 11 shows a campaign poster in which the hand of Uncle Sam is arresting a Japanese hand that is grasping for a map of California. The text reads "Re-elect James D. Phelan U.S. Senator and let him Finish the work he now has under way to stop the SILENT INVASION."¹⁷⁵ Phelan's reelection bid failed, but California's new Alien Land Law did pass in 1920. There is no record of where these posters were displayed, but as this was a senate campaign, one can assume that they were widely distributed around California, and probably particularly well represented in the Mission, a union stronghold where the message was likely to have been received favorably.

Whether or not residents of the Mission saw the advertising from Phelan's 1920 campaign, they were certainly exposed to the visual materials of the Anti-Jap Laundry League. The League explained that because its "crusade" was "mainly educational in character we endeavor through the medium of publicity to enlighten our people upon the dangers of fostering Asiatic competition. For this purpose we often resort to outdoor advertising," including billboards, broadsides, handbills, circulars, and newspaper advertisements.¹⁷⁶ The League's offices were originally in the Building Trades Temple, but they moved to the Anglo Building, on 16th and Howard Streets, in 1910. The Anglo Building was so named because it was owned by the Anglo-California Bank, but the League clearly traded on this coincidence in its print products, often putting its address in a larger font than might otherwise have been warranted. These materials exhibit many features which are of interest for the study of race in the American West. Not least of these was the League's tendency to collapse all Asian people, including South Asians (or "hindoos"), into a single category, which alternated among "Jap," "Chinese," or "Mongolian," depending on the circumstance, but following no apparent logic.

But the feature which is most pertinent to the present study is the intersection between the League's spatial imagination and the manner in which it defined the boundaries of a white public in terms of economic interests. One typical broadside challenged the patron of "Jap Laundries" to consider the "the injury you are inflicting upon your white brothers and sisters by forcing them from the employment that rightfully belongs to them."¹⁷⁷ Another bill admonished that "you are also advertising the Jap—for a Japanese laundry wagon at your door means that others, seeing your example, may be inclined to follow it."¹⁷⁸ "Is it not suicidal policy?" yet another handbill demanded, "To encourage, for the sake of saving a few cents per week, Oriental competition that no

¹⁷⁵ Reprinted in Ichiro Mike Murase, "Little Tokyo: One Hundred Years in Pictures," 1983, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁷⁶ Anti-Jap Laundry League to SFLC, August 2, 1911, Carton 2, Anti-Jap Laundry League folder, San Francisco Labor Council files, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. See also Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Report for 1911," 1911, California Ephemera Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁷⁷ Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Men and women! Protect your homes from loathsome Oriental diseases!" broadside, 1910, California Ephemera Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in Lillian Ruth Matthews, *Women in Trade Unions in San Francisco*, (Berkeley: University of California Publications in Economics, 1913), 96.

Caucasian can meet unless he relinquishes those standards of civilization that are the white man's inheritance upon the white man's soil?"¹⁷⁹ Here, as elsewhere in the League's publications, the "white man's" supposed longer presence in California rendered it his "soil," "territory," or "country." And from that soil, the white man derived a right to a higher standard of living. An ad which appeared regularly in the *Labor Clarion* in the early 1910s enjoined the Anglo public to "Patronize These Union White Labor Steam Laundries." Below this enjoiner appeared a list of eight establishments; the fact that six of the eight white laundries were located in the Mission suggests the possibility that the League regarded its home neighborhood as the heart of the "white man's territory."

As part of its strategy to protect that territory, the League portrayed Asian-owned business as a foreign intrusion, sometimes in militarized terms (as in "invading hordes") and sometimes in medicalized terms. A representative item from the latter category was a 1910 handbill titled "Men and Women! Protect Your Homes from Loathsome Oriental Diseases!" The presumption implicit here—and explicit elsewhere in League publications—was that "Orientals" were almost a different species, with their own diseases which were peculiar to them, but not, under natural circumstances, to whites. Quoting a Health Department report, the bill charged that the laundries were "encrusted with filth and dirt . . . breeding rats and vermin, all of which creates an unsanitary condition that is a nuisance and a menace to life and health."¹⁸⁰ The bill concluded by asking the Anglo public: "Are you willing, for the purpose of saving a few cents per week, to endanger the health of yourself and those near and dear to you? Shun the JAPANESE LAUNDRIES. They are the breeding places of Oriental Diseases."¹⁸¹ The perceived dangers of proximity—the threat to the near and dear—figured prominently in the rhetorical and visual strategies of the League. Following through this logic, one League poster recommended "Industrial Segregation" as a means of ensuring peace with Japan.¹⁸²

In its internal reports, the League described its own use of the public health argument as a strategy; but the real threat posed by proximity, the threat that animated the League, was an economic one.¹⁸³ This motivation was crystallized in a 1910 handbill, subtitled titled "Cause and Effect."¹⁸⁴ (See Figure 12.) The bill showed two industrial buildings side by side: one was occupied by a bustling "Jap Laundry" with darkened windows; the other had been occupied by a "White Laundry" but now stood vacant, with several "To Let" signs in the windows, and with laundry workers idling on the street.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Jap-Laundry Patrons: Attention!" handbill, 1910, California Ephemera Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁸⁰ Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Men and women," 1910.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

¹⁸² Anti-Jap Laundry League, "In the Interest of Peace with Japan Patronize White Industries Only" handbill, 1913, California Ephemera Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁸³ Anti-Jap Laundry League, 1911.

¹⁸⁴ Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Jap-Laundry Patrons," 1910.

¹⁸⁵ This bill also dramatizes the changing status of women during this period: the workers standing idly in front of the white laundry were women. Still dressed in clothing associated with Victorian domestic respectability, the women were also portrayed as industrial workers—as such, their rights were to be defended. Here was one moment in the process through which the "white man's territory"—a labor market—began to be understood as the white woman's territory also. The League's representations of white women marked one moment in a much broader blurring of gender lines in the laundry trade, and in the

In the visual economy of the League, "the white man's territory" was a local market for services; the "invasion" of that territory by a "Jap Laundry" resulted in unemployment among whites and in the failure of an adjoining white business. The threat of proximity was a threat to white prosperity.

The League's activities were not confined to the representations associated with their "educational" campaigns. By its own reckoning, the Laundry League was at least as influential as the Exclusion League in lobbying the state government on legislation pertaining to immigration, land ownership, and voting rights.¹⁸⁶ Within the city of San Francisco, the League effectively lobbied the Public Health Department to investigate businesses owned by, or employing, Asians. This included not only laundries, but also machine shops, department stores, and the Southern Pacific, among other businesses.¹⁸⁷ In 1911, the Board of Supervisors received 29 applications from Asian businesspeople for permits to operate a laundry; the League claimed some credit for the fact that the Supervisors denied all of these applications except for the four which were to be located in Chinatown, where Chinese could be safely segregated.¹⁸⁸

As part of its strategy to deal with existing laundries throughout the city, the League also pushed for passage and enforcement of a local ordinance making "it unlawful for the operation of a public laundry or wash house between the hours of 6 p.m. and 7 a.m., or on any portion of that day known as Sunday. It provides that no work shall be done on clothes during these hours."¹⁸⁹ From the League's perspective, any labor done during "non-working hours" constituted unfair competition because it drove prices lower. This competition, in turn, would undermine the campaign for the eight hour workday. In order to ensure that "the Chinese laundrymen be forced to compete upon a near equality with white laundrymen," the law "provides also that all windows in laundries that open on any public thoroughfare shall permit of an unobstructed view of the interior of said buildings during the hours within which work is prohibited. The use of shutter, blinds, shades or other covering that fill the entire window space is strictly prohibited." Considering that the League regularly advertised that "Japs eat, sleep, drink, and smoke in the same room in which your laundry work is done," it is clear that this law was also intended to make everyday life uncomfortable for anyone operating such a business.¹⁹⁰

In addition to their legal and educational campaigns, the League engaged in other activities which no doubt bordered on physical harassment. Members of the League conducted their own spot checks of laundries at night—which meant looking into people's windows—and reported violations of the Unobstructed View law to the police.

industrial workplace more generally. For a fuller discussion of this subject, see Arwen Mohun, *Steam Laundries: Gender, Technology, and Work in the United States and Great Britain, 1880—1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

¹⁸⁶ Anti-Jap Laundry League, 1911.

¹⁸⁷ See Anti-Jap Laundry League to Machinists' Union, November 8, 1909; League to Emporium Department Store, March 28, 1910; and League to the Southern Pacific, May 7, 1910, Carton 2, Anti-Jap Laundry League File, San Francisco Labor Council Files, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁸⁸ Anti-Jap Laundry League, 1911.

¹⁸⁹ Bill No. 2551, San Francisco Ordinance No. 2298 (New Series), amending Section No. 4 of Ordinance No. 144. See also William Bonsor, "Anti-Jap Laundry League," *Labor Clarion*, August 28, 1914, 16.

¹⁹⁰ Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Men and women," 1910.

In 1911, the League reported that it regularly followed Asian laundry workers to document the details of their operations. Because one of these laundries had purchased an automobile, and because all the others had adopted tactics "to elude our trailers," the League had found it economically wise to purchase a motorcycle, rather than run up large bills for "buggy hires."¹⁹¹ Such an investment demonstrates how central these tactics were to the League's operations.¹⁹²

While Chinese living in the Mission could expect to be harassed by the Anti-Jap Laundry League, they also had to contend with neighborhood children. In the 1970s Frederick Wirt conducted interviews of people who had grown up in the Mission in the early part of the twentieth century. Two of the interviewees, in separate sessions, recalled that children in the neighborhood would "torment" the laundrymen. A resident named William Bauer recalled that "There was lots of rocks in those days, you know, the size of your fist, baseball size, and they'd throw them at the poor Chinaman as he'd go along in his wagon. He'd go like the dickens."¹⁹³ Bauer explicitly stated that he "never participated in this." Another interviewee named William Dunne (the same who regarded himself as a "Mission Boy") also expressed chagrin about the practice, though it is less clear whether or not he participated:

The Chinese were not only badly treated by what we call the coolie labor working on the railroads, but when they ran those laundries, they were the laundry people of San Francisco, And as growing up youngsters, I think it was disgraceful that our parents didn't do something, but they seemed to tolerate it. The kids would throw rocks at their laundry, break windows, things like that, just to see, they'd keep their distances and see these Chinese come out and chase them and run. They didn't know how to handle it. They never appealed to the police."¹⁹⁴

Considering the "educational" activities of neighborhood institutions, like the Anti-Jap Laundry League and the Asiatic Exclusion League, which portrayed all Asians as "scheming" invaders, it may be easier to understand why adults in the neighborhood condoned these violent and humiliating practices.

As Dunne noted, the Chinese residents of the Mission never appealed to the police. An unpublished memoir titled *Growing Up in the Mission*, by Frank Quinn, provides evidence that such appeals would have been in vain. As a child in the 1920s, Quinn played the "Chinese lottery"; his father, who referred to the lottery as the "Hong Kong Derby," was also an avid player.¹⁹⁵ According to Quinn, "Chinese lottery was

¹⁹¹ Anti-Jap Laundry League, 1911.

¹⁹² The League's more confrontational tactics were not reserved only for Chinese. On occasion the League also sent threatening letters to Anglo patrons of non-white laundries. However, the most menacing tactics were reserved for Asian businesspeople. See *Women in Trade Unions in San Francisco* By Lillian Ruth Matthews, pg 35 see also Arwen Mohun, *Steam Laundries: Gender, Technology, and Work in the United States and Great Britain, 1880—1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 67.

¹⁹³ Bauer, 19.

¹⁹⁴ Dunne, 18.

¹⁹⁵ "This form of gambling," Quinn explains, "involved marking a thin paper ticker on the surface of which were eighty numbers in Chinese characters. Marking simply meant that you drew a delicate Chinese brush with Chinese ink over each number that you selected. With that done, you brought your ticket to the Chinese gambler who sat behind a table. He took a fresh ticket and duplicated your markings, put the amount you wagered on the upper right-hand side of the ticket below the amount. What these characters meant I never knew but I was told they described the bettor. A ticket would be played for as little as ten

usually played in the rear of a Chinese laundry. I knew of two in my immediate neighborhood. The one I patronized was on 24th Street. This particular laundry was situated on the corner of an alley. Its back door was on the alley."¹⁹⁶ As Quinn recounts, there were risks involved in this illegal betting.

Every once in a while the police would raid the laundry and cart the Chinese gamblers and patrons to the police station. My father was once caught in such a raid. He, the customers, the proprietors and the assistants were given a free ride in the Black Maria [a paddy wagon] to Mission Police Station on 17th Street. In such a situation the Chinese proprietor would make a hurried telephone call to his attorney who would arrive promptly and post bail. The customers were released for ten dollars. Bail was always forfeited. No one ever dreamed of showing up for trial. It was a free and easy age. My father regarded his arrest as being nothing more than a humorous incident in his life.¹⁹⁷

The white gambler was in the position to recall these run ins with police wistfully, as a kind of cat and mouse game. Since the bettors' bail was apparently paid by the laundrymen, the consequences were limited.

Chinese laundries were a presence in the Mission, but that presence was tolerated only on certain conditions. Many white workingmen accepted them because they serviced a vice industry. But it was understood by the laundries, the bettors, and the police that such activity would be operated from back doors on alleys, at night. Contrast this situation with that of the white bookies, who, according to Quinn, "evidently prospered. Three flourished in my immediate neighborhood. I was aware not only of their existence but patronized them as well. The bookies made no pretense of being anything other than what they were. No camouflage. Anyone could walk in and lay a bet on a horse."¹⁹⁸ It is clear from Quinn's recollections that Anglos could operate illegal businesses out of storefronts in the Mission, under no apparent police threat. Meanwhile, the storefronts of legitimate Chinese businesses might be subject to police raids, Public Health Department inspections, informal checks by the Anti-Jap Laundry League, and the violent games of Anglo children. In the illicit economy, then, Chinese were permitted to operate only in the shadows; in the legitimate economy, they were permitted to operate only under surveillance.

Any Asian person who might have wished to live in the Mission, outside of a laundry, would likely have found it very difficult to rent a flat or to purchase a home. Real estate professionals at the time believed that the presence of any non-white person would cause surrounding land values to depreciate—a self fulfilling prophesy.¹⁹⁹ The situation would have been even more difficult for Asians in the newer "exclusive home

cents which made the Chinese lottery popular with working people." Frank Quinn, "Growing up in the Mission," unpublished manuscript, 1984, San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library, 34.

¹⁹⁶ Quinn, 36. Judging by the 1913-1915 edition of the Sanborn maps, the building that Quinn is likely referring to was located on the corner of 24th Street and Osage Alley, just west of Mission Street. See Sanborn Fire Insurance map, San Francisco 1913-1915, vol. 6, Sheet 595.

¹⁹⁷ Quinn, 36.

¹⁹⁸ Quinn, 33.

¹⁹⁹ For a discussion of how assumptions about race and property value were self reinforcing in Chicago, see Margaret Garb, *City of Dreams: A History of Home Ownership and Housing Reform in Chicago, 1871-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 193-198.

parcs" just to the south of the core of the Mission.²⁰⁰ In 1916, the San Francisco Real Estate Board reported that the "Mission Terrace and the Crocker Amazon Tract are the leading restricted parks of the Mission and are enjoying a substantial growth."²⁰¹ According to the Board, the developments had the same restrictions as the wealthier western neighborhoods, like Ingleside Terraces and St. Francis Wood, where covenants stipulated that "No person of African, Asiatic or Mongolian descent shall be allowed to purchase, own or lease."²⁰² The Central Council West of Twin Peaks, which represented the new suburban tracts on the entire western half of San Francisco, lobbied the City Planning Commission (under Matt Sullivan) to incorporate these racial covenants into the First Residence zoning for the entire city.²⁰³ The Rolph administration did not act on this recommendation, but the effort attests to the manner in which prevailing racial attitudes marginalized Asian residents.²⁰⁴

To be a white resident of the Mission District was to be a member of the public and to enjoy the associated benefits: ever improving services and physical amenities and economic prosperity. Non-whites in the neighborhood, by contrast, were regarded as a threat to prosperity. This threat was felt most keenly by the Mission's unions; the MPA and the merchants were less concerned. One method of measuring this dynamic is to examine the architectural choices that the respective groups made within the boundaries of the Mission. While the unions consistently represented themselves through styles associated with Anglo respectability, the Mission business community felt free to traffic in a more exotic style.

Anglo America Meets Spanish (Anglo) America: Architecture and the Public

As the home of the city's oldest structure, the Mission District had an architectural heritage to contend with. Barbara Berglund and other historians have demonstrated that in the late nineteenth century San Francisco elites felt anxiety about their city's reputation among Easterners as a barbarous, corrupt, and foreign place.²⁰⁵ The Mission Dolores was one site where such anxieties were spatialized. In the early American period of the 1850s, all of the rancho lands surrounding the Mission were squatted by settlers from the Eastern U.S. and even Europe. American courts did not uphold the Mexican government's land grants, and by the 1860s the areas few residents were almost exclusively white.²⁰⁶ Even so, neighborhood groups and institutions were eager to assert their Anglo-American identity.

²⁰⁰ San Francisco Real Estate Board, *Bulletin*, February, 1916, 6.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

²⁰² W. H. Levings (for Central Council West of Twin Peaks) to City Planning Commission, August 27, 1920, Box 71, Folder 4, Rolph papers, California Historical Society. Other neighborhoods with such covenants were Forest Hill, Forest Hill Extension, Merritt Terrace, West Portal Park, Claremont Court, Westwood Park, and Balboa Terrace.

²⁰³ *ibid.*

²⁰⁴ See City Planning Commission, "Proposed Zone Plan for San Francisco," June 1920, Box 71, Folder 4, Rolph papers, California Historical Society, 15.

²⁰⁵ Berglund, 151; Brechin, 128-129.

²⁰⁶ San Francisco Planning Department, "City within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District," November 2007, 18. From the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, San Francisco's

This desire was discernible in the church which was erected not fifteen feet from the original Mission in 1884. In the late nineteenth century, the Mission parish church had begun to attract parishioners from the highest rungs of Catholic Society in San Francisco, including James Phelan.²⁰⁷ Catering to its new parishioners, the Church erected an Anglo Gothic revival structure that announced its ascendancy by towering over the more humble building.²⁰⁸ (Figure 13.) The Spreckel's mansion (1887) on Howard and Twenty First Streets was built in the Victorian Stick Style which was also popular in the East at the time. (See Introduction, Figure 3.) Indeed, everything built in the Mission during the late nineteenth century simply ignored the area's architectural heritage.

The old Mission's status as an object of both indifference and Anglo racial anxiety was best illustrated by the works of Bret Harte. Writing in 1896, Harte referred to the Mission Dolores as "those queer little adobe buildings with tiled roofs," but he also ruminated that the

Mission Dolores is destined to be "The Last Sigh" of the native Californian. When the last "Greaser" shall indolently give way to the bustling Yankee, I can imagine he will, like the Moorish king, ascend one of the Mission hills to take his last lingering look at the hilled city. For a long time he will cling tenaciously to Pacific Street. He will delve into the rocky fastness of Telegraph Hill until progress shall remove it. He will haunt Vallejo Street, and those back slums which so vividly typify the degradation of a people; but he will eventually make way for improvement. The Mission will be last to drop from his nerveless fingers.²⁰⁹

Even though Harte had already written the Mission's eulogy in the 1890s, by the time of his death in 1902, a new generation of San Franciscans had begun to breathe life into the structure once again. Prominent citizens began to feel it was safe to memorialize the neighborhood's Spanish heritage, now that there was more than half a century's distance between the present and the city's Mexican and Spanish periods, with the U.S. having recently vanquished the Spanish military in the Philippines, and with no Latinos living in the area.

In the years that followed the disaster of 1906, the Mission became a centerpiece in San Franciscans' cultural contest with the Eastern United States. A novel entitled *The Lure of San Francisco: A Romance amid Old Landmarks*, published in 1915 in anticipation of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, provides an excellent example of how the Mission was deployed in this contest. The protagonist, a young San Francisco-born woman, takes her Eastern suitor on a daylong tour of the city. In the morning he regards San Francisco as brash and unrefined. But after visiting the Mission, the Presidio, and a handful of other sites, he is convinced that he was mistaken, and resolves at the end of the

principal colonia, known to Anglos as the "Latin Quarter," was located miles from the Mission, in the northwestern corner of the city, near Telegraph Hill, where Columbus Street meets Pacific Street.

²⁰⁷ Dorothy Kaucher, *James Duval Phelan, a portrait, 1861-1930* (Saratoga, CA: Montalvo Association, 1982).

²⁰⁸ For a discussion of how Mission Style architecture at the 1894 Midwinter Exposition in Golden Gate Park served to cast Latin American nations as "decaying and primitive," see Berglund, 177-178.

²⁰⁹ Bret Harte, *Gabriel Conroy: Bohemian Papers, Stories of and for the Young* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1896), 207 and 209.

day to move to San Francisco to marry his guide. In their Preface, authors Elizabeth Gray Potter and Mabel Thayer Gray wrote they offered "this little book" as a "suggestion to the casual visitor that we [San Francisco] are entitled to the dignity of age."²¹⁰

Like the United States, the Mission was founded in 1776, and was every bit as American as the Liberty Bell. The Mission Dolores was central not only to the authors' claim to venerability, but also to a claim on an American identity which was at once newer and older, and perhaps, in their view, improved over its Eastern variant. While at the Mission itself, the protagonist confronts her East Coast suitor:

"At the time when you New Englanders were pushing the Indians farther and farther into the wilderness, killing and capturing them, we Californians were drawing them to our missions with gifts and friendship. While you were leaving them in ignorance we were teaching them--"

He stooped to get a full look at my eyes. "I never knew a Spaniard to have eyes the color of violets. Look up your family tree, my dear enthusiast, and I think you will find that you are we."

"I'm not," I declared indignantly. "I'm a Californian. I was born here and even if I haven't Spanish blood in my veins, I have the spirit of the old padres."²¹¹

This common sentiment might be described as a curious variation on a phenomenon that Renato Rosaldo termed "imperialist nostalgia," or a feeling of nostalgia for a culture that one has participated in destroying through colonization.²¹² The variation, here, being that the culture which was destroyed through imperialist practices was itself imperialist. Like many Californians, the novel's protagonist was not mourning the passing of the savage yet noble Yelamu people; rather, she was identifying with a more venerable, nobler European imperialism.

This changing sentiment found architectural expression. After the Gothic Mission Dolores was badly damaged in the earthquake of 1906, the church was rebuilt in an Andalucian architectural idiom, though the church had served a predominantly Irish congregation for decades. (Figure 14.) Promoting a fanciful vision of Spanish heritage, the design was amended with Churrigueresque flourishes in 1913.²¹³ (Figure 15.) In 1918, Willis Polk, one of San Francisco's finest architects, was brought in to restore the original Mission.²¹⁴

The Mission architectural vocabulary was employed in buildings both civic and commercial throughout the neighborhood in the 1910s and 1920s, including the new high school and the city's largest movie theater, El Capitan, on Mission Street.²¹⁵ (See Figures

²¹⁰ Elizabeth Gray Potter and Mabel Thayer Gray, *The Lure of San Francisco: A Romance amid Old Landmarks* (San Francisco: P. Elder & Company, 1915), vi.

²¹¹ Potter and Gray, 14.

²¹² Renato Rosaldo, *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1993), Chapter 3. See also Peter Yorke, "Father Yorke's Letter in Souvenir Program," June 21, 1900, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, St. Peter's file

²¹³ Delahanty, 155.

²¹⁴ Delahanty, 159.

²¹⁵ "SF Biggest Theater, New \$1,250,000 El Capitan To Be Ready in 11 Months," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 14, 1927. Richard Longstreth dates the widespread adoption of Spanish architecture to the California Building at 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, but the Mission District did not embrace its Spanish patrimony until after the disaster of 1906. See Longstreth, Chapter 9; and Kropp, Introduction and Chapter 1.

16 and 17.) Soberer versions of this nostalgic tableaux appeared in some of the neighborhood's municipal buildings, most notably the Carnegie-funded Mission Branch Library, designed by G. Albert Lansburgh. In describing the library as "Spanish," the 1915-1916 San Francisco Municipal Report pointed to the roof overhang, which was "covered with red Mission tiles."²¹⁶ (See Figure 18.) Aside from this tell-tale detail, however, the building was a standard piece of neoclassical design, complete with a frieze reading "Mission Branch of the San Francisco Public Library," in roman font. State Architect Woollett alternately described the armory as a Spanish or Moorish fortress. Though the Mission Bank was "Grecian" in design, the Mission Savings Bank, which was located only a block away and whose MPA-affiliated leadership was almost identical, employed a decidedly Spanish vocabulary.²¹⁷ (See Figure 19.) That Spanish architecture had become a booster's promotional device was perhaps most clearly illustrated in the design of the MPA's hall, which opened in 1908.²¹⁸ (See Figure 20.) Located less than a block from the Mission Bank and the Mission Savings Bank, the facade was rendered in stucco, while the roof and eaves were covered with red tile. Inside, a quarter sized replica of the facade of the Mission Dolores was mounted to the wall above the speakers' table. (See Figure 21.)

In turn-of-the-century San Francisco, civic-minded businesspeople like Phelan had favored a Beaux-Arts style of architecture, which was best illustrated by the Burnham Plan. Though the MPA's objections to the Burnham Plan had nothing to do with the architectural language of proposed buildings, the Association nevertheless sought out its own civic architecture in the wake of the disaster of 1906. Because the neighborhood was home to the Mission Dolores, boosters felt they had a special claim to the Mission Style. This architectural language not only gave the Mission District a visual tool to distinguish itself from the commercial districts downtown and on Fillmore Street, it also served to remind San Franciscans and visitors that the Mission was the city's oldest inhabited neighborhood. The architecture thereby also symbolically supported the neighborhood's claim to the spoils of paternity, which included municipal investment in physical improvements.

Other institutions in the District, however, were less willing to make use of images of a Spanish past. Available evidence suggests that unionist Missionites did not resist attending mass in a Mission revival church, or taking in a movie at the El Capitan Theater. Upwardly-mobile skilled unionists purchased small Spanish colonial homes in the Mission Terrace housing development, just to the south of the neighborhood. In theaters and modestly priced housing developments, ethnic identity was an accoutrement of affluence, and Mission residents had no apparent objection to consuming a fantasy of class mobility which was dressed in ethnic imagery.

Yet unlike the MPA, unions like the BTC had always supported the Burnham Plan, and when it came to prominent structures built by the unions themselves, neoclassicism prevailed. The neighborhood's most prominent labor edifices, the Building Trades Temple and the Labor Council Temple both employed a commercial aesthetic,

²¹⁶ City of San Francisco, "Municipal Report," 1915-1916, 683.

²¹⁷ Horatio Stoll, "Pioneer History, Rapid Strides and Great Prospects of City's Important Section," *San Francisco Call*, July 18, 1908.

²¹⁸ "Dedicates its Hall in Mission," *San Francisco Call*, August 11, 1908; "Promotion Association Will Dedicate Hall," *San Francisco Call*, August 9, 1908. Architect unknown.

with Beaux-Arts ornament. The former was a steel and concrete building which featured a balustrade at the cornice and two-story pilasters capped with Ionic scrolls. (See Figure 22.) The Labor Council's Temple follows the style of a Renaissance Palazzo which, in the United States, was often associated with hotels, department stores, and other commercial buildings. (See Figure 23.) Both structures had doorways framed with prominent scroll brackets and other classical details. Smaller halls around the Mission, like the Sheet Metal Workers' Hall, were similarly adorned with non-Spanish Beaux-Arts elements. The white ethnic banks in the neighborhood were also decidedly neoclassical. Structures like the German Savings Bank, and the Mission branches of both the Hibernia Bank and the San Francisco Savings & Loan Society, are cases in point. All built between 1906 and 1930, these structures employed cut and dressed stone rather than stucco surfacing, flat rather than gabled roofs, cornices with dentils rather than red tiled eaves, friezes with roman lettering rather than bell towers. (See Figures 24-26.) The cumulative visual effect of such elements was to render incidental any similarity to Mission architecture, like the occasional use of Tuscan columns.

So while local businesses were laying claim to a Spanish heritage, partly in an attempt to distinguish themselves from the eastern United States, the unions reasserted their association with the east's Anglo-American architectural vocabularies.²¹⁹ Labor battled the city's industrial magnates on the shop floor, and formed coalitions with the Mission-based business community; yet in the field of aesthetics, the sympathies were reversed. In unions' print culture—where financing, real estate, and the practical needs of the organizations were no barrier to creative expression—this taste for the neoclassical was even more pronounced. (See Figure 27.) For example, while the Building Trades Temple itself had some restrained neoclassical ornament, the Building Trades Temple Association certificates (which largely financed the building) were illustrated with ornate Beaux-Arts elements. (See Figure 28.) Fluted Corinthian columns appeared in the margins of the document; construction tools appeared both below the plinths of these columns, and above the capitals in the entablature. In the center of the entablature was an image of the building to be. So where one might have expected to see the name of a great author or a sculpture of a Roman scene, here the iconography of labor was woven into a neoclassical facade, and the neoclassical facade framed a transaction between union and worker.

Such intertwining of imagery suggests the possibility that union workers saw in this neoclassical architecture the finest expression of their labors. A survey of how buildings were represented in the union newspapers lends support to this interpretation. To take one example, in 1907 *Organized Labor* published an article that described, with real connoisseurship, the Italianate design, with heavily rusticated angles, and projecting marble balconies, of the new Metropolitan Life tower in New York.²²⁰ Architect Napoleon LeBrun & Sons had modeled the tower after the campanile in Piazza San Marco in Venice, a favorite of the Beaux-Arts.²²¹

²¹⁹ During the Progressive Era, the Beaux-Arts was the preferred style of Anglo-dominated chambers of commerce and commercial clubs in cities across the country. For Chicago, see Carl Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). For Kansas City, see William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

²²⁰ "Tower of the Metropolitan Life Building, New York," *Organized Labor*, March 9, 1907.

²²¹ For more on Metropolitan Life tower, see Carol Willis, 151-152.

The unionist taste for the Beaux-Arts can be explained in terms of pride in craftsmanship, and perhaps also in terms of workers' own economic aspirations. But the fact that all of the buildings associated with unions scrupulously avoided the exoticized styles of their political allies, the MPA, suggests that there may also have been a racial component to this taste. In the context of the early-twentieth century San Francisco, the Beaux-Arts was a thoroughly Anglo architecture. James Phelan, the political figure most responsible for bringing Daniel Burnham to San Francisco, was the same man who was most responsible for Exclusion legislation. Though it is difficult to know if unionist residents of the Mission made these associations, there is overwhelming evidence that many of these residents, and all of the institutions that represented them, intended for the Mission to remain "white man's territory."

Conclusion

At the beginning of 1906, the Mission District was a growing streetcar suburb which San Franciscans still described as "the country." The majority of its residents were skilled workers and their families. After the disaster of 1906, the unions themselves moved to the neighborhood, bringing with them the political power of institutionalized labor. The Mission had been home to many of the city's elites, including the Spreckels family and James D. Phelan. After the disaster, the old money moved away, and the new money—represented most prominently by Rolph, Sullivan, and other residents of the Liberty Hill section—became the District's leading citizens. Capitalizing on this status, the Mission's new money elites partnered with the local retail and service interests to create the city's most powerful improvement club, an organization which might even be described as a Progressive political machine. Like the so-called machines of the Gilded Age, the MPA served the interests of its home neighborhood first.

As far as the MPA was concerned, the public interest was the economic prosperity of the neighborhood. In this calculus, the opposite of public interest was not "private interest"; indeed the MPA regarded the local merchant's private business interest as the archetype of the public interest. Rather, the opposite of the public interest was "special interest," as represented by corporations and "selfish" individuals. This conception of the public interest was explicitly spatial. In some circumstances terms like "the East" or "downtown" might be used as surrogates for "special interest."

That the neighborhood's powerful unions shared this conception of the public interest was illustrated in a dispute between the Anti-Jap Laundry League and the organizers of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in the years leading up to the event. When some of the League's outdoor advertising was covered over, it charged that "Large Interests," fearing the potential for scaring off tourism, had been responsible. In a letter to the SFLC, the League stated that

To us it is quite evident that a coterie of financiers, shielded behind the Exposition ensign, has arrogated to themselves the rights of sitting in the high places of censorship and battering down any public movement not coinciding with their predatory activities. . . . Let it be borne in mind that this Exposition project is not being fathered exclusively by any priveleged [sic] class. It is the offspring of the general public. Labor Unions, fraternal societies, small business concerns and individuals are mainly shouldering its financial burdens, and its success can alone

be assured when the grasping propensities of designing groups are rigorously curbed. If the supporting of the Fair carries with it the bartering away of the Caucasians' rights to fight for the maintenance of the white man's standard through organized endeavor; then indeed have we purchased a dubious prize at a fearful sacrifice."²²²

For the League, as for the MPA, labor unions and small business concerns represented the public. "Designing groups," here, referred not only to Asians, but also to those entities that Matt Sullivan often referred to collectively as "downtown": city fathers, financiers, large interests. For the League, Asians and large businesses had one thing in common: they were both threats to the public interest—indeed the League often described the so-called Japanese threat, as the threat of monopoly.²²³ They were both perceived as threats to the public interest because they were also perceived as threats to the economic prosperity of unionists and local businesses.

The coalition between unions and local business depended upon continued economic prosperity and upon the maintenance of racial homogeneity. The events of the 1930s would soon cause this delicate consensus to unravel. But in the meantime, the leading institutions of the Mission had to make decisions about how to represent publicness in the built environment. Unions stuck closely to a Beaux-Arts idiom which was associated with Anglo Americanness. The MPA and the businesses it represented, on the other hand, chose to associate themselves with an older European tradition. This decision was intended not only to distinguish the Mission among retail districts, but also to claim a civic legitimacy ("the venerability of age") which could be leveraged in the contest for public largesse. Because Latinos had not lived in the Mission since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the leaders of the neighborhood did not have to confront the contradictions between a romanticized Spanish colonial past and a Latino present. That too would soon change.

²²² Anti-Jap Laundry League to SFLC, August 2, 1911.

²²³ Matthews, 95.

Chapter 1 Figures:

Figure 1: April 1906 fire as seen from the Mission District, probably Folsom Street. Dome of City Hall visible to the left of frame. Source: The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

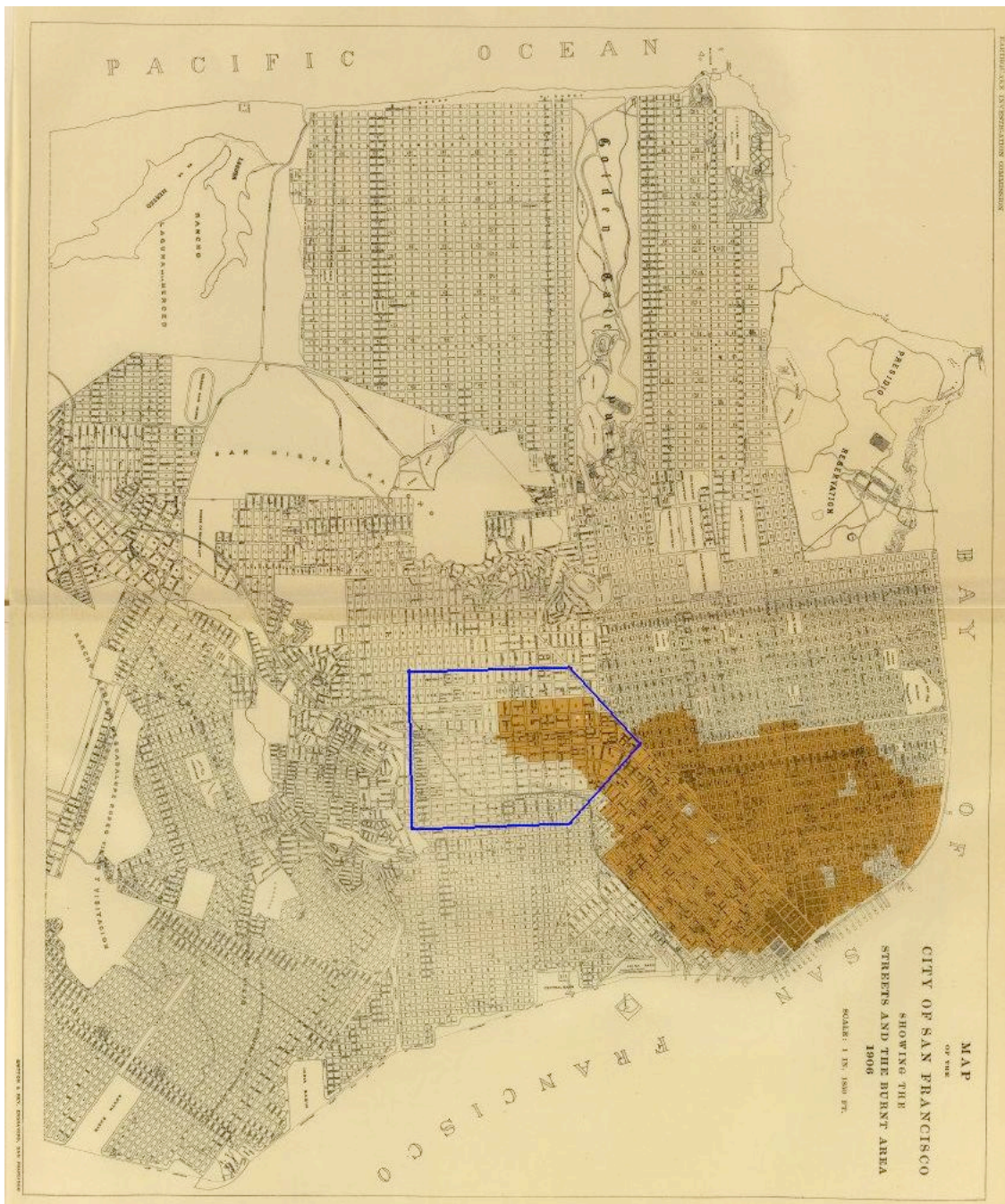



Figure 2: California State Earthquake Investigation Commission, "San Francisco Burnt Area," 1908. Superimposed blue line indicates the boundaries of the Mission District. Source: David Rumsey Map Collection.



The place for valuable documents, securities, mortgages, deeds, insurance policies and the like is a safe deposit box.

We rent them at a cost of little over one cent per day.

**SAFE DEPOSIT DEPARTMENT
THE MISSION BANK
16th St. and Julian Ave.**

Figure 3: Mission Bank advertisement that ran in the *Labor Clarion* through the 1910s. Source: *Labor Clarion*.



Figure 4: Long lines outside of the Mission Relief Association headquarters. Source: The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Digital Collection, California Historical Society.

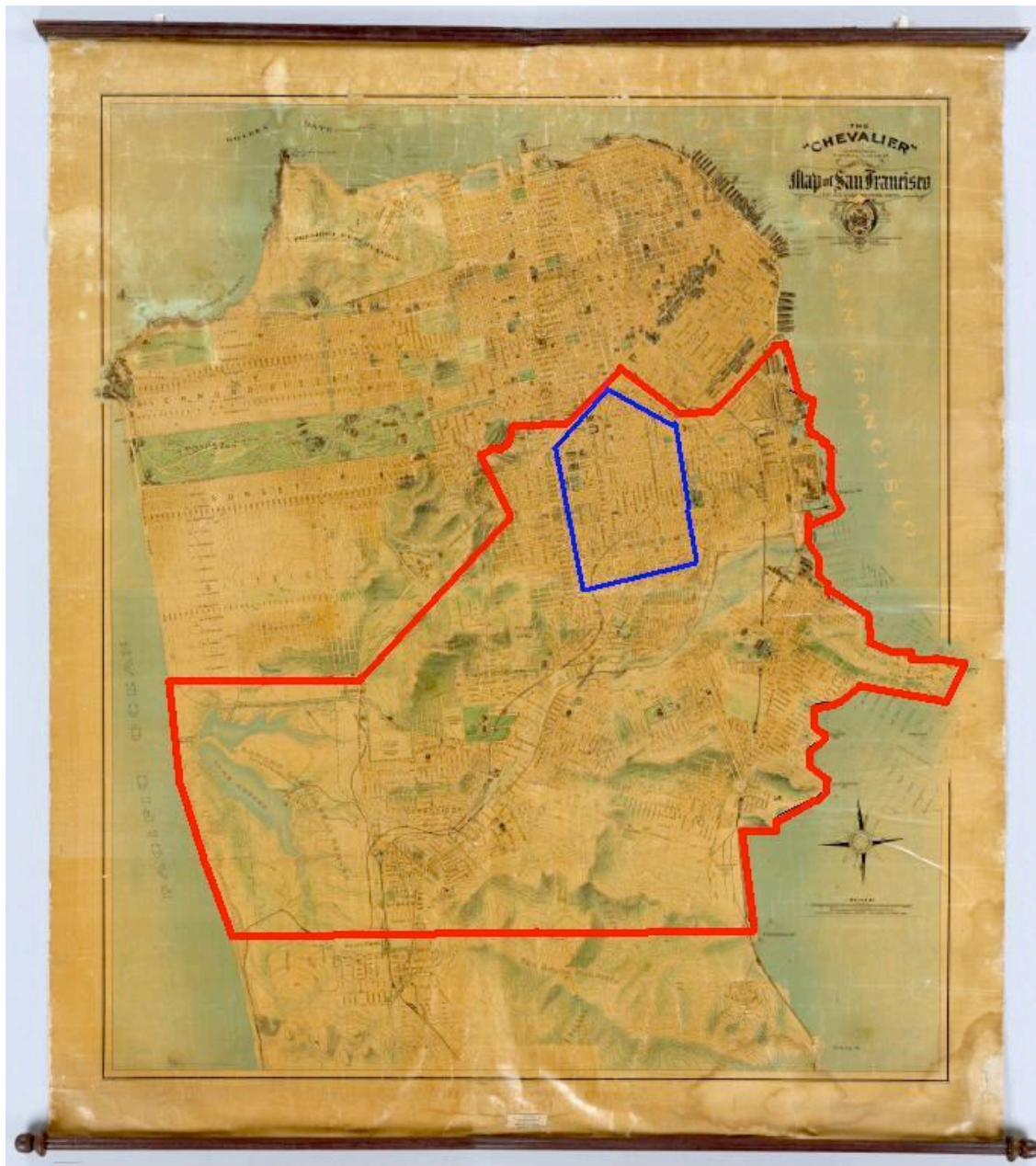


Figure 5: 1915 Chevalier Tourist Map, with MPA geography superimposed. Blue indicates Mission District boundaries as most San Franciscans understood them. Red indicates boundaries of "Mission District proper," according to MPA. Lake Merced appears in the lower left, while Islais Creek appears in the center right. Source: David Rumsey Map Collection.



Figure 6: Detail of the Burnham Plan for San Francisco, showing would-be site of armory (in red). The Civic Center appears in the center right. Source: Daniel H. Burnham, *Report on a Plan for San Francisco* (San Francisco: Sunset Press, 1905).

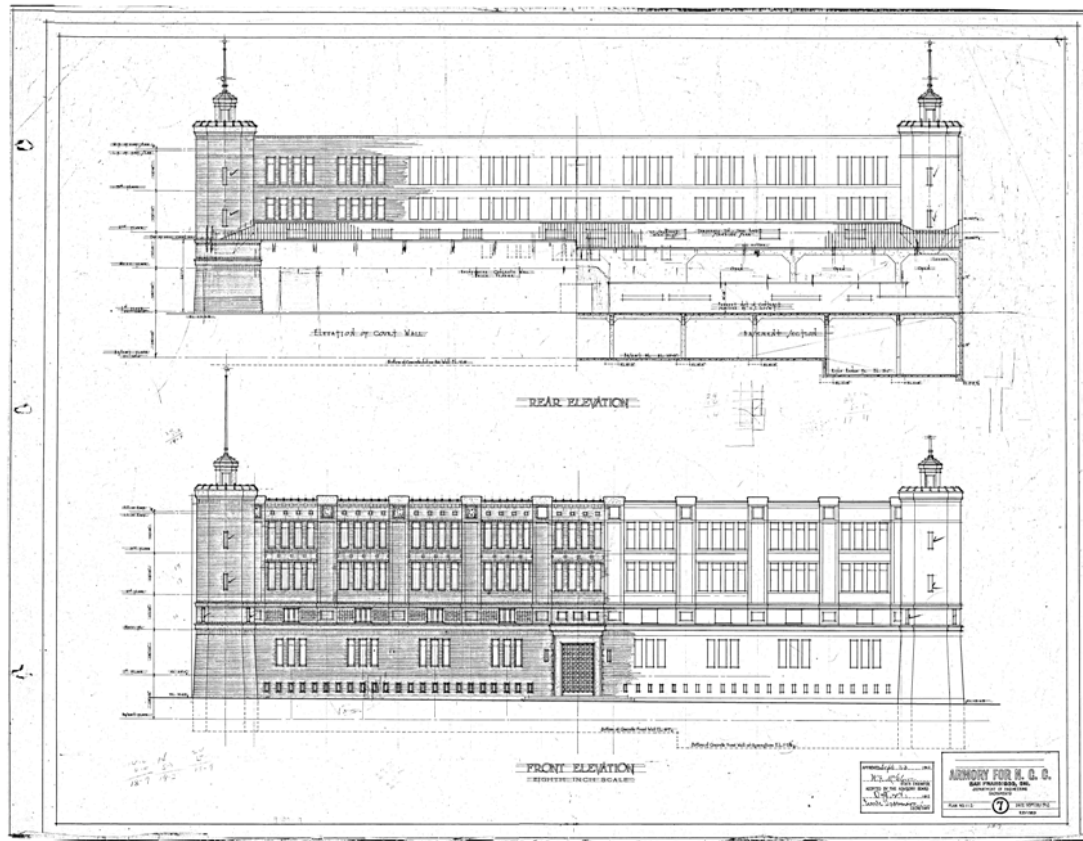


Figure 7: 1912 Woollett and Woollett design for armory, reflecting input from John Galen Howard. Source: California Department of General Services, Real Estate Services Division, Professional Services Branch.

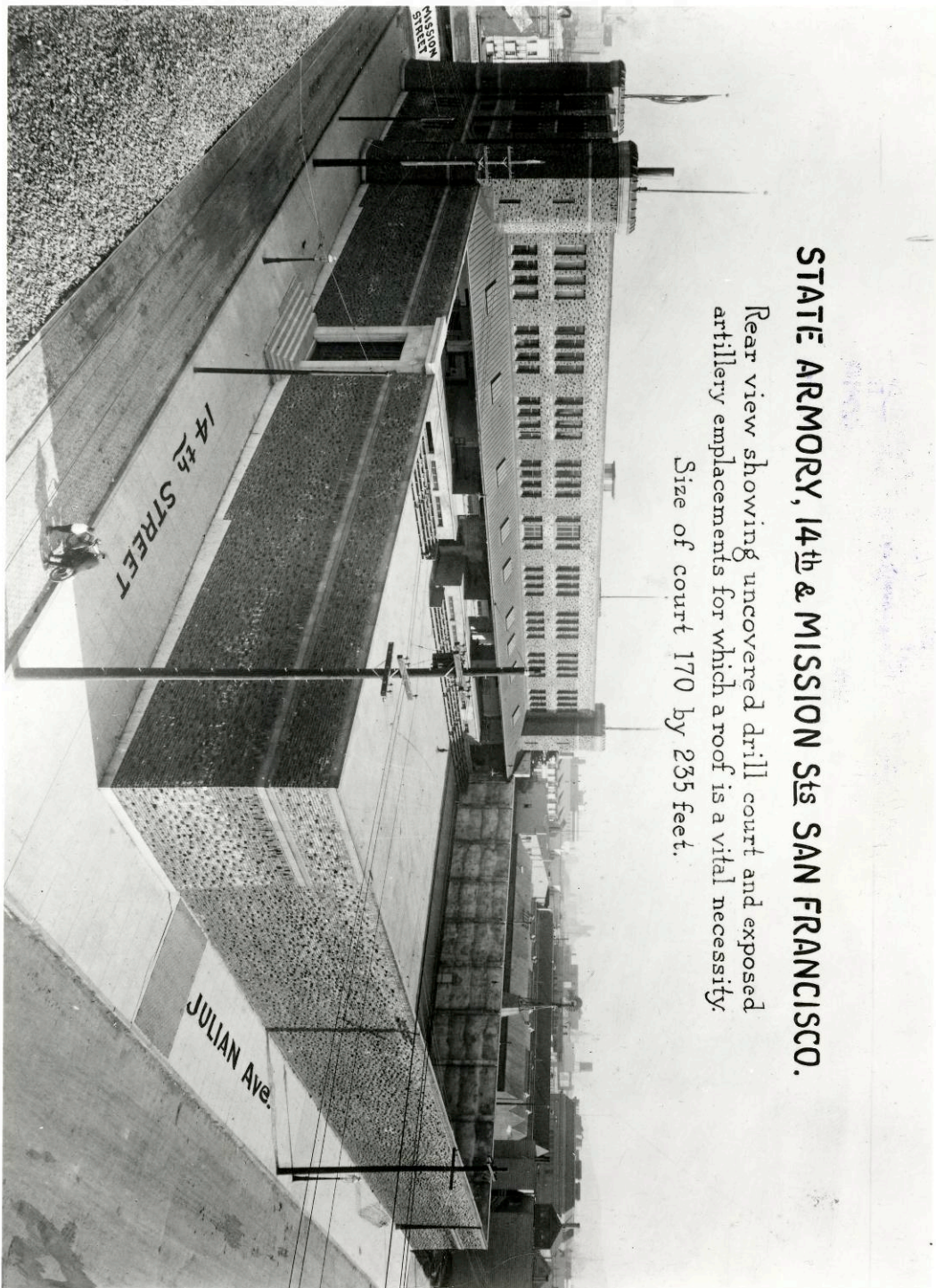


Figure 8: Armory between its construction in 1914 and installation of the barrel vault over drill court in 1926. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAF-0567.

FAMILY PICNIC NO LIQUORS ALLOWED ON GROUNDS **LAKE MERCED, SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1915. SPEAKERS MUSIC**

THE MISSION'S BIG PARK

Eight hundred and twenty-three acres of Lake, Forest and Recreation Grounds in the Tract the City will acquire when it buys the SPRING VALLEY property around THE MERCED LAKES

THE ENTRANCES
There are two entrances, one on the Sloat Boulevard frontage, half a mile from the ocean; the other from the Junipero Serra boulevard near the county line.

THE BOULEVARD
Extending entirely around the property, it is proposed to construct a boulevard from which magnificent views of forest, lake and ocean may be obtained.

