



BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT AREA B SURVEY

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

PREPARED BY
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FOR THE
SAN FRANCISCO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>A. PURPOSE</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>B. DEFINITION OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREA</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>C. IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE.....</i>	<i>6</i>
II. METHODOLOGY	11
III. IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS	14
<i>A. HERE TODAY</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>B. 1976 CITYWIDE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>C. SAN FRANCISCO ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>D. ARTICLE 10 OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>E. UNREINFORCED MASONRY BUILDING (UMB) SURVEY</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>F. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>G. CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>H. OTHER SURVEYS AND TECHNICAL REPORTS.....</i>	<i>18</i>
IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT.....	20
<i>A. PREHISTORIC AND EARLY CONTACT ERA: -1775</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>B. EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT – SPANISH AND MEXICAN PERIODS: 1776-1847</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>C. EARLY AMERICAN SETTLEMENT: LAND SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT: 1848-1864.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>D. INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN "SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO": 1865-1906</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>E. INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT: 1907-1929.....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>F. BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT DURING THE DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II: 1930-1945.....</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>G. EVOLUTION OF BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT DURING THE POST-WAR ERA: 1946-1974.....</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>H. POSTSCRIPT: BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT: 1975-2009</i>	<i>124</i>
<i>I. AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1841-2009.....</i>	<i>127</i>
<i>J. MALTESE AMERICANS IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1900-2009.....</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>K. REDEVELOPMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1948-2009</i>	<i>145</i>
V. DEFINITION OF PROPERTY TYPES	155
<i>A. IDENTIFICATION OF PROPERTY TYPES ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORIC CONTEXTS.....</i>	<i>155</i>
<i>B. DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE BUILDING TYPES.....</i>	<i>171</i>
<i>C. CONDITION OF RESOURCE TYPES</i>	<i>171</i>
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	176
<i>A. SIGNIFICANCE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS</i>	<i>176</i>
<i>B. OTHER PRESERVATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES.....</i>	<i>177</i>
<i>C. AREAS REQUIRING FUTURE WORK</i>	<i>178</i>
VII. CONCLUSION.....	181
VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	182

APPENDIX

I. INTRODUCTION

Bayview-Hunters Point is a sprawling residential and industrial district in the southeast corner of San Francisco. One of San Francisco's largest districts, the 2,528-acre swath encompasses roughly 9,000 parcels within multiple neighborhoods, including Hunters Point, India Basin, Bayview, Silver Terrace, and Bret Harte, as well as extensive industrial districts in the Islais Creek Estuary (Oakinba and Northern Gateway) and South Basin areas. The boundaries of Bayview-Hunters Point are generally understood to be Cesar Chavez Boulevard (formerly Army Street) to the north, San Francisco Bay to the east, the Bayshore Freeway (U.S. Highway 101) to the west, and Candlestick Hill (also known as Bayview Hill) to the south (**Figure 1**).¹ Traditionally a diverse, mixed-income, and mixed-use residential and industrial district, Bayview-Hunters Point enjoys tremendous physical assets, including a 14-mile coastline on San Francisco Bay, relatively balmy weather, and a network of hills that provide views of the eastern half of San Francisco, the East Bay, Marin, and San Mateo counties. The district is also afflicted by entrenched poverty, disinvestment, and the legacy of industrial pollutants that continue to affect many in the area to this day.

Bayview-Hunters Point is one of San Francisco's oldest and most historic communities. Originally occupied by plains of coastal grasslands, hillsides covered in coastal sage scrub, and extensive marshlands, the physical character of the district has been extensively transformed from the initial contact era between Spanish explorers and the native Ohlone inhabitants. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district was home to cattle herds, belonging first to Mission Dolores, and later José Bernal's Rancho Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo. After the American conquest of California, the land comprising today's Bayview-Hunters Point district was quickly subdivided into house and garden lots and gradually sold off to diverse group of American and European settlers. The area soon became San Francisco's most ethnically varied community, housing British, Scandinavian, and German boat builders at India Basin; several Chinese fishermen's camps at Hunters Point; Italian, Maltese, and Portuguese truck farmers in the Bayview; and French tannery workers and Mexican and southwestern vaqueros at Butchertown.

Bayview-Hunters Point has a distinguished industrial history, beginning with the construction of the San Francisco Dry Dock at Hunters Point in 1866. Shipbuilding was soon augmented by Butchertown, San Francisco's wholesale butchers' reservation on Islais Creek. By the First World War, San Francisco's industrial belt had extended south along the Central Waterfront to Islais Creek, leading to the filling of most of the Islais Creek Estuary for industrial sites during the 1920s and 1930s. However, it was not until the Second World War that Bayview-Hunters Point leapfrogged into the top ranks of industrial zones on the West Coast following the acquisition of the Hunters Point Dry Dock by the U.S. Navy in 1940. During this period the population of the district exploded as thousands of war workers (many of whom were African American) moved to Hunters Point to take jobs in the naval shipyard.

Despite extensive job losses following the closure of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in 1974 and the eventual decommissioning of the base in 1991, as well other problems stemming from isolation, neglect, and higher-than-average rates of poverty, Bayview-Hunters Point has remained a vibrant predominantly (but not exclusively) African American neighborhood. Today, the district stands at a crossroads. Over the last two decades the percentage of African

¹ Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Committee (PAC) and San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) Long Range Planning/Technical Staff. *Bayview Hunters Point Community Revitalization Concept Plan* (San Francisco: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 2002), 16.

Americans has diminished to less than half of the total population while the percentage of other races and ethnic groups has increased substantially. Although longstanding issues facing the district persist, the future promises many changes, including a redeveloped shipyard, new housing and parks, and a revitalized commercial corridor. Many of these changes will result in changes to the social, cultural, and physical character of the neighborhood.