RECREATION PARK
One portion consists of about 200 acres of level land where the future boys and girls of the Mission may enjoy outdoor sports on their own playground.

AQUATIC PARK
North Lake, with its high terraced sides, and protected from the wind, will afford a place for aquatic sports, unequalled anywhere.

This property is two-thirds as large as Golden Gate Park. What is the latter worth?

M. M. O'Shaughnessy, City Engineer, says:
The lands around the Merced Lakes were selected by the Advisory Water Committee from surveys made in my office and under my personal supervision, and in making this reservation I had in view two objects, as follows:
First—To keep the boundary line far enough away from the lakes and especially the shallow lake, to prevent pollution of the water.
Second—To obtain a sufficient area for a public park for that district and particularly for the people residing in the Mission, Excelsior, Homestead and Ocean View sections of the city.
With that in view I advised the acquisition of a frontage on Sloat Boulevard of more than 600 feet extending from Thirty-ninth to Forty-first avenues. This will be the principal entrance to the park although there will be another one on the Junipero Serra Boulevard connecting with Ocean View.
The statement has been made that San Francisco will have nothing but a fringe of land around the lakes. This is not true. The frontage on Sloat Boulevard includes the nursery and the property known as the "Home Place." There are between fifteen and twenty acres in this place. The area of the peninsula between the north and south lakes is nearly 200 acres and consists of a beautiful plateau especially adaptable to recreation grounds. On this tract can be established baseball grounds, tennis courts and playgrounds.
A boulevard 60 feet in width on a 2 per cent grade will be constructed around the entire property. This boulevard will constitute the boundary line between the property to be acquired by the city and the land which was excluded by me for the simple reason that we do not need it and, when developed either by the Spring Valley Water Company or its successors, this land will return a large income in taxation to the city.
The amount of land in the Lake Merced tract which the city will not acquire is as follows:

Acres	
In San Mateo County about	800
In San Francisco County about	1179
Total	1979

The statement has been made that these excluded Lake Merced lands are worth \$10,000,000 or \$5,000 an acre. Let us consider the facts.

VALUATION OF EXCLUDED LANDS.
Within the last eighteen months the Whitcomb tract of 60 acres between the southern lake and the Pacific Ocean was sold for \$1,000 per acre. Within the same period the Brickett property of 60 acres immediately north of the County line fronting on the Pacific Ocean was sold for \$500 per acre. A little over two years ago the Residential Development Company bought from the Sloat Estate 623 acres at \$2,000 per acre. The city paid Wells, Fargo & Company \$2,500 per acre for 32 acres on the Carbett Road adjoining the Relief Home Tract.
There is a great deal of waste on the 1979 acres which the Spring Valley will have left, particularly along the Pacific Ocean and in the swales and canyons throughout other portions of the property. I think a full valuation of the 1979 acres is about as follows:

211 acres on the Sloat Boulevard at \$4,000 per acre	\$ 844,000.00
174 acres on Junipero Serra Boulevard at \$2,500 per acre	1,180,000.00
100 acres at the end of the Sloat Boulevard, the greater portion of which is subject to the overflow of the lakes and is badly cut up, at \$2,000 per acre	200,000.00
271 acres between the southern lake and the Pacific Ocean, a good deal of which is waste, at \$1,000 per acre	271,000.00
103 acres of swales and canyons at \$500 per acre	51,500.00
800 acres in San Mateo County at \$100 per acre	80,000.00
1979 acres	\$3,181,500.00

The city is securing all the lands necessary for water purposes, and the land will also serve as a magnificent pleasure ground for the southwestern section of our city. The lands which are not to be purchased are not necessary as part of our water supply system, their purchase would be an unnecessary burden on the taxpayers, and by leaving them in private ownership the city will for all time derive an income from them in taxes proportionate to their value.

Hon. Matt. J. Sullivan, former Chief Justice, says:
The statement has been made that Lake Merced belongs to the Federal Government. This is not only false but is as absolutely absurd as any one of the statements that the titles to the lands and water rights of the Spring Valley Water Company are imperfect. You can depend upon it that San Francisco is not going to buy any law suits.
The Spring Valley Water Company undertakes and by agreement with the city has bound itself to convey to the city a good title if the people approve the purchase. The title to each piece of property will be examined by the city, and the Water Company will have to correct any defects which may exist before any money is paid. Any particular piece of property, title to which upon examination proves invalid, will be rejected and not paid for. Taxpayers need feel no alarm in this respect.
If purchased by the city, the Spring Valley Water Company's properties will earn the interest on the investment, pay operating expenses, provide for depreciation and pay a profit to the city of from \$500,000 a year the first year after the purchase to \$1,500,000 a year when the demand for water reaches the capacity of 60,000,000 gallons a day to which it is proposed to immediately develop and extend the system.
On the other hand, if these properties are not purchased but March Hasky is developed independently, the city will be obliged to expend \$4,000,000 before any water whatsoever can be delivered to consumers, and the interest on this sum which must be raised by taxation will result in an increased burden on the taxpayers of from 4 cents on the \$100 the first year that construction is commenced to 8 cents on the \$100 in the sixth year.

Shaded portion shows lands around the Lakes to be acquired by the City from Spring Valley.

DON'T FAIL TO ATTEND THE BIG PICNIC, LAKE MERCED, Sunday, April 18, 1915. ENTRANCE TO GROUNDS SLOAT BOULEVARD, Opp. 38th Ave.

Issued by The Mission Promotion Association
JAMES W. BERRY CO. 1122-24 MISSION ST.

Figure 9: MPA, "The Mission's Big Park," 1915, broadside. Source: Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society.

The Palace Hotel, San Francisco
with its wonderful Court and Cafes and



“The Fairmont”
with its grass and flower covered terraces are two most beautiful results of organized labor.



UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF PALACE HOTEL CO.

Figure 10: Palace and Fairmont advertisement. Source: *Labor Clarion*, September 4, 1914, 5.



Figure 11: Senator Phelan 1920 Re-Election Campaign Poster. Source: Ichiro Mike Murase, "Little Tokyo: One Hundred Years in Pictures," 1983, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Jap-Laundry Patrons
ATTENTION!

The dollars you make from the white man and turn over to the Japanese are helping to swell the unemployed ranks with your own kind, the Caucasian race.

—OBSERVE—
THE CAUSE AND EFFECT
OVER

AM I ACTING FAIR
Toward my fellow men and women when I patronize a Japanese Laundry in preference to the White Race from whom I earn a livelihood?

SHOULD THE JAPANESE INVADE
The industrial field that I depend upon as a means of securing subsistence; what would I think of the white person, who through his or her patronage, assisted the Asiatic in making harder my lot and reducing me and my family to privation?

IS IT NOT SUICIDAL POLICY
To encourage, for the sake of saving a few cents per week, Oriental competition that no Caucasian can meet unless he relinquishes those standards of civilization that are the white man's inheritance upon the white man's soil?

ASK YOURSELF THIS QUESTION!
From what race do I depend upon to earn my daily bread—WHITE or JAP? Then how can you patronize the Mongolian while men and women of your own blood are walking the streets in idleness?

ANTI-JAP LAUNDRY LEAGUE, 483 GUERRERO STREET

OVER  JANSSEN

2800 Japanese in Cal

Figure 12: Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Jap-Laundry Patrons: Attention!" handbill, 1910. Source: California Ephemera Collection, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

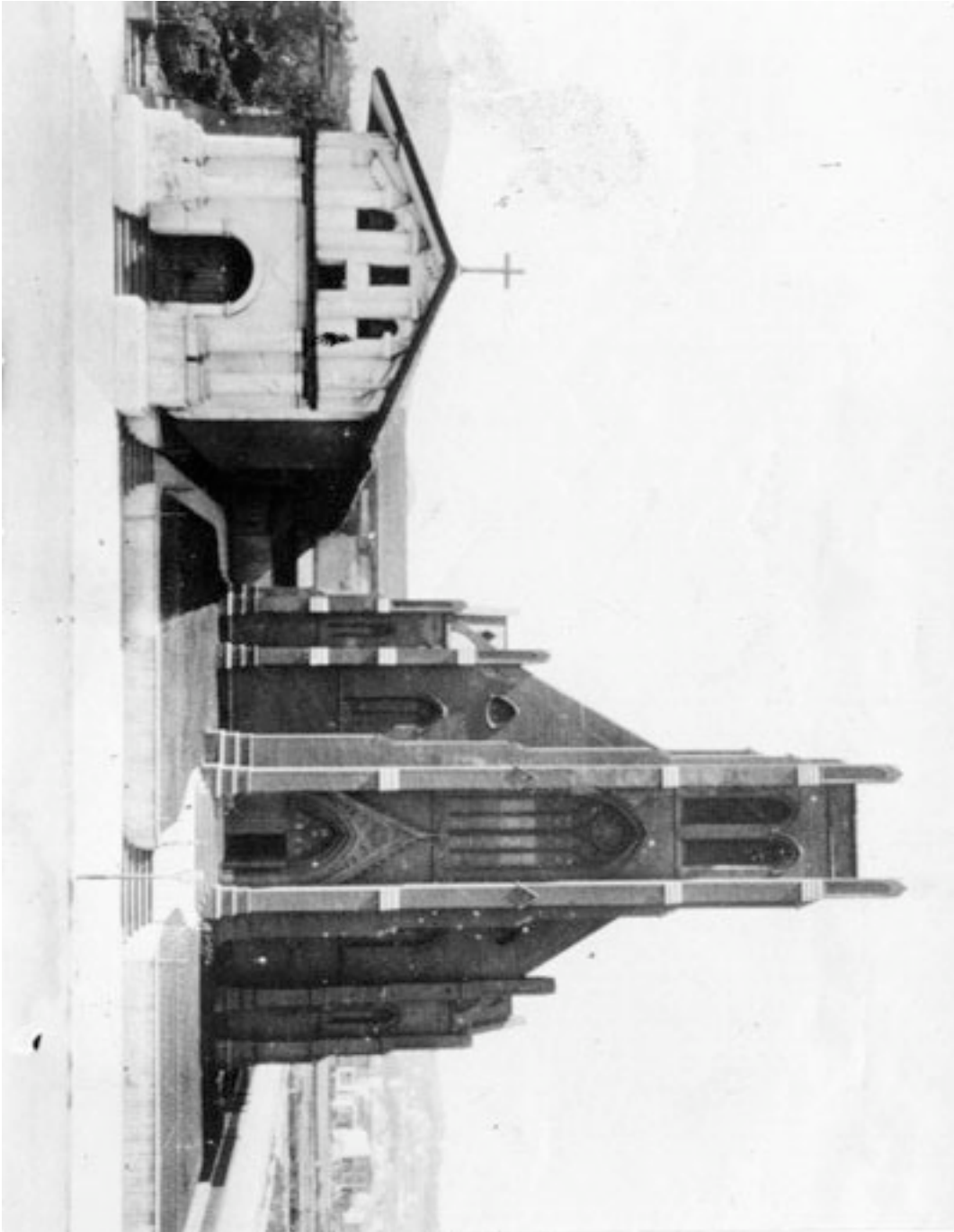


Figure 13: Mission Dolores in 1884. Original building on left; Anglo Gothic structure on right. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAB-0679



Figure 14: Post-quake reconstruction of Mission Dolores in Andalusian idiom. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAB-0638.



Figure 15: 1929 photograph of Mission Dolores complex, showing Churrigueresque amendments. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAB-0474.



Figure 16: 1933 photograph of El Capitan: San Francisco's largest movie theater, which opened in 1928. Designed by W.H. Crim and Albert Lansburgh, the architect of the Mission Library. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAA-8643.



Figure 17: 1926 photograph of Mission High School. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAB-0389.



Figure 18: Undated photograph of Mission Branch Library, built in 1915, designed by Albert Lansburgh. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-5677.

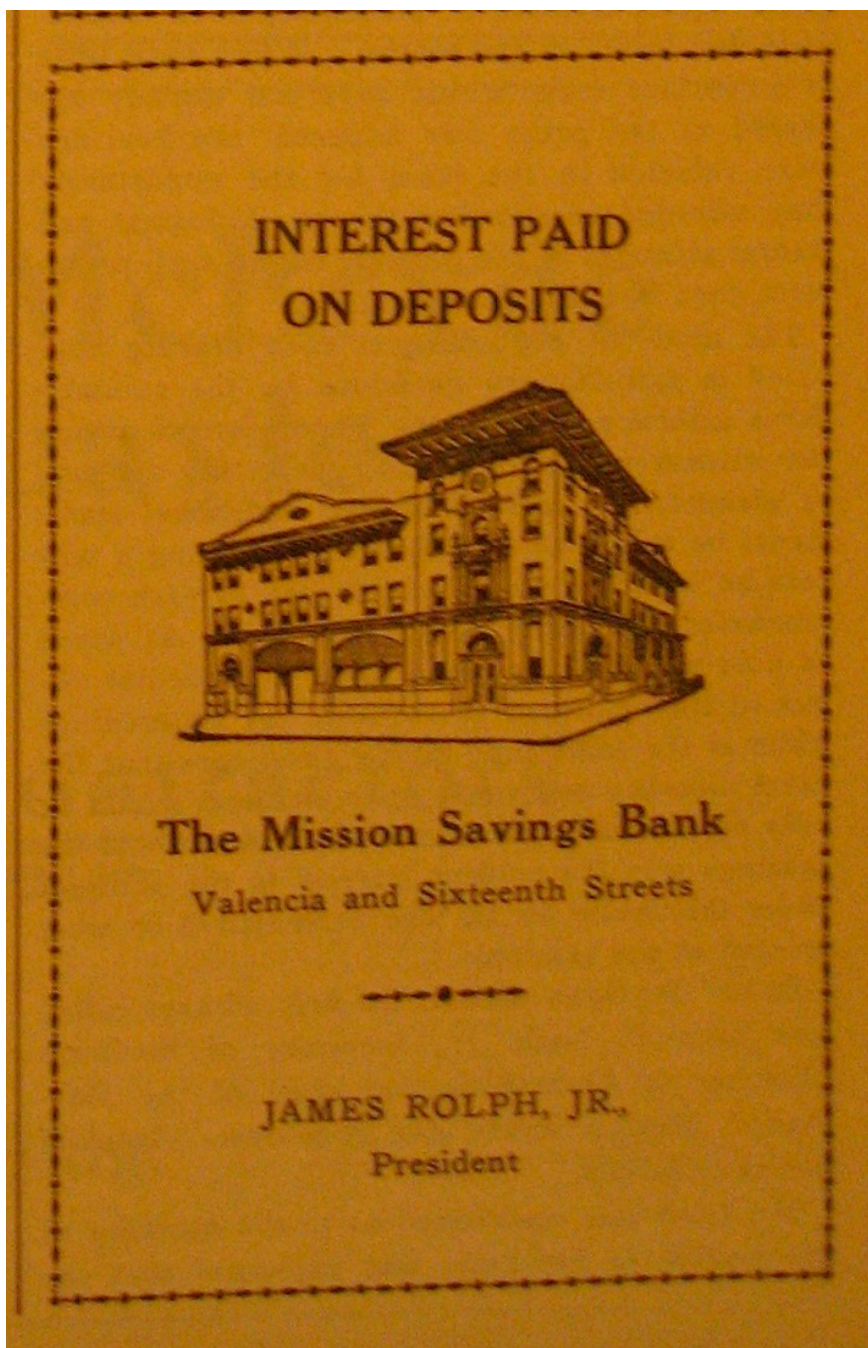


Figure 19: Advertisement for Mission Savings Bank which ran regularly in the *Labor Clarion* in the 1910s. Source: *Labor Clarion*.

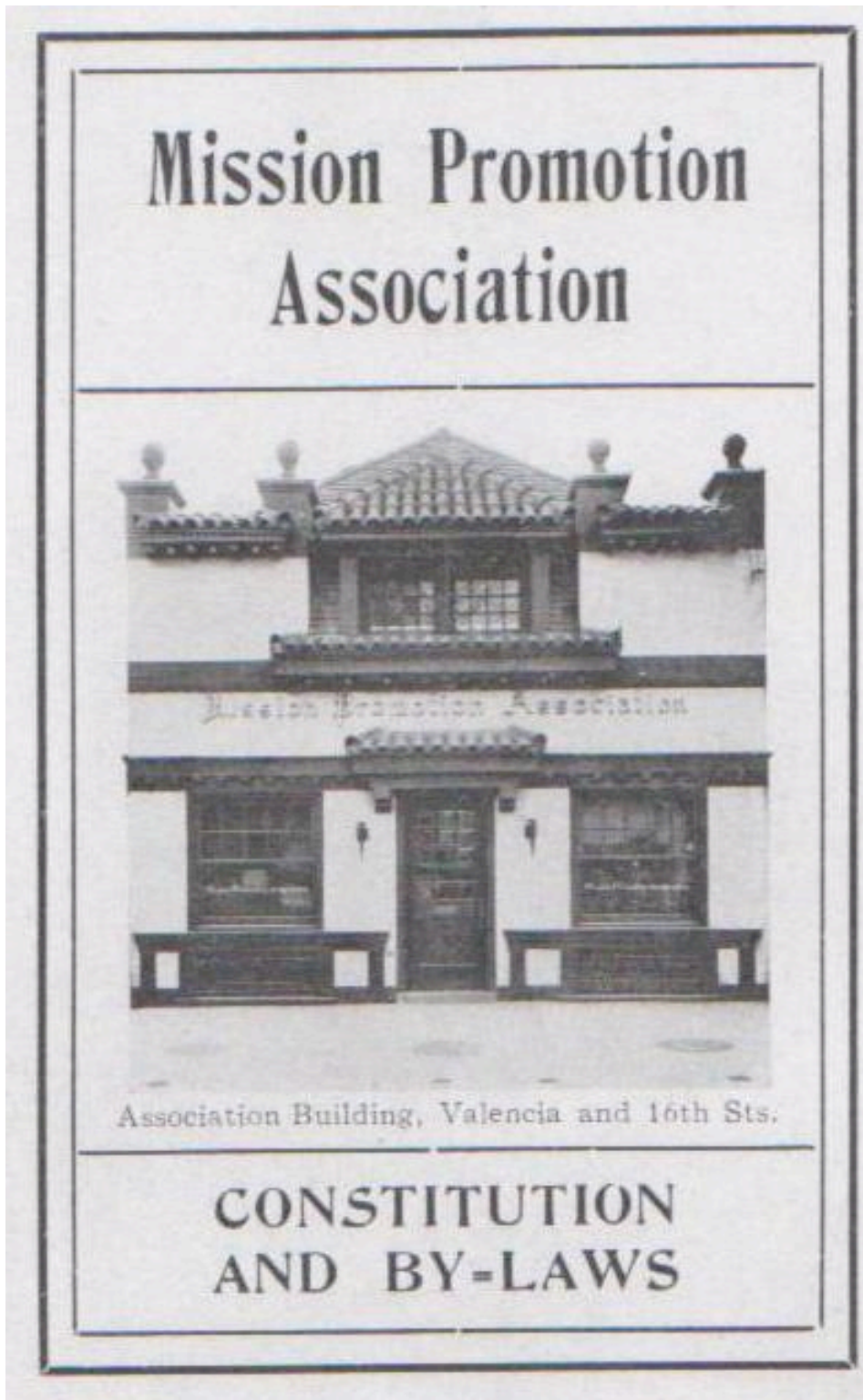


Figure 20: Headquarters of the MPA, constructed in 1908. Source: MPA, "Constitution and Bylaws," 1909, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society.



Figure 21: Interior of MPA hall at 1908 banquet, showing quarter sized replica of Mission above speakers' table. Source: Mission District File, Photograph Collection, California Historical Society.



Figure 22: 1926 photograph of San Francisco Building Trades Temple. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-4687.



Figure 23: 1929 photograph of San Francisco Labor Council Temple. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-4995.



Figure 24: Undated photograph of Mission Branch of Hibernia Bank at Valencia and 22nd Streets. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-4544.



Figure 25: 1912 photograph of German Savings Bank. Source: Mission District File, Photograph Collection, California Historical Society.



Figure 26: Undated photograph of Mission Branch of the San Francisco Savings & Loan Society. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-4610.

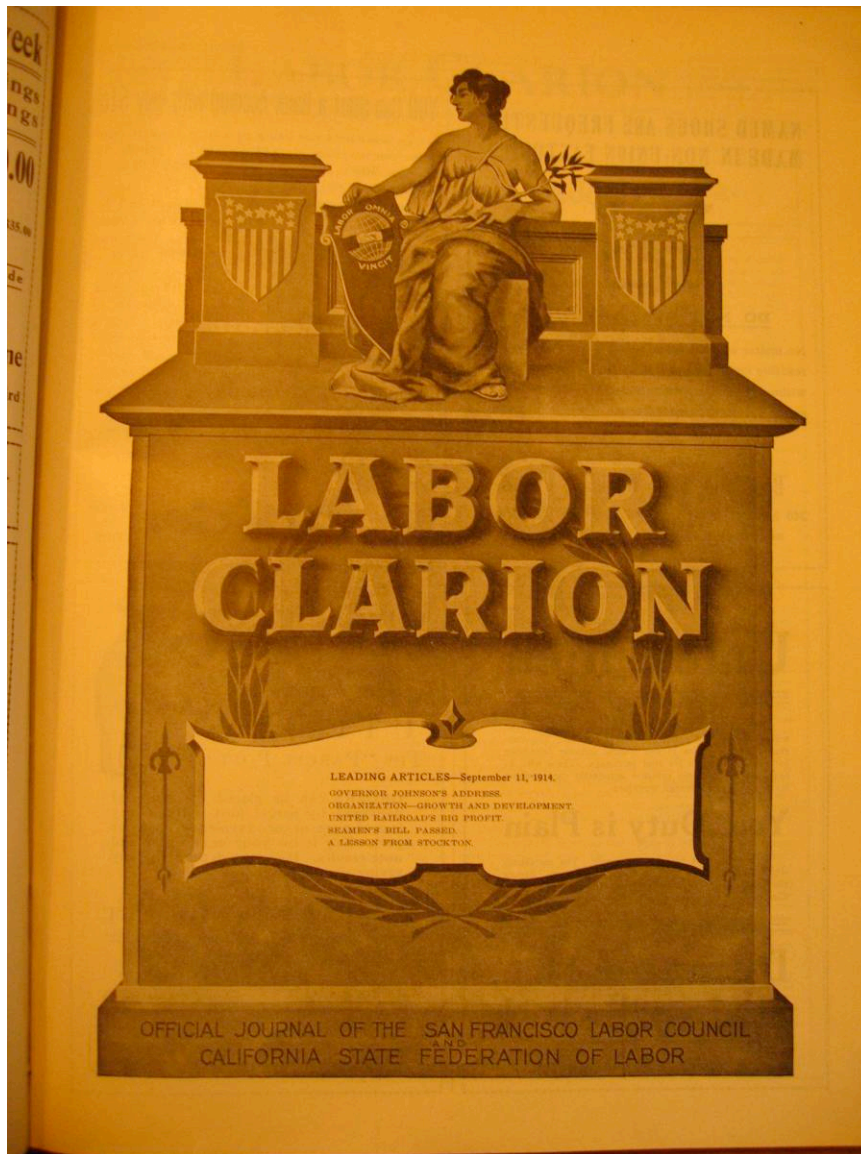


Figure 27: Cover of *Labor Clarion*. Source: *Labor Clarion*, September 14, 1914.



Figure 28: Certificate of the San Francisco Building Trades Council's Temple Association, showing Corinthian columns with images of construction tools below the plinths and above the capitals, and an image of the building to be inlaid in the entablature. Source: San Francisco Building Trades Temple Association file, San Francisco Labor Archives & Research Center, San Francisco State University.

**Chapter Two:
Spaces of the Laboring Public:
Economic Equality, Racial Erasure, and the New Deal 1930-1945**

They have constituted themselves the public, with their corporations, their legal trickeries, their factories, their guns, their police, their courts, their company towns, their economic control. But they are not the public. The public is made up of you and me, and of all others who work for a living; of the middle classes, who at least as consumers are vitally affected by everything labor does. We are the public, and ours is the public interest.

--Richard Lyon, "Trade Unions Are Responsible," *Labor Clarion*, September 3, 1937, 71.

On August 10, 1937 the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported the death of Matthew Sullivan, a cofounder of the Mission Promotion Association (MPA), the former Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, and the "Mission's noted son." He was 80. The *Chronicle* described Sullivan as an "empire builder," and much of what he built was located in the political and physical environment of his lifelong neighborhood.²²⁴ But when he passed, that neighborhood had fallen upon hard times. The Mission suffered privations that were typical to working-class districts across the country during the Great Depression, but these were compounded by a loss of political capital which most other districts never possessed to begin with.

The Mission had been exceptional among working-class neighborhoods through the first quarter of the twentieth century in the amount of influence and privilege it enjoyed at the municipal level and even at the level of the state. After the Building Trades Council moved to the neighborhood, its political wing—the Union Labor Party—reclaimed City Hall in 1910 under P. H. McCarthy. The union mayor was ousted in 1912 by James "Mission Jim" Rolph, who then occupied City Hall until he left for the California governorship in 1931. U.S. Senator James Phelan was a former Mission resident, MPA member, Rolph ally, and (at least on the subject of immigration policy) a friend to the unions. Through the 1920s Mission residents enjoyed ever improving schools, recreational facilities, transportation systems, and, in general, a measure of self determination, all of which was made possible, in no small part, through the influence of these figures.

Phelan died in 1930, Rolph in 1934. On the occasion of Sullivan's death in 1937, the *Chronicle* observed that the "last of the Mission's great triumvirate—Governor James Rolph, Senator James Phelan and now Judge Matt I. Sullivan—had passed."²²⁵ If not for its unapologetic antipathy towards labor, the *Chronicle* might have also mentioned the death of P. H. McCarthy in 1933. With the passing of these prominent figures also passed the Mission's exceptional political influence and much of its capacity to chart its own future. But this loss of leadership was only one among many factors that contributed to the neighborhood's loss of political autonomy. The MPA had been incomparable in its

²²⁴ "Mission's Noted Son," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 10, 1937.

²²⁵ *ibid.*

ability to attract municipal largesse, but with the onset of the Great Depression, there was no longer any largesse to be lobbied for.

Luck had graced the district in April 1906 when the great fire stopped at the doorstep of the Mission Dolores, and did not penetrate much farther south into the neighborhood. But the fact that the neighborhood's 1890s urban fabric was still extant proved a liability by the 1930s. Assessment practices at the time favored newer structures, and loans for rehabilitation (from private or governmental sources) were difficult to come by.²²⁶ By 1939, the percentage of residential structures in need of major repair was much higher in the Mission than in most of the rest of the city, including Chinatown.²²⁷ Average monthly rentals in the Mission were well below that of most of the neighborhoods north of Market Street, and were about half that of the newer neighborhoods on the western side of the city.²²⁸

The industrial employment center in the northeast of the Mission also began to show early signs of distress, as the Bay Area economy began to regionalize. Beginning in the 1920s, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce started cooperating with business leaders from the surrounding counties in the hopes of fostering an efficient regional economy which could challenge the Los Angeles metropolitan area for investment.²²⁹ Business leaders around the Bay Area began to promote economies of scale by moving manufacturing to peripheral cities in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo counties, and allowing San Francisco to function as the "Hub City" where management and finance would be concentrated.²³⁰ As the economy regionalized, San Francisco manufacturing lost ground to surrounding cities like Oakland and San Leandro; within San Francisco, manufacturing also lost ground to finance as the city's major industry.²³¹

A diminishing role in the regional economy, a deteriorating physical fabric, and a loss of prominent political advocates combined with generalized economic insecurity to produce an environment in which the definition of the public interest would be up for grabs in the Mission District. As Chapter One of this dissertation demonstrated, in the period between the disaster of 1906 and the onset of the Great Depression there had been agreement among the Mission's most influential groupings—the merchants and the unions—that the public interest was coterminous with economic prosperity. The beneficiaries of that prosperity were white trade unionist residents and the local businesses that served them. Land use decisions in the neighborhood were made by the neighborhood's own residents and institutions, primarily the MPA, but financed by the municipality. Nonwhite populations, as such, were regarded as a threat to the public

²²⁶ For more on assessment practices, see Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) Division of Research and Statistics, San Francisco Residential Security Map Description, April 15, 1937, 2. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 195/Home Owners' Loan Corp, Location: 450, 68:6:2/Box 147.

²²⁷ Works Progress Administration (WPA), "1939 Real Property Survey," 1939, Map 1, 16.

²²⁸ WPA, 1939, Map 4, 21.

²²⁹ See William Issel and Robert Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1986), 50-57; Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1959), Chapters 11-14.

²³⁰ Issel and Cherny, 50-52. The Oakland Bay Bridge (1936) and the Golden Gate Bridge (1937) were only the most tangible signs of this new cooperative spirit, but the effort could be traced back at least as early as 1925, with the formation of the Regional Plan Association (modeled on the Regional Planning Association of America, founded by Lewis Mumford and others in New York in 1923). See Scott, Chapter 12.

²³¹ Issel and Cherny, 50-57.

interest, as were downtown-based banks and real estate companies, and any government entity that advocated on their behalf. None of these material or ideological arrangements remained tenable in the 1930s. This chapter details how fiscal challenges, demographic shifts, and federal/municipal interventions coalesced to create an environment in which the public interest could be redefined.

While a distressed infrastructure and housing stock presented challenges to longtime Mission residents, they also offered an opportunity to low-income newcomers. This chapter begins with a discussion of the Mission's new Latino residents, and their relationship to existing institutions and spatial politics. Documentation of the Mission's new residents is sparse but, read together, city directories, records of the Catholic Archdiocese, the Spanish-language press, and reports from the State Emergency Relief Administration of California (SERA) suggest that there were at least a thousand Latinos living in the Mission by the end of the 1930s. The very fact that documentation on this population is fragmentary indicates that Mission Latinos were largely invisible to Anglo institutions. While this invisibility sheltered Latinos from the kind of harassment that Chinese laundrymen had suffered in the early twentieth-century Mission, it also meant that they were excluded from the public by the unions, the MPA, and municipal government—they were neither invited to participate in decision making, nor were they intended to benefit from the decisions made.²³²

The next section of this chapter argues that Latinos' exclusion from the category of the public was accomplished in no small part through the interventions of New Deal agencies. When describing the influence of the New Deal on cities, it is useful to distinguish between two broad categories of federal agency. There were those that were concerned first and foremost with infrastructural and civic projects—such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Public Works Administration (PWA), and the United States Housing Administration (USHA)—and those which were concerned with mortgage lending and real estate—the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), and its parent agency, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB). The infrastructural and civic agencies had race-neutral hiring policies, but they also endeavored to respect local (sometimes racist) norms.²³³ In the Mission that meant respecting the neighborhood's longstanding maintenance of residential and institutional segregation with projects like white-only public housing and a vocational school with an anti-immigrant curriculum. That is not to say that these agencies left the Mission exactly as they had found it. The stated aim of the WPA, PWA, and USHA was to help workers first, and businesses only indirectly by injecting capital into the economy.²³⁴ Anglo workers had been the junior partner of business in the Mission, but in

²³² See Chapter One of this dissertation for more on the treatment of Chinese in the early twentieth-century Mission District.

²³³ WPA, "Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-1943," 1946, 15-18, 45. Owing to their widespread marginalization in private labor markets, especially in the South, African Americans were in fact disproportionately represented on WPA rolls. In 1942, for example, African Americans accounted for 20% of nationwide WPA rolls, though the total labor force was only 11% "nonwhite."

²³⁴ For typical statements on the purpose of the WPA and Public Works Administration (PWA), see WPA, "Jobs: The WPA Way," 1937, 1-5, which details how the WPA has made "cash customers" out of formerly unemployed people, which helped retail businesses. As for its contributions to industry, the WPA reported that its yearly expenditure on materials for works projects was "nearly \$143,000,000." See also PWA "PWA: The First Three Years," 1936, 1.

the 1930s this power dynamic was reversed, as these new federal agencies consistently resolved disputes over development in favor of labor.

But while the infrastructural and civic agencies promoted economic (if not racial) equality as a criterion for determining the public interest in the Mission, the next section of this chapter shows that the mortgage and real estate oriented New Deal agencies encouraged the upwardly mobile to abandon the neighborhood altogether. This section focuses, in particular, on HOLC's 1937 Residential Survey of San Francisco, and the accompanying map. I argue that the HOLC map charted a troubling future for the Mission District, but not for the reasons that urban historians might at first guess. Parts of the Mission were redlined, not on the basis of race but because of mixed use—indeed HOLC described the redlined areas in the Mission as white, with "no racial concentration," thereby reinforcing the invisibility of Latinos who were certainly concentrated in the surveyed areas.²³⁵ Furthermore, mortgage institutions remained "very favorably disposed towards the Mission District," and continued to lend in the redlined areas.²³⁶ In the 1930s, redlining did not bode ill for the future of the Mission, at least not when compared to a practice which I call "no-lining," or designating an area Industrial/Commercial, in spite of the fact that it contained residential fabric.²³⁷ Over half of the area of the Mission was no-lined and, as a review of a WPA Transportation Plan will make clear, the Industrial/Commercial designation served to mark areas off for state-led modernization projects, in this case a plan which used the largely residential northern end of the Mission as an interchange for five separate freeways.²³⁸

This chapter will argue that HOLC's 1937 survey map revealed less about racially biased lending than it did about what San Francisco's largest downtown-based mortgage institutions and real estate firms had planned for the physical and economic future of the entire city. Made in close consultation with entities like the Crocker Bank and Magee Real Estate—which had advocated for citywide planning since the days of the Burnham Plan—the HOLC survey provided a framework through which a citywide, and even metropolitan scale of planning could be reasserted, with federal funding but with downtown business interests at the helm. If the public is defined as the group of people and institutions that are allowed to make decisions along with the group of people and institutions in whose name and whose benefit those decisions are made, then one might say that HOLC initiated a consolidation of the public by moving diffuse decision-making power from the neighborhoods to downtown. This incipient consolidation would recast the neighborhoods as mere beneficiaries, when urban plans were favorable to their interests, but would exclude them from the category of the public entirely, when they were not.

The chapter concludes with a discussion about how San Francisco's complex spatial and institutional politics found visual expression in architecture and print culture. While the pro-urban policies of the WPA, PWA, and USHA were associated with a heroically modernist visual language, populated by magnificent machinery and muscular

²³⁵ HOLC, descriptions for areas D-8 and D-12. (Individual area descriptions are unpaginated.)

²³⁶ HOLC, description for area D-8.

²³⁷ As my discussion of HOLC will make clear, I call this practice no-lining because Industrial/Commercial areas were appeared white on the residential survey maps.

²³⁸ See Miller McClintock, "A Limited Way Plan," in WPA, "A Report on the San Francisco City-wide Traffic Survey," 1937, 241.

workers, the anti-urban vision of the HOLC and FHA was represented as a neo-traditionalist idyll of half timbered cottages, Spanish haciendas, and manor houses. When the city appeared at all in the visual economy of the HOLC and FHA, it tended to be represented as smokestacks on the horizon; more often it was simply invisible. By the end of World War II, the entire Mission District would begin to be rendered invisible in the plans of government agencies at all levels, much as the new Latino population had been rendered invisible within the boundaries of the Mission beginning in the early 1930s.

In order to explain how the Mission figured in the city's new planning framework, it is necessary to begin with an overview of Latino life in the Mission and in broader San Francisco before World War II. Because there is no detailed scholarship on this subject, and because existing scholarship suggests that there was not a sizable Latino population in the Mission until the 1940s, this section will include in-depth discussions of how available sources indicate that Latinos were moving to the Mission in the early 1930s, and of how those newcomers likely related to San Francisco's established *colonia*.

A New Population, Not a New Public: Latino Diversity in San Francisco and the Mission District

The historian David Gutiérrez has used the phrase "frustratingly fragmentary" to describe the early-twentieth century historical record with respect to the relationship between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants.²³⁹ This phrase can be used to describe the historical record with respect to most subjects pertaining to Latino populations in San Francisco during the 1930s, and particularly with respect to the Mission District. Latinos began moving to the neighborhood early in the decade, but it is difficult to know where they moved from, why they chose to leave, why they chose to make the Mission their new home, how they related to the city's established Latino populations, and how they related to Anglo residents and institutions. The U.S. Census Bureau had idiosyncratic methods of counting these populations, and many Latinos were undocumented to begin with. The city's Spanish-language press was mostly focused on national stories or on matters pertaining to the politics of sending countries. The records of the Catholic parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, located in the *colonia* on the north side of town, contain no substantive information on the new Mission residents. Finally, this population was almost invisible in municipal documents.

However, by reading many of these fragmentary sources together, one can assemble a narrative outline of Latino experience in San Francisco and the Mission District in the 1930s. The available evidence strongly suggests that Latinos, primarily from Mexican backgrounds, began moving to the Mission at least as early as 1931. The evidence also suggests that there was a class division in San Francisco between Latinos of European Spanish descent (real or perceived), and those of *mestizo*, or mixed Indian descent. This division was loosely correlated with national background, Mexicans often being associated with *mestizos* while Central- and South Americans were more typically associated with Spanish heritage. The division was perceived and maintained not only by Anglos, but also by Latinos themselves. It is necessary to establish the contours of these heritage politics before explaining, in the following sections of this chapter, how

²³⁹ David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, (Berkeley, UC Press, 1995), 65.

authority and the public interest were renegotiated along the dimensions of ethnicity, class, and geography.

Existing studies of Latinos in the Mission District have focused on the postwar period, and the potted history sections of these studies have drawn primarily on Brian Godfrey's study of San Francisco. Godfrey's brief prewar section contains many useful observations but also contains some errors which leave the impression that the new Latino community was smaller than it was.²⁴⁰ Godfrey identifies the first Spanish-language congregation as El Buen Pastor, at 16th and Guerrero Streets, and dates the first Spanish-language service to 1940.²⁴¹ This is at least seven years too late. The 1933 *Crocker Langlely Directory* lists a Baptist church called the "Spanish Mission," with "Rev Rosalio Corona pastor," in a storefront address on 11th Street, in the northern end of the district.²⁴² Because neighborhood churches typically went to areas where there was already a potential congregation, there is reason to assume that Latino settlement on the northern end of the district began prior to 1933. In nearly every succeeding year, the Directory listed a new Pentecostal or Baptist Spanish-language church in the neighborhood, sometimes in buildings that had only recently hosted Irish or Danish congregations.²⁴³ By 1942 there were at least seven Spanish-language churches in the Mission, all Protestant denominations. But Latino Catholics certainly lived in the neighborhood, too. In 1944 Catholic Archbishop John Mitty received a petition with at least 100 signatures from Mission addresses, approximately a quarter of the total signatures, requesting that a dismissed priest be reinstated at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.²⁴⁴ In 1943, Isaura Michell de Rodriguez, a recent Mexican immigrant and an employee of the Mission-District St. Peter's Catholic parish, counted nine storefront Protestant churches in the heart of the District alone.²⁴⁵ Rodriguez circulated a petition through the neighborhood and collected 500 signatures of residents requesting Catholic sermons in Spanish.²⁴⁶ In 1946, a priest in the St. Peter's parish church "counted 12 different storefront churches that had sprung up" in the central part of the neighborhood.²⁴⁷

Churches were not the only indication that there was a growing Latino population in the Mission. While Spanish-language papers like *El Imparcial* never contained stories

²⁴⁰ Brian Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1988), 141. Godfrey writes that Latinos settled in the neighborhood "in the 1940s, if not before" but says no more about Latinos in the Mission in the 1930s. See also City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, "City within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District," 2007, 86; and Manuel Castells "Urban Poverty, Ethnic Minorities and Community Organization: The Experience of Neighborhood Mobilization in San Francisco's Mission District," in Ida Susser, ed., *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, [1983] 2002), 139-80.

²⁴¹ Godfrey, 150.

²⁴² Polk's *Crocker-Langlely San Francisco City Directory*, 1933.

²⁴³ Polk's *Crocker-Langlely San Francisco City Directory*, 1933-1942.

²⁴⁴ See Petitioners to Archbishop John Mitty, undated correspondence [September 1944], Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Parish file, Archive of Archdiocese of San Francisco.

²⁴⁵ Isaura Michell de Rodriguez, interview by Jeffrey Burns, July 17, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 11.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Father Nichola Farana, interview by Jeffrey Burns, July 7, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

on the neighborhood, the paper did contain advertisements for Mexican groceries, Latino handymen, Latino-owned laundries, and other businesses which listed Mission addresses as early as 1931; there were also businesses which were apparently owned by Anglos but which catered to Latinos in the Mission.²⁴⁸ In the early 1930s, the Anglo Bank of California even began taking out Spanish-language advertisements for Mission real estate in *El Imparcial*.²⁴⁹ The addresses of these properties, businesses, and churches show that there were three distinct residential clusters in the northern, southeastern, and central areas of the neighborhood. Godfrey and others after him have suggested that the earliest Latino settlement was in the more industrial northern Mission.²⁵⁰ But real estate and business advertisements from the Spanish-language press suggest that Latinos were moving to the more residential central Mission at the same time, or even earlier.²⁵¹

Though the presence of Latino businesses does not conclusively prove that there were Latino residential concentrations, when read against the "1939 Real Property Survey" the collective sources leave little room for doubt that Latinos were indeed settling in the Mission. The Survey reported a "percentage non-white" residential count for every block in the city, a measure which allows for rough estimates of the size of the Latino population.²⁵² During the 1930s, city directories furnish no evidence of a significant non-white population in the Mission, other than Latino—all of the Mission's non-white clusterings in the Survey correspond to Latino businesses and churches from the city directories. For example, the block of 11th Street which hosted the "Spanish Mission" Baptist church was 60 percent non-white; the "Spanish Pentecostal" Church on 17th Street ("Rev Luis Cavallo pastor") was adjacent to a block which was 66.7 percent non-white.²⁵³ Assuming then that the non-white population of the Mission was overwhelmingly Latino, a comparison of the Survey's population density mappings and

²⁴⁸ See, for example, the following Spanish-language advertisements from *El Imparcial*: a cleaners called Ropa Limpia (Clean Clothes) at 2450 Harrison Street from November 20, 1931; a free clinic with Spanish-speaking doctors advertising an address on Mission Street between 21st and 22nd Streets (exact address illegible) from November 20, 1931; a dentist in the Anglo Building on 16th Street in the Mission from December 9, 1932; Casa de D. Abraham furniture at 2250 Mission Street from February 1, 1935; a beauty shop at 1632 Howard Street from August 20, 1938; and Bay City Cleaners, owned by Marcelino Ortega, at 2491 of Folsom Street from August 27, 1938.

²⁴⁹ See for example the Anglo Bank advertisement, "Compra su Hogar!" (Buy your Home!), *El Imparcial*, December 9, 1932. The advertisement listed three properties in the Mission.

²⁵⁰ Godfrey, 150; Castells, 140.

²⁵¹ See advertisement for La Morena *El Imparcial*, November 20, 1931 giving an address at 1072 Valencia Street, near 22nd Street; and advertisement taken out by Antonio Martinez: "Carpintero, pintor, y empapelador. Ofresco mis servicios a la colonia latina." (Carpenter, painter, and wall paper hanger. I offer my services to the latino community"), *El Imparcial*, September 3, 1938. The address given by Martinez was 3322 22nd Street, around the corner from La Morena Mexican grocery.

²⁵² To produce the Survey WPA workers conducted a building-to-building canvas of every residential structure in San Francisco, and aggregated the results at the level of the city block. "White, Negro, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, and other races are listed" on the survey forms, but those forms have not been archived; at the block level, results were reported only as white and non-white. WPA, 1939, 294.

²⁵³ The 11th Street Church first appears in the 1933 edition of the *Crocker Langley Directory*, while the 17th Street Church first appears in the 1937 edition. The "Survey" block numbers are 3520 and 3571b, respectively, from WPA, 1939.

non-white mappings suggests that there may have been at least a thousand Latinos living in the Mission by 1939.²⁵⁴

Who were these Latinos? There are a number of reasons to believe that they were mostly from Mexican backgrounds, rather than Central- and South American.²⁵⁵ The name of one church indicated as much: the "Iglesia Bautista Mexicana" (Mexican Baptist Church) was located on Capp Street near 24th, in the central Mission, in 1938. The pastor, Rosalio Corona, was the same who had served at the 11th Street church, which suggests that the northern Mission cluster might have also been Mexican and Mexican American. A store called La Morena, in the central Mission, was advertising "Abarrotes Mexicanos" (Mexican groceries) in *El Imparcial* as early as 1931.²⁵⁶

While stores and churches help to establish that there was a Latino presence in the Mission, they say precious little about Latino experience. There is, however, one 1930s ethnographic collection which provides not only additional evidence that Mission Latinos were predominantly Mexican, but also gives clues as to the new residents' status in relation to their new home, to Anglos, and to more established San Francisco Latinos. In 1934 and 1935 the California SERA funded the "Survey of San Francisco Minorities," which was conducted by Paul Radin, an anthropologist who was trained by Franz Boas at Columbia University, and who taught at the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Chicago; and Brandeis University. Dr. Radin oversaw the work of over 200 interviewers—mostly under-employed white collar workers—who set out "to study the steps in the adjustment and assimilation of minority groups in San Francisco and Alameda counties, from the first arrival to the present time."²⁵⁷ Rather than use a questionnaire, Radin's amateur interviewers recorded "anything and everything which the interviewees wished to say."²⁵⁸ The original handwritten interviews, numbering in the thousands, are collected in San Francisco Public Library's Paul Radin Papers, which include dozens of interviews with people from Mexican backgrounds, and dozens more with people from Central- and South American backgrounds.

Unfortunately for the present study, the interviewers rarely asked where in San Francisco the subjects lived. This information was recorded for about ten Central- and South American informants—all of whom lived in the *colonia* in North Beach—but not for Mexicans. Still, the Radin Papers contain many details about Latino life stories which give clues about residential patterns and social experience. In the postwar period, San Francisco's Central American immigrants (many refugees from civil wars) tended to have working class backgrounds which were comparable to the city's Mexican immigrants. Not so the prewar Central- and South American immigrants, who were much more likely to have been professionals and even politicians in their home countries. Many of these

²⁵⁴ WPA, "1939 Real Property Survey, Volume II," 1939. Compare Map 6 with Map 7.

²⁵⁵ Ignoring residential patterns for a moment, sheer numbers suggest that any given Latino in San Francisco was more likely to have been from a Mexican background. Census data reported that in 1930 there were more than twice as many people from Mexican backgrounds living in San Francisco as there were Central- and South Americans; the former numbered at "7,900, or 5.1 percent of the total foreign born population," while the latter group numbered at 3,200, or "2 percent of the total foreign-born population." See Godfrey, 140.

²⁵⁶ See advertisement for La Morena *El Imparcial*, November 20, 1931.

²⁵⁷ Paul Radin, quoted in Radin Papers Finding Aid, History Room, San Francisco Public Library, 1.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*

immigrants came directly by sea to San Francisco and found employment as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, small business owners, newspaper reporters, downtown secretaries, or administrators importing businesses. By contrast the Mexican interviewees in the Radin Papers recount circuitous routes to the city, which often began in the impoverished state of Sonora, and wended their way through factories in South Texas and Los Angeles, through the fields of the rural Coachella Valley, and ending in the San Francisco shipyards or canneries, like the Alaska Packers' Corporation.

In the 1930s, the working-class Mexican immigrants were more likely to have found accommodations in the Mission than in the North Beach *colonia*. The Mission had a much higher percentage of blocks with "substandard" dwellings than did the *colonia*, and rents in the *colonia* were typically at least 20% higher than they were in the Mission—and on some blocks they were twice as high.²⁵⁹ The average Mexican or Mexican American could afford to live in the Mission, but probably not in the *colonia*. In addition, many of the Mexican immigrants interviewed stated specifically that they preferred not to live in a *colonia* (for reasons they did not explain) while the Central- and South Americans made no such comments.²⁶⁰ Because there were only two areas of San Francisco with concentrations of Latino businesses, it is reasonable to assume that Central- and South Americans, as well as long-established Mexicans and Californios, clustered in North Beach, while newly-arrived Mexicans began to cluster in the Mission.

As Godfrey noted, in the late 1920s many Latinos lived on Rincon Hill, in the South of Market, near the coffee companies, fruit importers, "canneries, agricultural refineries, and industrial plants needing manual labor."²⁶¹ Because most of the Mexican immigrants interviewed in the Radin Papers reported working in precisely these industries, it stands to reason that the low-rent Rincon Hill would have been largely Mexican. Rincon Hill was almost entirely condemned in the early 1930s, in order to make way for the approaches to the Bay Bridge. The destruction of this neighborhood corresponded to the growth of a Latino neighborhood in the Mission, which again suggests that the new "non-whites" in the Mission were from Mexican backgrounds.

Some authors have characterized the new Latino migration to the Mission as "in a sense recapturing past turf."²⁶² This formulation is tempting, but ultimately untenable. It is true that some of the buildings which the new Spanish-language congregations took over were Spanish colonial in design, including the Danish Methodist Episcopal church on 17th Street which became the "Spanish Pentecostal Church" in 1937, and the Salem Swedish Baptist church on Capp Street which became the Iglesia Bautista Mexicana in

²⁵⁹ For data on substandard dwellings, see WPA, 1939 (Volume II), Map 3. For data on rentals, see WPA, 1939, blocks 149, 159, 158, 3571b, and 3520. A rental on the block which hosted Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe averaged \$33.81 a month, while a rental on the block of 11th Street which hosted the Baptist "Spanish Mission" was \$17.32. No block in the *colonia* had rents below \$25, and no "non-white" block in the Mission had rents as high as \$21.

²⁶⁰ See O. A. Morris report on Joe Hernandez, R. V. Armstrong report on Juan Romero, and Theodore Frey report on unnamed Mexican subject, Box 2, Folder 18, Paul Radin Papers, 1933-1943, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

²⁶¹ Godfrey, 140.

²⁶² Godfrey, 131.

1938.²⁶³ However, the reclamation narrative conceals more than it reveals. These churches were not Spanish; they were Spanish colonial revival, a turn-of-the-century style which expressed Anglo American-ness, Anglo upward mobility, and Anglo neighborhood pride (see Chapter 1). The narrative becomes stressed to the breaking point when one observes that the new Mission de Completo Evangelio, on 24th Street, took over an Anglo gothic revival structure complete with pointed arches and stained glass. In fact, the vast majority of the new Latino churches and businesses in the Mission went into speculative storefronts, not Anglo-gothic *or* Spanish colonial structures.

But there is an even more fundamental problem with describing the new migration to the Mission as a reclaiming of former Spanish and Mexican territory. The new residents were working class Mexicans, many *mestizo*, who likely had as much neophyte heritage as Spanish colonist heritage. Rather than push the reclamation narrative, it is more informative to examine the intersection between the spatial requirements of a new immigrant group and the changing realities of an existing real estate market. The new arrivals needed a place to live, and hard times made it more difficult, and perhaps less desirable, for property owners to maintain racial homogeneity.

In order to explain how this new population fared in the Mission, it is necessary to map how Latino identity figured in the ethnic and racial politics of broader San Francisco. Here, as in many other cities, the distinction between "Spanish" or sometimes "Latin," on the one hand, and Indian or *mestizo* (mixed), on the other, marked the line between racialized and non-racialized. This distinction had purchase not only among Anglos, but also, as I discuss below, among Latinos themselves.

In most city agency reports, and in local reportage, Latinos were nearly invisible. When Latinos were mentioned, the observations were often preposterous, as in the 1926 recreation survey which reported that a "study was made of the leisure-time activities of the Mexican population and it was found that the chief pastime was gambling, often followed by a stabbing party."²⁶⁴ The Radin interviews offer observations which are less absurd, but often no less xenophobic. The fact that the interviews were conducted by amateur ethnographers makes them less reliable as a source for Latino worldviews, but it might make them a more reliable gauge of the racial attitudes of white-collar Anglos than a more professional study would have been. Almost without exception, interviewers who expressed positive impressions of an informant noted the subject's Spanish or even "white" heritage, while interviewers expressing negative impressions almost invariably noted Indian heritage. The pattern was illustrated succinctly by one interviewer who noted of his subject that "he has quite a dash of white blood in him, being uncommonly tall for a Mexican, say 5 ft 9, and with very regular features, creamy coloured skin and light brown eyes. He is married to a typical Mexican Indian, short, swarthy and very

²⁶³ For 17th Street church compare 1937 edition of *Crocker Langley Directory* with identification of the same building in Sanborn Fire Insurance map, San Francisco 1913-1915 vol. 6, 1914, Sheet 549; for Capp Street church compare 1938 edition of *Crocker Langley Directory* with identification of the same building in Sanborn Fire Insurance map, San Francisco 1913-1915 vol. 6, 1914, Sheet 596.

²⁶⁴ Josephine D. Randall, "Character Building Resources: A Study of the Recreational Opportunities and Facilities Provided by Agencies Affiliated with the Community Chest of San Francisco," 1926, 18.

dirty."²⁶⁵ Here, as in most of the interviews, "Indian" was correlated with "Mexican," and both identifications were correlated with characteristics like passivity and slovenliness.²⁶⁶

Though many of the interviewers expressed sympathy for their Mexican subjects, representing them as simple people who had been victimized by the capitalist system, other interviewers were less charitable. For example, one interviewer noted of his college-educated subject that "His father was Spanish, his mother was a fullblood [sic] Yaqui squaw."²⁶⁷ His features and characteristics trend largely to the mother's blood." After noting that the subject, a Mr. Hernandez, worked as an announcer at the Tanforan race track, taking "the place of a capable and jobless American citizen," the interviewer concluded with the following observation: "In brief, Mr. Hernandez 'does not belong,' socially, racially, or industrially. (NOTE: But there's nothing your humble reporter can do about it!)"²⁶⁸

Radin's interviewers typically noted that their Mexican subjects had Indian heritage, and then went on to record unfavorable impressions of those Mexican subjects. By contrast, the interviewers tended to note the Spanish heritage of their Central- and South American informants, of whom they recorded much more favorable impressions. In those few reports where negative impressions of Central- and South Americans were voiced, the interviewer expressed his or her own class and race consciousness with relation to the interviewee. For example, one interviewer described the refined manners of a newly arrived young Columbian woman—the daughter of a coffee magnate—as follows: "Her blond hair worn in short braids in front and her beautifully cut features made the other girls think that she was a like a princess stepping out of a story book. . . . She has never had to do any kind of work—they [her family members] have a retinue of servants—and she can't understand how the girls here manage to work their way through College." After noting that the young woman was disdainful of "Negroes" and "Orientals," the ethnographer remarked that "It would be interesting to interview this girl again two or three years from now and see what kind of effect democracy has on aristocracy."²⁶⁹

While most interviewers unreflectively used the terms "Spanish" or "Latin" with a positive inflection, some did seem to be attuned to a dynamic which might be described as heritage politics. As one interviewer observed of his or her subject, "It may be that this woman who assumes certain Spanish mannerisms herself was attempting to assure herself of her superiority over Mexicans."²⁷⁰ This and other Radin interviews strongly suggest that there was a class difference, which was often racialized, between Central- and South Americans, on the one hand, and Mexicans and Mexican Americans, on the

²⁶⁵ Dominick Twomey interview of unnamed Mexican subject, Box 2, Folder 18, Radin Papers. Twomey's interview notes were handwritten on the back of a letter addressed "To the Bond Holders of San Francisco Elks New Building Association," January 24, 1933; the Elks are a fraternal order that maintained race restrictions on membership until the 1970s.

²⁶⁶ See also Manuel Gamio, *Mexican Immigration to the United States* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971 [1930]), 54.

²⁶⁷ O. A. Morris report on Joe Hernandez, Box 2, Folder 18, Radin Papers.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Presto interview with "Miss N.," Box 1, Folder 13, Radin Papers.

²⁷⁰ Unidentified ethnographer's interview with "Mrs. Monroy," Box 1, Folder 13, Radin Papers.

Interviewee's national origin was not recorded, but Radin filed the report among the Central- and South American subjects.

other. One Chilean importer, for example, remarked that all the houses in his home region of Chile had "a cook and a washwoman, a house man or 'cholo,' and a nursemaid or house girl."²⁷¹ Though "*cholo*" may have been a relatively neutral term to describe a *mestizo* male servant in Chile, it would likely have sounded "ugly" to many Mexican Americans.²⁷² As David Gutiérrez makes clear, "*cholo*" had, by this time, a long history as a term of abuse that Californios used to describe poor, particularly Sonoran Mexicans.²⁷³

In his famous 1930 study, the Mexican sociologist Manuel Gamio noted that many Mexicans in the United States also claimed a Spanish heritage as a means of evading the "stigma of indigenous blood."²⁷⁴ This was true even of those whose "color and features show[ed] marked indigenous" traits. According to Gamio, however, both "white and brown Mexicans" also described themselves as belonging to a single group: *La Raza*.²⁷⁵ The Radin Papers confirm that this was also true of many Mexicans and Mexican Americans living in San Francisco. Though *la raza* translates literally to "the race," the term paradoxically erased race, serving as a bridge across European and Indigenous racial distinctions, substituting an identity position that was based on language and, secondarily, on national origin. In San Francisco, Columbus Day was celebrated by Latinos from all national backgrounds as the Fiesta de la Raza (though it was the Spanish consul who would deliver an address).²⁷⁶ More common than *raza* were the terms *latino*, *colonia latina*, (latino colony), or *colonia de habla español* (Spanish-speaking colony), all of which also served as pan-ethnic identifications, uniting white and brown, Spanish and indigenous, Central American and Mexican into a single community. While many Mexicans may have preferred not to live in the geographical *colonia* in North Beach, there is every indication that they provisionally regarded themselves as part of the *colonia latina* and the *colonia de habla español*.

The Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Mission may have felt themselves part of the broader Latino community but, as I show in the following section, they were not acknowledged as being part of the public in the still predominantly Anglo Mission. Hard times had stripped many of the Mission's prominent institutions and individuals of the resources necessary to maintain residential segregation. But when New Deal agencies stepped in to rehabilitate the neighborhood, they ended up reinforcing those exclusions (sometimes inadvertently) in the process of respecting local norms. At the same time, however, New Deal agencies helped to reconfigure how residents and institutions in the Mission defined the public interest, by emphasizing the importance of economic equality, as opposed to only economic growth.

²⁷¹ D. Taforo interview with unnamed Chilean subject, Box 1, Folder 13, Radin Papers.

²⁷² See Manuel Gamio, *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 178. One Mexican immigrant complained of his Mexican American neighbor's children: "Those kids were calling my children *cholos* and other ugly names."

²⁷³ Gutiérrez, 58.

²⁷⁴ Manuel Gamio, *Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Study of Human Migration and Adjustment*, Dover Publications (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1930] 1971), 54.

²⁷⁵ Gamio, 1930, 51-56.

²⁷⁶ James Ladd Delkin, *Festivals of San Francisco*, WPA, 1939, 47.

Economic Equality, Racial Erasure: Infrastructural and Civic New Deal Agencies in the Mission

New Deal projects across San Francisco and the country varied widely. Since it was local rather than federal agencies that ultimately determined what would be built where, projects tended to respond to the spatial and political contexts into which they were inserted. But to respect a context was not always to conform to that context. In responding to existing sociopolitical and spatial arrangements the WPA, PWA, and USHA reinforced some existing power relations, but undermined others. In the Mission these agencies promoted a shift in the balance of power by tabling the concerns of the business community, while privileging the interests of labor. At the same time, however, the agencies reinforced some patterns of racial discrimination that had prevailed in the neighborhood.

There were at least a dozen New Deal projects in the Mission, and most conformed to the neighborhood's existing development priorities. Both business and labor had long agreed upon the desirability of securing government funding for the expansion of amenities, and in most instances the fact that the funding was coming from a different level of government made no difference. Neither business nor labor complained about the PWA's expansion of the hospital, or about the new WPA sidewalks, playgrounds, police station, or school for "crippled children."

There were other projects, however, that did establish new priorities, most notably the USHA's projects in the neighborhood. When it opened in the southern end of the Mission in 1940, Holly Courts was the first public housing project west of the Mississippi.²⁷⁷ The old Recreation Park baseball stadium, in the northern end of the neighborhood, was razed in 1938 to make way for the Valencia Gardens public housing project (1939-1943). (Figure 3.) Recreation Park had stood in a central location, with the Building Trades Temple one block to the west, and the San Francisco armory one block to the east; it was a monument of the neighborhood's commercial public geography. When Valencia Gardens opened in 1943 it substituted in that prominent space a public monument to state sponsorship of economic egalitarianism. Designed by William Wurster, this project borrowed heavily from the architectural language of the *siedlungen*, the public housing projects that were built in Germany and socialist Vienna in the 1920s.

The implications were not lost on conservative factions of the Mission's population, who were accustomed to having their property values stand at the center of policy and planning debates. Holly Courts and Valencia Gardens had been under discussion for years, and both met with a "storm of protest," as John Baranski put it in his history of San Francisco public housing.²⁷⁸ The projects were enthusiastically supported by the unions, but bitterly opposed by local homeowners' groups, real estate interests, and the Mission Merchants Association on the grounds that they would depress surrounding property values, socialize the real estate market, and bring a lower grade population to the

²⁷⁷ See SFHA, "An Overview of the SFHA," available at SFHA website, <http://www.sfha.org/about/overview.htm>, accessed November 12, 2009.

²⁷⁸ John Baranski, "Making Public Housing in San Francisco: Liberalism, Social Prejudice, and Social Activism, 1906-76," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2004, 115-116, 128.

area, thereby "putting the stigma of 'slum area' in the Greater Mission District."²⁷⁹ As in the city's other neighborhoods, Anglo residents and business owners in the Mission were particularly concerned that the projects would disrupt the racial composition of their district.²⁸⁰ This list of objections was sufficient to keep the SFHA from moving forward with a third project in the northeast of the neighborhood, known as Cogswell.²⁸¹ However, the SFHA successfully argued that the need for workers' housing was too acute to do nothing, and the two other projects were built as planned, with some concessions about tenancy, which I discuss below.

That anything at all should be built in the Mission over the pointed objections of the Mission Merchants' Association marked a significant shift in the spatial politics of the neighborhood and of broader San Francisco. As Chapter One of this dissertation showed, in the first three decades of the twentieth century no municipal, state, or federal agency; no special district; nor corporate entity had pushed through a single project in the neighborhood without the approval of the MPA or, after 1920, the Mission Merchants. The MPA and later the Merchants had served as quasi-official governing bodies, successfully positioning themselves as representatives of the public interest of the Mission, but the SFHA/USHA projects effectively recast the neighborhood bodies as special interests.

Although the SFHA and the USHA made clear that the moral authority of Mission-based merchant and homeowner groups was no longer sacrosanct, they also understood that to completely ignore the "storm of protest" from these groups would be to jeopardize their projects. The SFHA's solution was to apply the USHA's "neighborhood pattern" guideline which stated that the tenants of any project would mirror the racial and ethnic composition of the surrounding neighborhood. The guideline was not law, but was applied across the country when local housing authorities met with resistance from white homeowners, businesspeople, and city governments.²⁸² The guideline was opposed by the leaders of the public housing movement in San Francisco, like Alice Griffith, a driving force behind the establishment of the SFHA, but political expediency trumped her objections.²⁸³

As Baranski reports, members of the SFHA's Negro and Chinese Advisory Committees "reluctantly approved" the neighborhood guideline, "because they were assured their respective communities would get a desperately needed housing project and because they put the success of the larger housing program and New Deal institutional goals before civil rights."²⁸⁴ The result would be the Westside Courts for African Americans, in the Fillmore, and the Ping Yuen project, in Chinatown, for Chinese

²⁷⁹ "Housing Authority Flayed by Mission District at Hearing," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 3, 1940; quoted in Amy Howard, "More than Shelter: Community, Identity, and Spatial Politics in San Francisco Public Housing, 1938-2000," PhD. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 2005, 204. See also "Supervisors' Vote Opposes Mission Housing Project," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 7, 1940; and Baranski, 125.

²⁸⁰ Baranski, 128 and 139.

²⁸¹ Baranski, 129.

²⁸² Baranski, 124; Howard, 27-28. See also Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1985] 1998), 14 and 230.

²⁸³ Baranski, 124.

²⁸⁴ *ibid.*

Americans. So in order for the SFHA to succeed in housing many of the city's minority residents, it also promoted segregation.

The case of Valencia Gardens in the Mission highlights the fact that the neighborhood pattern guideline did not aim to faithfully mirror the demographic composition of the surrounding area so much as it aimed to assuage the fears and defend the perceived interests of neighboring Anglos. By the late 1930s the area of the northern Mission District surrounding the Valencia Gardens site contained two large Latino residential clusters; some nearby city blocks were more than 66% Latino.²⁸⁵ It follows, then, that strict adherence to the neighborhood guideline would have dictated that at least some of the tenants of the project be Latino. But, like Holly Courts in the southern end of the neighborhood, Valencia Gardens was open only to whites.

Wurster stated that he took design cues not only from German and Austrian public housing, but also from Mexican courtyard architecture.²⁸⁶ Given the exclusionary guidelines about tenancy, and in spite of Wurster's egalitarian intentions, the Mexican architectural references conformed to the neighborhood's longstanding self-promotional practice of commemorating Latin-ness even as Latinos were excluded.

The Mission's two housing projects did, however, help to establish that business interest was not necessarily the public interest. The economic disasters of the Depression created a climate in which business became suspect, and workers could be valorized as the public. As World War II drew near, this dynamic was magnified, and indeed the federal and municipal governments expedited the construction of Valencia Gardens precisely because they recognized war worker housing as fundamental to the public interest.²⁸⁷ Once built, the Merchants apparently decided that it was best to integrate the new residents, mostly young families with husbands working in the war industries; after all, these were potential patrons of local businesses. The *Mission Merchants' News* featured occasional stories highlighting the pride that residents took in their space—like the front garden competition held in Holly Courts—stories which highlighted how much new residents had in common with nearby homeowners.²⁸⁸

Another project which announced a renegotiation of the public interest was the Samuel Gompers Trade School, built by the PWA, working with the San Francisco Unified School District, and opened in August 1937, across the street from La Morena Mexican grocery store on Valencia and 22nd Streets.²⁸⁹ The architects, Masten & Hurd, employed a Streamline Moderne idiom, an aesthetic which celebrated industrial design. (Figure 4.) The neighborhood's *Labor Clarion* reported approvingly that the plan

²⁸⁵ See WPA, 1939, block 3571b.

²⁸⁶ Gwendolyn Wright, "A Partnership: Catherine Bauer and William Wurster," in *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*, Marc Treib, ed. (Berkeley: UC Press 1999), 187.

²⁸⁷ See San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Minutes of Regular Meetings, January 25, 1943, 185; January 26, 1942, 185.

²⁸⁸ "Promote Beauty: Garden Club Lays Plans for Year," *Mission Merchants' News*, November 6, 1941, 1. In 1941, the SFHA reported that "Many who held fantastic ideas concerning the type of persons to be housed and the effect on private property, have become staunch proponents since learning the real purpose and effect of the complete operation. In the vicinity of Holly Courts, this change of sentiment has been particularly marked. A poll was taken among property owners adjacent to this project who were asked to express their ideas concerning the tenants, their children, and the effect on nearby property. The response was overwhelmingly favorable." SFHA, "Third Annual Report," 1941, 3.

²⁸⁹ "Opening of Samuel Gompers Trade School," *Labor Clarion*, September 3, 1937, 50.

followed the common "T" shape of the modern factory.²⁹⁰ Union labor had been a prominent physical presence in the Mission—most notably in the Building Trades Temple and the Labor Temple—yet this was the first edifice to labor that was financed with government money.

The school's faculty profile and curriculum also announced new support for the interests of workers. While the faculty responsible for courses like aircraft drafting and diesel engine theory held college degrees, the majority of the faculty were union laborers, none of whom held more than a high school degree, a fact which apparently seemed unfair to many employees of the Unified School District which managed Gompers.²⁹¹ The curriculum was typical of vocational schools at the time, including courses on welding, diesel engines, tool and die work, radio repair, drafting, and other skills that workers needed to succeed in an industrial economy. After the onset of World War II, the School promoted the same courses as a means of securing the future not only of individual workers, but of the country itself.²⁹²

Like Valencia Gardens, the School was a physical and institutional expression of new government support for the interests of workers. But also like Valencia Gardens, the School failed to challenge the discriminatory practices and attitudes that were common in the neighborhood. Because Gompers was a PWA project and because it later received federal funding for war industries training, federal non-discrimination clauses ensured that official School policy was to weigh student applications "without considerations of sex, race, color, or religious belief or affiliation."²⁹³ But national background did not appear on the list of personal characteristics which were to be ignored in admissions decisions. Early curricula and enrollment data for the School have not been archived, so it is difficult to say whether immigrants (naturalized or otherwise) were admitted. What is clear, however, is that any immigrant students who might have been admitted would have had to contend with nativist attitudes. School publications were peppered with references to citizenship and nation which clearly presumed to speak to a student body which was born in the United States. In the School's 1943 course catalog, the description of the required sequence in U.S. history promised to "give students knowledge and appreciation of their native land."²⁹⁴ A measure of that nativism was likely explained by the broader cultural conditions of World War II, but local unions and education officials had viewed the School as vehicle for promoting a nativist agenda well before the onset of war. In a 1937 article based on Board of Education meetings, the *Labor Clarion* reported that one of the primary aims of the Gompers curriculum was to help "native-born Americans" compete with the skilled labor of the foreign born.²⁹⁵ Such training was needed "if American-born boys are to be given equal opportunity with those coming from other lands to acquire journeyman skill in industrial occupations."²⁹⁶ That the school was

²⁹⁰ *Labor Clarion*, September 3, 1937, 52.

²⁹¹ See Willis O'Brien, "Gompers School: A Letter the Education Board Should Have Seen," *San Francisco Chronicle* June 6, 1944, 8; Samuel Gompers Trades School, "Announcement of Courses," January 1943, Box 52, Folder 17, San Francisco Unified School District Records, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

²⁹² Gompers School, "Courses."

²⁹³ Gompers School, "Courses," 18.

²⁹⁴ Gompers School, "Courses," 24.

²⁹⁵ *Labor Clarion*, September 3, 1937, 52.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*

named in honor of Samuel Gompers, the nativist AFL leader, also served to symbolically reinforce an anti-immigrant bias.²⁹⁷

Hiring policies of New Deal agencies were race-neutral, and the Radin papers contain many interviews with Latinos who were employed on WPA and SERA projects in other parts of San Francisco. Indeed one of Dr. Radin's interviewers was a white-collar Latino, identified only as M. Gómez, who conducted and recorded his or her interviews in Spanish. However, there is no evidence that Latinos were employed on jobs in the Mission, and most of the Mission projects conformed to the neighborhood's existing discriminatory spatial politics. These politics were expressed not only through public housing tenancy and educational curricula, but also through visual representation.

During the period of the New Deal, the iconography that was often associated with the modernist architectural vocabulary was urban and heroic. It featured industrial laborers rendered in severe angles, as though they, like the buildings they inhabited, had taken on the aspect of machinery. (Figure 5.) Joan Didion memorably referred to these types of figures as "the muscular citizens of a tomorrow that never came."²⁹⁸ In the New Deal-funded murals at Coit Tower, near San Francisco's *colonia*, many of the heroic workers depicted were Latino.²⁹⁹ By contrast, there were no Latinos represented in Mission projects, unless one counted the 1936 WPA mural dramatizing the founding of the Mission Dolores. Painted by Edith Hamlin in the library of Mission High School, the scene depicted neophyte Indians as noble savages and Spanish missionaries as benevolent bearers of civilization. Both Spanish and Indian figures appeared as historical relics, but not as a living presence. Like the architecture of the high school itself, this image gave visual form to the foundation myth expressed by Bret Harte and adopted by Father Peter Yorke and the Mission District's Catholic parish churches. (Figure 1.) The WPA's Sunshine School, "a school for crippled children," similarly recapitulated the neighborhood's Spanish foundation myth in stucco and red tiles. (See Figure 2.)

In the popular imagination, the New Deal is often thought to have produced broadly uniform results in cities across the country. This perception is likely due in part to a popular focus on buildings produced in the most recognizable architectural styles. Paul Cret's famous category, "WPA moderne," has inadvertently contributed to the perception that the work of New Deal agencies was confined to post offices, grade schools, court houses, and a handful of other civic buildings, all of which were produced in much the same "zigzag" deco style.³⁰⁰ But in fact, New Deal agencies funded the construction of nearly every type of permanent physical artifact that was to be found in American cities at the time, from court houses and city halls to sewers and sidewalks; the evidence of those projects was pervasive but often invisible to all but those who had participated in the projects themselves.³⁰¹ The wide functional and stylistic variation

²⁹⁷ "New Vocational School Named Samuel Gompers," *Labor Clarion*, June 11, 1937, 9. It should be noted that Gompers himself supported strict immigration laws, but regularly supported labor movements in other countries around the world, including in Asia.

²⁹⁸ Joan Didion, *The White Album* (New York: Pocket Books, 1979), 198.

²⁹⁹ The murals were painted by 26 artists, overseen by Victor Arnautoff. The murals were financed by the Public Works of Art Project.

³⁰⁰ For more on this argument, see Robert Leighninger, "Cultural Infrastructure: The Legacy of New Deal Public Space," *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 1996, 226-236.

³⁰¹ See California's Living New Deal project for an overview of the scope of New Deal-funded construction: <http://livingnewdeal.berkeley.edu/>

among these works reflected variations in local sociopolitical contexts. While a New Deal project in the unionist and historically anti-Asian Mission District commemorated Samuel Gompers, a vocal opponent of Chinese immigration, another New Deal project in Chinatown commemorated Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, founder of the Chinese Republic.³⁰² Each of these projects was addressed to a different public, and each project helped to symbolically delineate that public.

In the decades before the Depression, San Francisco political culture defined publics and public interests at the scale of the neighborhood, and New Deal agencies endeavored to preserve that practice. To do so, the WPA, PWA, and USHA devolved decision-making power to local agencies, like the San Francisco Board of Education, in the case of the Gompers School, and the SHFA, in the case of Valencia Gardens. These agencies took stock of the sociopolitical and spatial patterns of neighborhoods before approving projects, but the fact remained that it was now citywide agencies that determined what would be built where. In the pre-Depression Mission, the power to make planning decisions effectively rested with business-oriented neighborhood associations like the MPA and later the Mission Merchants, but New Deal-financed interventions reduced those quasi-official entities to interest groups, junior members of the public. The School Board and the SFHA privileged the interests of labor over business in the Mission, but did not elevate workers above junior status in the public either: unionist residents were to be the primary beneficiaries of the decisions made, but they were not themselves the decision makers.

Rather than reproducing existing structures of neighborhood authority, or imposing a uniform federal rule over local urban space in San Francisco, agencies like the WPA, PWA, and USHA instead provided an economic and administrative framework through which a citywide scale of authority could be imposed over the Mission for the first time in the twentieth century. The activities of other New Deal agencies—the FHA, the HOLC, and its parent organization, the FHLBB—also had the effect of imposing a citywide scale of planning authority over the Mission District. But while the former agencies worked to revitalize the neighborhood, many of the activities of the latter agencies encouraged upwardly mobile Anglos to abandon the neighborhood altogether.

"No-lining" and Neighborhood Erasure: Washington D.C. and Downtown San Francisco Come to the Mission

While the activities of the WPA, PWA, and USHA were directed primarily towards infrastructural and municipally-managed projects, the activities of the FHA, FHLBB, and the HOLC were directed towards the private sector, specifically the mortgage and real estate markets. In collaboration with local lenders and realtors, these business-oriented New Deal agencies rolled out a set of programs that can be fairly, if reductively, characterized as anti-urban. Contrary to popular belief, the HOLC actually did much to stabilize poor neighborhoods, even as it helped enable a centralization of planning authority that would ultimately disadvantage those same neighborhoods.³⁰³ Among the many federal and local entities that were responsible for this centralization of

³⁰² The Chinatown project is a sculpture of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen by Beniamino Bufano in St. Mary's Square. The sculpture was completed in 1937, and was funded by the Federal Art Project.

³⁰³ United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Housing: 1961 Civil Rights Housing Report," 1961, 13.

authority, the HOLC played only a bit part. Nonetheless HOLC records reveal the most about a collective course of action through which downtown-based banks and real estate interests effectively asserted planning authority over the Mission District, condemning over half of the neighborhood to disinvestment and physical deterioration.

HOLC was established in 1933 to help homeowners who were in danger of foreclosure; between 1933 and 1936, the Corporation made more than one million loans.³⁰⁴ Among urban historians, HOLC is best known for the residential security maps that it created between 1936 and 1940 at the behest of the Corporation's parent organization, the FHLBB, which had decided to survey all US cities with populations of at least 40,000. 239 cities met that criterion.³⁰⁵ The purpose of the maps, as HOLC described them, was to "graphically reflect the trend of desirability in neighborhoods from a residential view-point."³⁰⁶ The "desirability" of a neighborhood was determined by weighing a number of attributes against one another. These included land use; age and condition of structures; accessibility of transportation, retail, and recreation facilities; and ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic characteristics of the population; among other considerations. The areas which HOLC deemed the safest bets for mortgage lenders were colored green on the residential security maps; the next best areas were colored blue; areas where cautious lending was advised were colored yellow; and those areas which were considered to be high risks for mortgage lenders were colored red.

When historians rediscovered these maps in the 1970s, they connected them to a practice known as redlining.³⁰⁷ This term was coined by housing activists in the 1960s to describe the practice of denying mortgages in certain areas based on neighborhood characteristics, especially the prevalence of racial and ethnic minority residents.³⁰⁸ That this practice was widespread and common among private lending institutions, with support from the FHA, has been exhaustively documented, beginning at least as early as the 1961 Housing Report by the US Commission on Civil Rights.

But scholars have assumed, rather than demonstrated, that HOLC denied loans to areas it colored red.³⁰⁹ As Amy Hillier has shown, in two meticulously researched articles, this assumption is incorrect: when it began the City Survey Program in 1936, HOLC had already made nearly all of the million loans it would make, and most of those loans—as many as 60%—were made in areas the agency later colored red, with another 20% of them going to yellow-colored areas.³¹⁰ At least 5% of HOLC loans went to

³⁰⁴ Hillier, 205.

³⁰⁵ Hillier, 205, 211.

³⁰⁶ HOLC, 2.

³⁰⁷ Hillier, 205, 208. See Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 197; Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950* (Teaneck, NJ: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1986).

³⁰⁸ Hillier, 205, 208.

³⁰⁹ Douglas Massey, for example, has written that red- and yellowlined areas "virtually never received HOLC loans." See Massey, "Origins of Economic Disparities: The Historical Role of Housing Segregation," in James Carr and Nandinee Kutty eds, *Segregation: The Rising Costs for America* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 69. For a critique of scholarship on the role of the federal government in promoting residential segregation, see Robert Beauregard, "Federal policy and urban decline: a case of government complicity?" *Housing Policy Debate* Vol. 12, 2001, 129 – 151.

³¹⁰ Amy Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 29, 2003, 397; Amy Hillier, "Residential Security Maps and Neighborhood Appraisals: The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Case of Philadelphia," *Social Science History* Vol. 29, No. 2, 2005, 209.

African Americans.³¹¹ By contrast, but the more abundant FHA loans were indeed reserved for detached single family houses in suburban locations.³¹² When it came to HOLC's residential security maps, red lines did not indicate redlining, at least in the sense that the word acquired after the Civil Rights Movement.

The fact that green- and blue-lined areas received only 20% of HOLC loans was largely explained by the fact that HOLC's mission was to help distressed borrowers stay in their homes, and most of those borrowers lived in lower-income areas. Hillier's studies demonstrate that HOLC did not create the maps to decide where to lend and where not to lend, nor to influence private lenders. In fact, the FHLBB, HOLC's parent agency, *did not want* the maps ending up in the hands of private lenders, other than its local collaborators, precisely because it feared that smaller banks would misinterpret the maps, thereby hastening "disinvestment in poorly rated areas."³¹³ Rather, HOLC created the maps to track its existing loans, even though it continued to service all the loans equally whether they were made in safe, greenlined areas or in risky, redlined areas.³¹⁴ Hillier has further argued that because HOLC and its parent agency, the FHLBB, were heavily invested in redlined areas, the red designation was intended in part to indicate where rehabilitation programs would be needed in order to arrest blight, stabilize property values, and so to secure the agencies' long-term investments.³¹⁵

The assumption that HOLC did not lend in areas that it later colored red is bound up with complementary assumptions that HOLC applied the same evaluation criteria, equally weighted, to cities across the country, and that race and ethnicity were the most important of those criteria.³¹⁶ This impression is largely due to the fact that existing accounts of HOLC have focused on cities where xenophobic and racist sentiments were particularly sharp among Anglo bankers and real estate professionals, cities like Los Angeles, as described by Nicolaidis; Detroit, as described by David Freund; and most famously St. Louis, as described in Jackson's 1985 *Crabgrass Frontier*.³¹⁷ But the story was not the same everywhere—a fact that is brought into focus by comparing the 1937 residential security map of San Francisco with the counterpart maps from other cities. (See Figure 6.) A concentration of Jewish or Italian residents was reason to rate neighborhoods red on the Philadelphia HOLC map, but the San Francisco map reflected the city's longstanding lack of stratification among white ethnic groups.³¹⁸ The description of one blue-lined area of San Francisco's Marina District, for example, noted

³¹¹ David Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 117-118; Hillier, 2005, 209.

³¹² See Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), Chapter 2.

³¹³ Hillier, 2003, 400.

³¹⁴ Hillier, 2005, 210-211.

³¹⁵ *ibid.*

³¹⁶ For example, both Douglas Flamming and Becky Nicolaidis use the word "key" to describe the importance of race in HOLC redlining. See Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2006), 351; and Becky Nicolaidis, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 193.

³¹⁷ Nicolaidis, 193; Freund, 114; Jackson, 199-201.

³¹⁸ For more on the comparative lack of stratification among white ethnic groups in San Francisco, see Barbara Berglund, *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 10.

that "Many of the higher type Italians are residents of the area, and property located here is readily saleable"—Italian presence could be a selling point in San Francisco.³¹⁹

The city survey program did not evaluate each American city in exactly the same way. The HOLC maps were made with significant input from local real estate brokers and mortgage lenders, and the standard language in all the city survey descriptions indicated that the maps attempted to "represent a fair and composite opinion of the best qualified local people."³²⁰ In San Francisco those "best qualified local people" included the executives and staffs of locally based institutions like R.G. Hamilton & Co. Real Estate, Thomas Magee & Sons Real Estate, the Crocker First National Bank, the San Francisco Bank, and the Bank of America which was in the 1930s still primarily a Bay Area institution.³²¹ The HOLC map and report is the most concise index of the ambitions of these prominent downtown lenders and realtors. The map and report presented not only a "composite opinion" about the city's present, but also a composite view of the plans and aspirations that these downtown interests had for the future of broader San Francisco.

Absent from the list of local collaborators was any entity based in or claiming to represent the Mission, or any other neighborhood. Many of the interests that did appear on the list, like the Crocker and Magee family businesses, had been associated with the cause of instituting citywide planning in San Francisco dating all the way back to the Burnham Plan.³²² None of these entities had more than an instrumental relationship to the Mission District, and William Crocker, president of the Crocker Bank, was a prominent open-shop crusader, a fact which likely made him unpopular in the unionist Mission.

The input of these downtown interests was not tokenistic, a fact which was again illustrated by comparing the San Francisco map to those of other cities. While in many cities lenders were apparently unwilling to do business in a neighborhood with racial minority residents, HOLC's San Francisco report confirmed that private lenders were making loans in all of the areas that HOLC colored red. The report did note that such loans were given on less favorable terms, and that in the "Negro area" then known as the Fillmore, only one mortgage institution was lending, and "it did so largely as a matter of principle."³²³ Lending practices in San Francisco were indeed biased against African Americans, but the "principle" of racial fairness (if not equality) also had purchase in the San Francisco business community.³²⁴ This ambivalent orientation towards race contrasted sharply with Los Angeles, where the descriptions of red-graded areas were

³¹⁹ HOLC, description for area B-12. The only white ethnic group which was sometimes singled out as subversive was Russian, and that because of fears of Communist affiliation. See description of "red Russians" in Potrero Hill, Area D-15.

³²⁰ HOLC, 3.

³²¹ *ibid.*

³²² Judd Kahn, *Imperial San Francisco: Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897-1906* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 83 and 197.

³²³ HOLC, description for area D-1.

³²⁴ Speaking more generally, Anglo-dominated institutions in San Francisco were clearly racist by the standards which prevail at the time of writing, but as Albert Broussard has argued, when it came to African Americans, they were remarkably tolerant by the standards of larger prewar America. Albert Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 2-4.

often peppered with racist language; the description of the Latino area of San Gabriel Wash, for example, noted an "Infiltration of goats, rabbits, and dark skinned babies."³²⁵

When it came to ethnicity and race, San Francisco was not Los Angeles or St. Louis or even Oakland. In the "Definitions of Terminology" section of the San Francisco report, HOLC stated that the phrase "'Inharmonious or Undesirable Foreign Elements and Racial Concentrations' has reference only to the 'colored' races: Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, and Mexicans of mixed Indian extraction, as no other races as such are considered inharmonious or undesirable by residents of San Francisco" (emphasis original).³²⁶ Of the 17 redlined areas in the city, four were described as being under threat of "racial infiltration," but only two were noted as having present concentrations of "the 'colored' races."³²⁷ The remaining 11 redlined areas were described as white, with little or no threat of racial infiltration. Again, this contrasted sharply with Los Angeles, where, as Nicolaidis has argued, "In most cases, race was the key when it came to redlining. Of seventy-one red-rated areas in Los Angeles, all but two had racial minorities living in them."³²⁸ Race was clearly not the key in San Francisco, however, where only two of the 17 areas were redlined for racial or ethnic reasons.

Of the 11 redlined areas which were described as white, with no threat of racial infiltration, mixed land use appears to have been the single most important factor. Even upscale white neighborhoods like Nob Hill were redlined for mixed use; the description of that area noted that it contained "a heterogeneous mix of industry, business, hotels, apartments, and flats."³²⁹ Indeed, land use was noted in the very definitions of the area ratings. Green-lined areas were described as "homogeneous" and not-yet built out, while yellow- and redlined areas were "'Jerry built' areas . . . lacking homogeneity."³³⁰

Had the primary purpose of HOLC redlining been to warn lenders away from minority neighborhoods, then San Francisco's Chinatown—which was already infamous among housing inspectors and the Public Health Department—would certainly have been redlined. Instead the neighborhood appeared blank on the map. (See Figure 6.) The blank areas were designated as "Industrial/Commercial." In spite of that designation, Sanborn fire insurance maps illustrate that huge swaths of these areas were largely residential, and that many of these areas contained a high percentage of single-family detached houses. The WPA's "1939 Real Property Survey" confirms that many of these same areas were white and owner-occupied. The difference was that these dwellings were more likely to be located near a garment factory or a sheet metal shop than their counterparts in the surveyed areas. As with redlining, mixed use appears to have been the primary factor in deciding which areas would be labeled Industrial/Commercial, and so would not be surveyed at all—a process I describe as "no-lining." HOLC redlining has sometimes been portrayed as the death knell of a residential neighborhood, but in San Francisco, at least, that distinction rightfully belongs to the practice of no-lining. So while HOLC described the Fillmore as a Negro slum, the fact that the land use was overwhelmingly residential guaranteed that it would be surveyed, and therefore also

³²⁵ Quoted in Nicolaidis, 193.

³²⁶ HOLC, 4.

³²⁷ HOLC, 4. The areas redlined because of race were D1 and D3.

³²⁸ Nicolaidis, 193.

³²⁹ HOLC, description for area D-5.

³³⁰ HOLC, 3.

guaranteed that it was at least possible to receive a home loan there. On the other hand, HOLC considered the no-lined areas to be beyond the pale for residential lending.

When it came to the prospects for Mission residents, and the built environment in which they lived, the HOLC city survey charted a troubling future. Much of the neighborhood was redlined, but more than half the area of the neighborhood was no-lined. (See Figure 6.) As in so many other residential neighborhoods across San Francisco, mixed use appears to have been the overriding criterion in determining that areas of the Mission should be redlined, in spite of the fact that, as the HOLC report put it, "Officials of mortgage institutions are very favorably disposed towards the Mission District."³³¹ In the western area of the neighborhood, referred to as D-8, the report noted that single family houses "varied in types of architecture and construction," and that Multi-family dwellings, flats and apartments abound throughout the area, and that part lying north of 18th Street might almost be classed 'commercial' as it contains but few single-family dwellings and a large percentage is given over to business: many shops, markets, and stores, and even a few semi-industrial establishments being located here.

The D-12 area, in the central Mission, was similarly noted as having "improvements [which] consist of an inharmonious conglomeration of old houses, bungalows, flats, and apartments, sprinkled with shops, markets, and small industrial establishments."³³² It was primarily these features which compelled mortgage institutions to proceed with caution in the Mission.

As for racial characteristics, HOLC described both surveyed Mission areas as being white, with "no immediate threat of racial infiltration."³³³ This description is curious since the WPA's "Real Property Survey," city directories, and the Spanish-language press all provide considerable evidence that there was a sizable and visible Mexican population in these redlined areas, particularly in the central Mission area. The description of that area seemed to obliquely acknowledge as much: "Many nationalities are represented, but there is no racial concentration, *in the broad sense of the term*" (emphasis mine).³³⁴ This language seems to imply that in a narrower sense of the term there was a racial concentration. In HOLC's definitions of "inharmonious" racial groups, "Mexican" was the only designation which was left open to interpretation—broad, narrow, or other. Not all Mexicans were "colored," according to the definitions, only "Mexicans of mixed Indian extraction." The HOLC map is one of the clearest indications that, in the context of real estate, Latinos had an ambiguous racial status San Francisco: they might be regarded as colored or as white, depending on the circumstance.

In fact, the designation of Mexican—as inharmonious racial category—was used only once in the entire survey of San Francisco, in area D-3, in the Fillmore, where Negro and Japanese were also noted. Spanish-language newspapers and city directories confirm that there were some Latino businesses in the Fillmore. But as one Mexican American who owned a grocery store in the area noted, there was "not any too much

³³¹ HOLC, description for area D-8.

³³² HOLC, description for area D-12.

³³³ HOLC, description for area D-8.

³³⁴ HOLC, description for area D-12.

competition."³³⁵ The Mexican population of the Mission was almost certainly larger than whatever Mexican population clustered in the Fillmore. Since there is no question that there were Mexicans living in the central Mission at the time, it appears that HOLC and its local collaborators exercised their discretion to determine that the Mission Mexicans were not of mixed Indian extraction. As far as HOLC and the downtown mortgage institutions were concerned, this population was not to be regarded as "colored" for the purposes of lending, in spite of the fact that a Mexican grocery in the area was named "La Morena" (the dark-skinned woman). Lenders most likely did not regard this population as Anglo, but may very well have thought of it as a variety of European white, as "Spanish" or "Latin."

Why would HOLC and local real estate professionals overlook the Mexican population in the Mission? One likely explanation is that lenders were still "very favorably disposed" towards the neighborhood in the 1930s.³³⁶ Mortgage institutions lent on less favorable terms in the Mission, and they projected that the neighborhood would soon deteriorate further, but for the time being they still perceived business opportunities. For lenders or real estate brokers to acknowledge and publicize an "inharmonious racial combination" (even if only among themselves) would have been to accelerate the decline of those opportunities.

Potential investments in the neighborhood included mortgages not only for Anglo homebuyers, but also for Latinos, and there is abundant evidence to suggest that lenders were pursuing the Latino market. As early as 1932, the Anglo Bank of California was advertising Mission District properties in Spanish in *El Imparcial*.³³⁷ In 1935, Bank of America placed Spanish-language advertisements in the same paper announcing that the bank was authorized by the federal government to make home loans under the National Housing Act of 1934.³³⁸ (See Figure 7.) Bank of America was one of the "best qualified local" entities that had helped HOLC to determine that there were no "racial concentrations" in the Mission. There are no records readily available to the researcher which indicate how many FHA loans were made to San Francisco Latinos in the 1930s, but considering that they had an ambiguous racial status in the local real estate market it seems likely that San Francisco Latinos received more government backed loans than did their co-ethnics in Los Angeles and other US cities.

In the Mission, as in San Francisco at large, Latinos' ambiguous status was a mixed blessing. The fact that their presence in the Mission was not acknowledged meant that they were not eligible for public housing; it meant that the new Gompers school, located across the street from La Morena grocery, would not cater to their needs (and in fact taught an implicitly anti-immigrant curriculum). Yet Mexicans' status as potentially Spanish apparently gained them access to the private housing market; their invisibility as Mexicans also prevented the kind of precipitous disinvestment which would shake the redlined African American neighborhoods, like the Fillmore, in the coming decades. Visibility could sometimes be a trap, as it was for the Chinese laundrymen living in the

³³⁵ J. W. Villalon interview with "Mr. V," Box 2, Folder 18, Radin Papers.

³³⁶ HOLC, description for area D-8.

³³⁷ Anglo Land Company advertisement: "Compre su Hogar Ahora" (Buy your Home Now), *El Imparcial*, December 9, 1932.

³³⁸ Bank of America advertisement: "Préstamos para Residencias" (Loans for Residences), *El Imparcial*, February 1, 1935, 4.

Mission in decades prior, and for the Angelino Mexicans and Mexican Americans targeted for repatriation by U.S. Immigration during the 1930s because of their conspicuous presence in *La Plaza* in downtown Los Angeles.³³⁹

While the HOLC survey posed no particular threat to the Mission's Latino population, it did indicate that some geographical areas of the neighborhood as a whole would fare worse than others. In essence, the business-oriented New Deal agencies enabled downtown lenders and realtors to target the redlined areas of the Mission for rehabilitation, while insisting that the no-lined areas be entirely given over to private industrial uses and state-led modernization projects.

The same year that HOLC produced its map, the WPA published its "Limited Way Plan" (also produced with significant input from local experts at the Department of Public Works) which proposed that five different freeways intersect in the no-lined areas of the northern Mission District.³⁴⁰ (See Figure 8.) This plan would have transformed the northern Mission into the central hub for vehicular traffic in all of San Francisco. Comparing the HOLC map with the WPA freeway plan it becomes clear that the two no-lined corridors on either side of the central Mission area of D-8 corresponded exactly with two freeways that connected downtown San Francisco to the peninsula communities to the south. A small sliver of the western area of the Mission was yellowlined, three areas were redlined, but more than half of the neighborhood was no-lined. Residents in the redlined areas could expect to receive mortgages only on modified terms with (higher interest rates); residents of the larger no-lined areas would have a difficult time securing a mortgage on any terms.

In response, the local business interests continued to boost the neighborhood, but also began to map their departure. Continuing the neighborhood's longstanding tradition of memorializing Spanish-ness for the sake of retail promotion, in 1939 the merchants put on the Mission Trails Fiesta to advertise local businesses. The organizers placed bell towers and banners the length of the "Mission Miracle Mile" (Mission Street between 14th and 24th Streets). At one cross street, an arch spanned the width of Mission Street; painted on the apparatus were red tiles, exposed adobe bricks, an image of the Mission, a figure of a female flamenco dancer, and the words "The Old Mission." (See Figure 9.)

But while such promotional tableaus continued to appear on the streets of the Mission throughout this period, the pages of the *Mission Merchants' News* revealed a tension between boosterism and an emerging economic reality. Beginning at least as early as 1940, the *News* began featuring a "House of the Month" which was illustrated with an elevation and a floor plan. The accompanying text typically described the kind of FHA financing that would be available for such a house, in all cases a newly constructed single-family detached house in an apparently suburban location. The October 31, 1942 issue of the *News* featured an article that described how "Historian Boosts Local Products"; but one column away the new home feature presented "A Gem of a House for Newlyweds." (See Figure 10.) The illustration showed a small "garden home" nestled into the trees, with no other structures in sight: a dream of low density.

Just as the pro-urban New Deal policies were associated with certain representational conventions, so the anti-urban bias also had its own architectural,

³³⁹ Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929- 1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 59-63.

³⁴⁰ WPA, "Traffic Survey," 1937, 241.

iconographic, and discursive vocabulary. The pro-urban vision was represented in buildings that took after the factory and the machine; the FHA-sponsored vision was represented through neo-traditionalist rural buildings, like half-timbered cottages, Spanish haciendas, and garden homes as pictured in *Mission Merchants' News* and even in bank advertisements in *El Imparcial*.³⁴¹ The pro-urban iconography was populated by Didion's muscular citizens of tomorrow, which were typically presented as objects of gaze and admiration; women and children were rarely portrayed in this style. These figures contrasted with the approachable, human-scaled families from mortgage advertisements, FHA pamphlets, and *San Francisco Chronicle* articles, which were often shown from behind and in silhouette, as though you the viewer were a part of this family, approaching your new suburban setting. (Figure 11.) As Figure 7 illustrates, such imagery was not reserved for Anglos, but was also offered to Latinos. But while marketing aimed at upwardly mobile Latinos invoked fantasies of half timbered country life, the fantasy of the Spanish bungalow and hacienda seems, ironically, to have been reserved for upwardly mobile Anglo populations, as it was in the white-only Mission Terrace development discussed in Chapter One.

The SFLC and the BTC tended not to employ rural visual conventions, yet one dimension of the anti-urban vision was just as prevalent in the *Labor Clarion* and *Organized Labor* as it was in the *Mission Merchants News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*: the automobile made the city unsafe, particularly for children.³⁴² The November 7, 1942 issue of the *News* featured an open letter to drivers, from "Every Daddy," titled "Please Don't Run Over My Little Girl." Traffic statistics from the time confirm that the fear for the safety of children was well placed.³⁴³

In the labor press, images of children were only mobilized in the service of traffic safety messages; but in outlets like the *News* and the *Chronicle* they were also used to portray the moral decay of cities. Recalling the sensationalist photographs of Jacob Riis, a staple of this convention was the image of a child playing in the gutter. For example, the *Chronicle* carried a syndicated cartoon feature, called "Everyday Movies," which depicted urban space, in charcoal darkness, as a drain on the human spirit. The November 6, 1936 installment of the cartoon showed a group of children under the age of ten, reading the funny pages in the gutter. The caption read "Wouldn't that get yer goat! The part that tells how he saved the girl is under the mud."³⁴⁴

This convention was not confined to the popular press, but was also employed in government documents and policy reports. In 1941 the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association published its *First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco* (a document which I will return to in the following chapter). *First Steps* featured a series of panels showing the city "as it is"—dangerous and obsolete—contrasted with panels showing the city "as it could be"—suburban. The "as it is" panels were rendered in

³⁴¹ For an example of how the FHA promoted neo-traditionalist styles, see the "Model Home Mania" sequence in FHA, "Better Housing News Flashes, No. 7," newsreel, 1935.

³⁴² See, for example, "To Protect Children from Traffic Perils," *Labor Clarion*, February 16, 1940, 7.

³⁴³ Between 1934 and 1936, the San Francisco Police Department reported that 1673 pedestrians were struck by automobiles. Two Mission District intersections ranked in the city's top ten most dangerous intersections for pedestrians in 1936, a list which included downtown intersections. Children under the age of 10 were over five times more likely to be involved in a pedestrian accident. See WPA, "Traffic Survey," 1937, 162, 172, and 173.

³⁴⁴ "Everyday Movies" cartoon, *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 6, 1936.

negative, as though they were photographic film, which lent the scenes an overwhelming darkness; meanwhile the "as it could be" panels were rendered in positive, communicating an airy lightness in comparison. The panels illustrating recreational provision, "as it is," showed children floating paper boats in the gutter, while the panel showing how "it could be" featured a well equipped, fenced playground (See Figure 12.)

In the planning documents that emerged at the onset of the Second World War, the dominant visual convention was the city-as-dark-maze; the labor oriented vision of heroic urbanism was entirely absent. The fact that the documents which charted the future of the postwar city relied on such imagery is only one of many indications that the anti-urban vision gained more influence than the pro-urban vision. The PWA was dissolved the same year that the *First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco* was issued; the WPA was dissolved two years later. In the period that followed, the intellectual and material resources of the state, at every level, were mobilized in the service of the anti-urban vision.

As San Francisco prepared for a postwar world, middle-class Anglo Missionites were increasingly confronted with a choice—not just in the pages of the *Mission Merchants' News* but also in their pocketbooks—a choice between staying and boosting their old, dense, vibrant neighborhood, or leaving for a quiet and spacious idyll. Loans were harder to come by in the Mission, and were given only at higher interest rates over shorter periods. Over half of the neighborhood was slated for freeways and homogenous industrial development. FHA and FHLBB programs—guided by Bank of America, Crocker, and other prominent lending and real estate companies—made the choice to stay in older urban neighborhoods increasingly irrational. In San Francisco, a deep financial crisis followed by a quiet stream of federal money accomplished what a marketing campaign for the Burnham plan could not: radically transformative citywide planning guided by downtown business interests.