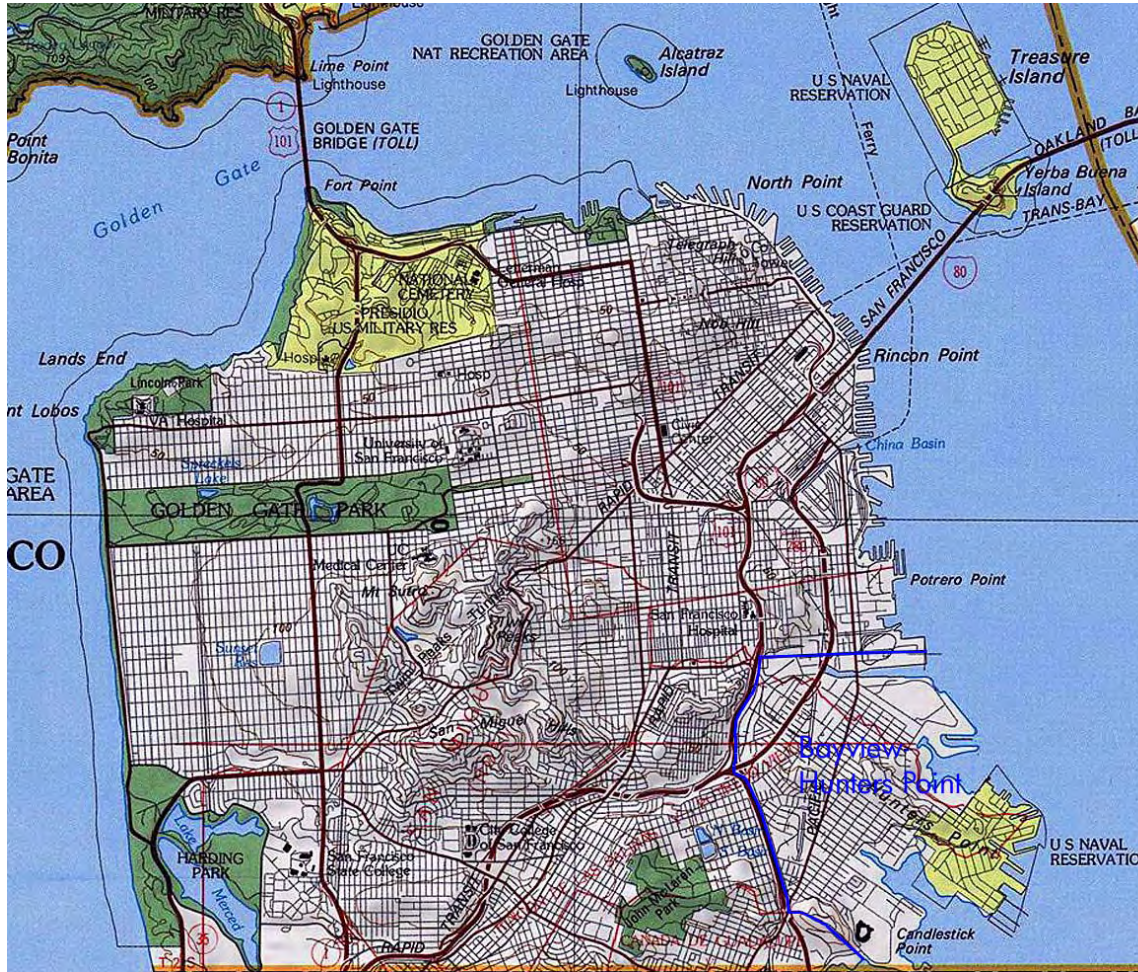


Figure 1. Location and boundaries of Bayview-Hunters Point district

Source: United States Geological Survey

Annotated by KVP Consulting

A. PURPOSE

The Bayview-Hunters Point Historic Context Statement (Context Statement) has been prepared by Kelley & VerPlanck Historical Resources Consulting, LLC (KVP) at the request of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) as part of ongoing planning/redevelopment efforts within the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Indeed, much of the district is divided among six SFRA project areas (both active and expired). This Context Statement has been prepared as part of planning activity relating to Area B, a 1,361.5-acre tract that comprises over half of the land area of the Bayview-Hunters Point district. This tract was added to the Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan in a 2006 amendment. Area B begins in the north at Cesar Chavez Boulevard and area extends south to Candlestick Point and the San Mateo County line. Third Street, the primary commercial corridor and “main street” of the district, serves as its spine.² Area B includes several distinct neighborhoods designated by the SFRA as “activity nodes,” including “Oakinba,” Northern Gateway, Town Center, Health Center, South Basin, Hunters Point Shoreline, and Candlestick Point.³ Although the Historic Context Statement is primarily concerned with Area B, this Context Statement will examine the history of the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district.

In the Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan, the SFRA proposes to address various goals and objectives, including increasing the district’s supply of affordable housing, strengthening the local economic base, improving public transportation, providing for additional public open space, eliminating blight, redeveloping undeveloped and underdeveloped areas, and “facilitating the preservation, rehabilitation, and seismic retrofitting of historic buildings and other landmarks.” Because SFRA projects have the potential to affect cultural and architectural resources it is essential that the area be surveyed in advance of any physical work to create an inventory of potentially significant natural, cultural, and architectural resources.

It is the purpose of this Context Statement to begin the process of identifying important historic contexts, as well as the potential historic resources that relate to these contexts, within the Bayview-Hunters Point district. The following definition and discussion of historic contexts are contained within Standard 1 of the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Preservation Planning*:

Decisions about the identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic properties are most reliably made when the relationship of individual properties to other similar properties is understood. Information about historic

² Other current and former SFRA project areas include: Area A, a 137-acre enclave of residential and civic properties located atop Hunters Point ridge; Area C, a small mixed-use industrial and residential tract centered on Hunters Point Boulevard and Innes Avenue on the south shore of India Basin; Hunters Point Shipyard/Candlestick Point, an 829-acre tract encompassing the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard; India Basin Industrial Park, a former SFRA project area centered on Evans Avenue; and Bayview Industrial Triangle, a small industrial district bounded by Evans Avenue, 3rd Street, and Kirkwood Avenue.

³ As mentioned above, there are seven activity nodes within Area B. Oakinba is a name referring to the Islais Creek Estuary industrial area. It is an acronym that combines the words “Oakdale,” “industrial,” and “Bayshore.” The Oakinba Activity Node is the industrial area bounded by Cesar Chavez Boulevard to the north, the Caltrain tracks to the east, Oakdale Avenue to the south, and Bayshore Boulevard to the west. The Northern Gateway Activity Node is an industrial and commercial area located east of Oakinba between the Caltrain tracks and 3rd Street. The Town Center Activity Node consists of the commercial district along 3rd Street and the adjoining residential areas between Kirkwood and Van Dyke avenues. The Health Center Activity Node spans 3rd Street south of the Town Center. Hunters Point Shoreline Activity Node is an area on the north slope of Hunters Point Ridge located between Areas A and C. South Basin is a large mixed-use industrial and residential area extending from the Bayshore Freeway to San Francisco Bay in the southern part of the district. The Candlestick Point Activity Node is the southernmost of the seven nodes; it comprises Candlestick Park, the football stadium, its parking lots, and the adjoining state park.

properties representing aspects of history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture must be collected and organized to define these relationships. This organizational framework is called a "historic context." The historic context organizes information based on a cultural theme and its geographical and chronological limits. Contexts describe the significant broad patterns of development in an area that may be represented by historic properties. The development of historic contexts is the foundation for decisions about identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic properties.

In addition to this Context Statement, KVP has surveyed the entire Town Center "activity node" of SFRA Area B project area and will prepare California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 A (Primary forms) for all 709 properties within the Town Center Activity Node.

B. DEFINITION OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

As described above, the scope of this Context Statement encompasses the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district, an area bounded by Cesar Chavez Boulevard to the north, San Francisco Bay to the east and south, Candlestick (Bayview) Hill to the south, and the Bayshore Freeway (U.S. Highway 101) to the west. Although the scope of the Context Statement is technically Area B, this document identifies and discusses historic events, contexts, and buildings throughout the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district.⁴ We have done this for the following reasons: the highly irregular boundaries of Area B encompass parts of virtually every neighborhood within the Bayview-Hunters Point district. It is therefore of little value to attempt to isolate this Context Statement to events that occurred solely within the boundaries of Area B, especially given that historic events and patterns typically had district-wide implications and effects. Second, it is anticipated that the SFRA will amend the existing Area B project area to include additional project areas and we anticipate that this Context Statement will be used and amended in upcoming planning work in the area.