Conclusion

The stated national policy of the WPA, PWA, and the USHA was to help workers first and business second. In the Mission those agencies made good on that intention, emboldening labor to claim the mantle of the public for themselves. In 1937, the *Labor Clarion* printed a piece on economic relations by Richard Lyon, a hosiery worker, which neatly encapsulated ideas that were often expressed in both the *Clarion* and *Organized Labor*. Lyon declared that

They have constituted themselves the public, with their corporations, their legal trickeries, their factories, their guns, their police, their courts, their company towns, their economic control. But they are not the public. The public is made up of you and me, and of all others who work for a living; of the middle classes, who at least as consumers are vitally affected by everything labor does. We are the public, and ours is the public interest.³⁴⁵

That a unionist laborer should have attacked corporations as anathema to the public interest was nothing new to San Francisco, but the statement did signal a subtle shift in the composition of the public. In the decades leading up to the Depression, unionists

³⁴⁵ Richard Lyon, "Trade Unions Are Responsible," *Labor Clarion*, September 3, 1937, 71.

typically included the small business person among the public, as a partner to labor. There was no small business person in Lyon's formulation, which was typical of this new era when profit as such was regarded as suspect. In the place of the small merchant, Lyon substituted the middle class consumer. Labor had always been the junior partner in its alliance with local business, and the small merchant was, in many instances, a figure who upwardly mobile skilled laborers aspired to become.³⁴⁶ No longer. For white unionists, the next rung up the social ladder was now the middle-class consumer, the white collar professional, the administrator, the government employee, all of whom were occupationally secure and well paid but who did not derive profit directly from the working classes.

In addition to illustrating a shift in the composition of the public, Lyon's statement also illustrated how the very idea of the public interest had changed for unionists. After announcing that labor and the middle classes were the public, Lyon went on to discuss the federal legislation that protected the right to organize and to engage in collective bargaining: "The Wagner Act," he wrote, "should be the great equalizer. At present it is only partly that. This corporation and anti-labor talk that the Wagner Act takes everything from the employer and gives it to the employee is as yet empty twaddle. But some day the two will really be equal."³⁴⁷ Here Lyon succinctly expressed an idea that was everywhere visible, that economic equality had been elevated in importance as a criterion for determining the public interest.

Racial equality would have to wait. In the process of respecting the local norms and values of the Mission District, the WPA, PWA, and USHA also reinforced the exclusions and erasures practiced in the neighborhood. The WPA did, however, make special efforts to celebrate the diversity of the city at large. For example, in 1939 the agency produced a slim volume titled *The Festivals of San Francisco*, which described the annual celebrations not only of Spanish, South Americans, and Mexicans, but also of Chinese and Japanese. These events, the volume announced, were "no more foreign to the city's life than was the first celebration staged by a foreign group—Jacob Leese's celebration, sixty years [after the founding of the Mission Dolores], of the Fourth of July, when he ran up the American flag over the second dwelling built on the site of what was still the Mexican frontier village of Yerba Buena."³⁴⁸ Beyond such symbolic gestures, the hiring policies of New Deal agencies were race-neutral, and the agencies did employ many Latinos.

There were signs that these efforts at least contributed to a new openness among neighborhood residents and institutions. When, in 1934, a culinary workers' local became the first white-only union to admit Filipinos, "on an equal footing with any other worker irrespective of race, color or creed," the *Labor Clarion* reported approvingly that the union had inaugurated "a 'new deal' for the workers."³⁴⁹ The photographic record from the period also shows that whites, Asians (most likely Filipinos), Latinos, and African Americans all marched alongside one another to protest WPA job cuts. (See Figure 13.) Beginning in the early 1930s, Mission-based Anglo businesses—dentists,

³⁴⁶ For more on how unionists perceived a solidarity between laborers and small merchants in the 1900s and 1910s, see Kazin, 199.

³⁴⁷ *ibid*

³⁴⁸ Delkin, 1.

³⁴⁹ "Invites Filipinos to Membership in Union," *Labor Clarion*, March 2, 1934, 3.

furniture stores, beauty shops, cleaners, and others—started advertising their goods and services in Spanish in *El Imparcial*. All of these moments suggest that some of the processes that Lizabeth Cohen identified in Chicago were also at work in San Francisco: the privations resulting from the open shop policies of the 1920s had made white workers and small businesspeople begin to feel solidarity with the non-whites whom they had previously disdained, and further to demand a new "moral capitalism" which ensured security and some semblance of economic equality.³⁵⁰ With these new attitudes developing, residents and institutions were becoming more receptive to federal non-discrimination policies.

But while the WPA, PWA, and USHA had begun to promote a more egalitarian urban life, the FHLBB, HOLC, and the FHA began to render many familiar features of urban life invisible. In the plans and the visual economies associated with these latter agencies the new, homogeneous, and suburban areas of the city were to be reserved for living, while the older and mixed use areas were to be reserved for the production and circulation of goods. A 1948 City Planning report, which I discuss in depth in the following chapter, described significant portions of the Mission as "non-living areas."³⁵¹ In 1937, HOLC charted the future of the Mission by no-lining most of the neighborhood, rendering it a blank canvass for modernization projects. Beginning in the early 1930s, the new Latino population had been rendered invisible within the boundaries of the Mission District; by V-J Day, all the residents and institutions of the Mission would begin to be rendered invisible in the plans of government agencies at all levels.

³⁵⁰ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³⁵¹ San Francisco Department of City Planning, "Progress in City Planning: A Report to the People of San Francisco," 1948, 15.

Chapter Two Figures



Figure 1: Newscopy: "Edith Hamlin today adds finishing touches to egg tempera mural in Mission High School, depicting educational activities of Franciscan friars during golden age of San Francisco's Mission Dolores. Mural subject was actually enacted a few blocks from library where it now appears." *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 8, 1937. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, AAB-0385



Figure 2: Exterior photograph of Sunshine School, a WPA project, showing tile roofing and other Spanish colonial architectural flourishes. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, AAD-4250.



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Figure 3: William Wurster's Valencia Gardens, a USHA project. Landscape architect: Thomas Church. Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, AAD-6120.



Figure 4: Masten & Hurd's Samuel Gompers Vocational School, a PWA project.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, AAD-8873.

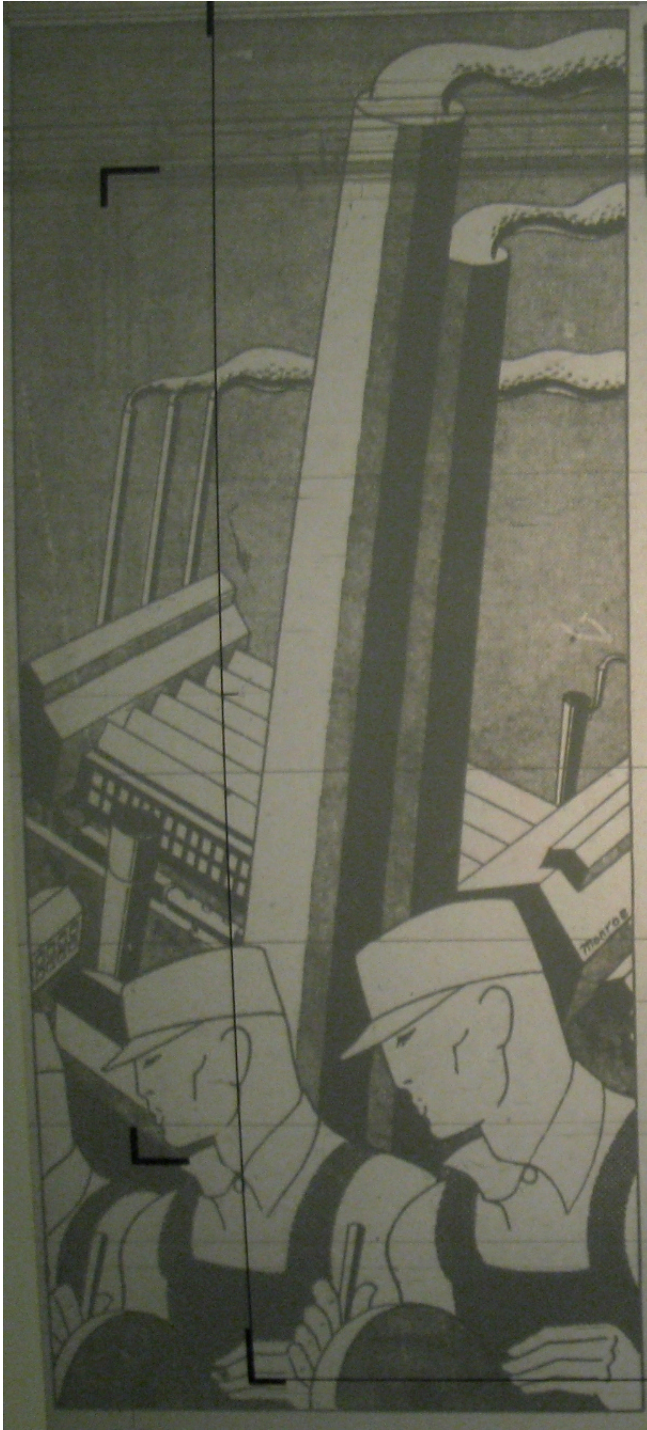


Figure 5: Heroic representation of workers—"the muscular citizens of a tomorrow that never came." Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 1941.

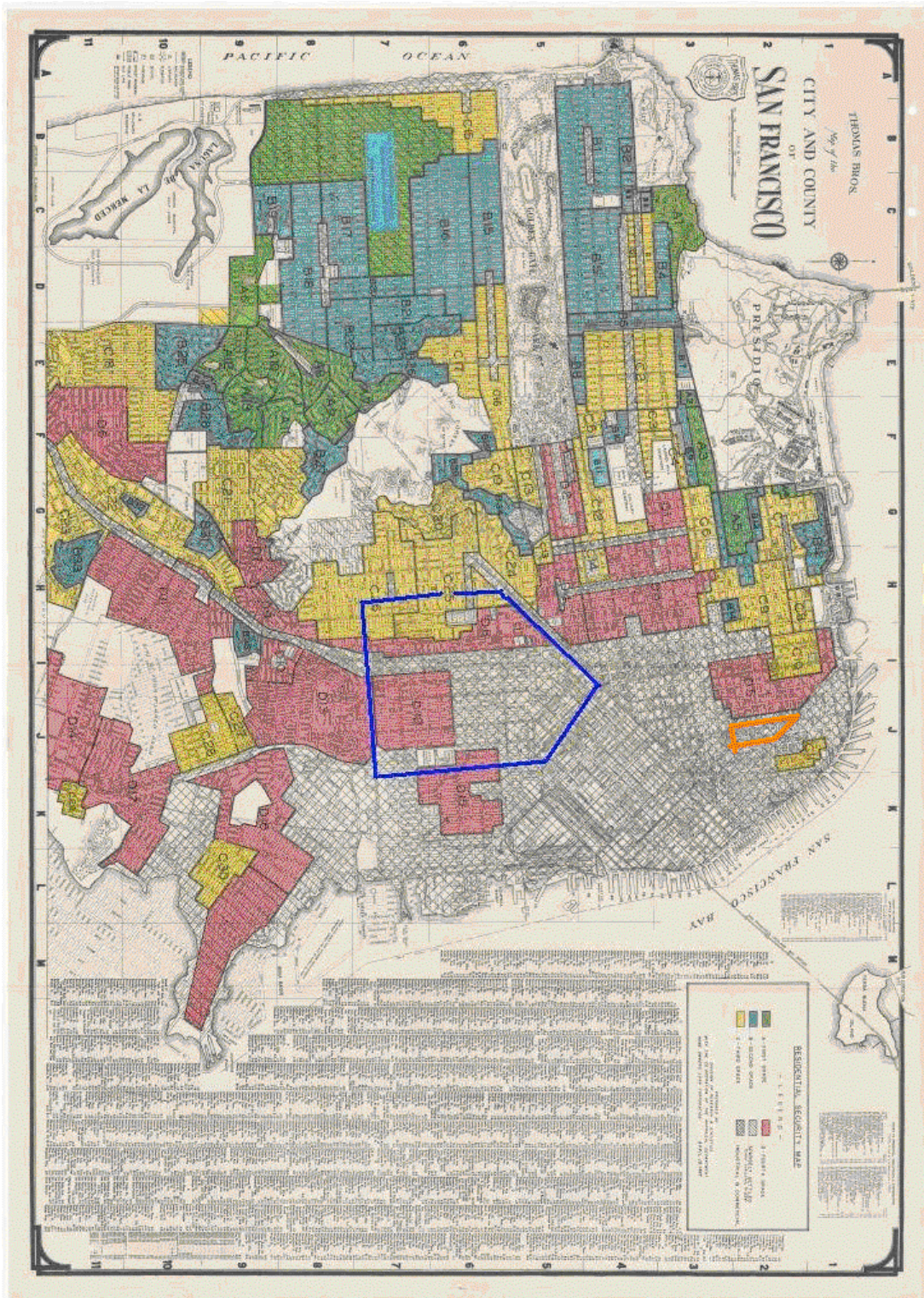


Figure 6: 1937 HOLC Residential Survey map of San Francisco, with blue lines superimposed to indicate boundaries of Mission District, and orange lines superimposed to show Chinatown. Source: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 195/Home Owners' Loan Corp, Location: 450, 68:6:2/Box 147.

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Figure 7: This Spanish-language Bank of America advertisement from 1935 announces that the bank is making loans for the purchase, construction, and modernization of homes under the National Housing Act of 1934. Source: *El Imparcial*, February 1, 1935, 4.

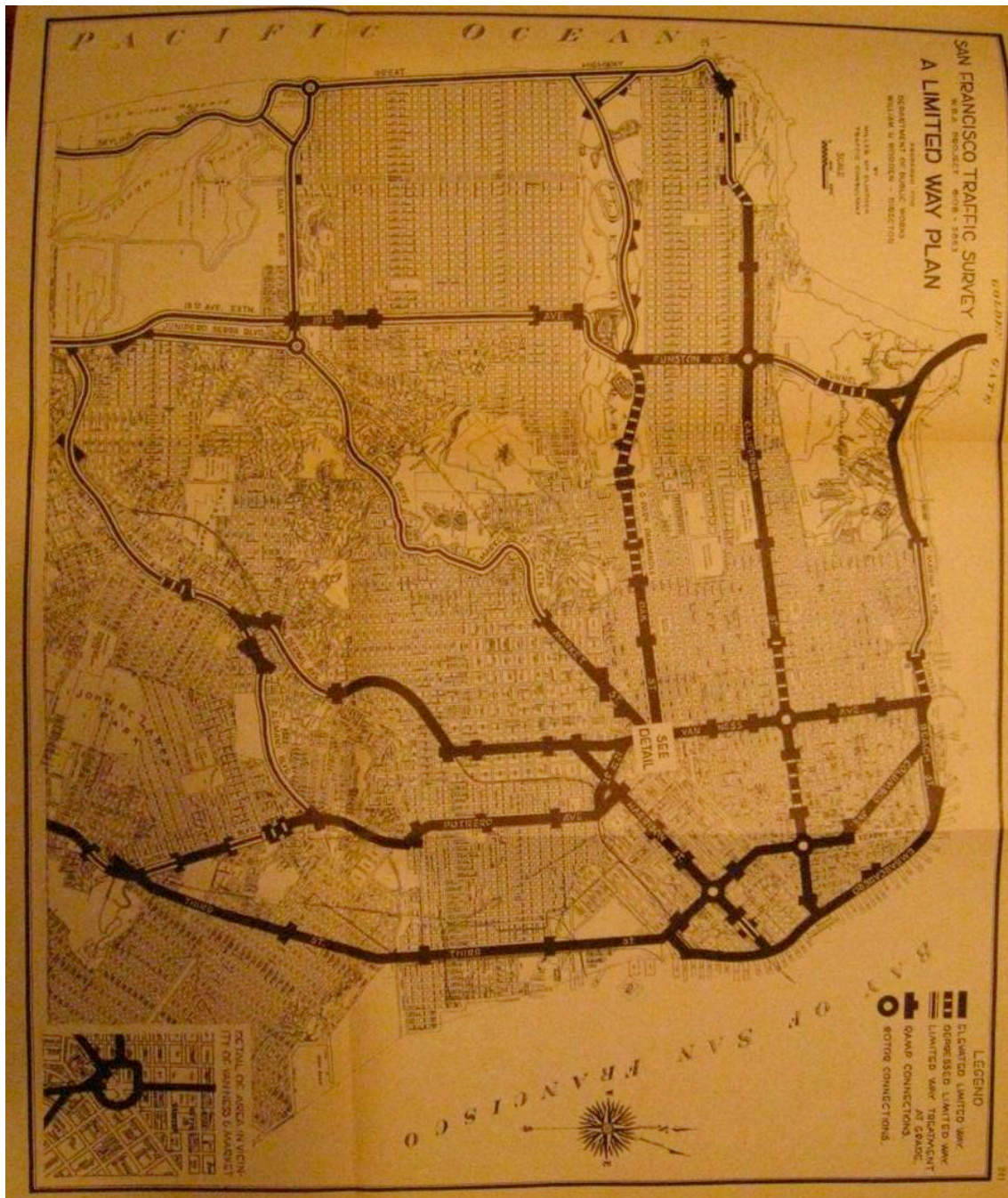


Figure 8: WPA's 1937 "Limited Way Plan" for San Francisco. The inset area shows detail of where five different freeways were proposed to intersect in the northern Mission District. The two freeways which run north/south through the length of the neighborhood correspond exactly to the no-lined strips of the Mission visible in Figure 6. Source: Miller McClintock, "A Limited Way Plan," in WPA, "A Report on the San Francisco City-wide Traffic Survey," 1937, 241.



Figure 9: Mission Trails Celebration, 1939, Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, AAB-4671 and AAB-9529.

BUY FOR LESS IN THE MISSION

"A Gem Of A House For Newlyweds"



Every average American family should own its own home! Of course there are some drawbacks to home-ownership, but they would not be effective, but they are exceptions. Apartment dwelling is ideal for most or less able individuals for a family, but the structure lends for a family to own their own home, if possible.

The "Gem of the Month" here excluded, but is cited as an example of the type of house recommended for this home, which provides for modernity that will give a good performance of service without overly expensive. These include other brick pipe or copper water heater, copper sink and range, and a refrigerator. The house is also equipped with a hot water heater, a hot water heater, a hot water heater, and a hot water heater.

The roof and shutters are green, while the brick is used in the chimney. Pink a little gem of a house is a satisfying investment. The floor plan is of the garden-house type, having its service porch facing the street.

In a corner of the living room, near the kitchen door, is a portable range for eating. A holding tank for the house is also included. The house is also equipped with a hot water heater, a hot water heater, and a hot water heater.

The house is also equipped with a hot water heater, a hot water heater, and a hot water heater.

Complete plans and specifications are available for this house for \$120.00. The house is also equipped with a hot water heater, a hot water heater, and a hot water heater.

Recreation Activities

Thursday
 Whelan Hall, Chester-Adams playground, Green Ave. and McGowan St., from 4:00 to 4:30 p. m. in which the Kew-Forest playground children will participate in the Kew-Forest playground. Music and field day, to enjoy their pleasure and games.

"Wildcat Lodge", a concert with music, will be repeated at the Portola Junior High school, Grand near Bacon St., at 8:15 p. m. There is a small admission charge. This public is invited.

Industrial Men's Basketball Tournament, Kew-Forest, 2000 and 2100 p. m. Admission, 100 and 150 p. m. No charge.

Industrial Men's Bowling League, Golden Gate Recreation Alley, 115 Jones St., 8:15 p. m. Also at Broadway-Yas Tennis Court, 1423 Broadway, 8:30 p. m.

Friday
 Industrial Men's Basketball Tournament, Kew-Forest, 2000 and 2100 p. m. Admission, 100 and 150 p. m. No charge.

Industrial Men's Bowling League, Golden Gate Recreation Alley, 115 Jones St., 8:15 p. m. Also at Broadway-Yas Tennis Court, 1423 Broadway, 8:30 p. m.

Historian Boosts Local Products

LOUISE E. YARBEN, HISTORICALLY BACK ON THE air years for O. Casperson and Tom, daughter of Robinson Foster and Casperson, is Louise E. Yarben, California's latest radio historian, who has speaking engagements in various parts of the state.

Miss Yarben, who arrived in California a period of ten years ago, has been a resident of San Francisco for a number of years. She is the daughter of a prominent family and has a number of children.

Mission Palace FISH and POULTRY

Quality, variety, dependability. We Accept Federal Food Stamp.

2431 MISSION
 Between 20th and 17th
 WE DELIVER FREE

FILET OF COD	20¢
No bones.	
HALIBUT	29¢
Good.	
COLONED HONEYERS	29¢
Energy, fresh.	
YOUNG MEAS	2 for 31.15
Fresh.	
PLANET FRIGERS	3 for 31
Fresh, fresh.	
ONIONERS	9 for 80¢
Fresh, thick.	
BROILERS OR FRIGERS	9 for 3.10
Fresh.	

Monday, October 20, 1942

2431 MISSION PALACE
 Between 20th and 17th
 WE DELIVER FREE

Figure 10: "A Gem of a House for Newlyweds" feature. Source: *Mission Merchants' News*, October 31, 1942.



Figure 11: The all male "muscular citizens of a tomorrow that never came" contrasted with human scaled, suburban family, with the city on the horizon. Source: both images from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 1941.

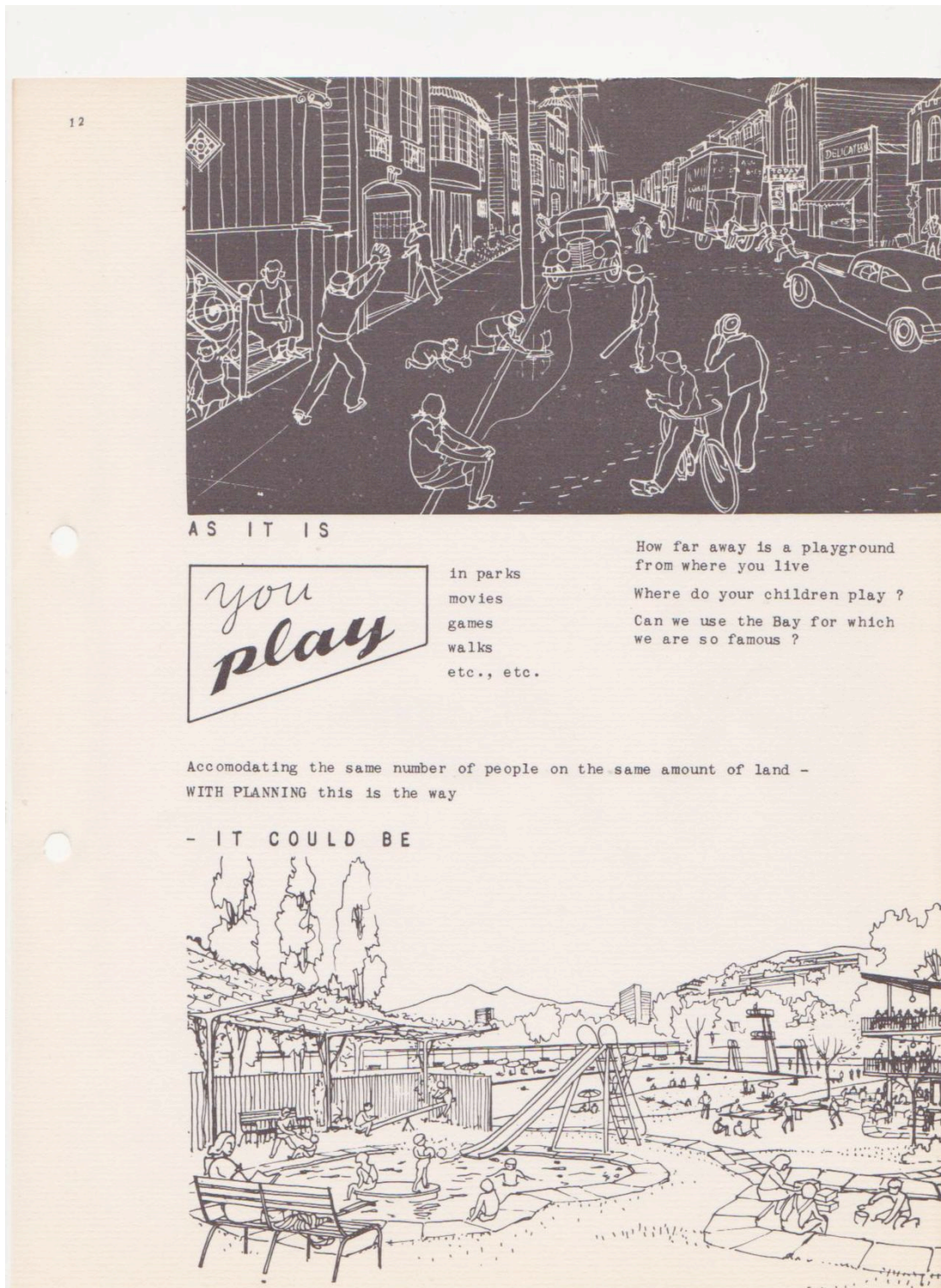


Figure 12: "You Play" panels, contrasting the scene "as it is," with children playing in the gutter, to a scene as "it could be": a modernist suburbia. Source: San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, *Now Is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco*, 1941.



Figure 13. One of many photos from the 1937 strike to stop WPA layoffs which show non-white workers marching alongside white workers. The picket signs read "Join the Workers Alliance: Stop WPA Cuts" and "We Are Striking to Support the Government, NOT Against it!" Source: San Francisco Public Library Historic Photograph Collection. Image AAK-0630.

**Chapter Three:
Neighborhood Erasure, Neighborhood Equality:
Transportation Planning and the Renegotiation of Ethnicity,
1945-1960**

In 1951, the *San Francisco Call Bulletin* ran a photograph of a goat perched atop a pile of boards; in the background lay the valley of the Mission District and the slopes culminating in Twin Peaks. (See Figure 1.) The copy read: "This is one of 16 goats standing (usually just like this) in the way of the Bayshore Freeway . . . baa-a-a-ing bravely against progress."³⁵² The animal belonged to a 64-year-old widow named Estelle West, who was battling the city to stay in her longtime home on Utah and Nineteenth Streets. (See Figure 2.) "I can't let them plow me under here," she proclaimed. "Life is more important than progress."³⁵³ She lost her fight and was paid \$3950 by the State of California when her house was razed.³⁵⁴ The year before, Edward Kelleher, Ms. West's neighbor on Vermont Street, had written Mayor Elmer Robinson to say that he would like to know why the people on the Bayshore Freeway never had a chance to protest this highway from the Board of Supervisors' Chambers or from any supervisor. . . . We have paid taxes to help build S.F. for 57 years, and this is a pretty raw deal to get after all the faithful service to our beloved city. We cannot buy other property in the Mission District for their, the States [sic] prices which we receive. We don't want to leave this district. . . . The war is over for everybody but us. . . . People here are too old to have to go into debt again to meet today's prices for new homes.³⁵⁵

Mr. Kelleher's wife, Elizabeth, added her own comment to the bottom of the letter: "Mayor James Rolph was one of the old timers here, and I don't think he would allow this to happen to us citizens here."³⁵⁶

Mrs. Kelleher's observation was correct. During and immediately before the Rolph administration (1912-1931), a public works project of the scale of the Bayshore Freeway—which would take three years to construct, finally opening to traffic in 1958—could not have been built over the objections of self-appointed neighborhood representatives like the Mission Promotion Association (MPA) or the Mission Merchants' Association. For the first three decades of the twentieth century, the municipal government of San Francisco regarded the interests of Mission homeowners as the public interest, or at least as one among a number of legitimate public interests which could not be easily circumvented. Homeowners like those represented by the Fair Oaks Parking Association had once been able to call on city government to produce reports on property values, and to help them to plan a beautification program for a single block; now homeowners were not given the opportunity to protest the condemnation of their

³⁵² *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, May 14, 1951.

³⁵³ *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, April 28, 1951.

³⁵⁴ *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, May 14, 1951.

³⁵⁵ Edward and Elizabeth Kelleher to Mayor Elmer Robinson, n.d. [1950], Bayshore Freeway 1943-1958 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*

houses.³⁵⁷ The MPA had brought federal and state projects like the armory to the Mission, but would not stand for so much as a facade that was not to its liking.³⁵⁸ In the immediate postwar period, however, the neighborhood would have no such influence. During the immediate postwar period, the cause of "progress" seemed to trump all other concerns in San Francisco. And progress meant freeways.

As I argued in the preceding Chapter, the reconfiguration of the relationships among neighborhood, municipality, state government, and federal government was accomplished, in no small part, through the interventions of New Deal agencies. In the immediate postwar period, federal, state, and municipal legislation continued the process of centralizing land-use authority in the hands of a planning regime led by San Francisco's downtown-based corporations. California passed its Community Redevelopment Act—which was written primarily by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce—in 1945.³⁵⁹ The Act enabled municipalities to create redevelopment agencies, which were empowered to use eminent domain in the service of urban renewal.³⁶⁰ The California Redevelopment Act was passed four years before the federal Housing Act of 1949, which gave the same powers to municipalities across the country, and strengthened the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.³⁶¹ When it came to highway legislation, California was also ahead of the national curve, passing the Collier-Burns Highway Act in 1947.³⁶² The Act mandated that municipalities create a system of primary roads and it expanded a state-wide gasoline tax to finance them.³⁶³ In 1952, California passed legislation creating a "Highway Right-of-Way Acquisition Fund," which simplified the process of expropriating land for freeways.³⁶⁴ The National Highway Acts of 1954 and 1956 ensured that these activities were on firmer legal and financial ground.³⁶⁵

The transformation of the built environment in the Mission District immediately after World War II is largely the story of what citywide agencies and downtown businesses were planning for the neighborhood. Outside of the no-lined area of the northeastern Mission—where industrial warehouses were being constructed—the urban fabric deteriorated but otherwise remained largely unchanged. A police station,

³⁵⁷ See also 1949 correspondence from group of Mission homeowners to San Francisco Planning Commission. W. C. Fraser to City Planning Commissioner, March 16, 1949 and May 13, 1949, Mission Freeway 1949-1958 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

³⁵⁸ See discussion of the San Francisco armory in Chapter One of this dissertation.

³⁵⁹ Crown Zellerbach Corporation, "The City of Gold: The Story of City Planning in San Francisco," 1960, 33.

³⁶⁰ Crown Zellerbach, 33; Jeff Chapman, "Tax Increment Financing and Fiscal Stress: The California Genesis," in Craig Lawrence Johnson and Joyce Y. Man, eds., *Tax Increment Financing and Economic Development: Uses, Structures, and Impacts* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001), 114.

³⁶¹ The subject of urban renewal will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

³⁶² Paul Harding, "District VII Freeways Report," *California Highways and Public Works: Official Journal of the Division of Highways, Department of Public Works, State of California*, January-February 1956, 54.

³⁶³ *ibid.*

³⁶⁴ *ibid.*

³⁶⁵ For overview of the federal highway legislation dating back to the Progressive Era, see Owen Gutfreund, *Twentieth Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), especially Chapter 1.

firehouse, and Catholic school were constructed during the 1950s, but little else was.³⁶⁶ These three buildings were executed in a modernist architectural language which celebrated functionality and economy over local identity.³⁶⁷ The municipal government of San Francisco described the old Mission police station, a hybrid Beaux-Arts and Spanish colonial structure, as "outmoded."³⁶⁸ But individual buildings, in individual neighborhoods, barely registered among the priorities of governmental agencies during this period; the question of whether a local style should be preserved did not register at all. Far more important was the question of how capital could circulate through urban spaces which were becoming choked with traffic.

With the backing of major corporations, the municipality entrusted city planners with much of the responsibility for transitioning San Francisco from war production to peace production.³⁶⁹ Planners and their allies promoted the need for this transition as common sense: by 1946, a city planning curriculum was even in place for grade-school children. Kindergartners learned mostly about traffic signals and playgrounds, but by the third grade the curriculum "laid particular emphasis on the city's transport," including "the plans for a freeway system."³⁷⁰ To planners and their allies, the need for better vehicular circulation was so obvious that even the objections of a person about to lose her house to a freeway could be dismissed as an instance of a bumpkin in the city "baaaing against progress." Fear of returning to a stagnant economy after the industrial mobilization of World War II helps to explain why a major metropolitan newspaper could paint such homeowner concerns as quaint.

The visual language of the newly ascendant city planners exhibited a similar detachment in its promotion of progress. In 1960, Mayor George Christopher's office issued a report on freeway planning which explained the process with actual cartoon panels: the allocation of money from the State was represented as a pile of coins cutting a freeway across a street grid; the condemnation of a neighborhood was represented as a check being carried toward empty houses.³⁷¹ (See Figure 3.) Estelle West's house was surely an example of what the Chamber of Commerce of the United States referred to as "quaint obsolescence."³⁷² The Chamber's 1956 informational film, "The Dynamic American City," showed the stretch of the Bayshore Freeway that went directly over West's property as an example of how American cities were moving towards the future.³⁷³ But not long after the first freeways were erected in San Francisco in 1955,

³⁶⁶ "St. Anthony School Dedication Souvenir," October 7, 1951, St. Anthony's Parish Historical file, Archdiocese of San Francisco; City of San Francisco, "San Francisco Annual Report for 1955," 1955, 2-4.

³⁶⁷ *ibid.*

³⁶⁸ City of San Francisco, 3.

³⁶⁹ Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1959), Chapter 16.

³⁷⁰ San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Planning as Study Material For Grade School Children: A Report on What Was Done in San Francisco Schools, 1944-1946," 1946, 3.

³⁷¹ City and Country of San Francisco, "Mayor's Committee to Study Freeways: Final Report," April 22, 1960.

³⁷² Chamber of Commerce of the United States, "The Dynamic American City," informational film, 1956.

³⁷³ US Chamber. In a separate sequence describing the need for clearance of aging structures, the narrator states: "It is good that the State of Oregon has placed a statue of the pioneer woodsman on its capitol, a beautiful reminder that the wilderness of this land has been reduced to a dynamic civilization with a simple ax. What amazing achievement there has been in America."

homeowners and ordinary citizens would begin to perceive these plans as brutal and their justifications as callous.

By the early 1960s San Francisco's "Freeway Revolt" (the nation's first) had begun to reassert the prerogative of neighborhoods to plan for themselves.³⁷⁴ But in the immediate postwar period, a neighborhood was a non-entity as far as planning authority was concerned. In 1957, the Eisenhower administration issued a pamphlet which sketched the institutional configurations through which public works should be planned and executed across the country—it was an arrangement that had already prevailed in San Francisco for over a decade. The pamphlet described a hierarchy of "Comprehensive Planning Units" which would decide what projects were needed for their respective jurisdictions.³⁷⁵ The different levels of authority were: federal agencies, states, counties, municipalities, and finally service districts (school, water, sanitation, etc.).³⁷⁶ Absent from the list of comprehensive planning units was the organizational scale that had been so determinative of urban form and urban life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the neighborhood. James Rolph recalled that the MPA had simply taken the authority to plan for the Mission in the wake of the 1906 disaster; such an act would not have been possible in the immediate postwar period. In terms of legitimate scales of planning authority, there was no longer any such thing as a neighborhood.

The Mission's loss of political power found expression in many arenas. In the 1920s, Mission businesses had regularly requested and received zoning variances; now such requests were much less common and were typically denied.³⁷⁷ The improvement clubs and merchants' associations could once count on getting desired infrastructure projects through city government without incident; now the neighborhood could only get projects which improved vehicular circulation, and found even those difficult to secure.³⁷⁸ While the Mission had once dominated the School Board, local chapters of the Parent Teachers Association were now complaining that the city was cutting too much funding from the schools.³⁷⁹ The Gompers School had been established to train journeymen, but in 1952 it was converted to a junior high school, a decision which was motivated in part out of district-wide teacher resentment over the fact that the Gompers

³⁷⁴ Raymond Mohl, "Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 30, 2004, 678. See also William Issel, "'Land Values, Human Values, and the Preservation of the City's Treasured Appearance': Environmentalism, Politics, and the San Francisco Freeway Revolt," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 1999.

³⁷⁵ Special Assistant to the President for the Planning of Public Works, "Planning for Public Works," pamphlet, United States Government Printing Office, 1957, 23.

³⁷⁶ *ibid.* Each comprehensive planning unit would coordinate with any other which had overlapping jurisdiction. The federal highway plan, for example, would have to be coordinated with states, counties, and municipalities, but not necessarily with a school district.

³⁷⁷ See for example San Francisco Board of Supervisors, "Journal of Proceedings, Board of Supervisors, City and County of San Francisco," December 17, 1956 and January 26, 1959.

³⁷⁸ For example, the Mission Merchants' Association and the Southern Civic Clubs lobbied the Board to have Army Street in the Mission widened in order to "open up an avenue for people who desire to get to the Mission district for trading." A faction of the Board objected that the project might siphon funds from the widening of Third Street (near the Bay), and so the plan was defeated. See Board of Supervisors, June 18, 1941.

³⁷⁹ See "McKinley PTA," *Mission Merchant News*, March 12, 1942.

faculty was composed entirely of unionists without advanced degrees.³⁸⁰ So while the School Board moved towards a city planning curriculum sponsored by downtown businesses, it moved away from the trade unionist curriculum that had been so important to Mission residents.

The loss of union power in the Mission was not confined to School Board politics. As many skilled white workers moved to the suburbs, so too did many of the unions that represented them. A number of those unions had kept offices in the Labor Temple and their departure translated to a loss of revenue for the San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC); by the 1950s the Council found itself taking out a series of loans for basic maintenance to the Temple. Citing reduced circulation and plummeting ad revenue, the SFLC announced that it would cease publication of the *Labor Clarion* in 1948.³⁸¹ In 1959, the Building Trades Temple burned, and the Building Trades Council (BTC), unable to rebuild, moved to existing office space on Market Street.

In the 1930s the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Public Works Administration (PWA), and the United States Housing Authority (USHA) had sought to foster a social order where economic equality took precedence over individual prosperity. But by 1943 the WPA and PWA had been dissolved. Among the governmental agencies which had promoted an egalitarian urban life, only the federal and local housing authorities remained. In the 1940s and 1950s the intellectual and material resources of the state, at every level, were mobilized towards an anti-urban vision in which most working-class neighborhoods figured only as a drain on city services and as a physical impediment to traffic circulation. In the new policy environment, economic equality was no longer regarded as the public interest; now the chief public interest was the efficient movement of capital. No longer was the worker regarded as the representative figure for the public; now that status was reserved for drivers and goods.

However, the plans of government agencies do not tell the whole story. While in the first decades of the twentieth century the policies of government agencies reflected the goals and self-perceptions of the Mission, in the immediate postwar period the neighborhood and government agencies developed two distinct and contradictory views of the public interest. The residents and institutions of the Mission—the labor stronghold of San Francisco—were not willing to abandon the vision of a vibrant, egalitarian urban life which had been promoted by the WPA: the worker as the public. Indeed, the unions, merchants, and churches in the neighborhood continued expanding that vision to include the Mission's ethnic-minority newcomers.

When it came to the physical spaces of the Mission District in the immediate postwar period, however, all Mission residents and institutions were negotiating membership in the public only in the sense of public-as-beneficiary. Authority over land use had shifted downtown, leaving the Mission District in a position where it could only react to planning initiatives. In other words, there was no longer a public in the Mission, in the sense of public-as-authority. Yet there were still retail strips, parks, street corners, union halls, parish churches, and many other existing spaces. As the ethnic and

³⁸⁰ "Supt. Clish Wants Gompers Converted to Junior High," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 18, 1952; "Junior high School Proposed," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 11, 1952; "Samuel Gompers Trades School Discontinued," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 21, 1952.

³⁸¹ "Labor Clarion Suspends Publication," *Labor Clarion*, April 30, 1948.

economic composition of the neighborhood shifted, the question of who should benefit from those spaces was yet to be determined.

Census data show that by 1950 the northeastern Mission was over 25% Latino; the heart of the Mission would reach that figure by 1960.³⁸² Though there are many documented moments when these changes caused tension, all of the important institutions internal to the Mission began to accommodate the newcomers. Mission merchants expanded their Spanish-language advertising, unions continued to integrate (though not without incident), and Catholic parish churches, in particular, began to provide physical and social space to Latinos. Many of the neighborhood's Anglo residents accepted Federal Housing Administration (FHA) inducements to join the ranks of middle-class consumers who were leaving cities for the suburbs. But many also stayed. As one Catholic minister recalled, the remaining Anglos were the ones who liked the idea of being part of a more expansive public, one founded on "a common sense and dignity about the working person, which was more important than what [a person's] country of origin was. I can think of people who chose to live there because of the ethnic diversity, not in spite of it."³⁸³

Over the course of the 1940s and 1950s, the Mission's commitment to an economically (and now ethnically egalitarian) view of the public interest would increasingly come into conflict with a government-financed vision of the public interest as the circulation of capital. In order to better explain the nature and trajectory of this conflict, it is necessary to begin by narrating the adoption of corporate-guided city planning structures in San Francisco.

Downtown Public, Neighborhood Erasure: The Ascendance of City Planning

To understand the institutional lineage of San Francisco's postwar urban planning regime, it is necessary to begin with the Progressive Era. In 1910 reformers created the San Francisco Housing Association, largely for the purpose of lobbying for anti-tenement laws which reformers believed were needed in the wake of the disaster of 1906.³⁸⁴ The Association was instrumental in creating the SFHA in 1938. In the early 1940s, the Association was joined by members of a group calling themselves Telesis, many of whom had been trained in the architecture and landscape architecture departments at the University of California, Berkeley.³⁸⁵ Reflecting its new composition and agenda, the San Francisco Housing Association became the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association. Through the 1940s and 1950s, the Association attracted the attention of many of San Francisco's business elite, including the leadership of the Crocker Bank,

³⁸² Brian Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1988), 152.

³⁸³ James Hagan, interview by Jeffrey Burns, June 19, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 3.

³⁸⁴ San Francisco Housing Association, "Report of the San Francisco Housing Association," 1911; San Francisco Housing Association, "Report of the San Francisco Housing Association," 1912; Eric Sandweiss, "Building for Downtown Living: The Residential Architecture of San Francisco's Tenderloin," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* Vol. 3, 1989, 162; William Issel, "Liberalism and Urban Policy in San Francisco from the 1930s to the 1960s," *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1991, 441-442.

³⁸⁵ Peter Allen, "A Space for Living: Region and Nature in the Bay Area, 1939-1969," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2009.

which had supported comprehensive city planning since the Burnham Plan, and the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, a group representing downtown business interests and drawing its name from an investment banking firm (Blyth) and a paper manufacturer (Zellerbach).³⁸⁶ With funding from Blyth-Zellerbach, the Association reconfigured itself once again in 1959, dropping "Housing" altogether to become the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR).³⁸⁷

Through research and advocacy campaigns, which had behind them the force of many of the city's largest corporations, the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, and later SPUR, helped to chart the future course of San Francisco. The Association's first publication, a 1942 pamphlet titled "Now is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco," made the case that the federal government was already contemplating floating "tremendous" loans to help cities transition "from war production to peace production," but that the government had made clear that such loans would only be available to cities that had an active Planning Commission and a Master Plan.³⁸⁸ At the time, the city's Planning Commission was mostly reactive, responding to requests for zoning variances, but not pushing forward with new campaigns. The Association was in fact the driving force behind the elevation of the City Planning Commission to the status of a municipal department in 1947, furnishing much of the early leadership of that department.³⁸⁹ While federal funding was an impetus, the Association argued that comprehensive planning was required at the scale of the city, in any case, if San Francisco was to have any hope of competing economically with the growing suburbs.

The San Francisco Housing Association (the predecessor organization) had framed its campaigns in terms of social equality, but such concerns were entirely absent from the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association's reports. In the newer vision, social considerations were confined to what urbanists in the 1980s would begin referring to as "quality of life" concerns: recreation accommodation, hassle-free transportation experiences, proximity to retail, and other matters relating to the convenience and comfort of middle-class consumers.

The Association's specific land use recommendations tracked closely with the "Functional City" ideas—as promoted by the largely European *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM)—which dictated that physical zones for transportation, work, and dwelling be rigidly separated from one another.³⁹⁰ But while CIAM claimed

³⁸⁶ Crown Zellerbach, 43. Also see Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco, Revised and Updated Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 10-11.

³⁸⁷ Crown Zellerbach, 43.

³⁸⁸ San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Now Is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco," 1941, 16.

³⁸⁹ The Association was also the driving force behind the creation of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, a subject which I address in depth in the following chapter.

³⁹⁰ It is difficult to know how exactly where the Association would have situated itself in relation to CIAM, but the modernist architects-cum-academics who were prominent in the Association were certainly well aware of the Functional City ideal. "Now Is the Time to Plan" was coauthored by Vernon de Mars, who would later serve as Chair of the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley (1959-1961). De Mars cited Le Corbusier as an important influence on his own thinking, and Le Corbusier was one of the principal figures in CIAM. See Mardges Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 294. For more on CIAM, see Eric Mumford, *The Ciam Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

allegiance to no political or economic order during this period (in part as a strategy for making the Functional City adaptable to any sociopolitical circumstance) the Association of Housing and Planning was dominated by an explicitly capitalist logic. Indeed, the overarching concern of the Association was that land in the City of San Francisco be recognized as a market commodity, and be managed according to business principles.³⁹¹ This concern was reflected in the iconography employed in Association publications. The first page of "Now Is the Time," for example, was dominated by a drawing of a coin, with a dollar sign on its face, lying at the foot of a citizen. (See Figure 4.) "We have before us a golden opportunity," the text read. "[W]ouldn't you increase the value of San Francisco and your section of it, by a comprehensive Master Plan?"³⁹² Other illustrations in "Now is the Time to Plan" prominently featured spreadsheets, checks, and especially coins to emphasize the importance of the accumulation and circulation of capital. Increasing the monetary "value of San Francisco" was the dominant concern of the city's postwar planning campaign.

Neighborhood, meanwhile, featured only as "your section" of San Francisco, one part of a more important whole. While the MPA had also thought of the neighborhood unit in terms of a business, the profits of that business were to redound to the neighborhood itself. The Housing and Planning Association, on the other hand, presented a neighborhood strictly as a commodity, or even a product line, which should be designed so as to maximize returns to the municipality. As I discuss below, there were many variables that San Francisco planners considered when determining whether or not an area was "blighted," but "Now is the Time to Plan" laid out the fundamental criterion: blighted neighborhoods were "those areas which cost the city more in services (streets, schools, sewers, light, etc.) than they bring in through taxes. Those 'bankrupt' sections are carried and subsidized by the business and healthy residential sections. Can this go on forever?" the pamphlet challenged.³⁹³

The Association answered its own question in its 1947 publication, "Blight and Taxes," which subjected two neighborhoods to a "Balance Sheet" analysis. The pamphlet compared the Marina District, a white and Italian neighborhood that HOLC had blue-lined, with the "Geary-Fillmore," a largely African American neighborhood which HOLC had redlined, and in which only one mortgage institution was lending in the 1930s.³⁹⁴ The Association calculated how much revenue each neighborhood generated for the City through real estate taxes, and how much each neighborhood cost the City through services. The Marina, in this analysis, had generated \$468,924 more than it consumed in services, while the Geary-Fillmore was "\$373,295 short of paying its own way in

³⁹¹ Molotch's well known formulation of the city as "growth machine" is useful in explaining the orientation of San Francisco's postwar planning regime: "An elite [group] competes with other land-based elites in an effort to have growth-inducing resources invested within its own area as opposed to that of another." See Harvey Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place," *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 82, No. 2, September 1976, 309.

³⁹² Panels from City and Country of San Francisco, "Mayor's Committee to Study Freeways: Final Report," April 22, 1960, Freeway Revolt 1959 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library; San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, 1941, 1.

³⁹³ San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, 1941, 5.

³⁹⁴ See Chapter Two of this dissertation; and Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) Division of Research and Statistics, San Francisco Residential Security Map Description, April 15, 1937, Areas B-12 and D-1, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 195/Home Owners' Loan Corp, Location: 450, 68:6:2/Box 147.

1946.³⁹⁵ In addition to costing the city in services, the Association argued that the blighted neighborhoods were also costing the city in tax base, because more affluent residents were leaving these districts for newer suburbs. The conclusion about what should then happen in these neighborhoods was clear: "Areas in the city which lose to the suburbs decay and go to seed—these are the blighted areas which must be replanned and rebuilt and bring [sic] the suburbs back to the city."³⁹⁶

During the immediate postwar period, the SFHA continued to promote its vision of a convenient and modern urban life for lower income residents, but in response to the new planning regime, it also began to present its activities as a strategy for retaining higher income Anglo residents.³⁹⁷ At its inception in the 1910s, the housing movement in San Francisco presented itself in terms of "social welfare," as a line of defense against the "rampant greed" of developers.³⁹⁸ By 1941, the SFHA described its core purpose in fiscalized terms, as the "reclamation of unprofitable shabby districts which now act as blockades for better uses. . . . We must rehabilitate those areas now obsolete and which produce less than they consume."³⁹⁹ In its 1957 Annual Report the SFHA insisted that it had always acted in "THE PUBLIC INTEREST."⁴⁰⁰ While the Authority did present some social concerns (health standards, crime rates, and delinquency) as dimensions of the public interest, more important was the argument that SFHA "projects do make a greater return to the City in the form of payments in lieu of taxes than the original properties that stood on those sites."⁴⁰¹ Such payments were often cited by the SFHA as a means of demonstrating the Authority's ability to produce revenue, thereby justifying its existence.

The San Francisco Housing and Planning Association promulgated its ideas of the need for a revenue-generating city not only to the SFHA, the Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor, but also in media outlets and even in the public schools: in 1943, the Association convinced the San Francisco Unified School District to include urban planning as a subject in its social studies curriculum.⁴⁰² In the spring of 1946, a pilot program was rolled out. In the new planning curriculum, first graders "learned that a home section should have playgrounds and their district had none."⁴⁰³ Sixth graders were sent on field trips where "They saw slums and wrote critical essays on dirt, overcrowding, rats, lack of sun, lack of heat and toilet facilities."⁴⁰⁴ After the pilot program proved popular among students and teachers, the School District produced a series of brief social studies texts which used San Francisco as a case study to introduce elementary school students to urban planning.⁴⁰⁵ The texts included exercises asking

³⁹⁵ San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Blight and Taxes," 1947, 10.

³⁹⁶ San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, 1941, 3.

³⁹⁷ John Baranski, "Making Public Housing in San Francisco: Liberalism, Social Prejudice, and Social Activism, 1906-1976," PhD dissertation, 2004, 291.

³⁹⁸ San Francisco Housing Association, 1911, 6-7.

³⁹⁹ SHFA, "Annual Report," 1941, 27-28.

⁴⁰⁰ SHFA, "Annual Report," 1957, 2.

⁴⁰¹ *ibid.* Because the land acquired by the SFHA was officially federal land, it was not subject to local property taxes; "payments in lieu of taxes" describes equivalent monies paid to the municipality.

⁴⁰² San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, 1946, 3.

⁴⁰³ *ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁰⁵ See Elementary School Department, San Francisco Unified School District, "San Francisco Today: Book 1, San Francisco Social Studies Series," 1948; "In and Out of San Francisco: Book 2, San Francisco

students to be "Junior Planners," using maps and models to design ideal cities, exercises which invariably convinced children of the wisdom of capitalist-CIAM principles of city planning.⁴⁰⁶

Though the language of the texts was simplified for a younger audience, the substance was identical to that of publications like "Now is the Time to Plan." Students were told of the importance of having a Master Plan, of the need for zoning and efficient transportation systems, and of the problems of density and obsolescence. Neighborhoods were represented just as they were in "Now Is the Time":

Some parts of our city are growing old. They were built long ago. Many of the houses are too close together. Some rooms get no sunlight and are dark. There is no space in neighborhoods for playgrounds. The children play in the streets and alleys. Some day most of the buildings in these old neighborhoods will be torn down. New neighborhoods will be built.⁴⁰⁷

The image illustrating this passage shows two small children standing on a dark street, near dark row houses, on narrow lots. The children point out to the brightness of the modernist future that approaches them, as construction workers clear away the aging structures board by board, and lot by lot. (See Figure 5.) The visual economy (and perhaps even the hand) is identical to that seen in "Now Is the Time to Plan." (See Figure 6.)

In all of the arenas where the Association promoted its goals, its principal method for appealing to suburbanites, and would-be suburbanites, was to project an image of modern, low density communities that were safe for children and were well served by highways. The modern suburbanized city was rendered in positive—black lines on a white background—projecting a feeling of airy lightness, while the existing city was rendered in negative, communicating a feeling of claustrophobia. The Department of City Planning employed the same visual language in representing the city: dark urban present, bright suburban future. (See Figure 7.)

The question of whether any particular area of the city made more than it cost, was closely bound with the official promotion of efficient transportation systems. As the Mayor's office maintained well into the 1960s, the problem of inefficient transportation threatened the "utter deterioration of the even flow of goods and people, thus resulting in economic disaster" for the City as a whole.⁴⁰⁸ The Mayor's position was indistinguishable that of the Downtown Association, which consistently warned that for

Social Studies Series," 1948; "Fun in San Francisco: Book 3, San Francisco Social Studies Series," 1949; and "At Home in San Francisco: Book 4, San Francisco Social Studies Series," 1949, Vertical Files, Schools, Social Studies File, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴⁰⁶ Elementary School Department, 1949b, 27-32. Indeed, the texts celebrated San Francisco's urban planners: "Do you know that we have experts who improve the neighborhoods and communities? The Mayor chooses five citizens to serve on the Planning Commission. They have many helpers in their offices at the Civic Center. These helpers are members of the Department of City Planning. That is one of the newest departments of our city government. It would be interesting to visit the city planners at their work in the Civic Center. They make maps and plans to show how the city looks today and how it could be improved. Their plan for changes in the city is called the Master Plan." See Elementary School Department, 1949b, 19.

⁴⁰⁷ Elementary School Department, 1948a, 30).

⁴⁰⁸ City and Country of San Francisco, "Mayor's Committee to Study Freeways: Final Report," April 22, 1960, 1.

San Francisco to ignore the problem would mean "the loss of the bulwark of its tax base, intolerable traffic blight and economic strangulation."⁴⁰⁹ (See Figure 8.) Concern over efficient transportation provision made even the "profitable" neighborhoods like the Marina subject to potential redevelopment: though the Marina did generate revenue, it also cluttered the path between the Golden Gate Bridge and downtown with narrow gridded streets. This hierarchy of concerns was reflected in the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association's bird's-eye views of San Francisco and the region. As Figure 9 shows, in "Now is the Time" the Association presented San Francisco as a space for the production and circulation of goods; the neighborhoods were simply blank space. These ideas were transmitted not only to policy specialists, but also to San Francisco's youngest members of the public, in an effort to inculcate diverse groups into its goals. (See Figure 10.)

The Motoring Public and Neighborhood Erasure

The priorities and strategies laid out in "Now is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan" were all intact in the official "Master Plan for San Francisco" when it was adopted in 1945. One of the primary aims of the "Master Plan" was the "Improvement of the city as a place for commerce and industry by making it more efficient, orderly, and satisfactory for the production, exchange and distribution of goods and services, with adequate space for each type of economic activity and improved facilities for the loading and movement of goods."⁴¹⁰ At the end of World War II, the planning agenda of San Francisco was dominated by the concerns of the industrial corporations and the associated investment banking firms that were rooted downtown. San Francisco's municipal agencies consistently supported those interests, and when business and local government did come into conflict, the wishes of business tended to prevail.

One episode which illustrates the ascendancy of corporation over municipality was the debate over a southern crossing of the San Francisco Bay. The San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge had opened in 1936, connecting the Rincon Hill area of downtown San Francisco (which been home to a small *colonia*) with an area just north of downtown Oakland.⁴¹¹ Though the bridge originally included light rail, it could not accommodate mainline rail. By the end of the war, auto traffic was already beyond capacity in downtown San Francisco and the Department of Public Works and City Hall believed that industry could only expand southward along the waterfront.⁴¹² The City began discussing a southern crossing with bridgeheads on Alameda Island, south of downtown Oakland, in the East Bay and at Army Street, where the MPA had fought to bring a

⁴⁰⁹ Albert Schlesinger, President Downtown Association, to the City Planning Commission, May 18, 1959, Freeway Revolt 1959 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴¹⁰ San Francisco Department of City Planning, "The Master Plan of the City and County of San Francisco," 1945, as amended through 1963.

⁴¹¹ The bridge's official name is the James "Sunny Jim" Rolph Bridge.

⁴¹² Sy Adler, "Infrastructure Politics: The Dynamics of Crossing San Francisco Bay," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1988.

harbor, in San Francisco.⁴¹³ (See Figure 11.) The idea received national attention; Frank Lloyd Wright even offered a design.⁴¹⁴

The Mission Merchants' Association had been lobbying for decades to have Army Street widened in order to "open up an avenue for people who desire to get to the Mission district for trading"; they supported the southern crossing presumably for the same reason, now with the prospect of drawing in East Bay shoppers.⁴¹⁵ The SFLC supported the plan because it would create industrial jobs in San Francisco.⁴¹⁶ The Chamber of Commerce originally supported the plan because it would have brought mainline rail connections, which now terminated in Oakland, from Army Street, up the coast of the Bay, directly into downtown San Francisco.⁴¹⁷ The East Bay suburbs supported the plan because it would bring increased economic activity to the cities south of Oakland. The Oakland Chamber of Commerce *opposed* the plan for all of the above reasons.⁴¹⁸ Because the Oakland Chamber's primary concern was traffic congestion in its own downtown, and because it had no desire to allow more business to come within San Francisco's economic orbit, the Chamber favored a "parallel crossing"—a new structure which would have been placed beside the existing Bay Bridge, along the same route.⁴¹⁹

When it became clear that the major rail carriers had no intention of extending lines across a new bridge to the south, the San Francisco Chamber also came out against the southern crossing and in favor of a parallel bridge.⁴²⁰ The chambers of commerce on both sides of the Bay had complementary interests: neither wanted economic activity moving to neighborhoods and cities to the south of them.⁴²¹ As with San Francisco land-use contests from decades past, the public interest furnished the conceptual terrain on which the battle over the Southern Crossing was to be fought. Mayor Robinson, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and the SFLC—all eager to see more industry come to the south of the city—condemned the San Francisco Chamber, charging that it was serving "special interests"; the Mayor even threatened to move the Chamber's municipal subsidies to the SFLC and the BTC, "organizations which interest themselves in the public welfare."⁴²² A group representing both chambers of commerce, in turn, charged

⁴¹³ For an exhaustively researched and persuasively argued account of the southern crossing debates, see Adler.

⁴¹⁴ Frank Lloyd Wright and Edgar Kaufmann, *Taliesin Drawings: Recent Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1952), 49-50.

⁴¹⁵ The Merchants were not vocal on the subject of the southern crossing, but when their opinion was solicited, they did add their name to a list of entities which supported the idea. See Fred Cox to Mayor Elmer Robinson, March 12, 1949, Box 2, Folder 1, Elmer Robinson Mayoral Papers, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. See also Board of Supervisors, June 18, 1941. The leadership of the Catholic parish church of St. Anthony's, which was located on Army Street, was ambivalent about the prospect of the widening of Army and constructing a southern crossing. The church might be affected by construction and the district might become more commercial than residential. See 1948 Parish of St. Anthony' Historical Report, St. Anthony's Parish Folder, Vol. 1, San Francisco Archdiocese.

⁴¹⁶ Board of Supervisors, March 21, 1949; Adler, 24.

⁴¹⁷ Adler, 23-25.

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ *ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Adler, 26.

⁴²¹ *ibid.*

⁴²² "Chamber Switch on Span Spurs Speculation," March 13, 1949, *San Francisco Chronicle*; "Mayor Leads New Campaign Against Parallel Bay Span," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 12, 1949. See also Elmer Robinson, "Press Release," March 11, 1949; San Francisco Department of City Planning to Elmer

that the campaign for a Southern Crossing was a "'self-interested' one by people who wanted to see their property values in the southern part of San Francisco and down the peninsula increased. . . . [the group] declared that the general interest in the relief of congestion on the existing bridge must take precedence over any 'promotional' projects."⁴²³ The use of the word "promotional" was likely calculated to belittle, to cast as parochial, the many neighborhood promotion and improvement clubs, like the Southern Improvement Association (an old ally of the Mission Promotion Association) which lobbied for the southern crossing.

In spite of the protests of the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors, the chambers' opposition was enough to kill the southern crossing plan at the end of the 1940s.⁴²⁴ The U.S. Navy scuttled the parallel bridge plan because enemy bombers could conceivably destroy two bridges at once, and in the end, no new bridge was built.⁴²⁵ Even so, the fact that the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce could suggest that the groups lobbying for a southern crossing were "self interested" illustrates the extent to which its own interests had come to dominate the planning of the city. The special interests that the Chamber was denouncing included not only the Mission Merchants' Association and the unions, but also legally elected or appointed representatives of the public, including the Department of Public Works, the Board of Supervisors, and City Hall.

The San Francisco Chamber's tactics were not dissimilar from those that the MPA had employed to great effect decades earlier in the debates over the Burnham Plan, Islais Creek, and other citywide and even regional planning initiatives. The crucial difference was that the MPA defined the public at the scale of the neighborhood, and effectively cast "downtown" as a special interest. Now the San Francisco Chamber reversed this relationship, defining the public at the scale of the city, but with downtown at the helm, and defining as special interests not only the neighborhood groups but also the smaller cities in San Mateo and Alameda counties which had supported a southern crossing. The contest over a new bridge demonstrates that the concept of the public interest had no stable referent, but was rather a rhetorical weapon in the battle over economic resources and political legitimacy.

In the immediate postwar period, neighborhoods like the Mission District were not faring well in land use contests. This was particularly true when it came to city government's top priority: transportation planning. The San Francisco City Planning Commission issued its "Master Plan" in 1945, and the first amendment to the document was the 1951 Trafficways Plan; the City-wide Land Use Plan was not adopted for another

Robinson, December 1, 1948, "Memorandum: Southern Bay Crossing," Box 2, Folder 1, Elmer Robinson Mayoral Papers, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴²³ Quoted in Adler, 30.

⁴²⁴ The southern crossing was revived several more times over the following decades, but was never brought to fruition for reasons ranging from financing problems to secret Navy projects. The southern crossing plan would be buried once and for all two decades later when the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system installed a tube connecting downtown Oakland to downtown San Francisco—a plan which historian Sy Adler demonstrates was pushed by downtown investment banking interests in part with the hope of foreclosing the possibility of a southern crossing. Adler, 37-38.

⁴²⁵ See Fred Cox to Elmer Robinson, Winthrop, Branschied, W. F. Wood, Joseph Bellini, and Arthur Phillips, January, 8, 1948, Box 2, Folder 1, Elmer Robinson Mayoral Papers, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. Also see Adler.

two years, in 1953.⁴²⁶ While one might assume that a Trafficways Plan would conform to a City-wide Land Use Plan, in fact just the opposite was true.

Nowhere was the priority of the Trafficways Plan more apparent than in the manner in which the Land Use Plan divided the city into distinct "areas" or "communities." The text of the Land Use Plan explained that the Planning Department had decided on "community" boundaries based on "traditionally accepted topographic or naturally formed limits or by the location of existing or proposed trafficways or open spaces."⁴²⁷ Yet one community boundary was drawn the length of Mission Street, along the path of the proposed Mission Freeway, a decision which flew in the face of "traditionally accepted" mappings: for half a century, now, San Franciscans had thought of the Mission retail corridor not as a limit, but as the heart of the neighborhood.⁴²⁸ This mapping essentially split the neighborhood along its spine. During the ascendancy of the MPA, the Mission District had operated as a coherent political unit. The Master Plan raised the possibility that it might not even remain a coherent physical unit for long.⁴²⁹

The reasons for siting the prospective freeway along Mission Street in the first place were laid out in the 1948 "Report to the City Planning Commission on a Transportation Plan for San Francisco."⁴³⁰ (See Figure 12.) The report introduced a number of new metrics to determine where routes should go. Prominent among the new measures was the origin-destination study which tracked where driving trips began and where they ended, then charted a straight line between the two points. When trips were aggregated and mapped, the resulting pattern of "desire lines" suggested where a path was most needed, and what the most direct and therefore ideal route would be.⁴³¹ Whose desire did this instrument measure? Trips were charted for both private automobiles and trucks. Because the purpose of truck trips was the transportation of goods, it was, curiously, goods' desire to circulate that was being quantified within the framework of the desire line metric. Drivers composed the other entity whose desire was being mapped, and many of those drivers were coming from the surrounding suburbs, which had three times as many registered vehicles as San Francisco.⁴³² Wherever the trips originated, all

⁴²⁶ San Francisco Department of City Planning, 1963.

⁴²⁷ "Land Use Plan," 1953, 3, in San Francisco Department of City Planning, 1963.

⁴²⁸ See Land Use Plan, Plate 1. The Land Use Plan did not name the "communities" that resulted from its mapping. However, the Urban Renewal Plan, which was adopted in 1960, and which used the same boundaries, did name the resulting communities. To the west of the boundary on Mission Street lay a community which the Plan referred to as "Mission" which extended from Market Street to the north, Glen Park to the south, and Twin Peaks to the West. To the east of the boundary lay another community referred to as "Potrero-Bernal" which contained all of Potrero Hill and Bernal Heights, and the flatlands of the Mission District. The no-lined northeastern section of the neighborhood was referred to as "Division." These groupings would have been unrecognizable to San Francisco residents. See "The City-Wide Urban Renewal Plan," 1960, 4-6, in San Francisco Department of City Planning, 1963.

⁴²⁹ Curiously, the mapping did not draw community boundaries at the Bayshore Freeway and the Central Freeway which did eventually change the way residents defined the borders of the Mission District, the Bayshore contracting the boundaries inward from the east, and the Central contracting the boundaries inward from the north.

⁴³⁰ De Leuw Cather and Company Consulting Engineers, with Ladislav Segoe and Associates Consulting City Planners, "Report to the City Planning Commission on a Transportation Plan for San Francisco," 1948. The Report was commissioned by the San Francisco City Planning Commission.

⁴³¹ Cather and Segoe, Chapter 2, 1-3 and Plates 1-8.

⁴³² There were around 200,000 vehicles registered in San Francisco and 800,000 in all nine of the Bay Area Counties. See Cather and Segoe, Plate I-7.

of the desire line mappings suggested that radical transformation was needed in the Mission. (See Figure 13.) The Report concluded by recommending paths which closely conformed to the WPA's 1937 Traffic Survey.⁴³³ Two north-south routes, the Bayshore Freeway and the Mission Freeway, were to traverse the Mission, at some points only ten blocks apart from one another.

The Bayshore was among the first freeways completed in San Francisco, opening to traffic in 1958, while the Embarcadero Freeway opened in 1959. The Mission Freeway was slated for a later building campaign. Resistance to the Bayshore Freeway came only from a handful of older residents, like Estelle West and the Kellehers, who had little political capital. The SFLC and the BTC had both supported the freeway plan in general because it meant construction jobs. The Mission Merchants' Association took no position at all on the Bayshore Freeway, a fact which highlights a crucial difference between the Merchants and the MPA. While the latter Association had been intimately involved with all large projects in the Mission (and most large projects throughout San Francisco as a whole), the Mission Merchants rarely voiced an opinion on land use matters in the immediate postwar period. The only plans that the Association did comment on pertained directly to parking near the retail stretch of Mission Street.⁴³⁴

Though the Bayshore Freeway met with very little opposition, the Embarcadero Freeway raised the ire of ordinary citizens and the editorial boards of all the major newspapers when the first section of the structure went up in 1955.⁴³⁵ The outcry focused on aesthetic concerns: the double-decked freeway blocked views of the historic Ferry Building and of the Bay. A representative of the Northern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) crystallized the aesthetic objections at a hearing on freeways in 1961: "A line on a map, a circle where two of these lines cross, eventually become land-eating, view-shocking tangles of steel and concrete structures: 'Origin and destination studies,' 'lines of desire,' become almost permanent dominating features of the City skyline. Views change, neighborhoods change, the whole character of the city changes."⁴³⁶ It is important to note, however, that the AIA Chapter did acknowledge that freeways were needed to address the traffic problem. The Chapter objected not to freeway planning, but to the dominance of traffic engineers in that planning, and to the appearance of the structures that resulted—a position which logically suggested that the Chapter should "offer the good services of our profession in the public interest to participate fully in further study of San Francisco's future."⁴³⁷ Immediately after the Embarcadero Freeway went up in 1955, the Housing and Planning Association, the Downtown Association, and the Mayor all conceded that more care should be taken to

⁴³³ See Chapter Two, Figure 8. The only highway included in the WPA plan which did not appear on the Cather and Segoe Report was the Cross-town Highway in the northern part of the city.

⁴³⁴ See Board of Supervisors, November 10, 1952 and February 16, 1953.

⁴³⁵ Mohl 678-679; Issel, 1999, 625-627. See also Joseph Rodriguez, *City Against Suburb: The Culture Wars in an American Metropolis* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 32-33.

⁴³⁶ American Institute of Architects (AIA), "Statement Made at City Planning Commission Public Hearing on Trafficways Report--April 13, 1961, On Behalf of the Board of Directors of the Northern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects," Freeway Revolt 1959 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. See also J. Rodriguez, 36.

⁴³⁷ AIA. The noted landscape architect Thomas Church expressed similar sentiments in a letter to the City Planning Commission. Thomas Church to City Planning Commission, April 10, 1961, Freeway Revolt 1959 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

integrate the structures into existing urban fabric.⁴³⁸ However, all of those entities continued to insist that freeways were necessary if San Francisco wished to avoid "the loss of the bulwark of its tax base, intolerable traffic blight and economic strangulation."⁴³⁹

San Francisco's postwar planning regime framed its campaign for freeways in economic terms, but when ordinary homeowners living in the neighborhoods applied similar economic criteria to their own circumstance, they came to very different conclusions. What would a freeway structure mean for circulation *internal* to the neighborhood? How much noise and pollution would residents have to endure? How would "a steel and concrete monster" affect the property values of nearby lots? Most importantly, for whose benefit were the freeways actually intended: neighborhood residents or trucks and suburban commuters?⁴⁴⁰ It was around these questions that "neighborhood defense groups" like the Property Owners' Association of San Francisco (organized in the Sunset District) and the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council were formed.⁴⁴¹ While the planning elites had been asking such "quality of life" questions about the entire city—and proposing radically suburbanizing revisions to the city based on their conclusions—the so-called "Freeway Revolt" marked a moment in which neighborhoods began to reassert their right to consider these questions for themselves.⁴⁴²

For the time being, however, these were reactive, single-issue groups which were concerned first and foremost with the effort to "Stop the Road."⁴⁴³ While bitter battles ensued over the planned freeways in the western and northern areas of the city, there turned out to be nothing to fight about when it came to the Mission Freeway. On February 2, 1958, the Mission Merchants' Association wrote the City Planning Commission on the subject of the Mission Freeway. The Merchants began by reminding the Commission of their own economic muscle, and then demanded that the freeway be stopped:

Our organization, the largest and oldest district merchants' association in the country, is this year celebrating its 50th Anniversary. We have a huge financial investment and expend large sums each year for advertising and promoting the Mission Miracle Mile, as well as contributing very substantial [sic] in taxes. We are influential, strongly supported, and closely knit organization composed of merchants, professional people, and property owners. We do not propose to sit idly by while our businesses are decimated by a steel and concrete 'monster,' which, as we understand it, would cut the depth of many of our stores to as little

⁴³⁸ Schlesinger; City and Country of San Francisco, "Mayor's Committee to Study Freeways: Final Report," April 22, 1960, 1; SPUR, "Report to the Honorable George Christopher and Board of Supervisors Regarding the Proposed Freeway and Trafficways Plan for the City and County of San Francisco," April 1961. See also J. Rodriguez, 36.

⁴³⁹ Schlesinger.

⁴⁴⁰ See Issel, 1999; Mohl, 678.

⁴⁴¹ Issel, 1999, 629-632. The Glen Park neighborhood, just to the southwest of the Mission, also produced vocal opposition to freeways.

⁴⁴² For more on the freeway revolt in San Francisco, see J. Rodriguez; and Issel, 1999. For an analysis of both San Francisco and the broader national freeway revolt, see Mohl.

⁴⁴³ Mohl.

as 40 feet, and in fact, mean the demise of an important business area, as has been the case in all other business areas where freeways have gone through.⁴⁴⁴

Paul Opperman, the Director of the Commission, responded five days later that the Mission Freeway had been off the city's plans for years.⁴⁴⁵

Opperman offered no explanation as to why the freeway had been eliminated, but a 1960 study, called "Trafficways in San Francisco: A Reappraisal," suggests that the city planners had already considered the economic importance of the Mission corridor. The report noted that while the Mission Freeway would be the single most effective route for relieving traffic, it would also have resulted in a "reduction of the assessment roll [which] would be about two thirds as great [as any other proposed freeway route] as it would involve the dislocation of nearly twice the number of business properties."⁴⁴⁶ So while the immediate postwar planning regime had disassembled the neighborhood as a discrete political entity, or comprehensive planning unit, the Mission retail corridor still had one claim on the public interest: it was an asset to the balance sheet of the municipality.

Many governmental agencies during the New Deal had invoked the notion of economic equality as a criterion for determining the public interest.⁴⁴⁷ In the immediate postwar period, that language was absent, having been replaced with an emphasis on efficient circulation. A string of 1949 correspondence between the City Planning Commission and the Southern Pacific (SP) neatly illustrates the new poles of the public interest. Opperman wrote to the members of the Commission that the City needed to contact the SP about acquiring a right of way that was needed for the Mission Freeway. He announced that the Freeway was vital to the "public interest" of "facilitating communication between the Central Business District and the residential sections it serves."⁴⁴⁸ M. Johnson of the SP responded to the Commission a few days later "that we do not now have in contemplation the abandonment of any portion of this branch line for the reason that it is necessary in connection with our operations . . . to be used by the shipping public."⁴⁴⁹ Both sides of this argument were making a claim to the public interest: the City on behalf of a driving public, and the SP on behalf of the shipping public. That a vital public interest was being served by ensuring that both drivers and goods should be circulating more freely to and from the Central Business District was almost never in dispute.

By the mid 1950s, that state of affairs would begin to change. Beginning in the early 1940s, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors regularly discussed ways in which physical aspects of city should be transformed in order to serve the "interests of the

⁴⁴⁴ Mission Merchants' Association to City Planning Commission, February 5, 1958, Mission Freeway folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴⁴⁵ Paul Opperman to Mission Merchants' Association, February 10, 1958, Mission Freeway folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴⁴⁶ San Francisco Department of City Planning and Department of Public Works, "Trafficways in San Francisco: A Reappraisal," 1960, 48.

⁴⁴⁷ See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

⁴⁴⁸ Paul Opperman to City Planning Commission, May 26, 1949, Mission Freeway 1949-1958 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴⁴⁹ M. Johnson to Paul Opperman, May 28, 1949, Mission Freeway 1949-1958 folder, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

motoring public."⁴⁵⁰ This phrase was used often by the Board of Supervisors, but after 1956, when the Freeway Revolt gained momentum, "motoring public" disappeared entirely from the Supervisors' vocabulary. Citing overwhelming community opposition, the Board of Supervisors would become the first municipal entity to break with the established Trafficways Plan in 1959, passing a resolution "Declaring Opposition to the Construction of All Freeways Contained in the Master Plan," excepting those which had already been built.⁴⁵¹ Because no freeway could be built without road closures, and because no road could be closed in San Francisco without the approval of the Board of Supervisors, the Board's opposition effectively stopped the freeway plan in its tracks, over the objections of the Mayor, SPUR, the Downtown Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and eventually the State of California which did not want to forfeit federal monies allocated for the system.⁴⁵²

Figure 14 illustrates how the Trafficways Plan differed from the network that was actually built. The City eventually prevailed in its negotiations with the SP over the right-of-way needed for the southern part of the Mission Freeway. That section—between Daly City and the neighborhood of Glen Park—was constructed, but it connected with the Bayshore Freeway near the Bernal Cut, and penetrated no further north into the Mission District. A section of the Central Freeway was constructed in the northeastern section of the Mission, in the area that HOLC had no-lined in 1937.

Because the federal government and the State of California began pushing San Francisco to complete its highway network after the Freeway Revolt, popular histories have assumed that the plan originated at the federal and state levels.⁴⁵³ In fact, only the funding came from higher levels of government; the decisions about where freeways should be sited were local.⁴⁵⁴ In many cities across the United States, highway plans exhibited local racial biases, proposing routes through minority neighborhoods as part of a larger renewal strategy.⁴⁵⁵ Citizen groups who became aware of the pattern in Washington, D.C., for example, began distributing flyers demanding "no more white highways through black bedrooms."⁴⁵⁶ The freeway routes planned in San Francisco exhibited no obvious racial bias, and there is no evidence that any was present. Indeed, affluent white neighborhoods like the Marina were slated for freeways, while the African American Geary-Fillmore was not. Unlike the situation in Washington D.C., resistance to freeways in San Francisco came almost exclusively from relatively affluent Anglos.⁴⁵⁷ The bias reflected in San Francisco's various traffic plans was in favor of the circulation of goods over aesthetics, of downtown over neighborhoods.

⁴⁵⁰ Board of Supervisors, April 7, 1941; December 21, 1942; December 20, 1943; January 18, 1943; August 7, 1944; October 22, 1945; October 24, 1949; December 8, 1952.; October 22, 1956. See also "City Hall Rejects Twin Span," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 9, 1949. Convenient parking was also frequently referred to in terms of the public interest; see for example, Board of Supervisors, February 16, 1953.

⁴⁵¹ See Board of Supervisors, January 26, 1959.

⁴⁵² Mohl 678-679; Issel, 1999, 633.

⁴⁵³ See, for example, Jim Klein and Martha Olson, "Taken for a Ride," video documentary, New Day Films, 1996.

⁴⁵⁴ Schlesinger. See also Issel, 1999; and Mohl;.

⁴⁵⁵ Mohl.

⁴⁵⁶ Mohl, 679.

⁴⁵⁷ Issel, 1999, 634.

There were, however, other citywide agencies and planning agendas which did have immediate relevance to questions of race and ethnicity. While the primary focus of city agencies in the immediate postwar period was the development of a more efficient transportation network, the next most pressing concerns were the eradication of blight and public housing. According to the "Master Plan" a comprehensive urban renewal program would be needed. The primary methods for renewal would be conservation (the protection of stable areas through enforcement of building and zoning codes), rehabilitation (the restoration of existing structures which were showing early signs of blight), and redevelopment (the clearance and reconstruction of already blighted areas).⁴⁵⁸ The fundamental criterion for assessing blight was again the balance sheet: those areas which cost more in services than they brought in revenues were considered blighted. But by 1955, the Planning Department had developed more fine-grained measures. The Department worked up twenty-item list of weighted criteria. Mixed use was the most important criterion for assessing blight, followed by traffic accidents and block size. One of measures that was given the least weight, but which nonetheless appeared on the list, was "non-white population."⁴⁵⁹

In some senses the postwar renewal discussions reflected the same racial attitudes that were in place when HOLC conducted its survey of San Francisco in 1937. But the discussions also demonstrated that the city's historically tolerant attitude towards African Americans was changing as it became clear that the wave of war workers who had migrated from the South did not intend to return there.⁴⁶⁰ While the prewar discourses of San Francisco elites had often exhibited paternalistic language towards blacks, it was difficult to find comments that smacked of outright racism.⁴⁶¹ In discussions of urban renewal such comments became more common, though the messages were often coded. For example, in mounting the case for why the Geary-Fillmore neighborhood should be razed, the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association described the largely African American neighborhood as follows: "It's not white. It is gray, brown and an indeterminate shade of dirty black."⁴⁶² The cover art for the pamphlet showed a black blob extending tendrils from the Geary-Fillmore over the entire map of San Francisco: a black blight spreading through a healthy body. (See Figure 15.) But if these were thinly veiled expressions of planning advocates' hardening racial attitudes, it was not difficult to find these attitudes expressed in completely un-coded language, even well into the Civil Rights Era. In 1960, for example, the Crown Zellerbach Corporation wrote that the Geary-Fillmore neighborhood "presented the city with a problem unique in its history. It had degenerated into one of California's worst slums. Its population consisted mainly of 35,000 Negroes."⁴⁶³ After the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was established in 1948, its first order of business would be the Geary-Fillmore, a subject I address in more depth in the following chapter.

But while attitudes towards African American populations were hardening, attitudes towards Latino populations were much the same as they had been when HOLC

⁴⁵⁸ Land Use Plan, 1.

⁴⁵⁹ San Francisco Department of City Planning, "Housing and Neighborhood Conditions in San Francisco: A Classification of Areas for Urban Renewal," 1955, 4.

⁴⁶⁰ Crown Zellerbach, 33.

⁴⁶¹ See, for example, HOLC, Description for Area D-1.

⁴⁶² San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, 1947, 3.

⁴⁶³ Crown Zellerbach, 33.

surveyed the neighborhood. In spite of the fact that the Mission District was somewhere between 11% and 23% Latino by 1955, the Planning Department's report did not identify the neighborhood as having a non-white population.⁴⁶⁴ The neighborhood received penalties for "absence of setbacks from front and rear lot lines and for deterioration," "age of dwelling units," some "mixed land use," "traffic accidents and traffic conditions," "deficiencies in neighborhood facilities" and "overcrowding and monthly rent under \$40."⁴⁶⁵ However, the report did not classify the Mission as blighted, but stated that the neighborhood "should be considered susceptible to blight."⁴⁶⁶ Like the Master Plan before it, the 1955 report called for a mixture of rehabilitation, redevelopment, and conservation in the Mission.⁴⁶⁷ While city agencies continued to survey the neighborhood, a formal renewal plan—and a wave of protest—would not come until the mid-1960s.

Challenges to SFHA policies, on the other hand, were already well underway. In 1952, three African Americans—Mattie Banks, her husband James Charley, and Tobbie Cain—were denied an apartment at North Beach Place by the SFHA, which invoked the neighborhood pattern policy to explain its action. The NAACP mounted a legal campaign which culminated in *Banks v SFHA* (1954).⁴⁶⁸ In what would become an early landmark case in the Civil Rights Movement, the San Francisco Superior Court found that the neighborhood pattern policy violated the Fourteenth Amendment.⁴⁶⁹ The SFHA set aside 20 units in North Beach Place for African Americans, as ordered by the court, but it also appealed, continuing to defend the neighborhood pattern policy on the grounds that the court's decision would "spark white flight."⁴⁷⁰ The SFHA lost in Appellate Court, and both the California State Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court refused to hear the case, the latter in 1954.

Even after *Banks v SFHA* the Authority continued to drag its heels on integration, yet Valencia Gardens already had tenants with Hispanic surnames at least as early as 1953.⁴⁷¹ That the SFHA might well have been admitting Latino tenants to all white

⁴⁶⁴ In 1950 the Spanish-surname population of the Mission was at about 11% of a total population of 47,681; by 1960 it was 23% of 51,198 people; and by 1970 the figure was 45% of a total population of 51,979. Large areas of the neighborhood were more than 50% Latino. Godfrey, 154.

⁴⁶⁵ San Francisco Department of City Planning, 1955, 7-10 and Plates 1-15.

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ *Banks v. San Francisco Housing Authority* (1953) 120 Cal. App. 2d 1, certiorari denied (1954) 347 U.S. 974.

⁴⁶⁹ Baranski, 235-237. See also Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001) 143; Albert Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 226.

⁴⁷⁰ Baranski, 237.

⁴⁷¹ For more on SFHA resistance to integration, see Amy Howard, "Peace and Prosperity Dwell Among Virtuous Neighbors: America's Chinatown Housing Project," paper delivered to Society for American City and Regional Planning History, Oakland, 2009. Records pertaining to tenancy in Valencia Gardens during this period are unavailable to researchers. To ascertain the demographic traits of the tenants of Valencia Gardens, the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) examined the Crocker-Langley Directory between 1953 and 1974—the 1953 directory being the earliest with reverse listings by address, and the 1974 being one of the last. The HABS report concluded that at least one third of the occupants of the project had Hispanic last names during the entire period under study, and that at least some of those occupants were already there in 1953. HABS, Valencia Gardens Housing Project, 2004, 19-20.

public housing projects before *Banks* illustrates the persistence of what I have called Latinos' ambiguous racial status in San Francisco. According to the HOLC's 1937 report, it was only "Mexicans of mixed Indian extraction" that were regarded as an "inharmonious or undesirable" racial group by the San Francisco lending and real estate industries.⁴⁷² Perhaps the presence of Latinos in Valencia Gardens before *Banks* should not be thought of in terms of "integration" at all; perhaps Valencia Gardens continued to be all white, in 1953, as far as the SFHA was concerned. If such was the case, then it follows the SFHA regarded Latinos as members of the public—literally admitting them to "public housing"—only insofar as they remained invisible as Latinos.

In the immediate postwar period, city agencies expanded the membership of the public to include Latinos very gradually. But in the institutions internal to the Mission District—where the figure of the worker still took precedence over drivers and goods—the process of accepting Latinos as members of the public was accelerating. When it came to the physical spaces of the Mission District in the immediate postwar period, however, Latinos like other Mission residents were negotiating membership in the public only in the sense of public-as-beneficiary. When considered from the perspective of authority, there was no longer any public in the neighborhood: neither the Mission Merchants' Association, nor any other entity, was exerting influence over major decisions about what would be built where; that authority had been centralized downtown. Even so, there were many spaces in the Mission—store fronts and union halls, playgrounds and parish churches—which continued to benefit neighborhood residents. As the demographics of the Mission shifted, there arose a question of whether the composition of the beneficiaries of those spaces should shift also.

Latino as Worker: The Catholic Church and the Expansion of Publicness in the Mission

Census figures show that by 1950 the no-lined area of the northeastern Mission District was over 25% Latino; the heart of the Mission reached that figure by 1960.⁴⁷³ While the Mission Merchants' Association's promotional festivals had long had a decidedly Spanish theme, by 1961 the festival was renamed "Fiesta Latino-Americana."⁴⁷⁴ More Latino-owned businesses were appearing throughout the neighborhood, and more Anglo-owned businesses were advertising to Latinos. In the 1950s the NAACP began pushing the SFHA to include a nondiscrimination clause in its maintenance and construction contracts, as part of a strategy to force BTC-affiliated unions to integrate.⁴⁷⁵ Movement on this issue would not come until 1964, but the BTC had already created a Latino caucus: the *Obreros* (Laborers). The *Obreros* union was based in the Mission, where it opened its own hall—the *Centro Social Obrero*—in 1959, an act which would have been impossible in the early twentieth-century Mission District.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷² HOLC, 4.

⁴⁷³ Godfrey, 152.

⁴⁷⁴ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, September 5, 1961.

⁴⁷⁵ Baranski, 291.

⁴⁷⁶ Baranski, 291. The *Centro Social Obrero* was located at Nineteenth and Florida Streets.

All the major institutions in the Mission began to accommodate Latinos, and none more so than the Catholic Church. In 1960 the Catholic newspaper *The Monitor* reported that it "has been some years since San Francisco's Mission district last heard 'grosser Gott, wir Joben Dich' belted out in a solid Bavarian baritone. The steaming kettles of biersuppe are gone. Menus no longer mention kartoffelpfannekuchen. Today it's tortillas."⁴⁷⁷ The article, which was about the old German national parish of St. Anthony's, on 24th and Alabama Streets, narrated these culinary/cultural changes in an elegiac tone, but not a bitter one. Because the German-speaking population was becoming an English speaking population and was dispersing geographically by the end of World War II, St. Anthony's reverted to territorial status in 1948. Shortly thereafter it became the first Catholic parish in the Mission to offer Spanish-language services.⁴⁷⁸

Similar changes were underway at the traditionally Irish parish of St. Peter's, just to the southeast of St. Anthony's. The moment when the clergy at St. Peter's recognized a need to minister to a new public came around 1946, with the arrival of Father Nicolas Farana, a priest of Italian descent. Early in his tenure at St. Peter's, Father Farana observed that there were twelve Spanish-language Pentecostal and Baptist storefront churches within the parish boundaries.⁴⁷⁹ Farana suggested that the Catholic Church should also open storefront churches: "the idea," he explained, "was to meet competition with competition."⁴⁸⁰ Though the Church did not act on the "little parish" plan until the 1960s, years after Farana had left, the discussion opened the door to engagement with the growing Latino community.⁴⁸¹

In 1950 the parish appointed a Nicaraguan priest, Luis Almendares, as assistant pastor. Almendares began hearing confessions and giving counsel, as well as hosting "a Spanish Holy Hour on radio, reciting the rosary and giving a short sermon in Spanish, which was broadcast throughout the Bay Area," in the early 1950s.⁴⁸² By the early 1960s there was increasing pressure within St. Peter's to hold mass in Spanish. Father James Casey remembered that the "English-speaking Masses were poorly attended, and a lot of the people at those masses were Spanish-speaking."⁴⁸³ Casey and other members of the ministry told the aging pastor, Timothy Hennessey, "that we thought we could really fill up the church with a Spanish-speaking Mass."⁴⁸⁴ For most members of the ministry a transition seemed inevitable, but the change would not be free of ethnic tension.

In 1961 a parish employee named Isaura de Rodriguez presented Hennessey with a petition, bearing 500 signatures, to hold Spanish-language masses. Hennessey's first

⁴⁷⁷ James Kelly, "St. Anthony's German Traditions Linger," *The Monitor*, November 4, 1960.

⁴⁷⁸ James Casey, interview by Jeffrey Burns, March 20, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 4.

⁴⁷⁹ Nicholas Farana, interview by Jeffrey Burns, July 7, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 1.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ Farana, 2. The little parishes were eventually set up in the 1960s, with the help of the Mission Coalition Organization, about which more in the following Chapter.

⁴⁸² Jeffrey Burns, "¿Que es Esto? The Transformation of St. Peter's Parish, San Francisco, 1913-1990," in James Wind and James Lewis, eds., *American Congregations, Volume 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 416.

⁴⁸³ Casey, 4.

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.*

response was: "Why are the people so lazy? They should learn English."⁴⁸⁵ But after a concerted campaign by Rodriguez, Hennessey relented in 1963; the first Spanish-language mass that September was attended by over 1000 people. At one of the first of these masses, Father Hennessey found himself practicing announcements in Spanish when one of the older parishioners approached him to challenge "Why did you give in to them?"⁴⁸⁶ Though Hennessey himself had recently regarded the neighborhood's Spanish speaking Catholics as lazy, in the coming years he would become a crucial bridge across the ethnic divide. Father Casey remembered that Hennessey "called on the affection he enjoyed with the older Irish to smooth out relations between the groups, reconciling the older parishioners to the need for Hispanic ministry."⁴⁸⁷

Casey recalled that one event in particular forced the old guard to "face up to the fact that it was a Spanish-speaking" parish. Every year Hennessey had held a Mass to celebrate an old parish hero, Father Peter Yorke, who had been known in the Mission and beyond as the "labor priest." Each year the mass would get smaller because the older Irish parishioners "were dying off or losing interest."⁴⁸⁸ One year in the early 1960s, Hennessey and Casey found that the mass was attended by only 20 or so Irish and about 1000 Spanish-speaking parishioners. "Finally at the end of the Mass . . . we asked the Spanish-speaking to sing a hymn. They just blasted out. It was so beautiful."⁴⁸⁹ In the following years, the smaller group of those celebrating the life of Father Yorke moved their observance to the cemetery.

Though these changes were certainly painful for many of the older Irish residents, all available accounts suggest that most did indeed "face up" to the reality that the Mission was now a largely Latino neighborhood. In fact, members of the Catholic ministry recalled that there was more tension among Latinos of various national backgrounds, than there was between Latinos and Irish. Father Casey recalled that the Mexicans, who were mostly from rural backgrounds, had many cultural differences with the "Nicaraguans, Puerto Ricans and El Salvadorans" who had endured "that ground-grinding poverty in the city" of their home countries.⁴⁹⁰ Subtle differences in personal bearing and life experience no doubt exacerbated tensions when small conflicts over the space and programming of the church itself. One such conflict could be counted on every December, when the Nicaraguan celebration of the Immaculate Conception fell at about the same time as the Mexican celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe.⁴⁹¹

While there were occasional squabbles between and among all of the ethnic groups—Latino, Irish, and Italian—the clergy of St. Peter's recalled that there was an overarching class identification which took precedence. To explain the dynamic, it is worth quoting Father James Hagan at length:

⁴⁸⁵ Isaura Michel de Rodriguez, interview by Jeffrey Burns, July 17, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 1. See also, Deacon John Bourne, interview by Jeffrey Burns, April 6, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 20-33.

⁴⁸⁶ Burns, 419.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁸ Casey, 5.

⁴⁸⁹ Casey, 5-6.

⁴⁹⁰ Casey, 8.

⁴⁹¹ Casey, 9; Monsignor James Flynn, interview by Jeffrey Burns, January 30, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 6-7.

There were an awful lot of people who lived in the Mission District who liked the idea of living with their neighbors, from whatever part of the world, they were neighbors. Those are basically the people who stayed in the neighborhood. They went along with anybody who came. They preserved and added an awful lot to the neighborhood itself. People talk about the differences between ethnic communities, but I noticed that there were a number of people there who stood for other things besides their own ethnicity. They reached out and got to know the people and they were all considerate of others. They expected things to be bilingual in the events that went on. It wasn't only in the church where there was a reflection upon their life; it was in the school and in the labor unions. I remember there was an old Irishman named Luke O'Riley, who was a grass roots organizer in his union, and there was a guy named Jose Gomez, who could hardly speak English, and the two of them got along famously. . . . There were so many people in the neighborhood who enjoyed being with their fellow workers. They had a common sense and dignity about the working person, which was more important than what their country of origin was. I can think of people who chose to live there because of the ethnic diversity, not in spite of it. That included traditional old-line Catholics.⁴⁹²

According to Hagan, older parishioners' acceptance of the new population was not born only out of resignation. Rather, many of them felt a solidarity rooted in a respect for the figure of the worker.

As the union stronghold of San Francisco, the Mission District had never lacked in respect for the working person, but in the early part of the twentieth century such respect was given only on circumscribed terms. Even the internationalist faction of San Francisco labor did not regard people of Asian descent as dignified working people, but rather as "invading hordes."⁴⁹³ Father Yorke, the old "labor priest" of St. Peter's, was himself a vocal proponent of Asiatic exclusion in the early twentieth century.⁴⁹⁴ During that period the public was composed of local business people and white workers; the public interest was the economic prosperity of those same groups. Insofar as non-white workers competed with white workers, the former were regarded as a threat to the public interest.

The New Deal agencies that I have referred to as "pro-urban" contributed to a renegotiation of the public interest in the Mission by promoting not only economic prosperity, but more importantly economic equality. Having embraced the principles of economic equality, racial equality was not a cognitive leap for most Mission residents. As Hagan's impressions suggest, those Anglo residents who did not feel that it was in the public interest to promote racial equality were more likely to have taken FHA loans and left by the 1950s. But there were many others who liked the idea of being part of an ethnically expanding public, one founded on "a common sense and dignity about the

⁴⁹² Hagan, 3.

⁴⁹³ Michael Kazin, *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 164.

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid.*

working person, which was more important than what [a person's] country of origin was."⁴⁹⁵

Conclusion

During the 1940s and 1950s Mission-based merchants, unions, and Catholic parish churches all began to promote a vision of urban life which revolved around economic and racial equality. Workers were still dominant figures in the construction of the public in the Mission, just as they had been in the heyday of the BTC and the MPA. Only now ethnic minorities were also beginning to be thought of as workers, rather than as interlopers or scabs. But while the institutions internal to the Mission were amending well-established neighborhood practices and attitudes, governmental agencies were radically rethinking the very existence of neighborhoods, thinking not in terms of a laboring public, but rather a motoring public, a driving public, and a shipping public. In this vision, the public was constituted at the scale of the city, and the neighborhood figured only as a commodity.

The members of San Francisco's immediate postwar planning regime understood their activities as a reclamation and vindication of the principles behind the 1905 Burnham Plan. According to SPUR and the Department of City Planning, Burnham's scheme had been defeated by the so-called machine politicians of the Schmitz administration, who "had failed to grasp the real opportunity before the city."⁴⁹⁶ In fact, the Schmitz administration had been the plan's best hope.⁴⁹⁷ The Burnham Plan had actually been defeated by the *Chronicle*, by many downtown corporate interests, and by a motley collection of local homeowner and business groups, not least among them the MPA.⁴⁹⁸ But with a very real traffic problem to resolve, the facts of splintering interest groups and powerful neighborhoods would not help SPUR or the Department of City Planning to promote their own vision of San Francisco's future, a vision of an urban unity which would be guided by their own expertise. In 1947 promotional pamphlet, the Planning Commission expressed the vision as follows:

Whether you think of the new San Francisco as a group of neighborhoods within a framework of major traffic and transit streets or as a system of major streets bounding and linking together various neighborhoods, all the parts of the city relate to one another as neatly as the parts of an efficient mechanism or living organism. Each boulevard, each neighborhood has been conceived as part of a Master Plan.⁴⁹⁹

The lobbying activities of the postwar planning regime were successful in that they helped establish citywide authority as a common sense arrangement through media campaigns and even by influencing grade-school curricula. The authority of the municipality and the wisdom of its plans went unchallenged for more than a decade, until

⁴⁹⁵ Hagan, 3.

⁴⁹⁶ Crown Zellerbach, 19. See also San Francisco Department of City Planning, "Progress in City Planning: A Report to the People of San Francisco," 1948, 3.

⁴⁹⁷ See Judd Kahn, *Imperial San Francisco: Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897-1906* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979).

⁴⁹⁸ Kahn, 192-193.

⁴⁹⁹ San Francisco City Planning Commission, "New City: San Francisco Redeveloped," 1947, 6.

the first plans were translated from paper into concrete. But the moment that the Embarcadero Freeway was erected, the power of any entity to plan the physical space of the entire city would once again be attacked by homeowners, businesses, and neighborhoods—entities which were no longer content to be thought of as sub-units of the city, and which would soon reassert the prerogative to plan for themselves.

The historiography of the Freeway Revolt has focused on the process through which white suburbs sought to replan largely minority cities around their own shopping and commuting needs.⁵⁰⁰ These histories are part of a larger literature on postwar U.S. urbanism which has focused, in the main, on ethnic and racial polarization: white suburbs/black cities, white flight/urban decay.⁵⁰¹ These spaces and processes were indeed pervasive, but there were other spaces and processes which merit further study. The Mission District was one inner-city neighborhood which did not experience a precipitous sequence of disinvestment, racial transition, and "decline," but rather maintained much of its older population, fostered interethnic solidarity with newcomers, and retained sufficient tax base to make traffic engineers pause before ramming through a freeway.

Robert Self has argued that the metaphor of white flight, though convenient, has also served to obscure many of the institutional and social relations that determined postwar life. "White flight," he writes, "was less a flight than a complex and ideological process of state building within discrete spatial boundaries."⁵⁰² Anglos were not simply fleeing the city, as a crowd flees a natural disaster; rather, they were creating their own cities where they could establish their own policy priorities, tax regimes, and, one might add, aesthetic environment.

The white flight metaphor has also obscured the fact that many Anglos actually stayed in the city, where they too would soon engage in a new round of "state building"—this one at the scale of the neighborhood. The San Francisco Freeway Revolt has largely been explained as a contest pitting *City Against Suburb*, to borrow the title from Joseph Rodriguez's book on the subject. But the Freeway Revolt also marked the first salvo in a battle to reestablish the neighborhood as a "comprehensive planning unit." That battle would reach a pitch in 1965, when the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency unveiled an urban renewal plan for the Mission.

⁵⁰⁰ See Mohl; and J. Rodriguez.

⁵⁰¹ See Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1985] 1998).

⁵⁰² Self, 333.

Chapter 3 Figures:

Figure 1: Photograph of Estelle West's goats, from the *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, May 14, 1951. Source: Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-0369.



Figure 2: Photograph of Estelle West with her goats, from the *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, April 28, 1951. Source: Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID Number: AAC-0348.