As mentioned above, the boundaries of Area B are highly irregular and it would take several pages to describe the metes and bounds in their entirety. Instead, KVP has included a map prepared by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency that shows the boundaries of Area B in relation to the boundaries of the Bayview-Hunters Point district and other SFRA project areas past and present (**Figure 2**). As illustrated on the map, Area B spans over half of the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district, ranging from Islais Creek in the north to Candlestick Hill in the south. Beginning at the north, Area B takes in most of the Islais Creek Estuary industrial area (Oakinba) with the exception of Apparel City. It also encompasses the Northern Gateway, an adjoining tract of industrial land that abuts 3rd Street to the west. From Kirkwood Avenue south, Area B embraces both sides of the 3rd Street corridor, encompassing both commercial properties along 3rd Street as well as the adjoining residential blocks on either side of 3rd Street to Palou Avenue in the south. From Palou south to Van Dyke Avenue, Area B spans just the commercial properties on either side of 3rd Street, excluding most of the abutting residential areas of Silver Terrace to the west and Bayview to the east. South of Van Dyke Avenue, Area B encompasses most of the southerly portion of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, including the

⁴ The term "Bayview-Hunters Point" is of relatively recent origin. Prior to the incorporation of the City of South San Francisco in San Mateo County in 1909, what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point District was commonly known as "South San Francisco," although this technically only referred to one of a half-dozen nineteenth-century subdivisions in the area. After 1909, in order to avoid confusion with the nearby city of South San Francisco, many residents of the district began to use the name of their individual neighborhood, such as Hunters Point, Bay View, Silver Terrace, or Bret Harte. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the hyphenated term "Bayview-Hunters Point" began to be used to refer to the entire district. In addition, at least three different street naming conventions have been used within the district. Within this document we have used historic nomenclature as much as possible, taking care to include contemporary names in parentheses to avoid unnecessary confusion.

industrial district west of 3rd Street and north of Paul Avenue, and all of South Basin and Candlestick Point. The boundaries in this area exclude the former Paul Tract and Candlestick Hill. Area B also encompasses an outlying tract called the Hunters Point Shoreline sandwiched between SFRA project areas A and C. Area B comprises several subareas, or “activity nodes,” including “Oakimba,” the industrial area that occupies the former Islais Creek Estuary; the Northern Gateway, Town Center, Health Center, South Basin, Candlestick Point, and Hunters Point Shoreline. The locations of these activity nodes, as well as other active and completed SFRA project areas, are indicated in **Figure 2**.

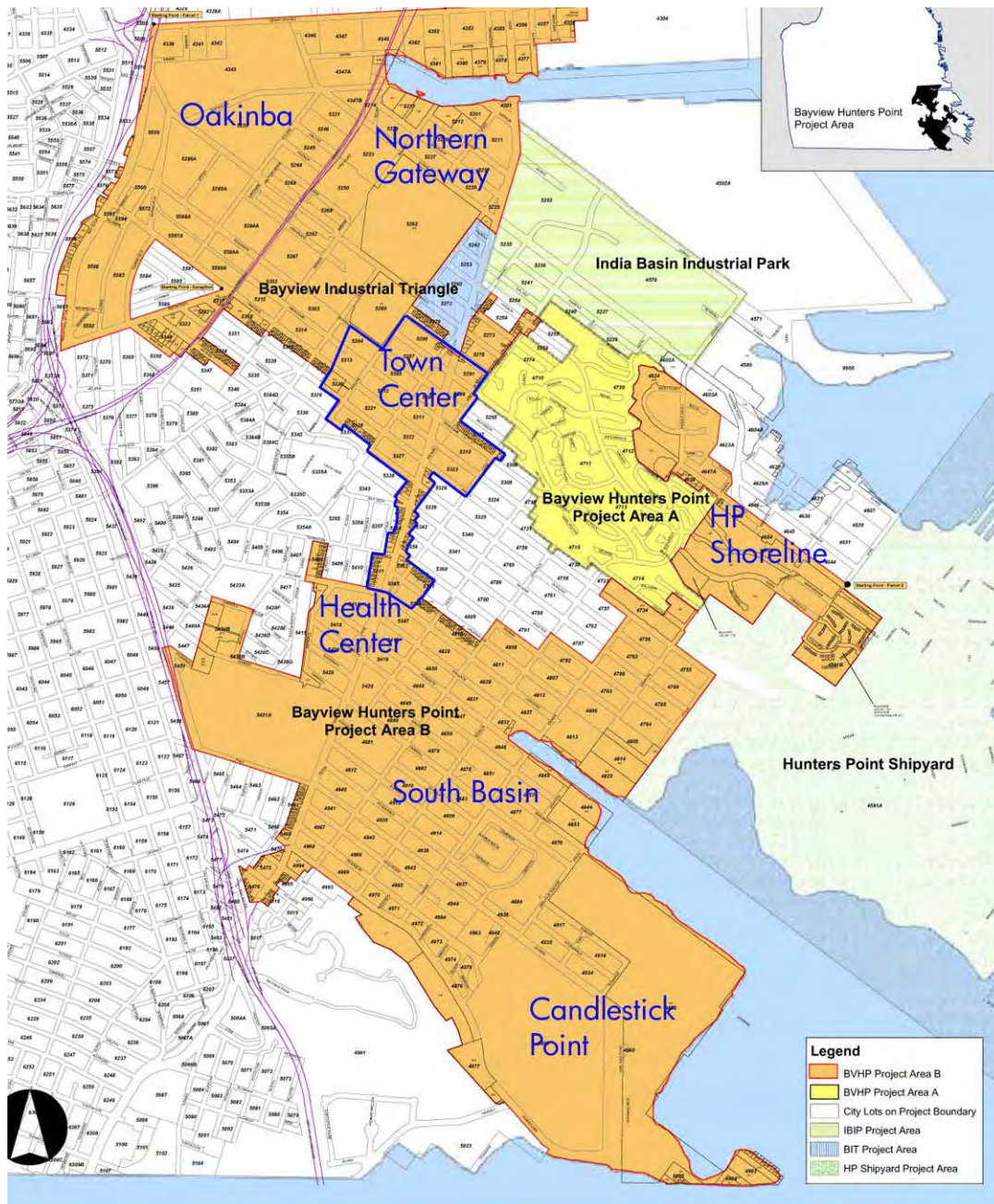


Figure 2. Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Boundary – Area B
Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency; Annotated by KVP Consulting

KVP completed an intensive-level survey of the Town Center Activity Node, a geographically compact but intensively developed subarea at the heart of Area B. Its boundaries, also irregular, are roughly encompassed by Kirkwood Avenue to the north, Mendell and Lane streets to the east, Van Dyke Avenue to the south, and Phelps Street to the west. The Town Center Activity Node is the most heavily commercial stretch of 3rd Street, serving as the traditional “downtown” of Bayview-Hunters Point. Initially developed during the last half of the nineteenth century, 3rd Street is lined with nineteenth and early twentieth-century, one-to-five story, mixed-use commercial buildings, with retail space on the first floor and flats or offices on the upper floors. The intersecting avenues are largely residential in character with dozens of older nineteenth-century Victorian-era dwellings interspersed among early twentieth-century rowhouses, flats, and apartments, with more recent infill development and vacant lots. Topographically speaking, the Town Center Activity Node is quite varied. The east-west avenues that intersect 3rd Street mostly climb uphill to the west and to the east, placing 3rd Street within a shallow valley between Hunters Point Ridge to the east and Mt. St. Joseph to the west. Third Street is generally level from Kirkwood Avenue south to Revere Avenue. From Revere Avenue south, it descends a moderate grade to Van Dyke Avenue.

C. IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

This period of significance for the Context Statement is 1862-1974, an era beginning with the subdivision of Hunters Point as the South San Francisco Homestead and Railroad Association and ending with the closure of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Typically a period of significance begins with the earliest known building or structure within a particular area. At this time, the earliest building within the district is not known, although some of the earliest structures appear to date back as early as the early 1860s. Typically historic context statements end fifty years prior to the completion of the context statement, which in this case would be 1959. We have carried the end of the period of significance forward to 1974 in order to encompass more recent events of the 1960s and early 1970s, as well as to capture more buildings from the SFRA era.

To provide additional context both before and after the period of significance, this Context Statement includes background on the Ohlone, Spanish and Mexican, and early American periods that predate 1862, as well as a postscript that deals with events that have occurred in the district since the closure of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in 1974. Although subdivided as early as 1862, Hunters Point remained too far from built-up portions of San Francisco to attract much concentrated residential development (beyond 3rd Street) until the early twentieth century. However, the area’s distance from built-up portions of the city, made it ideal for industry, in particular shipbuilding and meatpacking and associated animal-processing industries. In the sections below, we introduce some of the major historic themes events, discussed in more depth in Chapter IV, that directly influenced the development of the Bayview-Hunters Point district.

Subdivision Activity

Although the Hunters Point peninsula was subdivided as early as 1849 as part of the ill-fated South San Francisco real estate development scheme, it was not until 1862 that the peninsula was resurveyed in its current arrangement of numbered avenues running from northwest to southeast and alphabetical streets running from northeast to southwest. Laid out in the standard “New York” style of streets and blocks, the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association’s subdivision set the stage for a flurry of subsequent subdivision activity, beginning with the Haley & O’Neill Tract and Bayview Tract. No. 1 in 1867, the Case Tract in 1868, the Bay Park Homestead Association Tract and the Garden Tracts in 1870, the Paul Tract in 1871, and

Silver Terrace in 1873. Most of these early subdivisions were intended for working-class people and they included both standard 25' x 100' house lots and 75' x 100' "garden" lots. Much of the subdivision activity was inspired by the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and Long Bridge in the late 1860s but due to the tracts' distance from downtown and the lack of reliable transit, they did not appeal to very many individuals. Collectively, what is now Bayview-Hunters Point was known as "South San Francisco." The period of significance for this theme is 1862-1873.

Bay View Park Race Course

The Bay View Park Race Course was an early recreational facility constructed within what is now Bayview-Hunters Point. Built in 1864 by several prominent investors at the heart of what is now the South Basin Activity Node in Area B, the facility was constructed on marshland to take advantage of the underlying soggy soil, which was thought at the time to provide a springy surface that enhanced the speed of the horses. Accessed by several graded roads paved with oyster shells, the Bay View Race Course also had a hotel. Originally it was supposed to have been accessed by horse-drawn rail cars but this line was not built beyond Islais Creek until the 1880s. By the early 1880s, the hotel had burned and the race course abandoned. By the time the 1883 Coast Survey Map was published, Bay View Park was no more, leaving little behind aside for its name, which eventually became applied to the surrounding flats south of the Hunters Point peninsula.⁵ The period of significance for this theme is 1864-1880.

Hunters Point Dry Docks

Although South San Francisco did not prove popular with prospective residential home owners, it did become a primary center of boat and shipbuilding in San Francisco due to its ample land with deep water access. Ship building and repair became the most important industry in the area, beginning in 1866 with the construction of the California Dry Dock Company at the eastern tip of the Hunters Point peninsula. This forerunner to the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard initially consists of a single graving dock and a wood dry dock. The facility was purchased by Bethlehem Steel in 1908 and expanded several times before the Navy acquired it in 1940 and massively expanded it as part of its conversion into the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. During this phase, the Navy acquired much of the eastern end of the Hunters Point peninsula and remade it into a modern repair facility for the Pacific Fleet. The period of significance for this theme is 1866-1974.

Meat packing and allied animal processing industries comprised another important early industry in South San Francisco. Beginning in 1867, civic authorities compelled wholesale butchers to relocate to Islais Creek, far away from the built-up residential districts of the fast-growing city. For nearly a century, the northerly section of South San Francisco – an area known as Butchertown – remained the primary center of the meat-packing industry in the Bay Area. Initially constructed on wharves above Islais Creek so that offal could be swept out by the tides, Butchertown was a concentration of wood-frame sheds, offices, and later, large industrial plants. Butchertown had a significant effect on the life and culture of the district, with Mexican and American vaqueros periodically driving livestock up Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) and into the once-open pastures on Hunters Point ridge. The industry entered a period of slow decline following the opening of large modern meat processing facilities in South San Francisco but several companies remained in business in the area into the late 1960s before the area was

⁵ Roger and Nancy Olmsted. *San Francisco Bayside Historical Cultural Resources Study* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 98.

redeveloped as a business park by the SFRA. The period of significance for this theme is 1867-1969.

Small Boat Building Industry at India Basin

Beginning around 1870, local wooden boat builders pushed out of Steamboat Point and Potrero Point began relocating to India Basin. Attracted by the availability of inexpensive land with water access, these boat builders built several yards along the southern edge of India Basin. Most of the early yards were family-owned businesses operated by English, Scandinavian, and German immigrants. Boat yard owners and their skilled employees lived alongside one another in simple frame vernacular dwellings that grew up around the yards, creating a linear “village” along 9th Avenue (now Innes Avenue). Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these boat builders concentrated on the construction of San Francisco bay scows. Although the bay scow building industry began to decline in the 1920s due to the introduction of the gasoline-powered launch and competition from short haul truckers, general wooden boat building and repair sustained one yard (Anderson & Cristofani) and its successors for another half-century. The period of significance for the small boat yards of India Basin is 1870-1938.

Early Charitable Institutions

The availability of large tracts of inexpensive land, combined with the district's isolation from the rest of the city, made South San Francisco a prime location for large charitable institutions. In 1867, the Sisters of Mercy opened two separate institutions on a 52-acre parcel it had purchased in 1866 at the summit of Mt. St. Joseph: the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum (popularly known as the St. Joseph Orphanage) and the Magdalen Asylum for Wayward Girls. The Magdalen Asylum was soon converted into an orphanage for babies. The twin organizations occupied this land through the 1930s, when the Sisters of Mercy began to sell off chunks to residential housing developers, beginning with the site of the old Magdalen Asylum. By the 1980s, the final section constituting the site of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum (rebuilt in 1912 after a fire destroyed the original) was sold off to developers and the orphanage asylum demolished to make way for housing. The period of significance for this theme is 1867-1980.