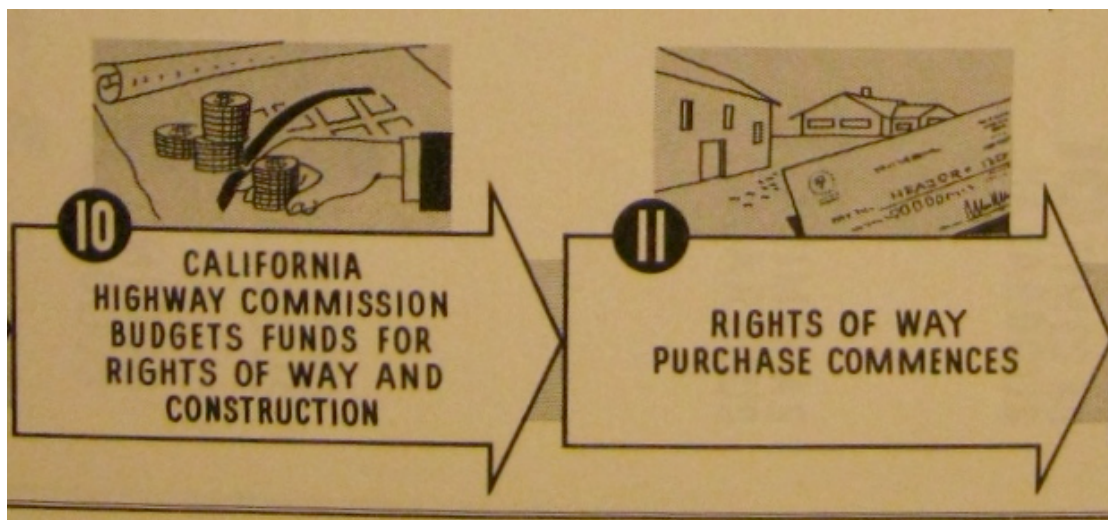


Figure 3: Panels describing the process of highway construction. Source: City and Country of San Francisco, "Mayor's Committee to Study Freeways: Final Report," April 22, 1960.

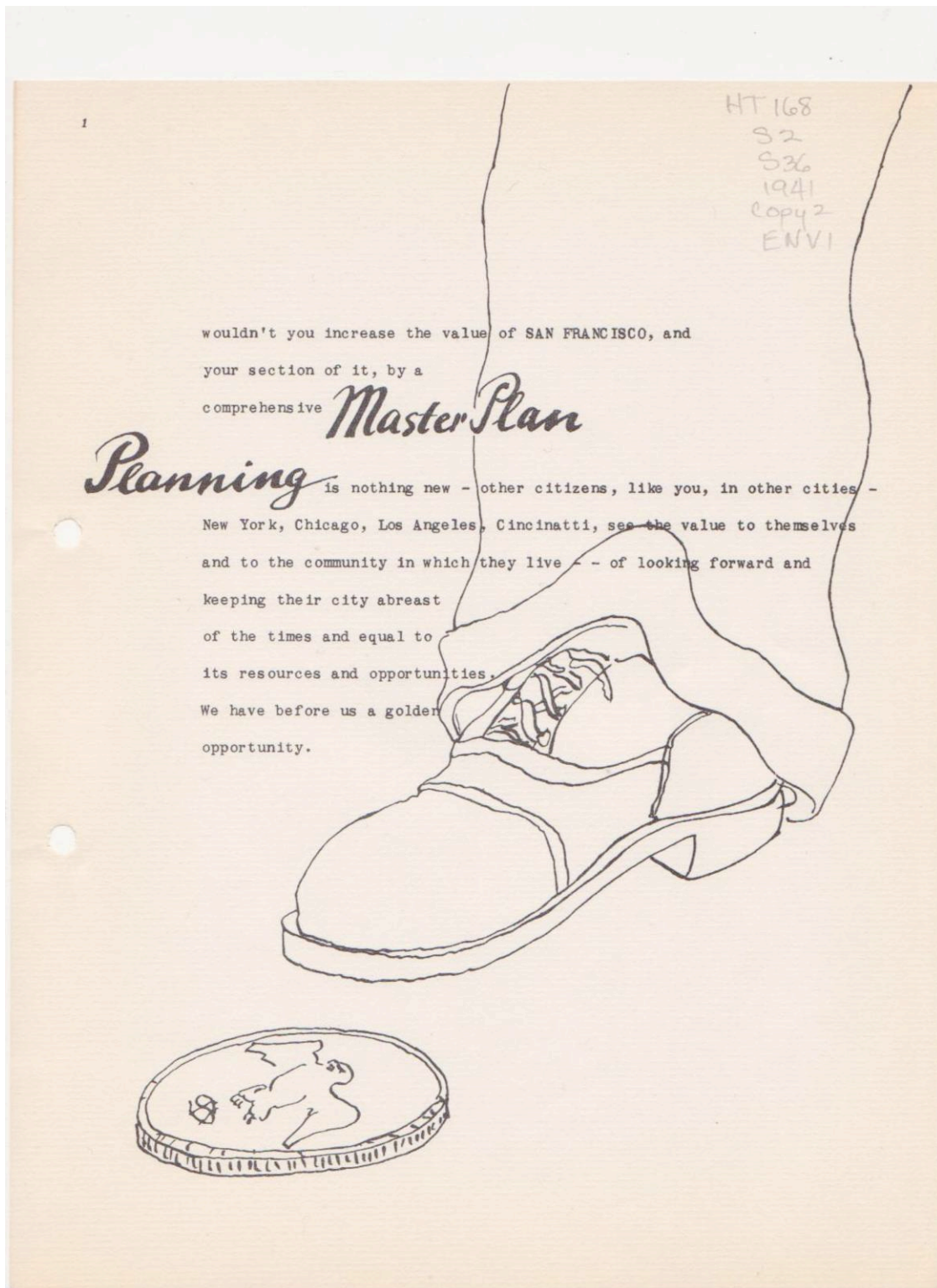


Figure 4. The opening page of "Now is the Time to Plan." Source: San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Now Is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco," 1941.

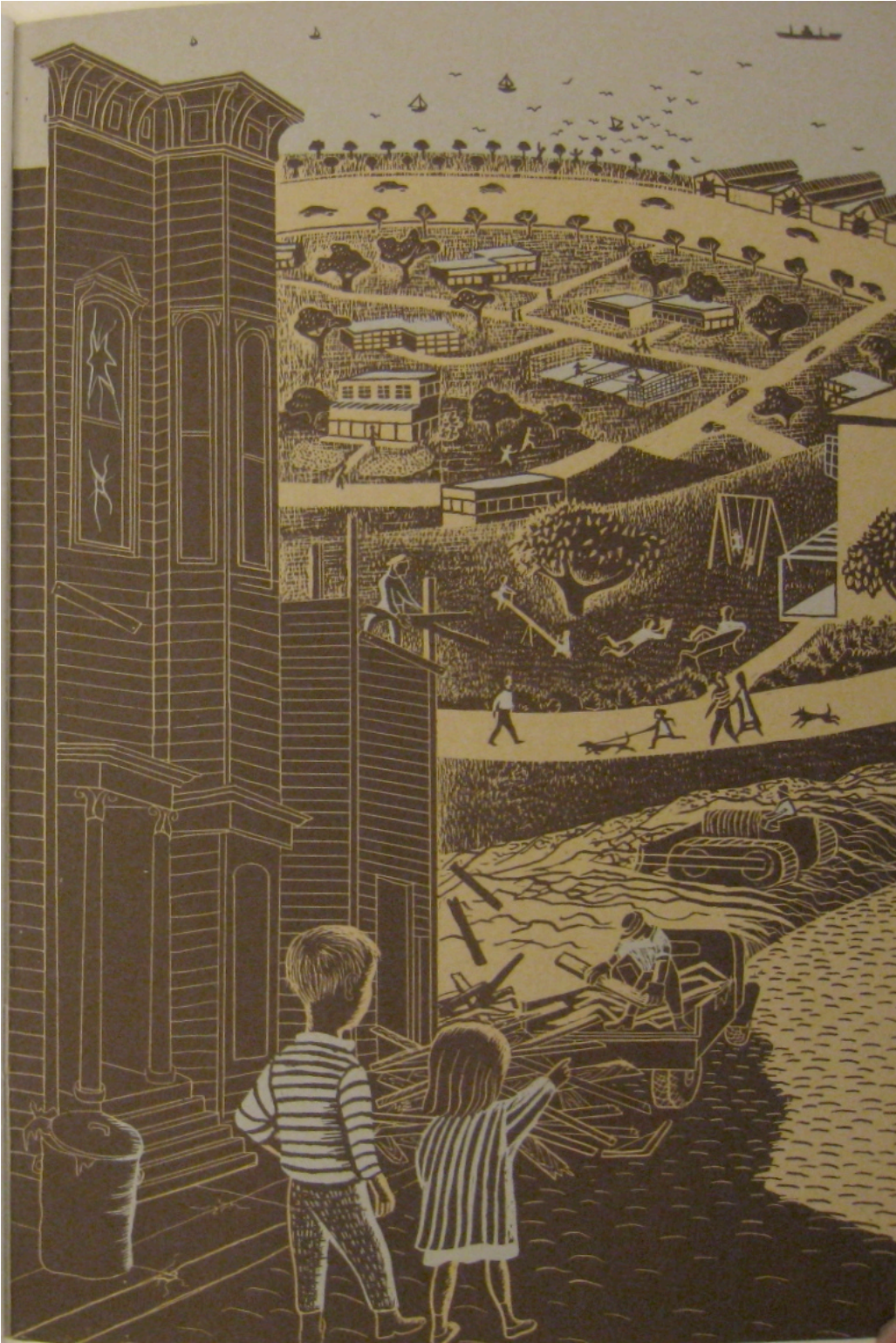


Figure 5: Illustration from elementary school text, 1948. Source: Elementary School Department, San Francisco Unified School District, "San Francisco Today: Book 1, San Francisco Social Studies Series," 1948, Vertical Files, Schools, Social Studies File, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

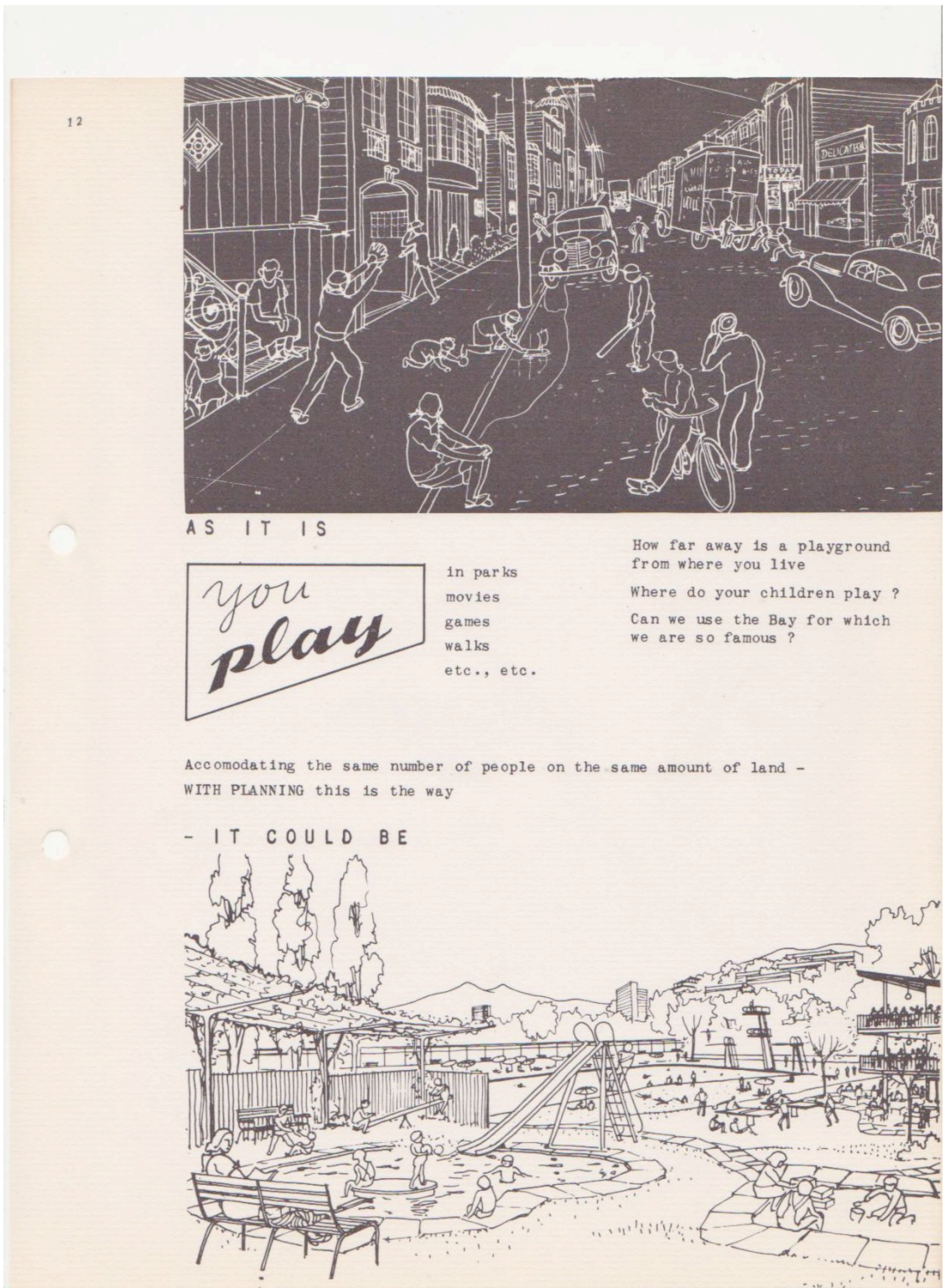


Figure 6: "You Play" panels, contrasting the scene "as it is," with children playing in the gutter, to a scene as "it could be": a modernist suburbia. Source: San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Now Is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco," 1941.



Figure 7: Dark urban present, bright suburban future. Source: San Francisco Department of City Planning, "Progress in City Planning: A Report to the People of San Francisco," 1948,

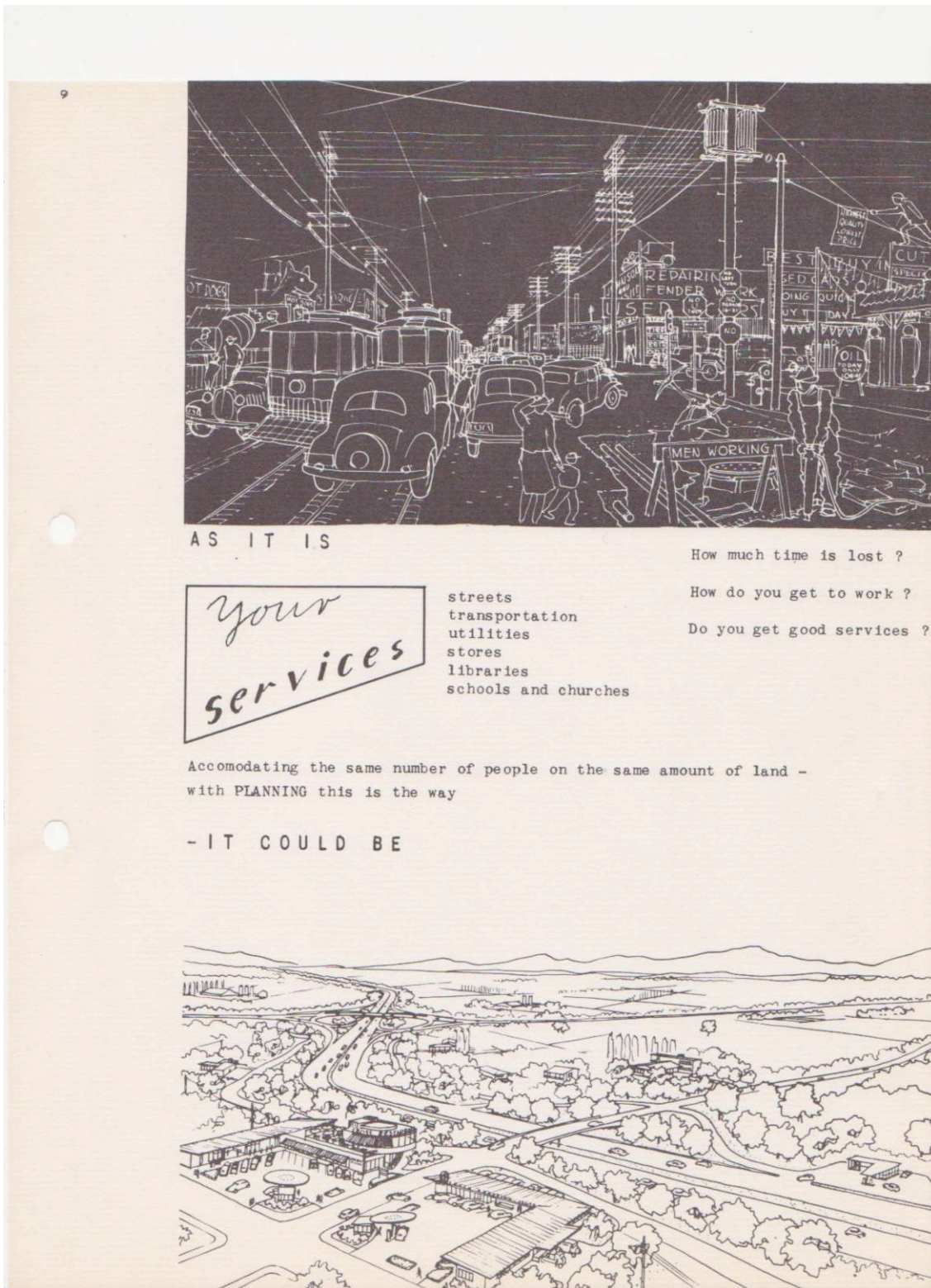


Figure 8: "Your Services" panels. Source: San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Now Is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco," 1941.

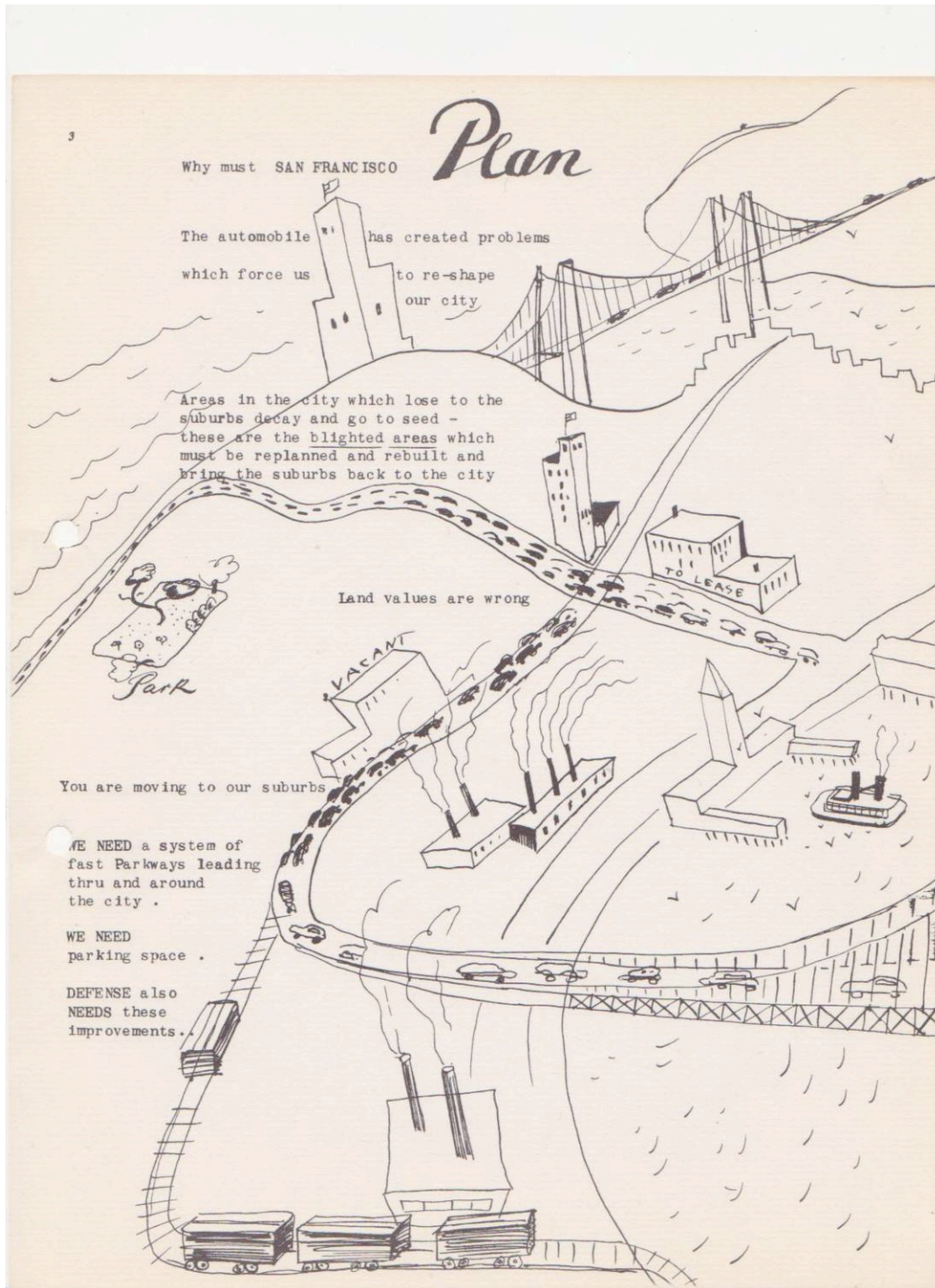


Figure 9: San Francisco represented as a site of production and as a transportation problem. Existing neighborhoods are represented as blank space. Source: Source: San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Now Is the Time to Plan: First Steps to a Master Plan for San Francisco," 1941.

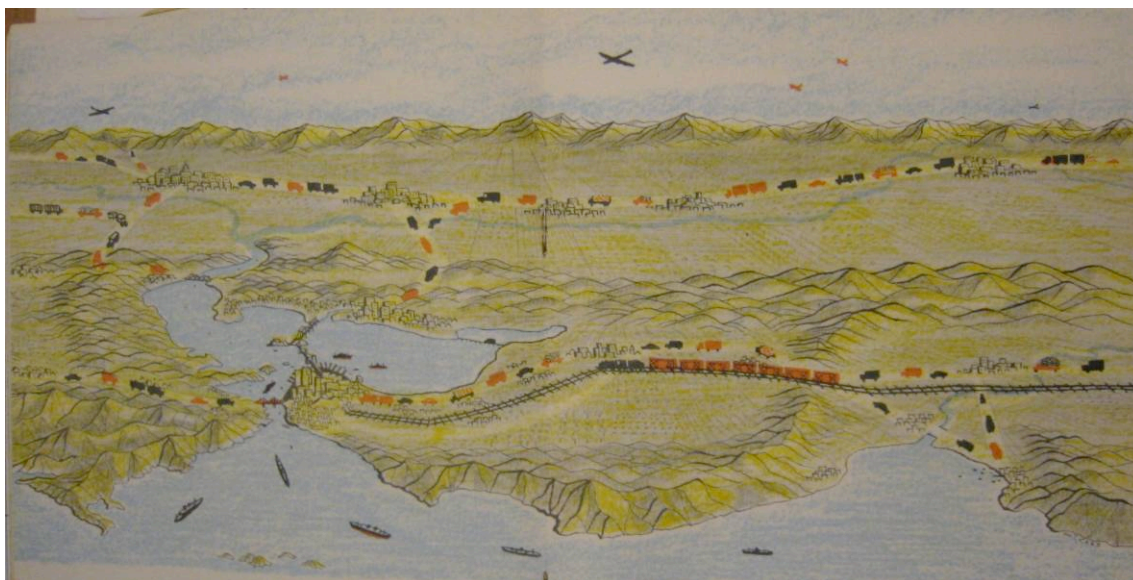


Figure 10: Illustration from elementary school text, 1948, showing transportation in the Bay Area and beyond. San Francisco appears at the tip of the peninsula, in the lower left. In the upper left appear the cities of the San Joaquin Valley. Source: Elementary School Department, San Francisco Unified School District, "In and Out of San Francisco: Book 2, San Francisco Social Studies Series," 1948, Vertical Files, Schools, Social Studies File, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Figure 11: Map showing proposed southern crossing, and rail and highway lines from southern crossing, up eastern coast of San Francisco, into downtown. Grey indicates areas subject to future industrial growth; black indicates areas subject to residential development. Source: City and County of San Francisco, "The Case for the Southern Crossing," 1949, Box 2, Folder 1, Mayor Elmer Robinson Files, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

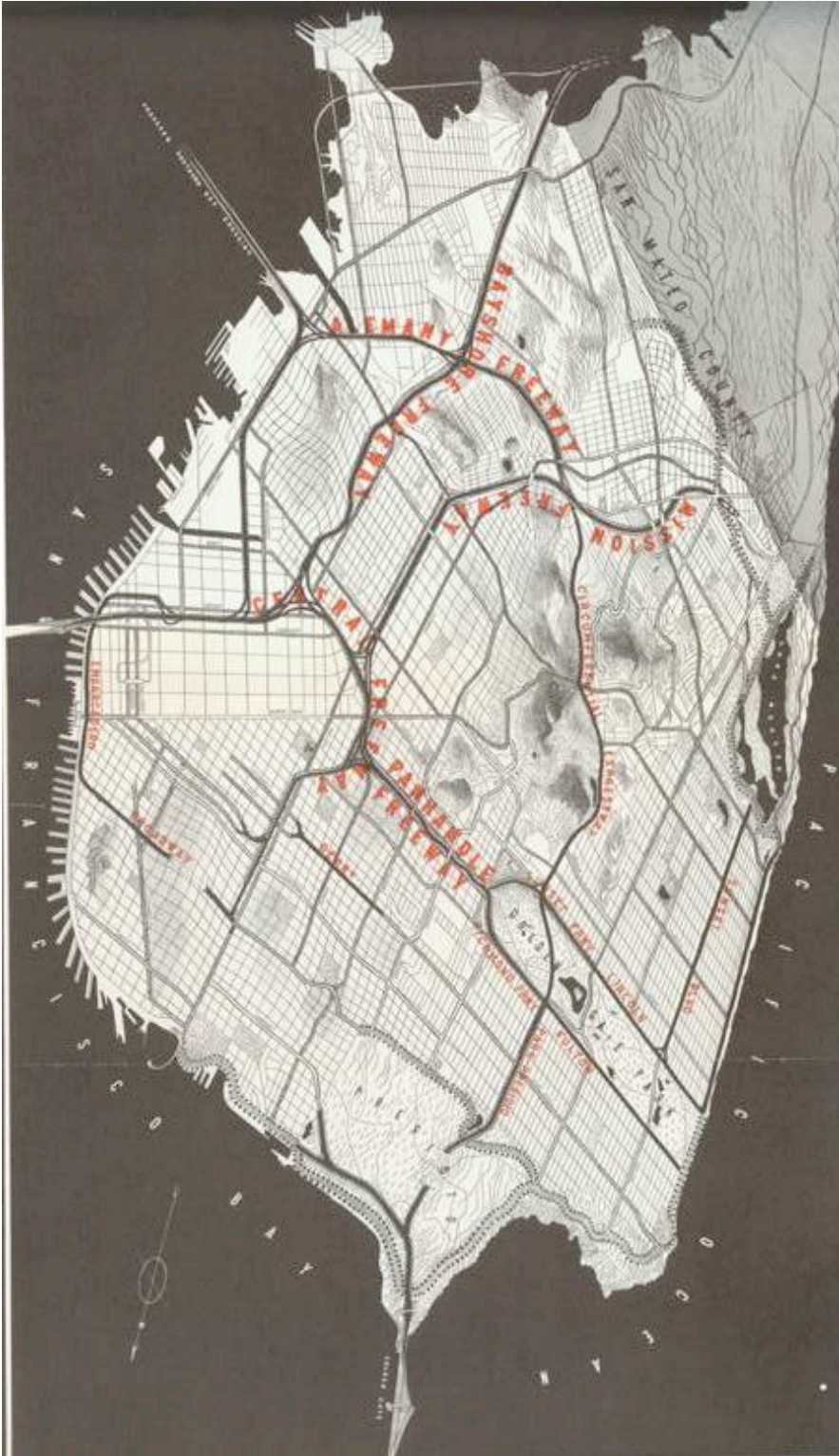


Figure 12: 1948 Highway Plan for San Francisco. Source: De Leuw Cather and Company Consulting Engineers, with Ladislav Segoe and Associates Consulting City Planners, "Report to the City Planning Commission on a Transportation Plan for San Francisco," 1948.

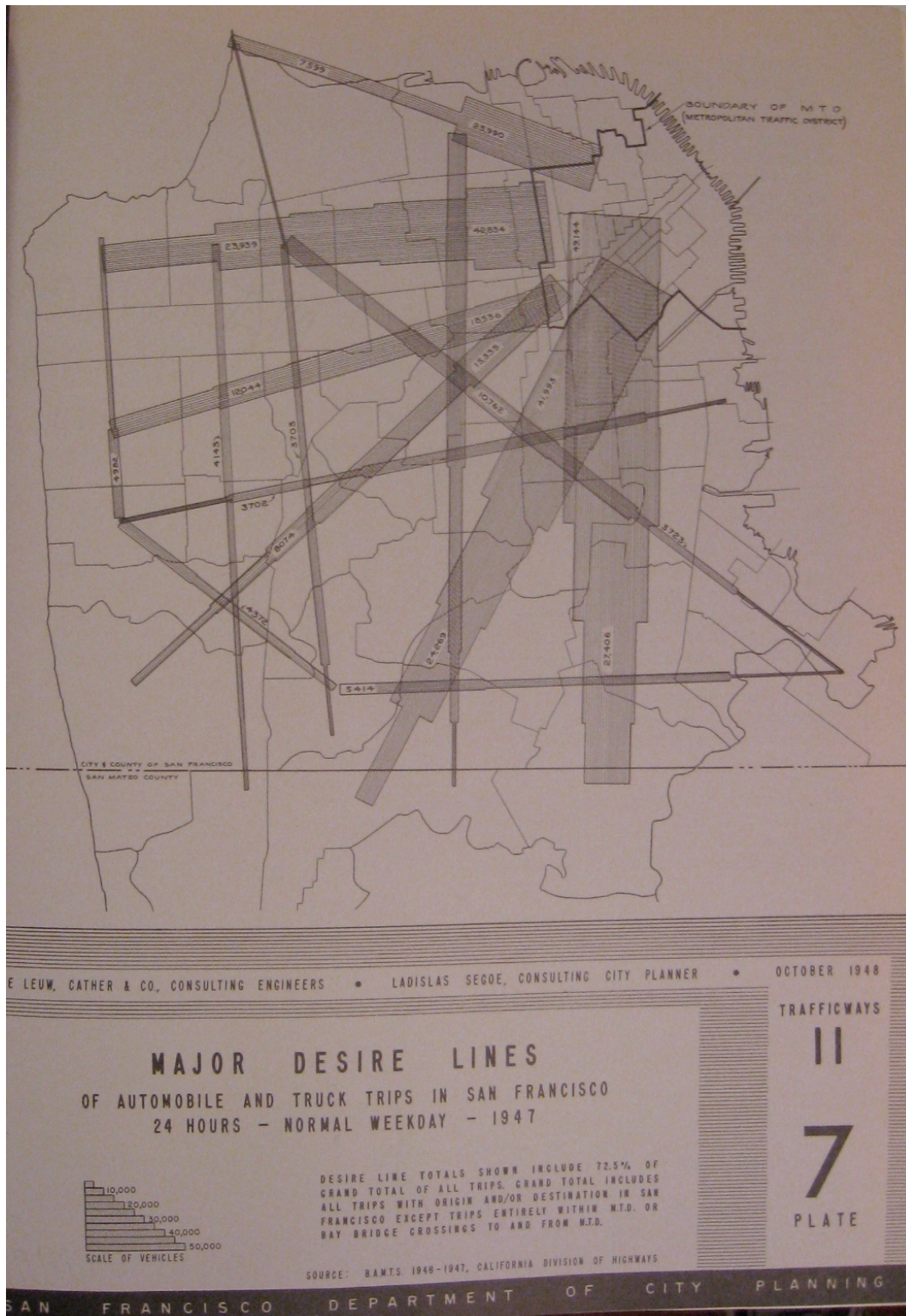


Figure 13: Major Desire Lines, 1948. De Leuw Cather and Company Consulting Engineers, with Ladislav Segoe and Associates Consulting City Planners, "Report to the City Planning Commission on a Transportation Plan for San Francisco," 1948.

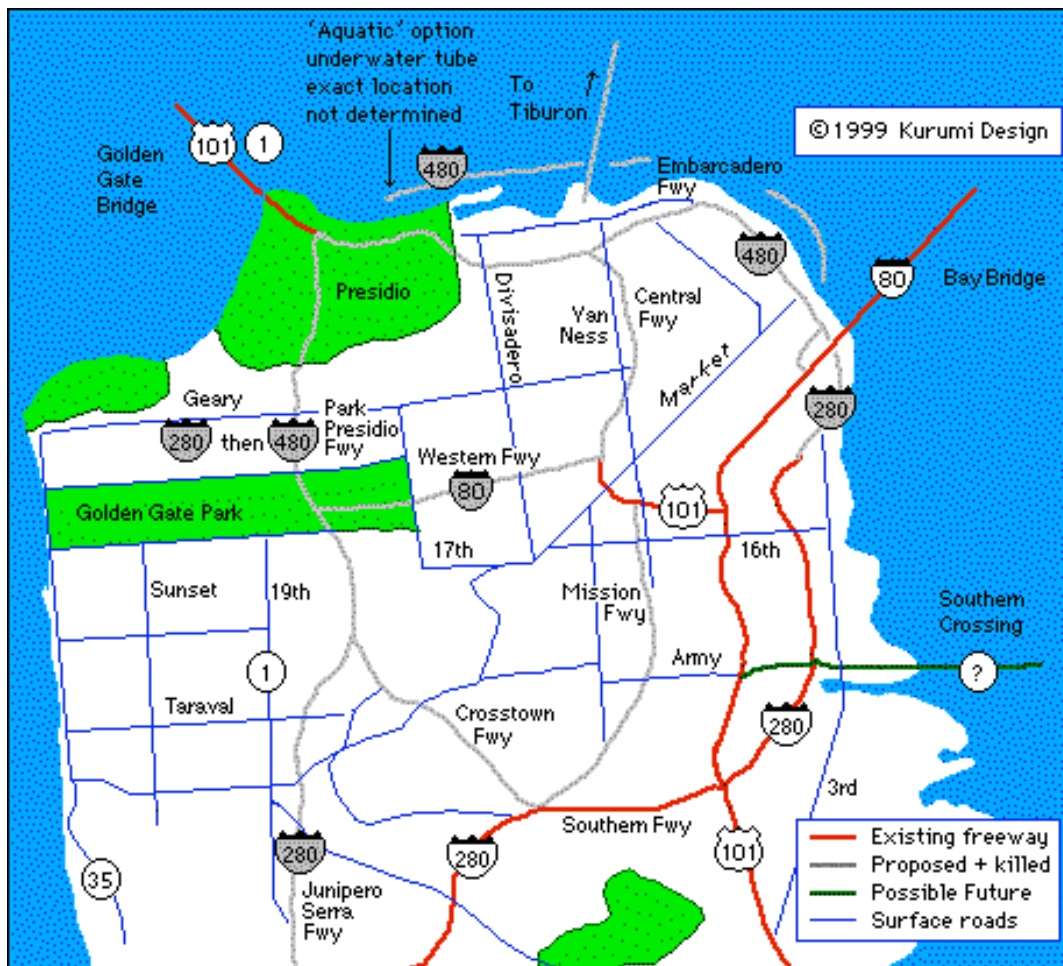


Figure 14: Map showing existing, proposed, and "killed" freeways. Source: California Highways website, accessed December 9, 2009, <http://www.cahighways.org/maps-sf-fwy.html>.

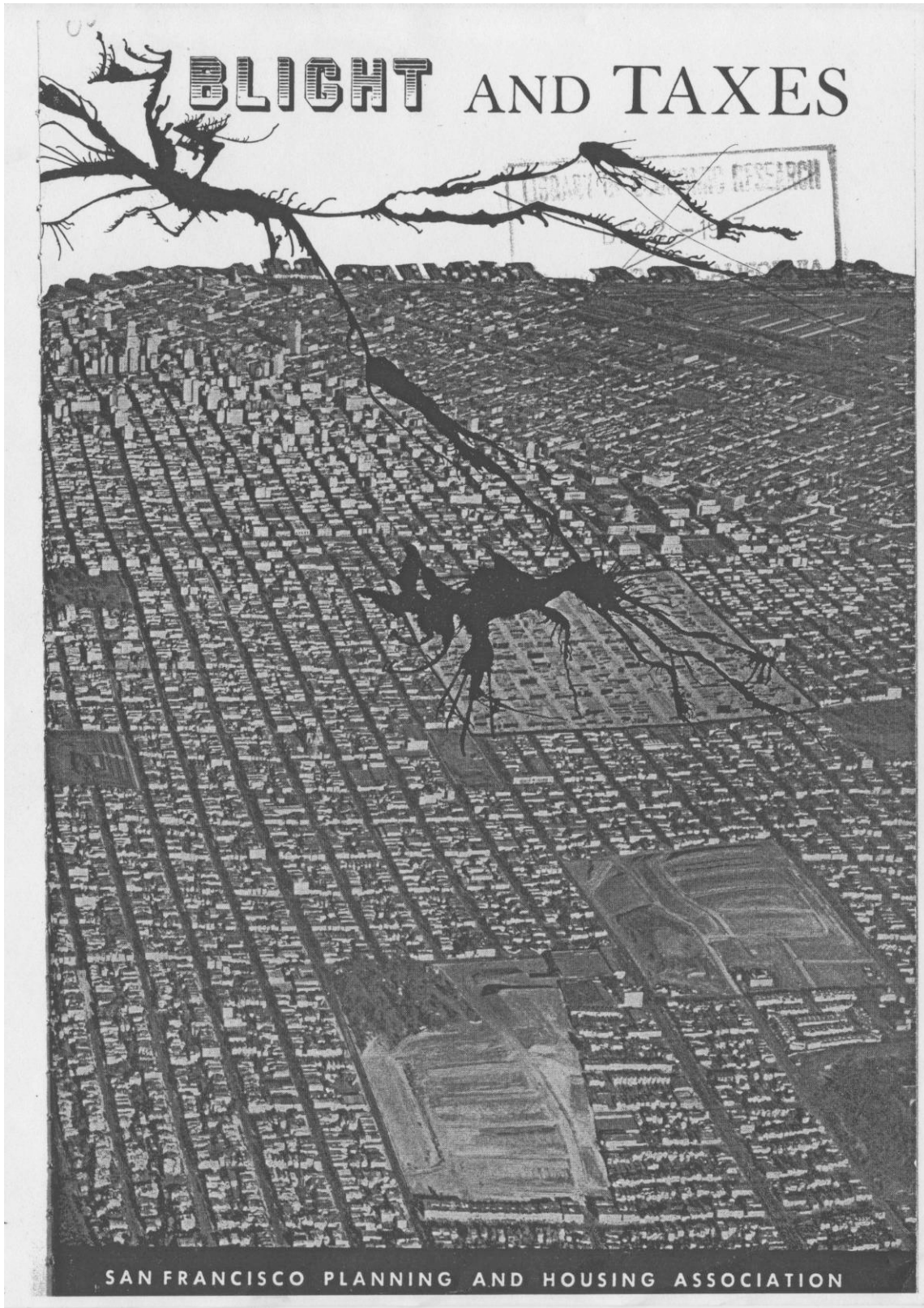


Figure 15: Cover of "Blight and Taxes." Source: San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, "Blight and Taxes," 1947.

Chapter Four: The New Public in the Old Neighborhood: Multiethnic Coalitions and Neighborhood Authority through Urban Renewal, 1961-1973

In the immediate postwar period, city and state agencies ran roughshod over the wishes of Mission District residents, homeowners, and merchants. Within the structures of municipal, state, and federal government that existed before World War II, neighborhood was a scale at which the public interest was constituted; but in the immediate postwar period, neighborhood registered only as a special interest. In the 1960s, a broad-based coalition of neighborhood groups—calling itself the Mission Council on Renewal (MCOR) and later the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO)—would challenge this arrangement, demanding and winning a measure of planning authority that the Mission had not enjoyed since the days of the Mission Promotion Association (MPA) and the Rolph mayoralty.

Like the MPA, MCOR and the MCO were formed partly in response to an urban plan that was endorsed at the municipal level, but that was formed with little input from neighborhoods: the MPA was formed in the context of the Burnham Plan, and the MCO coalesced partly in reaction to an urban renewal plan which was designed to coordinate with a proposed regional transit rail system.⁵⁰³ But unlike the MPA, which advocated explicitly on behalf of Anglo residents, MCOR and the MCO were multiethnic organizations, with Latino/Anglo leadership, that advocated on behalf of all Mission residents, irregardless of race, ethnicity, or nativity. While the MPA was motivated by a desire to promote the "material, social, and moral advancement" of the neighborhood, MCOR and the MCO were motivated by a desire to allow current residents to remain in the Mission, and to have a say in how the neighborhood would be planned, in the face of the federal policies and global economic forces which were transforming San Francisco.⁵⁰⁴ So while the MPA had equated the public interest with economic prosperity, MCOR and the MCO equated the public interest with a right to be present, and to participate in whatever decisions would be made on behalf of the neighborhood.

These organizations' defensive stance with respect to municipal planning initiatives invites comparisons to other battles over urban renewal in the United States. Perhaps the most notable of these was the 1961 confrontation between residents of New York City's Greenwich Village and the City Planning Commission which was drawing up plans to clear much of the neighborhood, an episode now largely remembered as a fight between the activist author Jane Jacobs and the "master builder" Robert Moses—a David and Goliath story.⁵⁰⁵ Indeed, existing literature on MCOR and the MCO has painted a picture of a zero-sum contest between the neighborhood and the San Francisco

⁵⁰³ In the planning stages, this system was known as the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BARTD). After opening in 1972, it came to be known simply as BART.

⁵⁰⁴ Mission Promotion Association, "Constitution and Bylaws," 1909, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society, unpaginated.

⁵⁰⁵ See especially Ken Burns, *New York, Episode 7: The City and the World*, PBS, 1999. Documentary. See also Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* (New York: Random House, 2009).

Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), a contest which the neighborhood won, having "stopped" or "defeat[ed]" urban renewal.⁵⁰⁶

In the present Chapter, I argue against this interpretation of the encounter between the neighborhood and the redevelopment agency. While outstanding work has been produced on the internal dynamics of the MCO, particularly by Manuel Castells, none of the existing scholarly studies of urban renewal in the Mission make use of documents from the SFRA, not even the 1966 urban renewal plan itself. This Chapter will show that the SFRA's plan for the Mission was more sensitive to existing physical and social fabric than the "bulldozer urban renewal projects" familiar to urban historians from neighborhoods like Boston's West End and San Francisco's Western Addition.⁵⁰⁷ Citing accounts from key MCOR and MCO organizers, as well as the minutes of the SFRA's regular meetings, I emphasize that the neighborhood groups sought to collaborate with the redevelopment agency. Once the MCO gained control over federal planning money through the Model Cities program, the neighborhood groups actually acted on almost all of the SFRA's initial recommendations.

This analysis highlights the fact that the neighborhood groups did not seek to separate themselves from "central authority," as Castells suggests, but rather that they, like the MPA, sought to become a locus of authority.⁵⁰⁸ From the beginning, MCOR's and then the MCO's relationship with municipal and federal agencies was as much collaborative as it was confrontational. Finally, this Chapter demonstrates that the oppositional and, in many respects, insular politics that are sometimes attributed to MCOR and the MCO actually better describe a radical Latino youth organization, called *Los Siete de la Raza* (The Seven of the Race), which formed in response to police harassment in the Mission in 1969. Aligning themselves with the Black Panthers in Oakland, Los Siete was a self-described "Third World" defense organization which offered not only a social service program that responded to some of the everyday needs of the Mission's poorest residents, but also a revolutionary postcolonial critique of the politics of space and race.⁵⁰⁹

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the public can be conceived of as being divided between those who are allowed to make decisions (authority) and those who are intended to benefit from the decisions made (beneficiaries). The difference between the politics of Los Siete and those of the MCO can be described in terms of their

⁵⁰⁶ Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco, Revised and Updated Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 330. Also see Manuel Castells, "City and Culture: The San Francisco Experience," in Ida Susser, ed., *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, [1983] 2002), 144. The exception to this pattern is Tomas Francisco Sandoval, "Mission Stories, Latino Lives: The Making of San Francisco's Latino Identity, 1945-1970," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2002, 147.

⁵⁰⁷ Hartman, 330. See also Herbert Gans, *Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York: The Free Press, Updated and Expanded edition, 1982); Rick Butler, *The Fillmore*, KQED, San Francisco, 2001. Documentary.

⁵⁰⁸ Castells, 138.

⁵⁰⁹ "Third World" defense organizations like the Black Panthers drew on Mao Zedong's "notion of a united Third World aligned against the colonial West and his program of moral self-improvement." See Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 224. The most detailed work on Los Siete is Jason Ferreira, "All Power to the People: A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco, 1968-1974," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2003, Chapters 5-8.

stances vis-à-vis this divide in the public: Los Siete did not acknowledge the legitimacy of any such divide; in other words, no authority was acceptable unless it was identical to the beneficiaries. The MCO, on the other hand, did accept this divide, sharing authority with municipal and other agencies, in order to guarantee federal funding, even though such agencies were not rooted in the neighborhood. In order to explain how these arrangements functioned, how they influenced ethnic relations, and how they fit into the longer history of the public in the Mission District, it is necessary to begin by explaining some of the physical and social transformations that were underway in the neighborhood and the broader city.

The City in the World, and the Neighborhood in the City

The 1960s witnessed profound changes to the physical, sociopolitical, and economic landscape of San Francisco. Even as World War II had raged a group of the city's largest banks and corporations began an effort to plan a new city, one designed for the needs of a new economy.⁵¹⁰ This new economy would rely less on the production and transportation of goods, and more on the management of companies which were competing throughout the Pacific Rim and the world. Accordingly, the new San Francisco would need fewer rails for boxcars and more freeways for commuters, less working-class housing and more middle-class housing, fewer breweries or garment factories and more offices. In the 1960s, the transformation of San Francisco shifted into high gear: between 1960 and 1964, the city added 573,000 square feet of office space; between 1970 and 1974, it added 1,631,400 square feet of office space.⁵¹¹ During the 1960s and 1970s, "jobs in the manufacturing and wholesale trade sectors dropped sharply in numbers—and even more as a proportion of total employment—and were replaced by jobs in the real estate, insurance, retail trade, office, and financial sectors."⁵¹² According to Chester Hartman, by "the mid-1970s, San Francisco was second only to New York City among U.S. cities as a center of international commerce and banking."⁵¹³

These changes registered in the physical and social environment of the Mission District. Mission Street was still the "largest center of consumer activity outside of the central business district." The theaters, department stores, and furniture stores continued to do brisk business, but pawn shops and porn theaters were also beginning to open on the street, to the dismay of the Mission Merchants Association and many of the Latino families.⁵¹⁴ Industrial businesses continued moving away from the formerly no-lined area of the northeastern Mission, leaving many aging structures which, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce reported, had housed a range of "medium industry, including metal fabricators, contractors of all types, trucking, food processors, garment manufacturers, warehousing, building materials, and industrial suppliers."⁵¹⁵ Several

⁵¹⁰ Prominent among these interests was the Crocker Bank; Blyth, Eastman Dillon & Co., an investment banking firm; and the Zellerbach Paper Company. See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

⁵¹¹ Hartman, 3. Also see Castells.

⁵¹² Hartman, 3.

⁵¹³ *ibid.*

⁵¹⁴ San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and Mayor's Office of Economic Development, "Neighborhood Profile: The Mission District of San Francisco," 1975, 16.

⁵¹⁵ San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, 9.

abandoned breweries were a conspicuous presence in the built environment of the northeastern Mission.

With rents in the Mission at about 78% of the city-wide average in 1960, housing vacancies were quickly filled with immigrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico.⁵¹⁶ In 1950 the Spanish-surname population of the Mission was about 11%, by 1960 it was 23%, and by 1970 the figure was 45%.⁵¹⁷ Large areas of the neighborhood, like the northeastern corner and the central Mission, were more than 50% Latino by 1970.⁵¹⁸ In 1957, the old MPA hall was taken over by a Mexican restaurant called “El Borrego” (the Lamb) after having stood vacant for years. By the mid-1960s a restaurant called “La Cumbre” (the Summit) moved into the former hall; next door, the Tile Helpers Local no. 7 and the Terrazo Helpers Local no. 115 maintained their offices.⁵¹⁹ At the time of writing in 2009, the old MPA hall is still occupied by La Cumbre, though the neighboring unions moved away decades ago. Built in 1909, the MPA hall was the home of the neighborhood’s most influential organization, a *de facto* governing body which drove policy pertaining to the built environment of the Mission District and most of the southern half of San Francisco. The building was constructed in a Spanish colonial style, with white stucco and red tiled eaves, in order to advertise the Mission District’s claim to civic legitimacy as the oldest continuously inhabited section of the city. By the 1950s, however, the red tile appliqué was long since stripped away. El Borrego did not reclaim a Spanish building—the original MPA hall was an explicitly Anglo space to begin with—rather, the owners of El Borrego moved into one of many nondescript commercial properties that were increasingly coming vacant by the end of the decade.

Throughout the 1960s, the Catholic parish church of St. Peter’s expanded its advocacy on behalf of workers and Latinos. The church created a Catholic Council for the Spanish Speaking. In 1961, St. Peter’s joined the Cursillo movement, an international effort to train laypeople for Spanish language ministry.⁵²⁰ But the church also began to expand beyond strictly ecclesiastical activities. In 1965, St. Peter’s helped to found the Organization for Business Economic and Community Advancement (OBECA)/Arriba Juntos (Upwards Together), a Latino community service organization with offices in the Redstone Building (the old Labor Temple).⁵²¹ By the end of the 1960s, St. Peter’s was engaged in a number of activities which would make it controversial among conservative elements of the Mission and San Francisco. Father James Hagan began preaching sermons on housing, racial equality, and the Vietnam War. Hagan would also, on occasion, allow his friend Cesar Chavez to preach sermons.⁵²² St. Peter’s served as an urban base for the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), organizing pickets of the Safeway grocery stores, and arranging meetings between the UFW and other San

⁵¹⁶ Brian Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco’s Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1988), 150-1.

⁵¹⁷ Godfrey, 150 and 154.

⁵¹⁸ Godfrey, 154.

⁵¹⁹ *Polk’s San Francisco City Directory, 1953-1967.*

⁵²⁰ Jeffrey Burns, “¿Que es Esto? The Transformation of St. Peter’s Parish, San Francisco, 1913-1990,” in James Wind and James Lewis, eds., *American Congregations, Volume 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 432.

⁵²¹ Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), “A Plan for the Inner Mission, Book 2,” 1974, 35.