Nineteenth-century Residential and Mixed-use Commercial Development

The arrival of the boatyards and shipyards, Butchertown, and other employers, including the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, the Bayview Park Race Course, and dozens of small truck farms, led to the construction of several hundred wood-frame dwellings during the Victorian era in South San Francisco. Primarily concentrated within a four-block wide swath of territory spanning Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) from 11th (Kirkwood) Avenue in the north to 16th (Palou) Avenue on the south, Victorian-era construction in Bayview-Hunters Point primarily took the form of small, one-and two-story wood-frame cottages, duplexes, and tenements, with larger mixed-use commercial buildings with flats above located along Railroad Avenue. Today, remnants of this early phase of residential construction survive within the Town Center Activity Node and other areas throughout Area B. Easily distinguished from the rows of 1920s and 1930s-era stucco rowhouses, the Victorian-era construction often occupies larger lots, occasionally with outbuildings like water tanks, stables, and sheds. The period of significance for this type of residential construction is 1862 to 1906.

Nineteenth-century Civic, Institutional, and Religious Development

Various civic, institutional, and religious institutions were built throughout the last third of the nineteenth century to cater to the still quasi-rural district of South San Francisco. Perennially neglected by the city administration, the district only had a handful of civic buildings, including the Burnett School, a firehouse, and a police substation. There were no parks, very little in the way of infrastructure, and no public transportation until the twentieth century. Religion played an

important role in the lives of local residents and gradually over this period several groups constructed churches to serve their spiritual needs. Two of the earliest include the South San Francisco Methodist Episcopal Church (now Pearlgate Tabernacle) at 15 Latona Street in 1871 by the neighborhood's Protestants, and All Hallows Roman Catholic Church at Newhall Street and Palou Avenue in 1886 by Irish Catholics. In October 1884, local Masons built the South San Francisco Opera House as a local community center and lodge house. The period of significance for this theme is 1871 to 1886.

Late Nineteenth-century and Early Twentieth-century Truck Farming

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, much of the level land of the Bayview neighborhood had come under cultivation by truck farmers who supplied San Francisco with much of its fresh fruit and vegetables and dairy products. Some of the earliest truck farmers were Chinese but they were gradually pushed out by Italian, Portuguese, and Maltese immigrants who were allowed to purchase land. Small truck farms, dairies, and green houses were a common feature in the district's landscape well into the twentieth century, with a couple of remnants surviving to the present day. The period of significance for this theme is 1880 to 1974.

1906 Earthquake and Fire

The 1906 Earthquake and Fire did relatively little damage in South San Francisco, mostly due to its lack of building stock and its distance from the fires that destroyed so much of Victorian San Francisco. The quake did partially destroy Butchertown, which was radically reconfigured after the disaster but aside from that very little seems to have occurred. One of the legacies of the lack of destruction is that the modern-day district retains many Victorian-era dwellings destroyed in large numbers elsewhere in the city. The period of significance for this theme is 1906.

Early Twentieth-century Industrialization

The completion of the Southern Pacific's Bay Shore Cutoff in 1905, purchase of Hunters Point Dry Dock by Bethlehem Steel in 1908, and prospects of a navy base at Hunters Point suddenly made the vacant tidelands and waterfront land of South San Francisco valuable for industrial development. Various plans emerged that would fill in Islais Creek Estuary and part of India Basin, using fill from leveling Hunters Point ridge. As a preliminary step, the State of California seized by eminent domain most of the Islais Creek Estuary. During the First World War, the Hunters Point Dry Dock expanded its operations. The period of significance for this theme is 1906 to 1917.

1920s-era Residential Building Boom

The growth of industrial employment in what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district during the World War I era, coupled with the nationwide housing boom, resulted in residential builders erecting hundreds, if not thousands, of new rowhouses on empty lots throughout the district, especially within the Bayview and Bret Harte neighborhoods. This building boom resulted in the Town Center Activity Node taking on a more urban character that stood in contrast to the still semi-rural areas of Silver Terrace, South Basin, the Paul Tract, and other outlying parts of the district where truck farms and dairies still existed in large numbers. Although it diminished somewhat following the onset of the Depression, the housing boom continued throughout the 1930s as workers continued to move to the district to take jobs in the shipyard or the new industrial plants being built in the Islais Creek Estuary, South Basin, and the Hudson Tract. The period of significance of this theme is 1920 to 1939.

Depression-era Activism in Bayview and Hunters Point

Building on a tradition of self-help in the outlying district now known as Bayview-Hunters Point, local residents lobbied the City for new and improved infrastructure such as schools, parks, sewers, water mains, and bus and streetcar service. When official help was not forthcoming, local neighborhood groups took it upon themselves to build the needed infrastructure, in addition to starting a cooperative grocery and bank on the eve of World War II. The period of significance for this theme is 1929 to 1939.

World War II Era Boom

The World War II era was arguably the most important period in the history of what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Although the district had been steadily urbanizing during the 1920s and 1930s, the Navy's takeover of the Hunters Point Dry Dock in 1939 set the state for a sustained industrial and residential building boom that would transform the outlying semi-rural district into a center of the worldwide Allied shipbuilding and repair arsenal. After Pearl Harbor, the Navy converted the dry dock into the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, expanded it to encompass 979 acres of filled and unfilled land, six dry docks, 200 buildings, and 17 miles of railroad track. Meanwhile, the War Manpower Commission recruited thousands of predominantly African American workers from the Southwest and Deep South to work in important war industries. These migrants (both black and white) took up residence in the hundreds of hastily built dormitories erected on Hunters Point ridge, Double Rock, Islais Creek Channel, Candlestick, and several others. The period of significance for this theme is 1940 to 1945.

Postwar Building Boom

Although ship repair contracts temporarily nosedived after the end of World War II, the Navy decided to keep the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard open and during the Korean War, work at the facility surged, employing thousands of local workers. Residential builders responded to the demand for new housing by building rows of five-room, single-family dwellings on the remaining open spaces in the district, particularly in Silver Terrace, Bret Harte, and on the remaining surplus property of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum. At least initially, most of this housing was off limits to the district's fast-growing African American population, which in 1950 constituted around one-quarter of the district's population. The period of significance for this period is 1946 to 1952.

1960s-era Civil Rights Movement

Although not part of the Jim Crow South, San Francisco and the rest of the Bay Area was a leading center of the Civil Rights Movement. Many African Americans experienced discrimination in housing, employment, education, and other less subtle ways even if they were allowed to ride on the front seats of the local buses and drink from the same water fountains as whites. Growing tension between young African American residents (who were now over half the population of the Bayview-Hunters Point district) and the police, combined with growing insecurity over increasing unemployment as the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and other local industries began to shed jobs, set the stage for the 1966 Riots/Uprising in Hunters Point and the Western Addition. Put down in less than a week by the local police, highway patrolmen, and the National Guard, the events of September 1966 cast a pall over local race relations, drawing attention to the increasingly dire conditions in San Francisco's "forgotten district." The period of significance for this theme is 1963 to 1966.

Deindustrialization and Redevelopment

The aftermath of the 1966 Hunters Point Riots was initially marked by attempts by San Francisco's business and civic communities to provide jobs and remove many of the barriers to equal education and housing that afflicted many African American residents of Bayview-Hunters

Point. After a few months however, interest and attention died down as a new group of local activists joined, and in some cases, eclipsed the traditional authority of the Christian clergy in the local African American community, which was now almost three-quarters of the population of Bayview-Hunters Point, including the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam. However, nobody was prepared for the changes that would be wrought by the closure of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in 1974, which threw thousands of local residents out of work, ill-prepared to take jobs in the city's blossoming white collar businesses. Partly responding to the increasingly dire conditions in Bayview-Hunters Point, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency began a program of redeveloping the remaining World War II war workers housing on Hunters Point ridge and also the reconstruction of Butchertown as the India Basin Industrial Park. The period of significance for this theme is 1967 to 1974.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Bayview-Hunters Point Area B Survey is organized into three major components: field work, archival research and oral histories, and production of two major work products: this Historic Context Statement and the accompanying DPR 523 A (Primary) forms we prepared for the majority of the 709 individual properties within the Town Center Activity Node.⁶ Field work was completed first. KVP partners Tim Kelley and Chris VerPlanck, with the assistance of two interns who reside in Bayview-Hunters Point (DeSean Watson and Hassan Bailey), walked the streets of the Town Center Activity Node and photographed and documented every individual property using hand-held devices loaded with a GIS-based survey application. This phase, which took approximately two weeks to complete, was finished in September 2009. We noted the following characteristics about each property: number of stories, construction materials, likely date of construction, use, style, landscaping, and related features (if any). We then put the field data into a Filemaker database, which we used to prepare DPR 523 A forms for all properties within the Town Center Activity Node.

KVP initiated the archival research and oral history phase shortly after the field work began in the summer of 2009. We began by consulting standard sources on San Francisco history, including dozens of books and periodicals that deal with local history, but this effort failed to turn up much of value as most traditional histories ignore the mixed-use industrial, port, and residential swath of eastern San Francisco that extends south from Market Street to the San Mateo County line.

Due to the lack of secondary resources on the subject, KVP had to rely heavily on primary research and oral histories to identify and document the historic contexts discussed in this Historic Context Statement. After failing to turn up much in standard sources, we turned to planning and environmental reports – several of which proved to be quite useful – most notably two historical cultural resource surveys prepared by Roger and Nancy Olmsted in the late 1970s and early 1980s for the San Francisco Clean Water Program. These two documents: *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo* (1979) and *San Francisco Bayside* (1982), provide extensive information on archaeological and cultural resources within the Bayview-Hunters Point and Potrero districts. Another useful environmental planning report that contains extensive historic information in the Appendix is the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of Hunters Point Shipyard*, prepared in 2000 by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command. KVP also reviewed Carey & Company's *Bayview Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan – Historic Resources Survey and Evaluation* (2004).

After reviewing the environmental reports, KVP turned to primary research materials, especially maps, newspaper archives, historic photographs, U.S. Census records, and municipal and utility records, including water tap, assessor, and building permit records. Some of the most useful sources for determining historic land uses were maps, including the U.S. Office of Coast Survey's coast survey maps of 1853, 1869, 1883, and 1901; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps of 1886-93, 1899-1900, 1913-15, and 1948-50; historic official San Francisco maps and public transit maps from 1854 to 1970; and historic subdivision and tract maps on file at the San Francisco Public Library. We also relied on historic photographs in local repositories such as the San Francisco Public Library and the California Historical Society. For "real time" accounts of local events, as well as information on myriad development projects, we turned to historic newspaper archives, most notably the *San Francisco Call*, the *Alta California*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *San Francisco Examiner*.

⁶ The actual number of completed DPR 523 A forms will not exactly match the number of parcels on a one-to-one basis because several buildings occupy multiple parcels and several parcels contain more than one building.

KVP's scope of work also includes a substantial oral history component. Marjorie Dobkin, a labor and oral historian, conducted ten interviews with the assistance of interns DeSean Watson and Hassan Bailey. Oral history candidates were selected from a wide range of local community leaders. In addition, we consulted existing oral histories of community residents prepared as part of the Navy's transfer of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard to San Francisco. Oral histories are very useful for a number of reasons. In addition to providing useful clues for further archival research, oral histories provide personal insight into perspectives of regular people whose contributions and insights are often ignored by traditional historians of local history.

Lastly, we will discuss our approach to neighborhood and street nomenclature. As much as possible, this Historic Context Statement uses the historic names that were in use during the periods being discussed below. A primary example includes our use of the name "South San Francisco." From roughly 1849 until 1908, the name South San Francisco was used to refer to the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Therefore, within the chapters that cover the first 60 years of the district, we use the name South San Francisco. After the incorporation of the nearby City of South San Francisco in San Mateo County in 1908, residents of what is now Bayview-Hunters Point began using the names of their individual neighborhoods, such as "Bayview," "Bret Harte," or "Hunters Point." This practice continued on through much of the twentieth century, with the hyphenated "Bayview-Hunters Point" name not coming into common usage until the 1970s. In addition, it is essential to point out here that most street names within Bayview-Hunters Point have been changed three, and sometimes four, times in the 160 years of the district's existence. Within the Historic Context chapter below, we use the historic name of each street used during the periods under discussion with the contemporary names provided in parentheses.

III. IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

The following sections describe the major surveys and other registration activity that has taken place within the Bayview-Hunters Point district since the late 1960s, when historic preservation planning began to take hold. Several of the early surveys, especially the *Here Today* and 1976 Architectural Quality surveys, covered the entire city, including the Bayview-Hunters Point district. However, little survey activity has occurred in the district since the 1970s and the evaluation activity that has taken place in Bayview-Hunters Point has consisted mostly of reconnaissance surveys, meaning that little or no historical research was performed. As a result, few individual properties within the district have been evaluated and registered according to accepted methodology at either the local, state, or federal levels of government.

A. HERE TODAY

Published in 1968 by the San Francisco Junior League, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* was the first historic resources survey known to have been completed in San Francisco. Prepared by volunteers, the survey provides a photograph and limited information on approximately 2,500 properties located throughout San Francisco. The survey was adopted in 1970 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors under Resolution No. 268-70. At present, the survey files are archived at the Koshland San Francisco History Center in the San Francisco Library.⁷

The book published as part of the *Here Today* survey grouped most of the eastern third of San Francisco within the greater South of Market Area, which for the purposes of the survey included the entire eastern waterfront from Market Street south to the San Mateo County line, and from the bay west to the Bayshore Freeway (U.S. Highway 101). *Here Today* identifies only a handful of significant buildings within the Bayview-Hunters Point district, including the Albion Brewery (1870) at 881 Innes Avenue, the Quinn House (1875) at 1562 McKinnon Avenue, the Sylvester House (1870) at 1556 Revere Avenue, the South San Francisco Opera House (1888) at Newcomb Avenue and Mendell Street, the Baptist Mission at 1606 Newcomb Avenue (demolished), All Hallows Church (1886) at 1715 Oakdale Avenue, a large Queen Anne-style mansion at 907 Mendell Street (demolished), an Eastlake-style dwelling and carriage house at 1552 Palou Avenue (1895), and an Italianate-style dwelling at 43 Pomona Street (n.d.). Of these properties, only three are located within the boundaries of the Town Center Activity Node, including the South San Francisco Opera House, All Hallows Church, and 1552 Palou Avenue, (Appendix A, Table 1).