⁵²² James Hagan, interview by Jeffrey Burns, June 19, 1989, transcript, St. Peter’s Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 20.

Francisco-based grocery chains. Hagan recalled that for one week, in the late 1960s, there were 500 farm workers sleeping on the floor of St. Peter's.⁵²³ By 1970, the parish church was assisting Los Siete de la Raza by donating space for meetings and for the operation of a free breakfast program for children.⁵²⁴

The labor presence in the neighborhood was diminishing. The Building Trades Temple had stood at Guerrero and 14th Streets since 1908, when the BTC-controlled Union Labor Party dominated not only industrial relations, but also city government. This symbol of labor's political ascendancy burned in 1959. The building was later purchased by a development company called Security Builders, who replaced it with an apartment building containing 42 units of market-rate housing.⁵²⁵ A Latino Caucus of the BTC formed its own union, known as the Obreros (workers) Local 261, and opened the Centro Social Obrero Hall on 19th and Florida Streets. When it came to questions relating to the social and physical space of the neighborhood, the Obreros were now the Mission's most influential union.⁵²⁶

The San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC) continued to struggle. As industry moved away, so too did the unions that had once occupied the Labor Temple which had stood at 16th and Capp Streets since 1914, forcing the SFLC to take out a series of loans for upkeep. At least 55 unions had held meetings in the Temple in the prewar period; now only a handful did. By the 1960s, the SFLC began renting space to Latino community organizations.⁵²⁷ As the old SFLC headquarters transitioned into a community center, residents stopped referring to it as the "Temple," and began referring to it as the "Redstone Building." Community service space was in increasing demand all over the neighborhood. By the end of the 1960s, the National Guard used only about one fourth of the armory's 269,000 square feet, and that mainly on weekends; many neighborhood groups fought (unsuccessfully) to have the armory converted to a community center.⁵²⁸

Social services were in high demand because physical and social conditions were deteriorating. The SFRA reported that 23% of the housing in the Mission lacked "adequate plumbing."⁵²⁹ A new local paper called the *Nueva Mission/New Mission* regularly issued reports, like the 1968 "Facts on Glue Sniffing," about the

⁵²³ *ibid.*

⁵²⁴ During the 1960s, St. Peter's developed a reputation, in San Francisco and beyond, as a radical church. One measure of this reputation would come in 1974: Hagan recalled that "when Patty Hearst was abducted . . . the Symbionese Liberation Army had a representative call me and said, 'Would St. Peter's be a place where they could give out the food that was gained by the ransom payments from the Hearst family?' On the phone I basically told them to go to hell." Hagan and St. Peter's advocated on behalf of unions and Latino social service groups, but never ventured condoned some of the more radical politics that flourished in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The parish church's support of Los Siete was not an endorsement of the group's revolutionary discourse; rather the church was supporting Los Siete's commitment to the principles of self determination and mutual assistance, and its commitment to the space of the neighborhood. See Hagan, 20; and J. Burns, 434-435.

⁵²⁵ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) Regular Meeting Minutes, July 8, 1966, 18.

⁵²⁶ Mike Miller, "An Organizer's Tale," unpublished manuscript, 1974, 6; Castells, 165.

⁵²⁷ MHDC, 35.

⁵²⁸ MHDC, 19.

⁵²⁹ San Francisco Department of City Planning (SFDCP) and San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), "A Survey and Planning Application for Mission Street Survey Area (A Summary)," 1966, 3.

neighborhood's troubles, particularly among young people.⁵³⁰ Mike Miller, an organizer who would become prominent in the Mission, wrote that in the mid 1960s the "neighborhood had its full share of problems: city services were inadequate; the quality of the schools was poor; rents were beginning to skyrocket; unemployment was high, especially among teenagers and young adults; many people, including the elderly, were fearful to leave their homes—because of the local crime rate; large families were in desperate need of child-care services; health care was inadequate."⁵³¹ These were the physical and social conditions that prevailed within the Mission in 1966, when the SFRA put forward a plan. Before analyzing the details of that plan and its reception, it is necessary to review the basic facts of the federal urban renewal program.

Planning for the Renewal of the Nation, the City, and the Mission

The nationwide urban renewal program effectively began when the United States Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949. The stated aim of the Act was to realize "as soon as feasible the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family."⁵³² Part of the aim was also to expand and modernize existing downtowns, removing aging industrial and residential fabric to accommodate the spatial requirements of the service sector that lawmakers predicted would soon compose a much larger proportion of the economy. To accomplish these aims, Title I of the Act provided federal funding for a program of "slum clearance," expanding and streamlining powers of eminent domain for municipalities. Title II allocated funding to create 810,000 units of public housing nationwide, only about 370,000 of which were actually created by 1964.⁵³³ The 1954 Housing Act added to the existing program provisions for the rehabilitation of existing structures; the 1965 Housing and Urban Development Act added rent supplements for low income tenants. In 1973 the program effectively ended when the Nixon administration put a moratorium on all federal housing and community development assistance as part of his "new federalism" program.⁵³⁴

The San Francisco Planning and Housing Association began anticipating the disbursement of federal money for renewal at least as early as 1941, and was instrumental in creating the SFRA in 1948, well before the passage of the 1949 Housing Act.⁵³⁵ To qualify for Title I monies, rehabilitation funds, or rent supplements for a specific area, a city was required to declare the area as "blighted"; criteria for assessing blight were left to local governments. As I discussed in the preceding chapter, San Francisco's postwar planning regime defined a blighted area as one that cost more in services than it generated in tax revenue.⁵³⁶ More fine-grained measures included non-white population,

⁵³⁰ Paco Steele, "Facts on Glue Sniffing," *Nueva Mission/New Mission* 2, no. 5, 1968, 1.

⁵³¹ Mike Miller, "The Mission Coalition Organization and the Model Cities Program," unpublished pamphlet, 1981, 3-4. See also Miller, 1974, 118.

⁵³² 42 U.S.C. 1441

⁵³³ David Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 186.

⁵³⁴ Frederick Wirt, *Power in the City: Decision Making in San Francisco* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1974), 248.

⁵³⁵ See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

⁵³⁶ San Francisco Planning and Housing Association, *Blight and Taxes*, 1947.

average rental prices, average income, homeownership rates, condition of structures, and—most importantly—mixed use.⁵³⁷

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the SFRA began its first three projects: Diamond Heights, a sparsely populated hilly area south of Twin Peaks and west of the Mission; the Golden Gateway, the area of the produce market between the financial district and the Embarcadero which was operated mostly by Italian residents of North Beach; and the Western Addition, the primarily African American neighborhood that the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association had surveyed in its 1947 *Blight and Taxes* pamphlet. The SFRA easily overcame the little community resistance it met in the Diamond Heights and Golden Gateway projects.⁵³⁸ The much larger Western Addition project, however, would become a quagmire for the Agency.⁵³⁹

In the 1940s and 1950s the Western Addition was a working-class African American neighborhood with a mostly Victorian housing stock which was not in good repair. But the Fillmore, as the neighborhood was more commonly known among residents, also hosted a thriving entertainment district. Its many jazz clubs attracted Billie Holliday, Thelonius Monk, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane, among many other famous musicians, earning the Fillmore the nickname “Harlem of the West.” With little regard for the neighborhood’s cultural significance, the SFRA divided the Western Addition into two project areas, known as A-1 and A-2, which together comprised about 1,280 acres, or 100 plus blocks covering two square miles of contiguous land. The vast majority of the structures within that area were destroyed, including all of the jazz clubs and about 3,120 housing units. Over 13,500 people were displaced, but only a fraction of them received new accommodations. Those who did received the new housing well after the initial displacement, and at much higher rents.⁵⁴⁰ The noted developer and architect, Edward Eichler—who was close to the SFRA’s operations—publicly criticized the agency for failing to provide replacement housing.⁵⁴¹ The SFDCP would later report that the SFRA destroyed over 6,000 total housing units throughout its various redevelopment areas, while it only created 662 publicly-aided units.⁵⁴²

The leveling of the Western Addition prompted many observers to charge that the SFRA was targeting poor minority neighborhoods. Though the SFRA finessed data to counter these claims, the charge was difficult to deflect in the face of the spectacle of the “bombed-out” area, an area that had been a black neighborhood in the mental maps of San Francisco residents.⁵⁴³ Regardless of what the SFRA said it was doing, the hole in the ground spoke for itself. The autocratic bearing and insensitive comments of the Agency’s director, Justin Herman, did not help matters for the SFRA. In one public meeting, when discussing the elderly white pensioners who had lived for decades in another SFRA survey area (known as Yerba Buena), Herman announced that “This land

⁵³⁷ San Francisco Department of City Planning (SFDCP), “Housing and Neighborhood Conditions in San Francisco: A Classification of Areas for Urban Renewal,” 1955, 4.

⁵³⁸ Hartman, 8.

⁵³⁹ See Butler; and Hartman, 76-77.

⁵⁴⁰ It was because of the Western Addition project, and “projects like it around the country that redevelopment and urban renewal became known as ‘Negro removal.’” See Hartman, 63-64.

⁵⁴¹ Sam Blumenfeld, “Mission’s Late-Late Debate” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 30, 1966, 6.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Jerry Mandel and Carl Werthman, “A critique of the redevelopment and relocation plans proposed by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency for Western Addition Area II,” pamphlet, 1964, 6-8.

is too valuable to permit poor people to park on it.”⁵⁴⁴ Comments like this led a Western Addition organizer named Hannibal Williams to say that “we didn’t know who the devil was, but we knew who Justin Herman was, and that was the devil for us.”⁵⁴⁵

The fact that federal law required “maximum feasible participation” from the community in the formulation of renewal plans did little to quell criticism because the law did not explicitly define what constituted citizen participation.⁵⁴⁶ The San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR) had provided the citizen input component for all of the SFRA’s early plans, and SPUR was beholden to the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, a group of the city’s most powerful downtown business leaders. In 1966, SPUR issued a publication, titled “Prologue for Action,” which laid out the rationale for redeveloping the working-class Yerba Buena area in the South of Market:

If San Francisco decides to compete effectively with other cities for new ‘clean’ industries and new corporate power, its population will move closer to standard white Anglo-Saxon Protestant characteristics. As automation increases, the need of unskilled labor will decrease. Economically and socially, the population will tend to range from lower middle class through lower upper class. . . . Selection of a population’s composition might be undemocratic. Influence on it, however, is legal and desirable for the health of the city.⁵⁴⁷

That an organization with a plainly racist and self-described “undemocratic” planning agenda provided “maximum feasible participation” on behalf of a poor African American neighborhood was a farce.

Considering the SFRA’s track record, Mission residents were understandably nervous when the Agency unveiled an urban renewal plan for the neighborhood in 1966. However, the plan—authored by the firm of Okamoto/Liskamm—was unique among SFRA projects in that it exhibited some sensitivity to existing urban and social fabric.⁵⁴⁸ Rather than relying on the bulldozer, the plan favored federally subsidized rehabilitation loans and grants for home owners, rehabilitation loans and business services for small businesses, and rent supplements for low income residents.⁵⁴⁹ The area was 423 gross acres, 271 net acres (when street area was factored out).⁵⁵⁰ Rehabilitation was the treatment recommended for 70% of the structures within the survey area.⁵⁵¹

Designed to coordinate with the arrival of BART, Okamoto/Liskamm called for clearance only in the areas immediately surrounding the two planned transit stations, one

⁵⁴⁴ Hartman, 71.

⁵⁴⁵ Hannibal Williams interview in Butler. See also Wirt, 258; and Hartman, 18.

⁵⁴⁶ For a theoretical discussion of the notion of “maximum feasible participation,” see Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 175-180.

⁵⁴⁷ Quoted in Hartman, 65.

⁵⁴⁸ Okamoto/Liskamm, “Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission,” 1966.

⁵⁴⁹ SFDCP and SFRA, 4.

⁵⁵⁰ SFDCP and SFRA, 3

⁵⁵¹ Justin M. Herman to Joseph Alioto, November 22, 1967, “Rehabilitation Renewal Program for the Mission District: Confidential Letter to Mayor-Elect, Joseph Alioto,” Joseph Alioto Mayoral Papers, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. See also Okamoto/Liskamm; and SFDCP and SFRA.

at 16th and Mission Streets, and the other at 24th and Mission.⁵⁵² The plan would have cleared about 12 square blocks, 80 acres, of noncontiguous land occupied mostly by aging retail, and replaced it with high density housing, offices, and retail. (See Figures 1-3.) Though it was primarily Mission Street retail space that would have been cleared, the Mission Street merchants had invited the SFRA to develop a plan.⁵⁵³ The merchants' support for the plan was significant because it was not a reflexively pro-development group, as its recent opposition to freeway plans had illustrated.⁵⁵⁴

Compared to other redevelopment projects, the plan exhibited an attention to the fine grain of the existing physical fabric, attempting to integrate rehabilitated buildings into the new design, rather erase them. (See Figure 4.) Spot clearance was also recommended for individual structures, primarily aging commercial and industrial buildings in the formerly no-lined areas of the northeastern Mission. 80 acres was no small area, about 4.5% of the Mission's total 1,800 acres, but it paled in comparison to the Western Addition where about 1,280 acres were cleared, without any provision to deal with the social consequences.⁵⁵⁵

Many in the Mission feared that what had happened in the Western Addition would happen in their neighborhood: either they had not seen the Okamoto/Liskamm plan and had heard only that the SFRA was coming, or they had seen only the renderings showing highrises, or they were familiar with the plan but feared that the rehabilitation program was a cover for the Agency's actual intentions and that once the \$59 million in federal funds came, the SFRA would clear cut the neighborhood like it had the Western Addition/Fillmore.⁵⁵⁶

In fact, the SFRA and other city agencies had been surveying the Mission for decades and had always planned a rehabilitation, rather than a clearance program. The first statement on the neighborhood came in 1948, with the "Report on Conditions Indicative of Blight and Redevelopment Policies," a supplement to the Master Plan. The report singled out the Mission, Western Addition, Chinatown, and South of Market, asserting that drastic measures were called for in all of these neighborhoods *except* the Mission: "Some of the worst housing in the City and the greatest need for redevelopment exists in Chinatown."⁵⁵⁷ "The largest single area of blight in San Francisco is the Western Addition . . . Here are opportunities for the creation of new properties which would give clean, modern housing to hundreds of families."⁵⁵⁸ "The housing areas South

⁵⁵² SFRA, "General Neighborhood Renewal Plan—Rapid Transit Corridor," 1962-1963, 15.

⁵⁵³ Miller, 1974, 16.

⁵⁵⁴ See Chapter Three of this dissertation; and Mission Merchants' Association to City Planning Commission, February 5, 1958, in Mission Freeway File, Freeway Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁵⁵⁵ Castells compares the urban renewal plan of the Mission to that of the Western Addition, where, he writes, "3,119 housing units were demolished; it seems that community mobilization prevented the Mission from undergoing the physical destruction that other minority residential areas in the city suffered." See Castells, 144. This comparison is problematic. Some clearance was recommended in the Mission, but it would have amounted to about 6% of the area cleared in the Western Addition; and such clearance would have been carried out in commercial areas, not residential areas, as occurred in the Western Addition.

⁵⁵⁶ SFDCP and SFRA, 6; Miller, 1974, 16.

⁵⁵⁷ San Francisco City Planning Commission, "The Master Plan of San Francisco: The Redevelopment of Blighted Areas: Report on Conditions Indicative of Blight and Redevelopment Policies," 1945, 19.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

of Market must be attacked.”⁵⁵⁹ However, the Mission was identified only as a “spotty area of blight,” the “decline” of which might be “arrested” through “redevelopment or the comprehensive rehabilitation of certain key areas.”⁵⁶⁰

The same four neighborhoods appeared again in the SFDCP's 1955 report, focusing on the “Classification of Areas for Urban Renewal.” As with the previous report, clearance was recommended for the other three neighborhoods, which were described as “nonsalvable slums.”⁵⁶¹ However, this document did not classify the Mission as blighted, but stated that it “should be considered susceptible to blight.”⁵⁶² The neighborhood received penalties for “absence of setbacks from front and rear lot lines and for deterioration,” “age of dwelling units,” some “mixed land use,” “traffic accidents and traffic conditions,” “deficiencies in neighborhood facilities” and “overcrowding and monthly rent under \$40.”⁵⁶³ The Mission did not receive penalties for “nonwhite population,” in spite of the fact that the neighborhood was somewhere between 11.6% and 22.7% Latino in 1955, a fact that highlights the ambiguous racial position that Latinos occupied.⁵⁶⁴ The document stated more explicitly than the 1948 survey that conditions in the Mission—a “salvable” neighborhood—called for rehabilitation.⁵⁶⁵

In the SFRA's “Rapid Transit Corridor Study” from 1962 and 1963, the Agency affirmed its longstanding position on the Mission: “Because of the general quality of the Corridor area, emphasis will be on massive retention rather than clearance of structures.”⁵⁶⁶ At a regular SFRA meeting on February 8, 1966, Norman Murdoch, the Chief of the Planning and Architecture Division, and the person charged with carrying out the Rapid Transit Corridor Study, stated that

The emphasis of the proposal is on neighborhood improvement designed primarily to meet the needs of the current residents. Rehabilitation is the major treatment recommended, with spot clearance where required. New parks and playgrounds are proposed . . . Street tree planting, off-street parking, new community facilities, and underground utilities are proposed to make the community more liveable and attractive.⁵⁶⁷

Since 1948, the SFRA had insisted that the Western Addition and Yerba Buena must be cleared, but maintained that the Mission must be rehabilitated.⁵⁶⁸ So while many feared that the Okamoto/Liskamm plan's emphasis on rehabilitation was disingenuous—a cover for a clearance plan—decades of SFRA reports suggested otherwise. After all, the SFRA had done exactly what it always said it would do in the Western Addition and Yerba Buena, the provision of replacement housing notwithstanding.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ SFDCP, 2.

⁵⁶² SFDCP, 9.

⁵⁶³ SFDCP, 7-8

⁵⁶⁴ Godfrey, 154.

⁵⁶⁵ SFDCP, 7-8

⁵⁶⁶ SFRA, “Rapid Transit Corridor Study: Summary and Background of the Study to be Undertaken by the Redevelopment Agency and the Department of City Planning,” 1963, 1; SFRA, “Annual Report,” 1963, 19.

⁵⁶⁷ SFRA Regular Meeting Minutes, February 8, 1966, 5.

⁵⁶⁸ See SFRA Annual Reports from 1963 through 1967; and SFRA *Corridor Study News*, October 1965 and May 1966.

The Mission Coalition Organization and the Fight for Neighborhood Authority

In recounting the story of the struggle over redevelopment in the Mission, Mike Miller observed that "it is the errors and activities of the opposition that provide the organizer with his most powerful weapons."⁵⁶⁹ Miller identified two errors that he and other organizers in the neighborhood turned into weapons. The first was the fact that, in developing its plan, the SFRA had consulted only large Mission Street merchants and the leaders of an absentee-run neighborhood community center.⁵⁷⁰ The second critical error was representational. The areas around the 16th and 24th Street BART stations the Okamoto/Liskamm plan featured offices, hotels, parking structures, and retail plazas, all rendered in an abstract modernist architectural language which, by this period, was becoming associated in the popular imagination with mass displacement in low income areas, and corporate luxury in downtown areas.⁵⁷¹ Though the plan as a whole had many provisions for maintaining the existing population, the illustrations featured only one small nod to the Latino character of the area—kiosks with signs reading “Piñata,” “Tacos,” and “Bodega” at the entrance to a BART station—which likely smacked of tokenism to residents. (See Figure 5.)

As Miller put it, the "plan showed new sky-scrapers and shopping center plazas in the Mission, but left unanswered the question 'where am I in this picture?' And it was this question that we raised with pastors, tenants, homeowners, small businessmen, community based agencies and anybody else we could talk to. Pointing to . . . the evidence of earlier urban renewal projects in the City, we could readily convince those with whom we spoke of the threat."⁵⁷² Miller used the Okamoto/Liskamm renderings as part of an organizing strategy, but in his account of the redevelopment battle, he never did suggest that the threat posed by the SFRA in the Mission was indeed equivalent to that faced by other neighborhoods. The threat of mass displacement on the scale of the Western Addition was more organizing tactic than reality.

But neighborhood fears were not confined to clearance. “The rehabilitation plan would help only the big interests,” argued John Ross of the Tenants Union and the Progressive Labor Party. “Renewed housing would bring higher rents which little people aren’t able to pay. There would be fewer places where they could afford to live.”⁵⁷³ The Okamoto/Liskamm plan called for homeowner rehabilitation grants to be paired with rental supplements to avoid precisely this scenario.⁵⁷⁴ But with so many other blotches on its record, the SFRA’s promises not to displace current residents were met with skepticism. As the *Examiner* reported, by 1966 the SFRA was “in trouble. In the

⁵⁶⁹ Miller, 1974, 16.

⁵⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁵⁷² *ibid.*

⁵⁷³ “The Inner Mission’s Future,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 13, 1966, 21. Miller described the Progressive Labor Party as standing at the far “left of the political spectrum” in the Mission; because of its perceived “extremism,” its “leadership was unacceptable to the majority of the Mission’s leaders and activists.” See Miller, 1974, 10 and 14.

⁵⁷⁴ SFDCP and SFRA, 4; see also Bruce Ackerman, “Regulating Slum Housing Markets on Behalf of the Poor: Of Housing Codes, Housing Subsidies and Income Redistribution Policy” *The Yale Law Journal* 80, no. 6, 1971: 1093-1197.

Mission they call it a plague.”⁵⁷⁵ But this reputation was based on the SFRA’s track record, not on the Okamoto/Liskamm plan. In fact, the only objection that mainstream neighborhood groups voiced about the details of the plan related to the large clearance around the BART stations—the neighborhood supported rehabilitation and improved services. The principal objection that the neighborhood groups raised was not to any aspect of the plan itself, but rather with the institutional configurations through which it was to be carried out. The neighborhood groups were not content to allow an external agency plan for them; they were determined to plan for themselves.

MCOR was formed in 1966 to respond to the SFRA’s plans. Mike Miller’s guidance was crucial to the initial work of establishing the Council, though as an outsider he would subsequently defer to leadership from within the neighborhood, a subject I discuss in more depth below. Miller had been trained by Saul Alinsky, the sociologist/activist who famously organized Chicago’s Back of the Yards Neighborhood in the 1940s. Alinsky’s approach was to form place-based “mass organizations,” which would include all of an area’s influential entities, and mobilize them around the goals of self determination, institutional reform, and the alleviation of poverty.⁵⁷⁶ Under the leadership of Herman Gallegos, OBECA/Arriba Juntos had brought Miller to the Mission in order to introduce neighborhood institutions to the “Alinsky model.”⁵⁷⁷ MCOR succeeded in including most of the Mission’s prominent interests. OBECA/Arriba Juntos was of course involved, as were the other Latino social service providers, Catholic parish churches, tenants’ groups, block clubs, leftwing Raza youth groups, and some of the homeowners’ groups.⁵⁷⁸

According to Miller, the union Obreros were involved, but they were only “nominal members,” who were torn between the promise of work provided by the SFRA and the prospect of being able to control planning in the neighborhood.⁵⁷⁹ There is no record, in the newspaper reports, Miller’s account, or the minutes of the SFRA, on how the Mission Merchants’ Association viewed MCOR; perhaps the Merchants did not support MCOR, but their silence testifies that they were not willing to oppose the neighborhood council either.⁵⁸⁰ While the Obreros and the Merchants were ambivalent to MCOR, they would become active members of MCO when it formed in 1968.

The only groups that remained completely outside of MCOR and the MCO were absentee landlords, and a neighborhood-based group called the Responsible Merchants, Property Owners and Tenants, Inc.—a small but vocal organization composed of the most conservative homeowners in the neighborhood. This constituency was represented by a “right-wing populist” named Jack Bartalini who opposed urban renewal, the war on poverty, and Model Cities on the principle that all of these programs were “examples of

⁵⁷⁵ Quoted in Hartman, 26.

⁵⁷⁶ See Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971).

⁵⁷⁷ Miller, 1974, 12. Gallegos would go on to found the National Council of La Raza.

⁵⁷⁸ Castells, 164.

⁵⁷⁹ Miller, 1974, 18.

⁵⁸⁰ In a 1967 confidential letter to Mayor Elect Alioto, Justin Herman suggested that the Mission Merchant’s Association continued to support the urban renewal plan. If they did support the plan, they were not vocal about it. See Herman.

creeping socialism."⁵⁸¹ The fact that Bartalini and his constituents remained outside of the broad coalition highlights the collaborative, rather than the confrontational aspect of MCOR: Bartalini had been involved in the earliest stages of organizing MCOR, but once it became clear that the Council would not seek to absolutely "defeat" urban renewal, he peeled off.

Consistent with the Alinskyite model of forcing institutional reform, MCOR did not oppose urban renewal; rather it "took the position that if it was going to support renewal, it would have to have veto power over any plan and would itself have to be recognized by the City as the group that would develop a plan with the renewal agency."⁵⁸² MCOR's position was first discussed by the SFRA at their June 28, 1966 regular meeting.⁵⁸³ Justin Herman agreed to work with MCOR, but made clear that the SFRA could not be beholden to any single neighborhood group. The meeting became contentious, with MCOR supporters chiding the Agency for not disseminating its information in Spanish as well as English, and for generally failing to inform the community of plans being made for it. Even members of the SFRA board began to dissent: Lawrence Palacios "indicated that there should not be a plan without consulting with the people of the area."⁵⁸⁴ Dr. Joseph Wellington "then said that he disagreed with the proposed position recommended by the Agency staff and stated that Mr. [Justin] Herman assumes everyone has the same good feeling for the Agency that he has. The Agency cannot go into a community and offer its own plan on a take it or leave it basis."⁵⁸⁵ Everett Griffin, Chairman of the SFRA's board, took a more defensive tack, protesting

that none of us are ogres. We want good housing in the Mission for the people of the Mission at prices they can afford. But we must proceed in a businesslike way, and we can get the things done with the Mission people to the maximum extent of the law if they and we can work together. We certainly want this to happen. Concern for what happened in the Western Addition A-1 is understandable and proper. The agency used every tool it had to get better housing. Today it is fortunate we have many more tools and we intend to use them all. The program has changed, and we have changed with it.⁵⁸⁶

At the end of the meeting the SFRA adopted the position that planning would be made in cooperation with Mission neighborhood groups, but without giving any neighborhood group veto power.

MCOR made another presentation at the regular meeting on August 9, 1966. Father John McCarthy, representing the Archdiocese, voiced the neighborhood's desire to "meet and cooperate with the Agency."⁵⁸⁷ Gallegos, of OBECA/Arriba Juntos, reiterated that they were "attempting to arrive at a working relationship with the Agency."⁵⁸⁸ But

⁵⁸¹ Miller, 1974, 11 and 19. For more on Bartalini see undated newspaper clipping from *The Leader*, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. See also Sandoval, 147.

⁵⁸² Miller, 1981, 4.

⁵⁸³ SFRA Minutes, June 28, 1966.

⁵⁸⁴ SFRA Minutes, June 28, 1966, 7.

⁵⁸⁵ SFRA Minutes, June 28, 1966, 8.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ SFRA Minutes, August 9, 1966, 11.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

MCOR held fast to the one condition that a representative neighborhood group have veto power. Herman responded, in a September 20, 1966 letter, that "MCOR is recognized by the SFRA as an official body to work with the Redevelopment Agency in the planning and development of the Mission Street Survey Area."⁵⁸⁹ But the letter clarified that "the Board of Supervisors must by law be the local body of last resort in the acceptance or rejection of the planning that will evolve."⁵⁹⁰ MCOR objected that this meant in essence that they "would be treated in an advisory capacity only," and that the understanding gave insufficient representation and guarantees.⁵⁹¹ Maximum feasible participation had not, in their view, been met. It was on these grounds that MCOR opposed the application for federal funding, not because they opposed urban renewal.

The Board of Supervisors took up the SFRA's request in December of 1966, and MCOR "brought out a couple hundred people to the meeting."⁵⁹² Responding to the overwhelming neighborhood pressure, the Board rejected the application by a vote of 6 to 5. The SFRA brought the application before the Board again in the spring of 1967, but met the same community resistance and the same 6 to 5 vote. With this battle behind them, and with nothing other than the threat and opportunity of renewal to unite them, MCOR dissolved.

On November 22, 1967, Herman sent mayor elect Joseph Alioto a confidential letter about the situation in the Mission. "The major problem is political," he wrote. "There was never any serious controversy regarding the need for renewal efforts or of the preliminary planning recommendations for the area in question."⁵⁹³ Herman's assessment was correct—the problem was political in the sense that final authority would not have rested with the neighborhood; but the problem was also political in the sense that Herman's own reputation as an autocrat had damaged the SFRA's credibility.

At the end of 1966, Congress had enacted the Johnson Administration's Model Cities program largely as a response to the critique that community input in urban renewal plans had been insufficient.⁵⁹⁴ The new program was an extension of urban renewal, but it raised the bar for what counted as "citizen participation" and expanded funding for rehabilitation and social service delivery.⁵⁹⁵ Herman recommended to Alioto that he enter into "serious discussions" with a representative neighborhood group about "what they would like to see in the way of a renewal effort" and collaborate with the group on a Model Cities application.⁵⁹⁶ Once in office, Alioto took Herman's advice and announced his intention to apply for a multi-million dollar Model Cities grant for the Mission—a decision that was no doubt also influenced by the fact that the Obreros Local 261 had delivered Alioto a large constituency in the recent election.⁵⁹⁷

After the announcement MCOR reconvened to create the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO) to formulate the neighborhood's position on Model Cities. The

⁵⁸⁹ SFRA Minutes, September 27, 1966, 6.

⁵⁹⁰ SFRA Minutes, September 27, 1966, 7.

⁵⁹¹ SFRA Minutes, September 27, 1966, 8.

⁵⁹² Miller, 1974, 21.

⁵⁹³ Herman, 2.

⁵⁹⁴ See Self, 243; John Lindquist and Charles Barresi, "Ghetto Residents and Urban Politics: Attitudes toward Urban Renewal," *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1970, 241.

⁵⁹⁵ Self, 243.

⁵⁹⁶ Herman, 2.

⁵⁹⁷ Miller, 1974, 28; Castells, 144.

composition of the MCO was substantially the same, only now the Obreros and the Mission Merchants' Association were fully involved, on equal footing with OBECA/Arriba Juntos, the tenants' groups, the Raza youth, social service providers, home owners' groups, and the parish churches.⁵⁹⁸ With organizing help from Mike Miller and OBECA, the first convention of the MCO was held in Centro Obrero Social Hall on October 4, 1968. The meeting was attended by about "500-600 delegates and alternates from 66 organizations."⁵⁹⁹ At the peak of its power, in 1970, the MCO involved up to 12,000 individuals.⁶⁰⁰ At the convention in 1968, delegates elected OBECA's Ben Martinez as president of the Coalition, but key leadership positions were also held by the Obreros and the tenants' unions. The MCO created a variety of committees to address the concerns of the diverse membership, including committees on housing, education, employment, and community maintenance and planning. This network of committees fostered a measure of unity, which would have been difficult to accomplish in their absence. To give an example of how unity was created, consider the Merchants, who were involved primarily with the planning committee, and were suspicious of radical ethnic politics.⁶⁰¹ If the Merchants wanted the MCO's support in its effort to ban pawn shops, it would have to provide backing for Raza youth groups' position on the strike at San Francisco State University; if the youth groups wanted MCO backing for the strike, they would have to support the Merchants' position on pawn shops.⁶⁰² The MCO struggled with many internecine battles, which I discuss below, but it also presented a unified front to city agencies, at least until the early 1970s.

Like its predecessor, the MCO insisted on veto power over any plan that was drawn up for the Mission, but it also began to support the idea of "joint planning with the urban renewal agency."⁶⁰³ In fact, the MCO accepted the SFRA's argument that urban renewal was the best guarantee against displacement, because a government controlled rehabilitation program was the only available means of preventing the invasion of speculative clearance in anticipation of the arrival of BART.⁶⁰⁴ As Miller put it, the neighborhood group understood that "a simple blocking of urban renewal would not be sufficient. . . . To preserve the Mission for its residents, and to finally improve their living conditions, required the ability of the MCO to both control and/or influence public sector activity."⁶⁰⁵ So while urban renewal was a potential threat, the MCO understood that the bigger threat was *not* to have urban renewal—the market would likely treat the Mission worse than a government program, particularly one controlled by the neighborhood.

Mayor Alioto was amenable to the MCO's demand for veto power, but the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) refused, since federal law required that a separate corporation be created under the mayor's office to implement

⁵⁹⁸ Miller, 1974, 50. See also Castells, 147.

⁵⁹⁹ Miller, 1974, 42.

⁶⁰⁰ Castells, 139.

⁶⁰¹ Miller, 1974, 40.

⁶⁰² Miller, 1974, 50-51.

⁶⁰³ Miller, 1974, 136.

⁶⁰⁴ Mel Wax, "Supervisors Kill Mission District Renewal Project," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 20, 1966, 15; "The Inner Mission's Future," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 13, 1966, 21; Bob Bartlett "Redevelopment Agency Warning: A Creeping Threat to 5000 Mission Dwellings," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 12, 1966, 4.

⁶⁰⁵ Miller, 1974, 136-7.

plans and disburse funds. The Mayor agreed, however, to allow the MCO to appoint 2/3 of the board of the new agency—the Mission Model Cities Neighborhood Corporation (MMNC)—thus giving the MCO veto power over any plans.⁶⁰⁶ The MMNC was a government authority, at the scale of the neighborhood, with a \$3.2 million dollar annual budget. Though it was officially an arm of the mayor’s office, it was under the effective control of the MCO.⁶⁰⁷ The Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC) was created in 1971 to receive and implement federal housing funding, but it too was controlled by the MCO. According to Sherry Arnstein’s well known article from the time, there were only a handful of Model Cities corporations that had comparable control, which she would have placed on the "Delegated Power" rung of her famous ladder of citizen participation.⁶⁰⁸ In terms of authority, the MHDC had more in common with the Community Development Corporations which developed in the 1970s, than with Model Cities Corporations.⁶⁰⁹

When the arrangement with City Hall was finalized in 1969, the local bilingual language paper *New Mission/Nueva Mission*, which consistently represented the perspective of the neighborhood organizations, quoted the announcement made by MCO president, Ben Martinez: The program, he said, “would be focused on social aspects rather than just physical aspects. Thus better schools, recreational areas, higher employment, beautified streets, etc. would be the goals. The existing buildings would tend to be rehabilitated rather than torn down.”⁶¹⁰ These goals track closely with those set forth in Okamoto/Liskamm and in all of the SFRA’s previous publications and statements. The Summary of the Application for Survey Funds, for example, stated that the “Renewal Objectives” were “1) Improved Housing (through rehabilitation and new construction), 2) Jobs, 3) Schools, 4) Parks and Beautification.”⁶¹¹

Over the next several years the MCO, MMNC, and MHDC designed and implemented a number of programs, including a reading clinic, a language and vocational School, and the Mission Childcare Consortium.⁶¹² The most successful program was the Mission Hiring Hall, which greatly expanded employment opportunities in the neighborhood. Many physical improvements were also undertaken, as the neighborhood groups worked with the city agencies on the expansion of parks and on beautification programs.⁶¹³

In order to prevent speculative clearance around the BART stations, the MCO successfully lobbied for the downzoning of Mission Street, imposing height and bulk

⁶⁰⁶ MHDC, 73.

⁶⁰⁷ Castells, 149; “March for Coalition,” *Nueva Mission/New Mission* 3, no. 5, 1969, 8-9; Miller, 1974, 138.

⁶⁰⁸ Sherry Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35, No. 4, 1969, 223.

⁶⁰⁹ For more on Community Development Corporations, see William Peterman, *Neighborhood Planning and Community-Based Development: The Potential and Limits of Grassroots Action* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000).

⁶¹⁰ “East Mission Wows ‘Em at City Hall,” *Nueva Mission/New Mission* 3, no. 2, 1969, 8-9.

⁶¹¹ SFDCP and SFRA, 4.

⁶¹² MHDC, 35-36, 62. For more on the social programs created with Model Cities funding in the Mission, see Stephen Weissman, “The Limits of Citizen Participation: Lessons from San Francisco’s Model Cities Program,” *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1978, 32-47.

⁶¹³ *Nueva Mission/New Mission*, “East Mission Wows ‘Em”; “East Mission Action Council (EMAC) Closes 26th to Extend Garfield Park,” *Nueva Mission/New Mission* 3, no. 3, 1969; MHDC, 57.

limitations.⁶¹⁴ At street level each of the completed stations consists primarily of two plazas of about 1000 square feet a piece, situated across Mission Street from one another. The end result was a pair of stations that could not be described as contextual, but which were much better integrated into the surrounding urban fabric, at least in terms of scale, than were any projects in the Western Addition.

Though the SFRA-endorsed clearances around the BART stations were never carried out, neighborhood organizations, particularly the MHDC, did use eminent domain in other areas of the district.⁶¹⁵ The neighborhood groups made extensive use of spot clearance throughout the district to remove abandoned buildings which might become magnets for squatters.⁶¹⁶ The MHDC also cleared many aging structures and acquired parking lots to create public housing projects, like the 50-unit Apartamentos Betel Complex. Architecturally, the complex was a series of white stucco boxes, typical of 1960s Bay Area apartments. While the speculative building style might be regarded as ideologically neutral, its very humility served to emphasize access. The most ambitious of the MCO's housing complexes was to have been the Regal Pale project in the Eastern Mission, named after the abandoned brewery that was slated for clearance, a project that the SFRA had recommended in 1966.⁶¹⁷ The objective was to "provide sound and attractive housing of low-to-moderate price for residents of the community" by clearing the aging structures, replacing them with new housing structures, and rehabilitating approximately eight existing housing structures around the periphery of the area.⁶¹⁸ The project would have created approximately 130 new units of housing.⁶¹⁹

A number of circumstances coalesced to halt implementation of the Regal Pale plan, and ultimately to precipitate the demise of the MCO. In 1970, a series of complex battles emerged within the leadership of the MCO when Ben Martinez decided to run for a third term as president of the MCO, in spite of the fact that the Coalition's by-laws forbade more than two terms.⁶²⁰ As these fights churned in the background, Nixon appointed new HUD officials who did not give low-income housing the same importance as the prior administration. HUD rejected the initial application for the Regal Pale project on the grounds that there was already sufficient low income housing in the area, and that more moderate income housing was needed.⁶²¹ At the same time, a power struggle between the leadership of the MMNC and the MCO emerged over the question of whether union factions in the MCO were using Model Cities to provide patronage

⁶¹⁴ Miller, 137.

⁶¹⁵ The organizations themselves did not have the power of eminent domain, but they did determine where such power would be exercised in collaboration with the Mayor's office, the Department of Public Works, the SFDCP, and the SFRA.

⁶¹⁶ Castells, 148.

⁶¹⁷ Herman, 4.

⁶¹⁸ SFRA, "Regal Pale Redevelopment Project: Redevelopment Plan," 1970, 3; Jerry Burns, "Project at Old Brewery Site: OK on Mission Housing," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 12, 1970; "Supervisors' OK: Low-Rent Plan on Brewery Site," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 5, 1971; Carol Pogash, "Regal Pale project stalled: Housing Hassle in Mission," *San Francisco Progress*, February 18, 1972.

⁶¹⁹ SFRA, 1970, 3.

⁶²⁰ Castells, 151-152.

⁶²¹ Miller, 1974, 146.

jobs.⁶²² The struggle was publicized in local media, undermining both organizations' credibility as stable agencies.⁶²³

Soon after this episode, Nixon summarily cut off Model Cities funding nationwide. By January of 1974, the MCO collapsed under the strain of dwindling resources and the expanded internecine battles among the coalition's many factions.⁶²⁴ When this happened, the MHDC was reassigned to the mayor's office, and effectively ceased to be a strictly community-controlled organization.⁶²⁵ From that point on, the organization's activities were severely curtailed by a conservative HUD.

The neighborhood housing authority's accomplishments were modest, but they were achieved in a few short years. By 1973, the MHDC gave "housing rehabilitation assistance to some 450" Inner Mission residents.⁶²⁶ The organization purchased and rehabilitated four existing buildings, which they resold, with subsidized mortgages, as condominiums for low-income residents.⁶²⁷ The MHDC had ambitious plans for "[w]hen the present housing moratorium ends," including increasing "low and moderate income homeownership by at least 4,243 units" through new construction and rehabilitation, guaranteeing low rents, increasing family units, minimizing relocation, and expanding historic preservation programs.⁶²⁸ However, limited by their new political and organizational context, they were only able to "build 101 housing units (39 for elderly), provide house ownership loans to 80 families, and help with the rebuilding of 331 units" by 1980.⁶²⁹

Miller (and Castells after him) argued that the MCO developed bitter internal struggles and became less effective because it became involved in the management of service programs, rather than continuing its challenge of institutional relationships up to higher rungs of authority in the city, state, and even federal governments.⁶³⁰ Miller asserted that the "effective decision making core of MCO was shrinking rather than expanding. This is a necessary and natural consequence of bureaucratic control of an organization."⁶³¹ The categorical nature of Miller's statement—that bureaucracy is always and in all circumstances ineffective—invites questions about the criteria he used to evaluate the MCO. Miller himself made no claim to impartiality, beginning his "Organizer's Tale" with

a word about my own bias. As a "community organizer" I had certain ideas about how the most effective organization would operate, what it would look like, what its strategy, tactics, and style would be, and so on. Most important for this paper, I thought that such an organization should be an "adversary organization," serving as the voice of its constituency in relation to various "outside forces," primarily big business and government.⁶³²

⁶²² *ibid.*

⁶²³ Castells, 151 and 173.

⁶²⁴ Castells, 152.

⁶²⁵ Castells, 173-174.

⁶²⁶ MHDC, 6.

⁶²⁷ MHDC, 8.

⁶²⁸ MHDC, 12, 15.

⁶²⁹ Castells, 173.

⁶³⁰ Castells, 179.

⁶³¹ Miller, 1974, 146.

⁶³² Miller, 1974, 1.

It may very well be that Miller's analysis of the MCO's demise is correct, but he does not adequately account for the fact that the MCO's dwindling effectiveness corresponded with its de-funding. As Miller himself frequently observed, dwindling resources often breed and intensify infighting.⁶³³ A definitive evaluation of the MCO would need to address the counterfactual question of whether the internal power struggles would necessarily have escalated to the point where they would have destroyed the organization.

From the perspective that assumes that a community organization should remain adversarial, the MCO was ultimately a "failure."⁶³⁴ However, the MCO succeeded in reclaiming neighborhood authority and revitalizing the physical and social environment of the Mission. As Miller put it,

the MCO was not 'that radical group' but the community organization. Whether one liked everything it did or not, it was the organization which represented the Mission. . . . it was the organization recognized by the major public institutions in the City. While some of them sought to go around it, and even succeeded on occasion, they did so with the fear that MCO might come after them.⁶³⁵

The MCO secured for the Mission the authority to plan its own physical and social space, an authority which the neighborhood had not enjoyed since the Rolph administration, and the heyday of the MPA. Like the MPA, the MCO was the entity that both made decisions about what would happen in the physical space of the Mission, and that decided who the beneficiaries of those decisions would be. But while the MPA defined its public as local businessmen and white unionist residents, the MCO represented a public in which race was not a barrier to membership. Both the MPA and the MCO insisted that the public interest was served by neighborhood self determination, but there the similarities ended. While the MPA regarded rising property values as fundamental to the public interest, in many circumstance the MCO sought to stabilize or even depress property values through down-zoning in order to prevent speculative displacement.⁶³⁶ For the MCO, the right to prosper was subordinate to the right to be present. On these principles, the MCO severed the connection between the public interest and wealth, and realigned the public interest with economic and racial equality.

But while the MCO was the dominant institution in the Mission during the late 1960s, it was not the only institution that wielded influence over how life would be lived. The San Francisco School District and the Police Department were both strong presences in the Mission District, and neither shared the MCO's commitment to racial equality. The encounters between Mission Latino youth and these institutions would foster a Third World defense movement called *Los Siete de la Raza*. This movement would offer a critique of the MCO's liberal politics of institutional reform and collaboration, advancing in its place a radical politics of confrontation and separation. While the MCO offered a vision of a Mission-based public authority that was integrated with existing municipal, state, and federal authorities, *Los Siete* offered a vision of neighborhood public authority that broke completely with "the state."

⁶³³ See, for example, Miller, 1974, 24.

⁶³⁴ Castells, 163.

⁶³⁵ Miller, 1974, 125-126.

⁶³⁶ MHDC 1974, 55.

The Police, Third World Activism, and the Critique of Liberal Reform

Latino youth in the Mission frequently found themselves at odds with the San Francisco School District and the Police Department. Spanish-speaking students often complained of English-only educational policies, tracking, and racist comments from teachers at Mission High.⁶³⁷ One young Latino recalled confronting a high school teacher, John O'Connell, about tracking. O'Connell defended the policies: if students were not differentiated, "he told me I'll be competing for his son's job."⁶³⁸ The racial attitudes prevalent in the Police Department were comparable, and often resulted in violent confrontation.

Relations between the Police Department and the Latinos living in the Mission had been uneventful through the 1950s; whatever tension might have existed was insufficient to attract the attention of the press. By the end of the decade, however, the relationship between the police and all of San Francisco's minority communities had badly deteriorated. The problems began in the African American neighborhoods, but would soon spread to the Mission. In the early 1960s, the Department created a Community Relations Department "to meet the rising pressures of the Civil Rights movement."⁶³⁹ The national magazine *The Nation* reported that the Department engaged community-based organizations, participated in social service programs, and was welcomed in San Francisco's African American neighborhoods. Law enforcement experts around the country regarded San Francisco's Community Relations program as a model for police departments in other major cities. While the Community Relations Department developed a rapport with minority populations, its relationship with the broader Police Department was hostile; many of the rank-and-file in the force referred to it as "the Commie Relations Department."⁶⁴⁰

A series of events in 1966 would bring the Department to an end. On September 27, an unarmed black teen was shot and killed in Hunter's Point, sparking a three-day riot. Chief Thomas Cahill, angry with the African American community "after all I did for those people," withdrew support from the Community Relations Department.⁶⁴¹ By 1967, the Department was underfunded and staffed with personnel who were antagonistic to the politics of community relations. Over the coming years, the relationship between the San Francisco Police Department and poor minority communities deteriorated further, as incidents with Anglo police officers shooting Black residents multiplied.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷ See Marjorie Heins, *Strictly Ghetto Property: The Story of Los Siete de la Raza* (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1972). Unpaginated pamphlet. See also *Los Siete*, California Newsreel films, San Francisco, 1969. Documentary.

⁶³⁸ *Los Siete*.

⁶³⁹ Alvin Rosenfeld, "The Friendly Fuzz," *The Nation*, April 21, 1969.

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁶⁴² A particularly contentious incident occurred in 1968, when an off-duty officer named Michael O'Brien got into an argument with an African American man named Carl Hawkins over a scratch on his boat. Another Black man named Otis Baskett intervened in the argument and was subsequently shot and killed by O'Brien. In the investigation and subsequent trial, witnesses reported that O'Brien had been drunk and had repeatedly called Hawkins, Baskett, and a number of bystanders "nigger." In the face of overwhelming evidence of excessive use of force, O'Brien was acquitted, a decision that the NAACP condemned. See

Throughout the 1960s Latino youth in the Mission had also complained of police harassment: random stops, warrantless searches, bigoted language, and excessive force. Reports of racism and harassment are difficult to confirm, but are lent credibility by statements of officers who had served in the Community Relations Department. One anonymous former member of the Department stated that "Some of the policemen in the San Francisco police department are clear and distinct racists . . . There are a number of men in the department that I would immediately fire. There are others that I would put in jail because I know what they have done and that is where they belong."⁶⁴³ The daughter of Joseph Brodnik, an officer who was killed in the Mission, remembered that racism was endemic in the Mission station, where many officers felt a personal duty "to bring peace to the Mission where the dirty Latinos are."⁶⁴⁴ The reports of police harassment were credible to the editors of the *New Mission/Nueva Mission*, the neighborhood newspaper which consistently supported MCO positions. In 1968, the paper issued a call for a Community Review Board. "We pay taxes to support the finest possible police force. Instead of this we seem to have a head-hunting goon squad here in the Mission. People want police, not bullies. . . . The people in the Sunset [a white neighborhood in western San Francisco] don't have to put up with this treatment."⁶⁴⁵

In early 1969, a series of events coalesced to push the relations between Mission youth and the Police Department to a new low. On April 25 a *Chronicle* reporter named Birney Jarvis, who worked the police beat, published a piece titled "A Gang's Terror in the Mission." Drawing on an apparently thin source base, the article reported that a "loose knit gang of hoodlums and idlers are slowly closing a fist of fear around the business of a once bustling Mission District neighborhood."⁶⁴⁶ Acknowledging the flood of protest, not only from youth advocacy organizations, but also from Anglo Mission Street merchants, Jarvis published a follow-up titled "A Defense of Mission Teenagers" the next day; four days later he published an article titled "Merchants Deny Story of Terror."⁶⁴⁷ In spite of Jarvis's clarifications, Chief Cahill created a "new super crime prevention unit" called the Crime Prevention Headquarters Squad.⁶⁴⁸ Part of the Squad's mandate was, as Mayor Joseph Alioto put it, "to curb the terrorism in the Mission District."⁶⁴⁹

It was in this context that, on May 1, 1969, two plainclothes officers named Paul McGoran and Joseph Brodnik stopped three young Latinos who were carrying a television set from a car to a house.⁶⁵⁰ The young men had been helping a friend move, but the officers regarded the scene as suspicious. The events which followed are known

article in San Francisco's African American newspaper: "Jurors Drink to Verdict," *The Sun Reporter*, March 29, 1969; see also Ferreira 253.

⁶⁴³ Quoted in Rosenfeld.

⁶⁴⁴ Ferreira, 264; Heins. That this statement was made by the daughter of Joseph Brodnik is significant, since Brodnik was the officer who was killed in the episode which precipitated the formation of Los Siete.

⁶⁴⁵ "Review Board," *New Mission/Nueva Mission*, February, 1968; Ferreira, 255.

⁶⁴⁶ Birney Jarvis, "A Gang's Terror in the Mission," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 25, 1969; "A Defense of Mission Teenagers," April 26; "Merchants Deny Story of Terror," 30.

⁶⁴⁷ Birney Jarvis, "A Defense of Mission Teenagers," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 26, 1969; Birney Jarvis, "Merchants Deny Story of Terror," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 30, 1969.