B. 1976 CITYWIDE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

Between 1974 and 1976, the San Francisco Planning Department completed an inventory of architecturally significant buildings throughout the City and County of San Francisco. An advisory review committee composed of architects and architectural historians assisted in the final determination of ratings for the roughly 10,000 buildings surveyed. The unpublished survey consists of sixty volumes of survey data on file at the San Francisco Planning Department. Both contemporary and older buildings were surveyed, but historical associations were not considered. Typically each building was assigned a numerical rating ranging from "0" (contextual importance) to "5" (individual significance of the highest degree). The inventory assessed only architectural significance, which was defined as a combination of the following characteristics: design features, urban design context, and overall environmental significance. When completed, the 1976 Architectural Survey was believed to represent the top 10 percent of

⁷ San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 11: Historic Resource Surveys* (San Francisco: n.d.), 3.

the city's building stock.⁸ Furthermore, in the estimation of survey participants, buildings rated "3" or better represent approximately the best 2 percent of the city's architecture. The survey was adopted in 1977 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors under Resolution No. 7831. The Planning Department has been directed to use the survey although the methodology is inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines PRC 5024.1(g).

The 1976 Survey inventories 77 extant properties within the Bayview-Hunters Point district, with 36 of them located within the Town Center Activity Node. In general, the survey's coverage of the district is quite extensive, with surveyors identifying many of the area's oldest and best-preserved Victorian residences, commercial buildings along 3rd Street, as well as a handful of modern resources, including the Bayview Public Library (**Appendix A, Table 1**).

C. SAN FRANCISCO ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

San Francisco Architectural Heritage (Heritage) is the city's oldest not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of San Francisco's unique architectural heritage. Heritage has sponsored several major architectural surveys in San Francisco, including Downtown, the Van Ness Corridor, Civic Center, Chinatown, the Northeast Waterfront, the Inner Richmond District, and Dogpatch. To date, San Francisco Architectural Heritage has not surveyed Bayview-Hunters Point. Heritage maintains files on a scattered number of properties within the Bayview-Hunters Point district, mostly properties that are locally designated landmarks or other properties of interest to the organization. Because Heritage has not officially surveyed any of the area, the organization has not assigned ratings to any of the properties.

D. ARTICLE 10 OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE

San Francisco City Landmarks are buildings, properties, structures, sites, districts and objects of "special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value and are an important part of the City's historical and architectural heritage."⁹ Adopted in 1967 as Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code, the San Francisco City Landmark program recognizes the significance of listed buildings and protects them from inappropriate alterations and demolition through review by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission. As of November 2009, there were 255 landmarked properties and 11 landmarked historic districts in San Francisco that are subject to the provisions contained within Article 10. The Article 10 designation process originally used the Kalman Methodology, a qualitative and quantitative method for evaluating historic properties. As of 2000, Article 10 was amended to use National Register significance criteria.

Currently, only five of the 255 city landmarks in San Francisco are located within Bayview-Hunters Point. They include the following: the Albion Brewery (1870) at 881 Innes Avenue, the John Dircks Cottage (ca. 1875) at 900 Innes Avenue, the Quinn House (1875) at 1562 McKinnon Avenue, the South San Francisco Opera House (1888) at 1601 Newcomb Avenue, and the Sylvester House (1870) at 1556 Revere Avenue. Of these, only one is located within the Town Center Activity Node: the South San Francisco Opera House (Landmark No. 8) (**Appendix A, Table 1**).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ San Francisco Planning Department, *Preservation Bulletin No. 9 – Landmarks* (San Francisco: January 2003).

E. UNREINFORCED MASONRY BUILDING (UMB) SURVEY

In the wake of the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989, the San Francisco Landmarks Board (now the Historic Preservation Commission) initiated a survey of all known unreinforced masonry buildings in San Francisco. Aware that earthquake damage already sustained, in addition to future seismic activity, could result in the demolition or extensive alteration of vulnerable masonry buildings, the Landmarks Board sought to establish the relative significance of all unreinforced-masonry buildings in San Francisco. The report: *A Context Statement and Architectural/Historical Survey of Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Construction in San Francisco from 1850 to 1940*, was completed in 1990 by Planning Department staff. In total, the survey examined more than 2,000 privately owned buildings in San Francisco. The UMB Survey listed the buildings in three categories: Priority I, Priority II, and Priority III UMBs. These categories were based on the relative significance of the resource, with Priority I being the most significant and Priority III being the least. The survey also included the production of DPR 523 A and B forms for selected properties. The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) evaluated the survey report and made determinations of eligibility for listing in the National Register for many of the 2,000 buildings.¹⁰

The entire Bayview-Hunters Point district contains only seven designated UMBs, most of which are mixed-use brick buildings along 3rd Street, as well as a few former civic and residential outliers on McKinnon, Newcomb, and Paul avenues. Three are located within the Town Center Activity Node (**Appendix A, Table 1**).

F. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's official inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. Typically, resources over fifty years of age are eligible for listing in the National Register if they meet any one of the four significance criteria and if they retain sufficient historic integrity. Resources under fifty years of age can be determined eligible only if it can be demonstrated that they are of "exceptional importance," or if they are contributors to a potential historic district. National Register criteria are defined in depth in *National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. There are four basic criteria under which a structure, site, building, district, or object can be considered eligible for listing in the National Register. These criteria are:

Criterion A (Event): Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

Criterion B (Person): Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

Criterion C (Design/Construction): Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a

¹⁰ San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 11 – Historic Resource Surveys* (San Francisco: n.d.), 3.

significant distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction;
and

Criterion D (Information Potential): Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A resource can be considered significant on a national, state, or local level to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture.

The San Francisco Planning Department treats National Register-listed properties as historic resources per CEQA. There are currently no National Register-listed properties in the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district.

G. CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-eligible properties are automatically listed in the California Register.¹¹ Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. This includes properties identified in historical resource surveys with Status Codes of “1” to “5,” and resources designated as local landmarks through city or county ordinances. The evaluation criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- *Criterion 1 (Events):* Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- *Criterion 2 (Persons):* Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- *Criterion 3 (Architecture):* Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- *Criterion 4 (Information Potential):* Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Resources listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register are automatically listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. California Historic Landmarks from No. 770 onward and locally designated landmarks are also automatically listed in the California Register. Although the Office of Historic Preservation maintains an inventory of historic resources throughout the state of California, this inventory does not contain a comprehensive listing of California Register listed properties. However, a tally of Article 10 properties and properties formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register yields only two properties within

¹¹ National Register-eligible properties include properties that have been listed on the National Register and properties that have formally been found eligible for listing.

the Town Center Activity Node: the South San Francisco Opera House and the Bayview Police Station (Appendix A, Table 1).