⁶⁴⁸ Quoted in Ferreira, 260.

⁶⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁵⁰ Earl Caldwell, "Coast Radicals Rally Behind 6 Latin Youths on Trial in Slaying of Policeman," *New York Times*, Oct 11, 1970, 54; "6 Cleared in Death of Coast Policeman," *New York Times*, Nov 8, 1970, 70.

only to the participants, but the result was that Brodnik was shot and killed with his partner's gun. According to McGoran's testimony, immediately after they began questioning the men, Brodnik struck one of them in the face. A scuffle ensued. McGoran claimed that one of the young men took his gun, while the defendants maintained that McGoran accidentally shot Brodnik.⁶⁵¹

Seven young Latinos were arrested for the killing, two of whom had been inside the house, and two of whom were not at the scene at all. What connected the five who were at the scene with the two who were not was their affiliation with the Confederation of Brown Race for Action (COBRA), a Third World defense organization. In its political philosophy COBRA was comparable to the Brown Berets of Southern California, but with a pan-Latino, rather than Chicano/Mexican nationalist outlook.⁶⁵² The Black Panthers provided legal assistance to the seven Latinos, known now as Los Siete de la Raza, and the defendants were acquitted in 1971, largely on the strength of testimony demonstrating that McGoran and Brodnik had a history of using excessive force.⁶⁵³

Los Siete was characterized by a frustration with Great Society liberalism and its focus on self help and incremental institutional reform. COBRA, its predecessor, was founded by young Latinos who had been affiliated with the Mission Rebels in Action, a youth service organization funded by the San Francisco Economic Opportunity Council. The group that left to form COBRA came to regard the Rebels and many other social service programs as safety valves, ultimately serving to reinforce institutionalized inequities; they began to regard the leadership of those programs as "poverty pimps," more interested in bringing federal funding to their programs, than in effecting social change.⁶⁵⁴ Following the lead of the Panthers—and drawing inspiration from the writings of Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, Che Guevara, and Karl Marx—COBRA and later Los Siete advanced a critique of the state as an instrument of imperialist oppression. The repressive capitalist state could not, in their view, be reformed, but must be destroyed.⁶⁵⁵

Los Siete's critique implicitly aligned with an idea which the Panthers would later call "intercommunalism."⁶⁵⁶ In this theory, all of the sites of imperialist oppression around the world were loosely linked in a kind of confederation which must struggle locally for the right of self determination.⁶⁵⁷ West Oakland was thusly connected to Chinatown and Watts, but also to the countryside of Vietnam.⁶⁵⁸ The Mission District was not a part of San Francisco, in this view, or even of the United States, but was one piece of a global whole, a nation within a nation. The police in the Mission were "an occupying army," a colonial force in a domestic Third World space.⁶⁵⁹

For Los Siete, the public was founded on solidarity among Third World peoples, including the poor of Vietnam and Latin America who were suffering through wars with western powers. It was only these Third World peoples who should be empowered to make decisions affecting their lives, and to benefit from the decisions made.

⁶⁵¹ "6 Cleared in Death of Coast Policeman," *New York Times*, Nov 8, 1970, 70.

⁶⁵² See Ferreira.

⁶⁵³ Heins.

⁶⁵⁴ Ferreira, 197-198

⁶⁵⁵ Heins.

⁶⁵⁶ Self, 299-302.

⁶⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁵⁸ *Los Siete.*

⁶⁵⁹ *ibid.*

Increasingly, as Los Siete's political philosophy evolved, they began to "see, too, that it can't just be brown people—it has to be all the oppressed classes—whether they be white or whatever color."⁶⁶⁰ As with any other public, membership was not universal. Any people, of whatever race, who espoused the principles of capitalism would not in the social organization be legitimate members of the public. The exclusion of capitalists from the new public was made clear in Los Siete's comments about the SFRA's and the SFDCP's planning efforts in the neighborhood, efforts which they regarded as "an attack on the Mission by those who measure the worth of a community by the profits they gain from it."⁶⁶¹ In one scene from a Los Siete documentary, an unnamed commentator spoke specifically to the Mission urban renewal plan, as Okamoto's renderings of the future 24th Street Station appeared on the screen. (See Figure 6.) "They have a bigger plan defined by the corporate giants: make part of the Mission Wall Street West; build a financial district within the Mission. They intend to move out all the brown people as an unskilled labor class. This is part of a mass extermination of a people."⁶⁶²

Decades hence it is easy to view Los Siete's revolutionary discourse as either quixotic or criminal, depending on where one's political sympathies lie, but in any case as overheated. But Los Siete's rhetoric must be understood within its broader social context, in which political rhetoric surrounding youth of color had reached a pitch on all sides. To announce that the Mission District urban renewal plan was aimed at the "extermination of a people" was exaggerated and inflammatory, but significantly less so than the well-publicized remarks that a judge in nearby Santa Clara County made to a young Mexican man who had pleaded guilty to robbery: "Mexican people feel it's perfectly all right to go out and act like an animal. . . . We ought to send you out of the country--send you back to Mexico . . . Maybe Hitler was right. The animals in our society probably ought to be destroyed because they have no right to live among human beings."⁶⁶³ In light of this 1969 comment, the 1970 comment about the extermination of a people seems much less inflated. For members of Los Siete to call police and civic leaders "pigs" and "imperialists" was no more inflammatory than the *Chronicle* referring to young Latinos as "terrorists," or police officers referring to them as "dirty" or as "wetbacks."⁶⁶⁴ Indeed

⁶⁶⁰ Heins.

⁶⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶⁶² *Los Siete*

⁶⁶³ Heins. The judge in question was Gerald Chargin. See *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 3, 1969.

⁶⁶⁴ See Heins; and *Los Siete*. The events around Los Siete not only garnered national media attention, but were also alluded to in popular television series and in films. For example, an episode of the television show *The Streets of San Francisco* was clearly inspired by the events that precipitated the formation of Los Siete. (The episode, titled "Hall of Mirrors," first aired on November 4, 1972.) The two series protagonists, detectives played by Karl Malden and Michael Douglas, are joined in a Mission District case by a blond haired, blue eyed detective who holds violently racist attitudes towards Latinos. At the resolution of the episode, however, it is revealed that the racist detective is himself a Latino who was raised in the Mission. Though the episode appears to confront the question of police racism, in fact it dodges the question, attributing violent and discriminatory policing methods to intra-ethnic tensions, rather than to institutional racism in the police department. Other popular allusions to Los Siete are less morally ambiguous than in *The Streets of San Francisco* episode. An allusion in the 1971 film, *Dirty Harry*, for example, seems to express only anger. In the opening scene of the film, before the credits, the camera pans across a plaque dedicated to the memory of San Francisco police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. The camera finally rests on a frame where the name Joseph Brodnik is centered; Brodnik was the officer who was killed in the 1969 incident which precipitated the formation of Los Siete. After pausing on this frame for at least ten seconds, the film begins. The main character in the film, also set in San

the heated discourse of Los Siete and COBRA is best understood precisely how they themselves understood it: as self defense.

But to focus only on the rhetoric employed in Los Siete publications is to miss many of the underlying ideas. Amid the charges of fascism and calls to global revolution lies a carefully researched spatial and economic analysis of development politics in San Francisco. In a pamphlet titled *Strictly Ghetto Property* Los Siete acknowledged that the large clearances had been stopped by a community coalition, but argued that the plans for BART would accomplish the displacement of "brown people" but subtler means.⁶⁶⁵ The pamphlet argued correctly that the original transportation plan was driven by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the Blyth Zellerbach Committee, and was intended to benefit downtown business interests and suburban commuters. Citing figures and statements from the SFRA, the City Planning Department, and the *Rapid Transit Corridor* study, the pamphlet argued that one goal of the BART plan was to convert the Mission into an area of moderately priced housing for downtown office workers. The MCO had the same analysis, which was part of the reason why it tried to gain control over urban renewal to begin with. But after the dissolution of the MCO in the early 1970s, the Mission was able to forestall speculative displacement only, Miller recalled, by cultivating a reputation as a neighborhood that was hostile to speculators, a reputation which was undoubtedly helped by the existence of a radical Third World organization.⁶⁶⁶

Like the Panthers across the Bay, the activities of Los Siete were not oriented only towards the lofty goal of inspiring a revolution of Third World peoples, but were also grounded in the everyday realities of their neighborhood. Using space donated by St. Peter's, Los Siete ran a program providing free breakfast to children.⁶⁶⁷ They also created a free medical clinic, and opened a volunteer restaurant called *El Basta Ya!* (Enough!) in a space on Valencia Street which had once been an Irish saloon.⁶⁶⁸ Los Siete was a part of the MCO, but it also offered a critique of the Coalition's approach. Although Los Siete was never opposed to renewing the Mission, it was opposed to urban renewal. That is to say that the group was not opposed to spot clearance of dilapidated structures, construction of new recreation facilities, development of job training programs, or any of the other activities of the MCO *within* the neighborhood; rather, Los Siete was suspicious of the idea that such activities should be carried out in partnership with the state. The organization was not interested in climbing Arnstein's ladder of civic participation; rather it advocated dismantling the entire structure upon which that ladder rested.

Conclusion

Latinos living in San Francisco before World War II could likely expect to contend with racial prejudice in their daily lives. But unlike Asians and African Americans, Latinos' racialization was conditional. The terms of their ambiguous status

Francisco, is a vigilante detective, played by Clint Eastwood, who disregards bureaucratic police procedure in order to punish criminals.

⁶⁶⁵ Heins.

⁶⁶⁶ Miller, 1981.

⁶⁶⁷ See Hagan.

⁶⁶⁸ Heins.

were codified in the 1937 Home Owners Loan Corporation survey of San Francisco: among Latinos, the only “inharmonious” racial group was composed of “Mexicans of mixed Indian extraction.”⁶⁶⁹ South and Central Americans were not included, nor were Mexicans of predominantly Spanish ancestry, all of whom were regarded not as Anglo, but as European. In the 1930s, the Bank of America was offering Latino San Franciscans FHA loans; the Anglo Bank of California advertised property in Spanish in the newspaper *El Imparcial*.⁶⁷⁰ As late as 1962, SPUR described the Mission as one of the city’s whitest neighborhoods, in spite of the fact that census data showed that large portions of the neighborhood were close to 50% Latino.⁶⁷¹ As I argued in Chapter Two of this dissertation, these systematic oversights are likely explained, in part, by the logics of the real estate market: if brokers and lenders designated an area as having an inharmonious racial concentration, they diminished their business opportunities in that area. While this practice rendered Latinos and their needs invisible, it also provided them a measure of shelter from the more overtly racist real estate practices that Asians and African Americans endured.

The ambiguous status of Latinos in San Francisco stood in sharp contrast to their status in cities like Los Angeles or even Oakland. A Mexican woman named Maria Martinez recalled arriving in Oakland’s Fruitvale district in 1957 to find signs in storefronts reading, “Dogs and Mexicans Not Allowed” and “Blacks and Mexicans Not Allowed.”⁶⁷² In the 1960s, however, the status of Latinos in San Francisco would come closer into line with the norm in California, as the Mission witnessed a wave of immigration from Latin American countries, an intensification of poverty, a rising crime rate, and an increasing demographic mismatch between Mission residents and the employees of the School District and the Police Department.

Latinos came to be regarded by many individuals and citywide institutions not as vaguely European, but as a distinctly foreign and potentially violent minority. In a 1970 report titled “Babel in Bagdad [sic] by the Bay: Impact of Immigration on Chinatown and the Mission District,” SPUR recommended strict immigration controls and mandatory English classes, lest San Franciscans “be subjected to a violent lesson in the destructive character of the time-bombs we now know as the ‘quaint’ Mission District and Chinatown.”⁶⁷³ As fear over immigration rose, Latinos’ status began to resemble that of African Americans.⁶⁷⁴

One woman, who identified herself as a non-Catholic, wrote to St. Peter’s in 1969 to protest the church’s support of the MCO: “These blacks are not nor will they ever be satisfied with anything. It is ironic that our own white decent men are trying to make

⁶⁶⁹ Home Owners’ Loan Corporation Division of Research and Statistics, San Francisco Residential Security Map Description, April 15, 1937, 4. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 195/Home Owners’ Loan Corp, Location: 450, 68:6:2/Box 147.

⁶⁷⁰ See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

⁶⁷¹ SPUR, “Report,” 1962, 90.

⁶⁷² See Thea Chroman, “Fruitvale: Deep Oakland,” Radio Report, KALW 91.7, 2005 (available at <http://www.deepoakland.org/sound?id=111>); see also Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 193.

⁶⁷³ SPUR, “Babel in Bagdad [sic] by the Bay: Impact of Immigration on Chinatown and the Mission District,” 1970, 7.

⁶⁷⁴ See Feirrer, especially Chapters 5 and 6.

history in landing on the moon for these trashy specimens. Activism should not be condoned nor abetted. It is wrong to preach liberalism in the churches, it's bad enough what we have outside of them." The letter was signed, "A disgusted Decent Individual, Mrs. Bixley."⁶⁷⁵ Mrs. Bixley's statements were notable not only for their virulence, but because the MCO was a multiethnic organization, with many Anglo members and a predominantly Latino leadership, but with very little African American representation. It was not only Anglos who began comparing Latinos to African Americans in the 1960s. As one elderly Latina put it in 1970, "I believe that the Spanish people is como [like] the colored people. There is discrimination in this country."⁶⁷⁶ Members of Mission-based Raza youth groups embraced the comparison, as part of their desire to foster solidarity among oppressed Third World peoples.

But while many San Franciscans' attitudes towards Latinos were narrowing in the 1960s, the major institutions of the Mission District continued to open to the concept of a racially and economically egalitarian urban life. While Latinos might encounter racist signs in storefronts in Oakland's Fruitvale District, the overwhelmingly Anglo Mission Merchants defended Latino youth against sensationalist journalism. Latinos were also defended within the Catholic parish churches: Father Leo Ulgesic recalled preaching a sermon in Spanish, in the mid-1960s, at St. Peter's; upon finishing he was "accosted by an irate Irish woman who reminded him, 'This is an Irish parish.' Ulgesic responded, 'Not anymore, it isn't.'"⁶⁷⁷

As I suggested in Chapter Three of this dissertation, the racially egalitarian impulses which were often displayed in Mission institutions might be explained in terms of an inherited common sense, rooted in the neighborhood's labor traditions and refracted through New Deal agencies' (inconsistent) promotion of racial equality. As Father Hagan recalled, "There were so many people in the neighborhood who enjoyed being with their fellow workers. They had a common sense and dignity about the working person, which was more important than what their country of origin was."⁶⁷⁸ This interpretation is supported by research conducted by Jason Fereirra. Drawing on interviews with Mission-based Latino activists, Fereirra argues that Bay Area Third World groups had a pan-ethnic orientation, rather than the nationalist orientation prevalent in groups like the Brown Berets in Southern California, because the Bay Area had a stronger labor tradition than Los Angeles. A prominent member of Los Siete named Donna Amador remembered that "My mom was in the hotel and Restaurant workers union, and my dad was eventually within the City and Public Employees union as a carpenter . . . And so that is how I was raised."⁶⁷⁹ Harry Bridges—a leader of the 1934 San Francisco General Strike and a president of the International Longshore and

⁶⁷⁵ Mrs. Bixley to St. Peter's Parish Church, no date [1969], St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

⁶⁷⁶ *Los Siete*.

⁶⁷⁷ J. Burns, 418.

⁶⁷⁸ Hagan, 20.

⁶⁷⁹ Ferreira, 277. See also Heins. Amador's description of her parents tracks closely with some of the self descriptions of the Mexican subjects interviewed in Paul Radin's survey of ethnicities in San Francisco. See especially David Craig interview of unnamed Mexican subject, November 15, 1934, Box 2, Folder 18, Paul Radin Papers, 1933-1943, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. Craig's subject, and likely Amador's parents, were among the first generation of Latinos admitted to unions in San Francisco in the 1930s.

Warehouse Union—had been an Amador family hero.⁶⁸⁰ The fact that even a radical group like Los Siete regarded themselves as part of a labor tradition made them a less disruptive, and even a welcome presence among the neighborhood's existing institutions.

In spite of its well deserved reputation for racism and classism, the SFRA was another San Francisco institution that did not exhibit openly racist attitudes towards Mission Latinos. Though its earliest plan would most certainly have resulted in the displacement of many Latino residents through rising property values, if not through clearance, the SFRA continued the local real estate practice of largely overlooking Latino presence. That practice was never challenged during the 1950s. During the 1960s, however, the neighborhood's many Latino groups—from conservative homeowners, to social service providers, and from political participation organizations, to Third World defense confederations—were not content with the meager protections provided by invisibility. Like the Mission Merchants and the Anglo homeowners groups, the Latino groups increasingly desired to have their presence recognized, and to be given the opportunity to plan for themselves. The SFRA's urban renewal plan gave the Mission a vehicle through which to fight for these goals.

In the short period from its creation in 1968 and the halting of Model Cities funding in 1973, the MCO made strides towards a renewal of the Mission by forcing the SFRA into collaboration. The MCO brought the Mission the authority to plan its own physical and social space, an authority which the neighborhood had not enjoyed since the Rolph administration, and the heyday of the MPA. Indeed, the new Coalition Organization and the old Promotion Association shared many organizational characteristics, including a bearing that was at times confrontational, and at times defensive, but which always insisted on the legitimacy of the neighborhood as a planning authority.

The principal difference between the MCO and the MPA was not organizational, but had to do with the composition of the public, and the nature of the public interest, that each represented. For the MPA, the public was composed of neighborhood-based businessmen (all men) and white unionist residents. Racial minorities, particularly Asians, were explicitly not members of the public. The public interest, in turn, was neighborhood self determination and the continued economic prosperity of the Mission's businessmen and white unionist residents. For the MCO, as well, local businesspeople and union-affiliated workers were regarded as members of the public. But the MCO expanded the membership to include any resident of the Mission, irrespective of employment status, class position, gender, race, or ethnicity. Indeed, the MCO emphasized the fact that it represented poor minority residents, those who were excluded from the public by the MPA. So while the MCO, like the MPA, regarded neighborhood self-determination as a criterion of the public interest, the MCO untethered the concept from its racial significations and from its association with productive capacity, the ability to generate wealth. For the MCO, racial and class equality were fundamental criteria in determining the public interest.

Though the MCO insisted on a more egalitarian conception of the public interest, and an expanded membership in the public, there were clear limits; as with any other public, the one promoted by the MCO implied certain exclusions. The libertarian positions taken by Jack Bartalini, of the Responsible Merchants, Property Owners and

⁶⁸⁰ *ibid.*

Tenants, Inc., marginalized him and his constituency within the public as defined by the MCO. Later in the 1970s, Mission community organizations (progeny of the MCO) made clear that sexual orientation could also marginalize one from the public. Horatio Roque Ramirez's research on queer Latina/o community histories has analyzed an instance when a white lesbian bar was set to open in the Mission: "Latino neighborhood residents and groups were up in arms, protesting the bar. They perceived it to be yet another white business coming in, and one selling alcohol at that. Public protests against the bar cited 'the fact' that it was in many ways 'a foreign aspect' of the Mission . . . How could a lesbian bar exist among residences with Latino families?"⁶⁸¹ Most Latino organizations did not regard Anglos, as such, as being on the margins of the public in the Mission; and many of the same organizations were slowly accepting the presence of gay and lesbian organizations, like the Gay Latino Alliance. So while neither whiteness nor homosexuality was by itself a barrier to membership in the public, white homosexuality was.⁶⁸²

The most widely cited interpretation of the Mission story presents a neighborhood group, motivated by "the search for cultural identity and for political self reliance," which achieved "local autonomy" from "heavy-handed political authority" and "central urban policy."⁶⁸³ Language of autonomy and self determination were important rhetorical tools in organizing this coalition, and others like it, but that does not mean that these terms—"slogans" as Mike Miller sometimes referred to them—provide the most satisfactory description of the events that followed.⁶⁸⁴ The activities of the neighborhood organizations and the government authorities were so interwoven in the Mission that it does not make sense to speak of the neighborhood's local autonomy from government authority. Indeed, various incarnations of the neighborhood coalition had legal standing as state entities. The Mission groups were not autonomous from government authority; rather they became a locus of authority, along with the city, the state, and the federal governments.

⁶⁸¹ Horatio N. Roque Ramirez, "Civil Rights Historians: Social Movements and Pivotal Personal Moments: A panel discussion with Ruth Rosen, Waldo Martin, Paul Longmore, and Horatio N. Roque Ramirez," in "Intersections of Civil Rights and Social Movements: Putting Disability in Its Place," Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2004, 19-20. See also Horatio N. Roque Ramirez, "'That's My Place!': Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco's Gay Latino Alliance, 1975-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2003.

⁶⁸² Because this dissertation has focused on how the public was defined through the relationships among only three terms—ethnicity, space, and neighborhood—questions of how the public was defined through gender and sexuality have been tabled. They will be explored further in future research.

⁶⁸³ Castells, 138-139. Castells's account of the Mission is cited in, but not challenged by, virtually all subsequent scholarship which considers the Mission, including, most prominently, David Diaz, *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 283; and Godfrey, 159.

⁶⁸⁴ Miller, 1974, 116.

Chapter 4 Figures

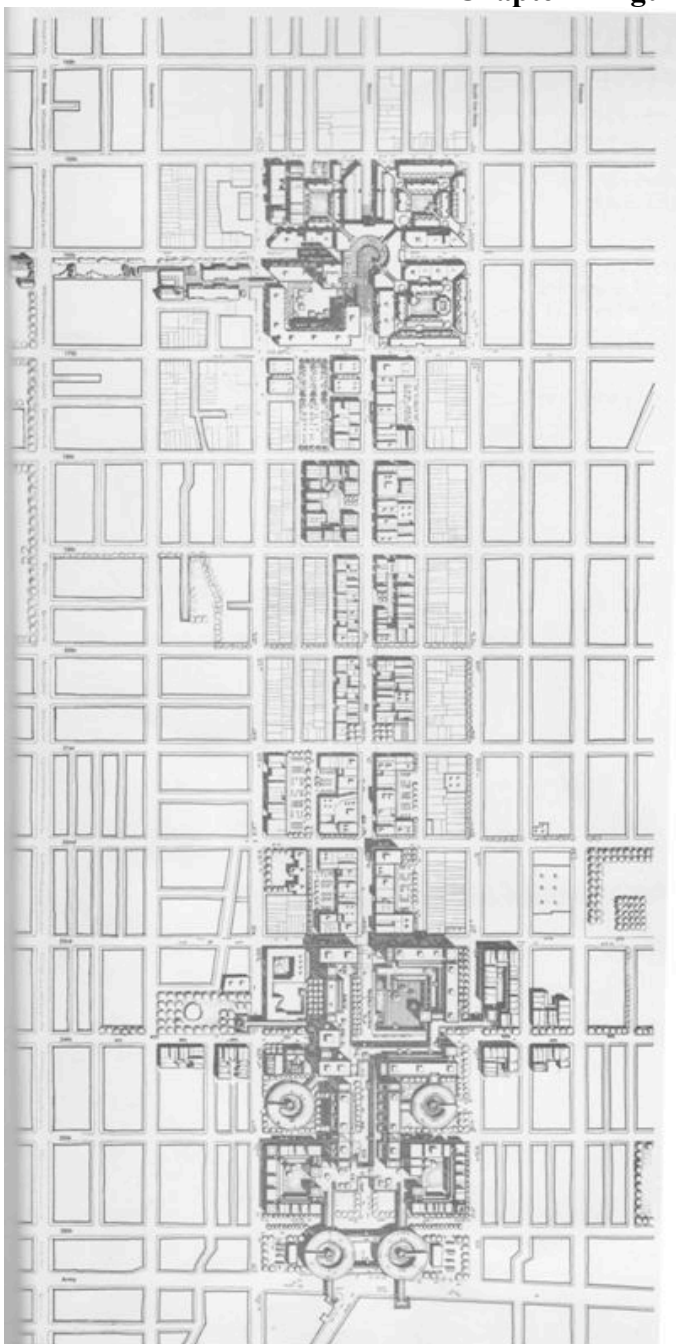


Figure 1: Okamoto Plan showing development at BART stations at 16th and Mission Streets, and 24th and Mission.

Source: Okamoto/Liskamm, "Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission," 1966, 38.

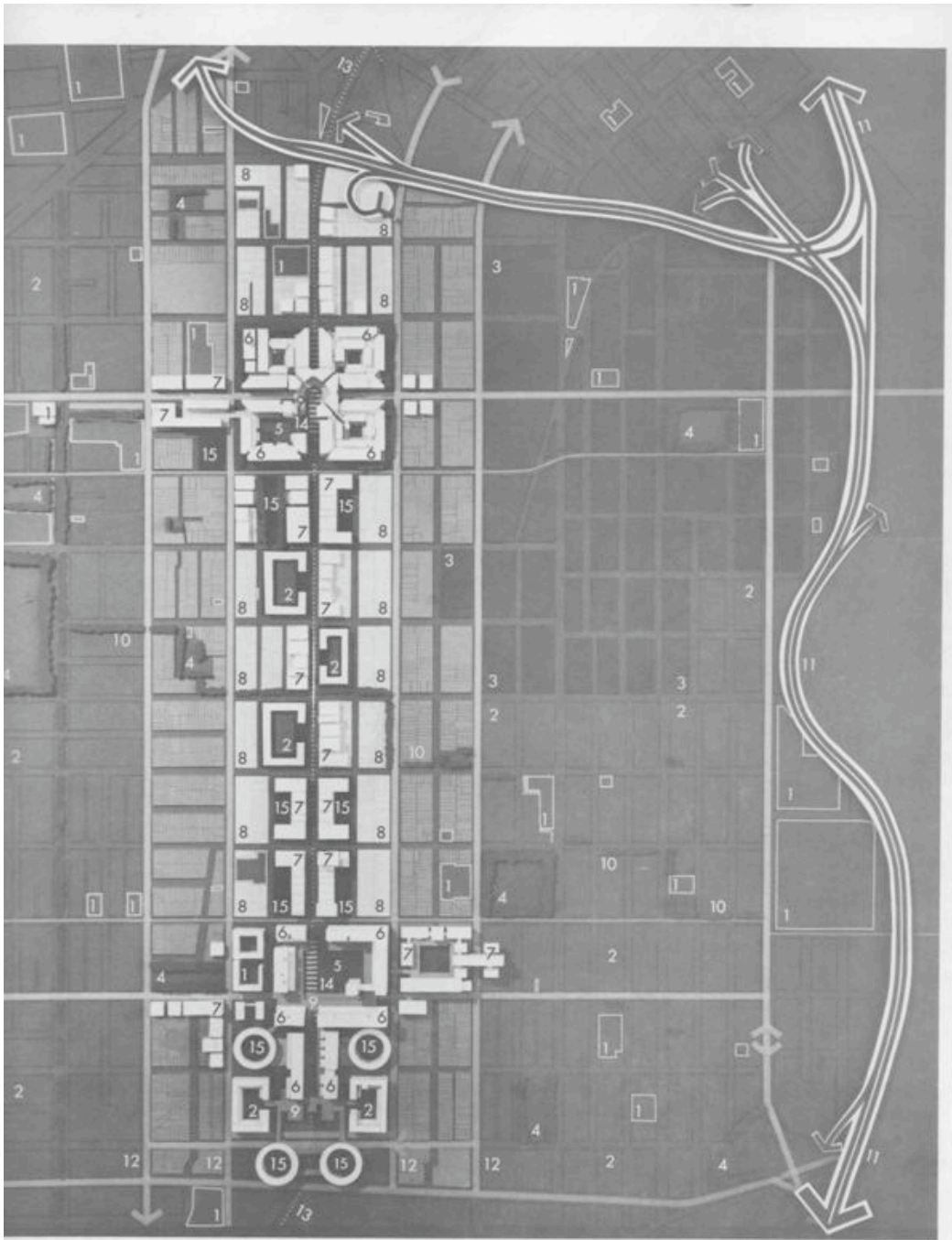


Figure 2: Land use and development pattern, Okamoto Plan. Number coded model: 1 Institutional, 2 Residential, 3 Industrial, 4 Park, 5 Plaza, 6 New Development, 7 New & Rehabilitation, 8 Rehabilitation, 9 Elevated Walkway, 10 Pedestrian Greenway, 11 Freeway, 12 Major Arterial, 13 Rapid Transit, 14 Transit Station, 15 Parking. Source: Source: Okamoto/Liskamm, "Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission," 1966, 20.

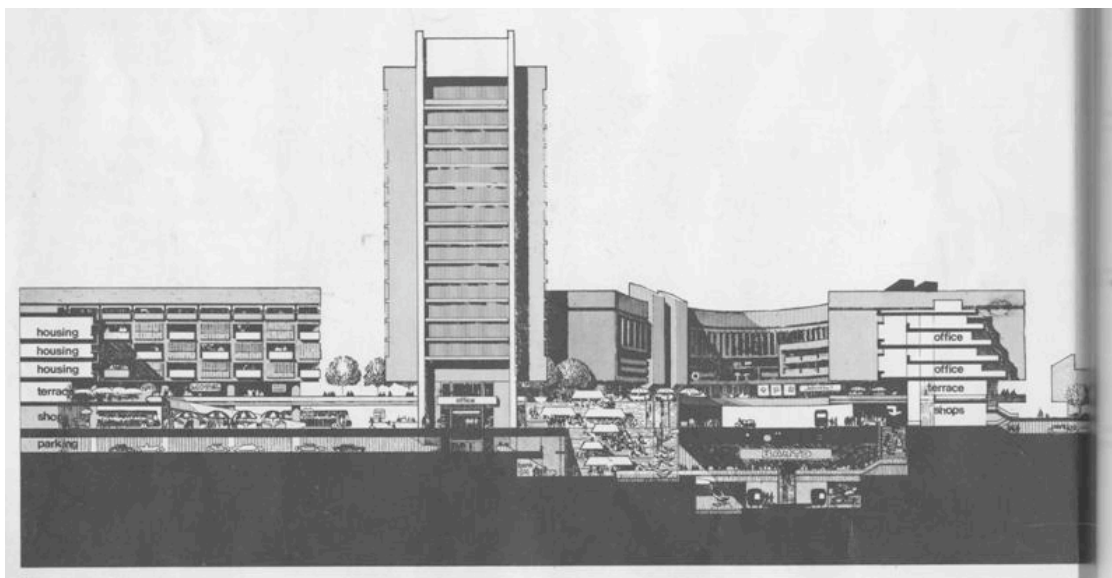


Figure 3: 16th Street Station Area Section. Source: Okamoto/Liskamm, "Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission," 1966, 23.

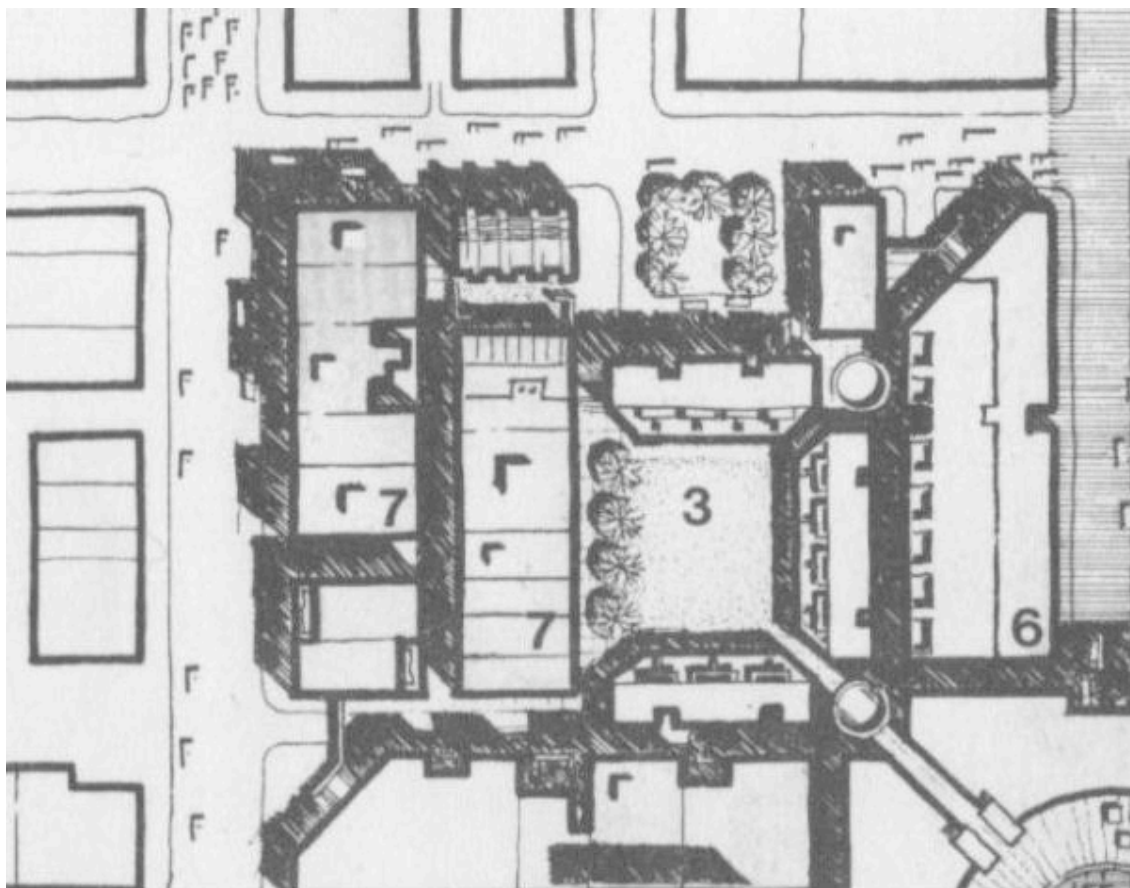


Figure 4: Detail of proposed redevelopment around 16th Station, demonstrating how existing, nineteenth century urban fabric would be woven in with new development. Number coded model: 3 Raised Pedestrian Level, 6 Housing (Parking Below Grade), 7 New & Rehabilitated Housing.

Source: Okamoto/Liskamm, "Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission," 1966, 24.

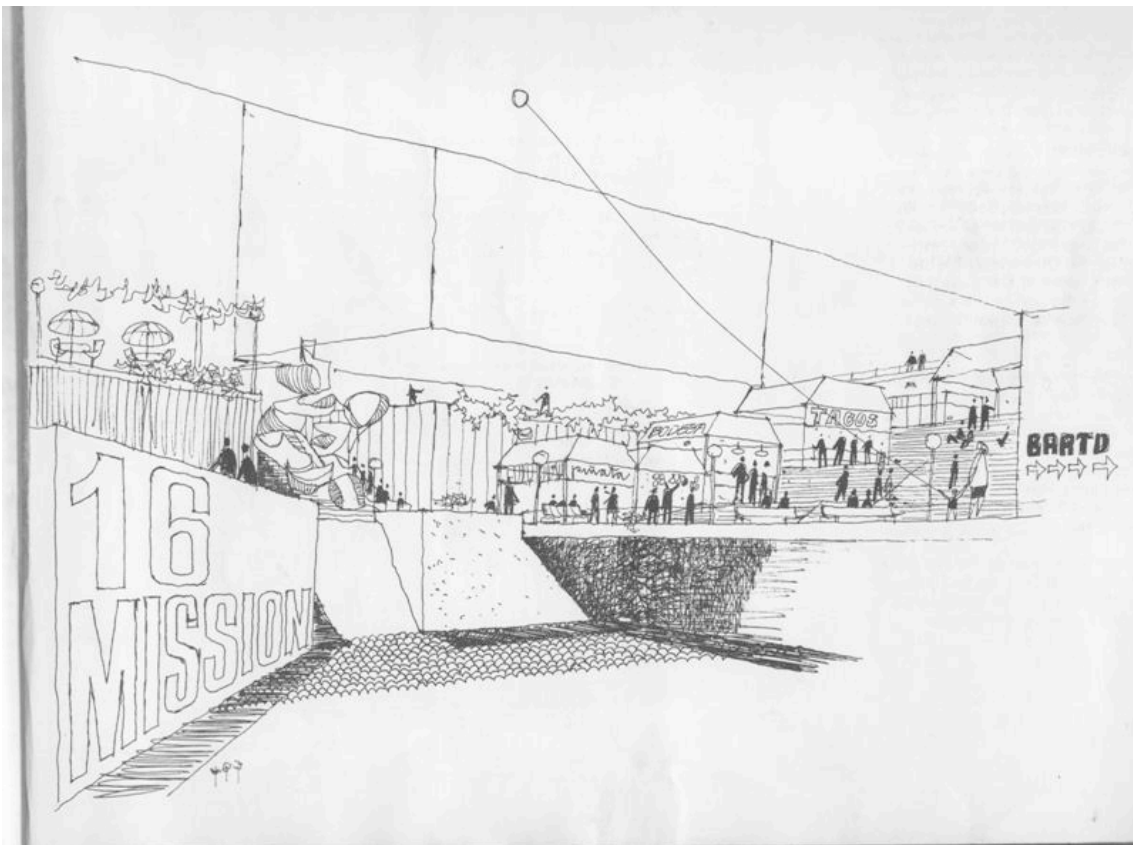


Figure 5: 16th Street Station Area Perspective. Note kiosks selling with signs reading Piñata, Bodega, and Tacos. Source: Okamoto/Liskamm, “Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission,” 1966, 36.

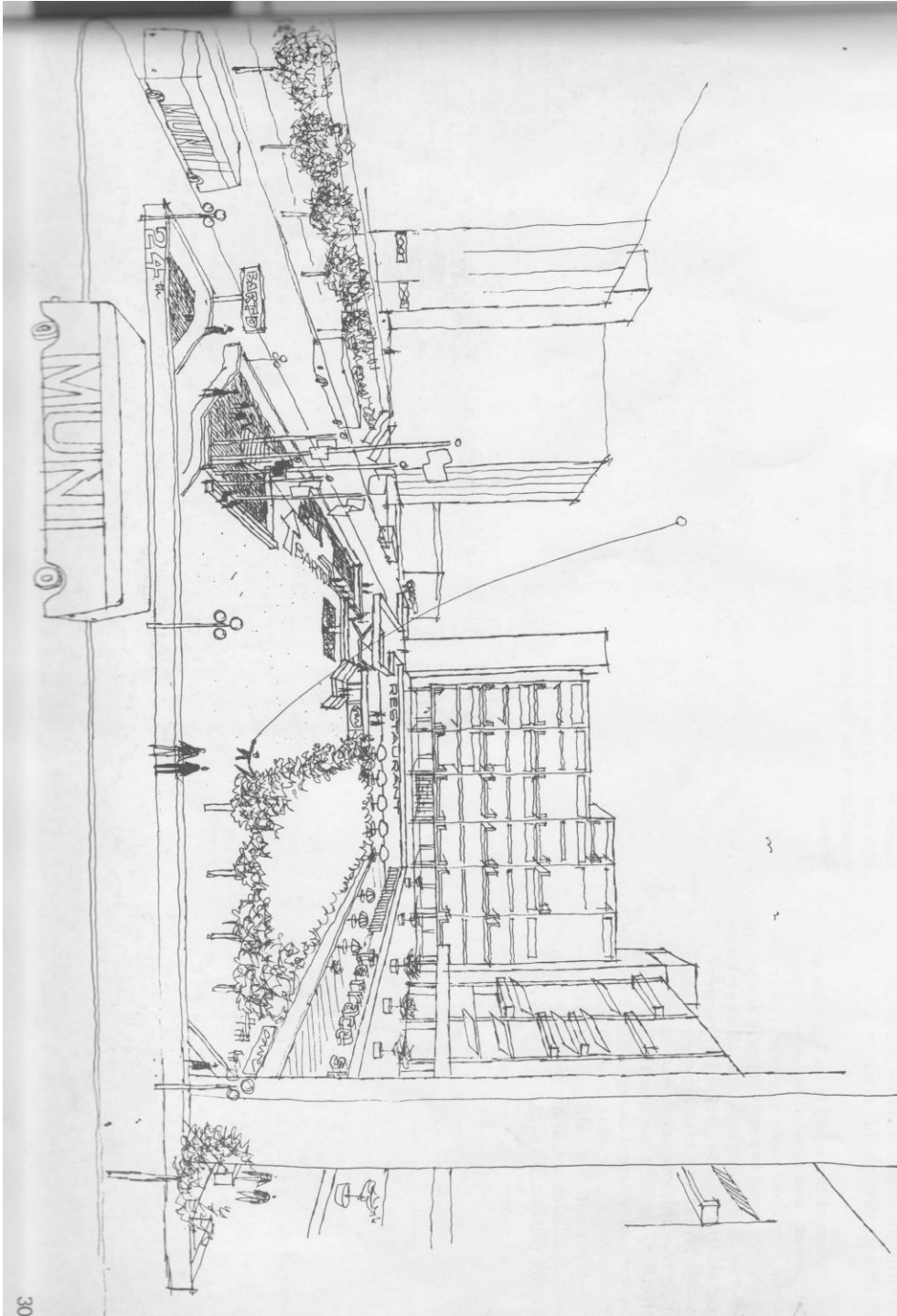


Figure 6: Rendering of 24th Street BART station. Compare to rendering of 16th Street (Figure 5). In both images a small child appears, holding a balloon. In both cases the balloon flies higher than the tallest structures. This was presumably a method for making the buildings appear less imposing. Source: Okamoto/Liskamm, "Mission District Urban Design Study: Prepared for the San Francisco City Planning Commission," 1966, 30.

Conclusion: On Neighborhoods, Ethnicity, and Authority

Scholarly histories of twentieth-century urbanism in the United States have tended to take cities and federal agencies as their units of study. In this literature, neighborhoods have figured primarily as subunits of a larger whole. Of course histories of cities and federal agencies must be told, but as I have argued in this dissertation, there is also much to be learned about American urbanism by considering the view from the ground up, by taking neighborhood as a unit of analysis. The neighborhood view is worth considering if for no other reason than that city residents themselves regarded neighborhoods as important determinants of urban life. Many of the people described in this dissertation proudly called themselves "Missionites"; for them, neighborhood was an identity category like race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or skill. Neighborhoods also merit further investigation because they often functioned as coherent actors, exerting influence in a broader political/economic field, alongside newspaper editorial boards, elite families, and chambers of commerce, not only at the level of the municipality, but also with regional, state, and federal agencies.

This study is concerned with describing the processes through which neighborhoods have been able to make decisions about the planning of urban space, and with the related questions of who is allowed to act on behalf of the neighborhood, and who is intended to benefit from the decisions made. In other words, this study asks how a neighborhood constitutes itself as a public. I have been especially concerned with how ethnicity has factored in these determinations.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Anglo residents and taxpayers of San Francisco's Mission District enjoyed an authority to plan not only the physical space of their own neighborhood, but also the space of much of the southern half of San Francisco.⁶⁸⁵ This authority was wielded primarily by the Mission Promotion Association (MPA), with support from all of the neighborhood's influential interests: merchants, unions, parish churches, and homeowners. While these groups clashed over many issues, particularly in the broad area of industrial relations, they were unanimous on the desirability of maintaining home rule, the power of the Mission to plan for itself. As Chapter One of this dissertation demonstrated, the neighborhood's most influential interest groups were also unanimous in their feeling that the neighborhood's few Asian residents were not welcome, or were only welcome insofar as they serviced a vice industry. The MPA's planning authority, though unofficial, was respected not only within the neighborhood, but also by San Francisco municipal government, and even by California state agencies. If, as I have argued in this dissertation, the public can be conceived of as being divided between those who are allowed to make decisions (authority) and those who are intended to benefit from the decisions made (beneficiaries), then in the first three decades of the twentieth century there was something like an uncontested public in the Mission District, at least when it came to decisions about land use: the neighborhood's authority was not challenged by municipal or state agencies, and within the neighborhood an ethnically homogenous population broadly agreed on who were to be the beneficiaries of whatever planning decisions were made.

⁶⁸⁵ See Chapter One of this dissertation, especially Figure 10.

The 1930s saw rifts emerge in the public, both within the neighborhood and at higher levels of authority. As I argued in Chapter Two of this dissertation, those rifts can largely be explained with reference to New Deal interventions. When the MPA dissolved in 1920, the Mission was left without an organization capable of unifying the neighborhood's divergent interests. Nevertheless, continued economic expansion had enabled homeowners, merchants, and union residents to agree on the desirability of supporting physical improvements of all kinds through the 1920s. Yet when the United States Housing Authority (USHA) proposed projects for the Mission in the 1930s, the fragile truce between workers and neighborhood property owners was shattered, each side accusing the other of threatening the public interest—the public interest, defined by workers as economic equality and by merchants and homeowners as property value.

Within the Mission, the USHA and other New Deal agencies consistently resolved these disputes in favor of labor, thereby continuing the Mission's longstanding tradition of defining workers as members of the public. With developments like a vocational school and housing projects, New Deal agencies endeavored to respect neighborhood mores, particularly pertaining to the ethnic composition of the Mission. Yet even while these agencies defined workers in the Mission as members of the public, in the sense of beneficiary, at the same time those agencies were marginalizing the Mission from the public, in the sense of authority. When it came to making plans for the future of all of San Francisco, New Deal agencies sought counsel only from the city's most powerful banks, corporations, and real estate interests. The agencies did not solicit input from neighborhood-based interests like merchants and unions, groups which had been accustomed to having their wishes respected in the city and even the state.

In the immediate postwar period, federal, state, and municipal legislation continued the process of centralizing land-use authority in the hands of a planning regime led by San Francisco's downtown-based corporations. As I showed in Chapter Three of this dissertation, the story of the built environment in the Mission District immediately after World War II is largely the story of what citywide agencies and downtown businesses were planning for the neighborhood. The foremost concern of these entities was the question of how drivers and goods could circulate through dense, aging neighborhoods which were becoming choked with traffic. The answer was freeways. Planners and their allies promoted the need for a comprehensive highway system as common sense, not only in policy reports and newspaper editorials, but also by establishing a city planning curriculum for the elementary school students. While New Deal agencies had continued to define workers as the public, the postwar planning regime spoke only of the "motoring public" and "the shipping public."

By all appearances, the new planning regime was at first successful in redefining the ideas of the public and the public interest around the efficient circulation of capital. But not long after the first freeways were erected in San Francisco in 1955, homeowners and ordinary citizens began to revolt, citing the negative impact that "steel and concrete monsters" would have on their more local economic interests, their property values. In the immediate postwar period, a neighborhood was a non-entity as far as planning authority was concerned, yet the freeway revolt was an opening salvo in a battle in which neighborhoods would begin to insist, once again, that the property values of individual homeowners was a legitimate public interest. These "neighborhood defense" organizations were the beginning of a longer battle in which neighborhoods would once

again claim the right to plan for themselves, the right to be considered members of the public, in the sense of authority.

But while a battle was erupting in the city and the state over who would have the authority to plan for neighborhoods, within the Mission there continued a negotiation over who would benefit from already existing spaces. Changing demographics made this negotiation tense at times. Throughout the 1930s, Latinos had been moving to the Mission. While they never suffered the kind of legal and even physical harassment that the Mission's Chinese residents had endured, nor were they welcomed into the neighborhood. The *Mission Merchants' News* never mentioned the expanding presence of Latinos. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), following the lead of the city's lenders and realtors, continued to describe the neighborhood as white, rendering Latinos invisible. Yet as more Latinos moved to the Mission in the immediate postwar period, the merchants, unions, and churches all began to accommodate the newcomers. As one Catholic priest recalled, the many Anglos who decided to stay in the Mission, rather than moving to the suburbs, were the ones who liked the idea of being part of a more expansive public, one founded on "a common sense and dignity about the working person, which was more important than what [a person's] country of origin was."⁶⁸⁶ The neighborhood's most influential institutions were beginning to regard Latinos as members of the public, on the basis that they, too, were workers.

Although the merchants, unions, and churches were determining who would benefit from spaces in the Mission, the fact remained that authority to make major planning decisions had been centralized downtown. Within the structures of municipal, state, and federal government as they existed before World War II, neighborhood had been a scale at which the public interest was constituted; but in the immediate postwar period, neighborhood registered only as a special interest. These were the relations that prevailed in 1966, when the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) proposed an urban renewal plan for the Mission. As I show in Chapter Four of this dissertation, the SFRA's plan for the Mission stood in contrast to the bulldozer plans which Jane Jacobs had attacked in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*: the Mission plan called for much more rehabilitation than clearance, and was, generally speaking, comparatively sensitive to existing urban and social fabric.⁶⁸⁷

In response, a broad-based coalition of neighborhood groups organized the Mission Council on Renewal (MCOR). The Council took the position that it would support the SFRA, provided that MCOR would have veto power over any aspect of the final plan. When the SFRA responded that it was not legally empowered to give MCOR decision-making authority, the Council successfully lobbied the Board of Supervisors to kill the plan. When Model Cities came to the Mission in 1968, the remnants of MCOR reconfigured themselves as the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO). The new Organization did win decision-making authority, and in fact gained legal standing as a state entity, a neighborhood planning authority constituted at the scale of the neighborhood.

The MCO brought the Mission a measure of planning authority that it had not enjoyed since the days of the MPA. But unlike the MPA, which advocated explicitly on

⁶⁸⁶ James Hagan, interview by Jeffrey Burns, June 19, 1989, transcript, St. Peter's Parish file, Archive of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 3.

⁶⁸⁷ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992 [1961]).

behalf of Anglo residents, the MCO was a multiethnic organization, with Latino/Anglo leadership, which advocated on behalf of all Mission residents, irregardless of race, ethnicity, or nativity. While the MPA promoted the material advancement of the neighborhood, the MCO was motivated by a desire to allow current residents to remain in the Mission, and to have a say in how the neighborhood would be planned.⁶⁸⁸ While the MPA had equated the public interest with prosperity, the MCO equated the public interest with a right to be present.

For a project which considers the role of neighborhood in the history of American urbanism, the Mission District is a rich case study. The Mission was an economically diverse, multiethnic neighborhood, and a site in which all of the twentieth century's major planning programs were contested. To tell the local history of this single neighborhood—considered not as a container for other social processes, but as a dynamic social process in and of itself—is to provide new perspectives on much larger stories, including City Beautiful Planning, redlining, race in federal public housing, Asiatic Exclusion, relations among Latino immigrant groups, the freeway revolt, urban renewal, Model Cities, Third World Defense organizations, and the role of multiethnic alliances in the making of twentieth-century urban America. There is no doubt that other neighborhoods across the United States have their own national and international stories to tell.

⁶⁸⁸ Mission Promotion Association, "Constitution and Bylaws," 1909, Mission Promotion Association file, California Historical Society, unpaginated.