H. OTHER SURVEYS AND TECHNICAL REPORTS

Several other notable reports and surveys have been prepared within the past two decades that deal at least tangentially with potential historic resources within the Bayview-Hunters Point district and Area B in particular. The first of these is the *Candlestick Point State Recreation Area General Plan Amendment*. Prepared in 1987 as part of the ongoing rehabilitation of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, the report identified several potential archaeological resources in the area, which spans parts of both the Candlestick Point and South Basin Activity Nodes. Some of these resources included shipwrecks and abandoned ship hulls submerged in the mud, as well as possible remnants of shell middens and a Chinese shrimp camp.

The *South Bayshore Plan*, an area plan of the *San Francisco General Plan* (originally adopted in 1970), was prepared in the 1980s. Adopted in 1995, the area plan identifies six subareas within the plan area that exhibit “distinctive characteristics.” These are: India Basin/Hunters Point Hill, South Basin east of 3rd Street, Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, Bayview Hill, Silver Terrace, and 3rd Street. Objective 10 of the plan calls for the revitalization of 3rd Street, and in particular, the revitalization of the South San Francisco Opera House and the creation of a pedestrian and gathering place around the building that would make 3rd Street “more attractive and secure for leisure shopping and for cultural and social events.”¹²

The *Hunters Point Shipyard Plan*, an area plan of the *San Francisco General Plan*, was published in 1996. Although the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard is not located within any of the existing activity nodes identified by the SFRA, it borders the Hunters Point Shoreline and the South Basin activity nodes and has of course greatly influenced the historic patterns of development within the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district. This plan contains several objectives that specifically address the preservation of historic and cultural resources within the district.

In 1997, the SFRA published its *Hunters Point Shipyard Redevelopment Plan*. Building upon the Planning Department’s report of the previous year, the SFRA plan includes the retention and restoration of historic structures as part of ongoing planning efforts in the former naval shipyard. Additionally, the Hunters Point Shipyard Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) suggested that development guidelines include the following objective: “Include uses that acknowledge the ...historic relationship of Bayview Hunters Point’s African-American community to the Shipyard.”¹³

In 2000, the Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Committee (PAC) published the final *Bayview Hunters Point Community Revitalization Plan*. Even more so than earlier Planning and SFRA documents, this report emphasized the general importance of the district’s cultural resources as a “setting for civic traditions.” Third Street was identified as the “heart of Bayview” and properties such as the South San Francisco Opera House and All Hallows Church were identified as important area landmarks. Third Street in general was identified as a place where the preservation of cultural resources should be integral to economic development:

¹² San Francisco Planning Department, *South Bayshore Plan* (San Francisco: 1995), II.9.35.

¹³ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Hunters Point Shipyard Redevelopment Plan* (San Francisco: 1997), 6.

Historic buildings along the Third Street corridor require restoration to advance vitality goals through the creation of a uniquely marketable identity. New development must take architectural harmony into account.¹⁴

The San Francisco preservation architecture firm of Carey & Company prepared two historic resource studies in Bayview-Hunters Point during the last decade. The first, published in 2001, is entitled: *Historic Resources Survey for the Bayview Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan and EIR*. As its title indicates, the report was prepared in advance of the SFRA's planning work in the district. The report summarizes previous surveys and planning activity in the area, briefly describes the property types to be found within each of the "activity nodes" established by the SFRA and then analyzes the potential impacts of the proposed Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan. The report concludes with a table of potentially architecturally significant properties located within the planning area, most of which lay within the Town Center Activity Node.

Carey & Company prepared a second report in 2004, this one entitled *Bayview Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan EIR Historic Resources Survey and Evaluation*. This report was an update of the 2001 report prepared in response to the enlargement of the SFRA's survey area, including the addition of the Oakinba Activity Node and the enlargement of the South Basin Activity Node. This report also concludes with a table of potentially architecturally significant properties. Those located within the Town Center Activity Node are noted in **Appendix A, Table 1**.

¹⁴ Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Committee and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Bayview Hunters Point Community Revitalization Concept Plan* (San Francisco: 2002), 10.

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

A. PREHISTORIC AND EARLY CONTACT ERA: -1775

Physical Landforms and Flora and Fauna

Prior to European contact, what is now San Francisco's Bayview-Hunters Point district was probably the best-suited part of the upper San Francisco peninsula for human settlement. With its ample supplies of fresh water from several dozen streams and artesian springs, combined with its relatively wind and fog-free climate and bountiful marshlands, the area supported at least one permanent Ohlone settlement, as well as several seasonal hunting and fishing camps. With 14 miles of coastline, San Francisco Bay was the dominant geographical feature in the area. An arm of the Pacific Ocean, the bay originally embraced extensive tidal marshlands – rich in food sources. Marshland occupied much of the area; the meandering Islais Creek Estuary comprised its northern and western portions. Except for a narrow channel east of Interstate 280, most of Islais Creek and its adjoining tidal marshlands were infilled in the 1920s and 1930s to make way for industrial development. Another area of tidal marshes in what is now the South Basin area was filled during World War II to create sites for war workers' housing, leaving only a narrow channel called Yosemite Canal.

Topographically speaking what is now Bayview-Hunters Point consisted of several hills and promontories interspersed among low-lying plains and tidal marshes. Two promontories – Hunters Point and Candlestick Point – jut out into the bay. Almost 6,000 feet long and averaging about 2,000 feet wide, Hunters Point is the area's dominant physical feature. Composed primarily of greenish serpentine rock, this feature – which rises to 290 feet above sea level – continues to appear as an arc-like ridge visible from much of the eastern half of the city. Much of the eastern third of the peninsula was graded flat and deposited into the surrounding Bay during the World War II-era construction of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Originally cloaked in native grasses and coastal sage scrub, Hunters Point is well-watered, possessing several streams and subterranean springs.¹⁵ Candlestick Point was originally a significant promontory until it was graded flat and the resulting debris used to fill the site beneath Candlestick Park and what is now Candlestick Point in the 1960s. Heavily quarried during the twentieth century, Candlestick (or Bayview) Hill rises 375 feet west of Candlestick Point. Heavily quarried to provide fill for Candlestick Park in the 1960s, the hill continues to present its prominent, eucalyptus-clad summit to the surrounding neighborhoods. Mt. St. Joseph, which today comprises much of the Silver Terrace neighborhood, was named for the Roman Catholic orphanage that once crowned its 250-foot summit. Almost entirely cloaked in houses, the hill is visible from surrounding districts as a dome-like escarpment.

In terms of its indigenous flora and fauna, not much remains to remind us of pre-contact conditions at Bayview-Hunters Point. Nonetheless, historic photographs, remnant open space, as well as the nearby ecosystems of San Bruno Mountain, provide evidence that much of the non-submerged sections of Bayview-Hunters Point were cloaked in seasonal grasses. The highland areas were covered in coastal sage scrub composed of California sage, coyote brush, poison oak, wax myrtle, ceanothus, and scrub oak. Serpentine outcroppings jutted through the thin soil at irregular intervals. Some coast live oak, toyon, and other small trees may have lived in more protected hollows, but for the most part the area was treeless.

¹⁵ Gerald Robert Dow, *Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change* (San Francisco: unpublished Masters Thesis submitted to the faculty of California State University, San Francisco, 1973), 199.

First Inhabitants: Ohlone Settlements and Culture

It has been estimated that between seven and ten thousand Native Americans inhabited the Bay Region prior to European contact. When the Spanish arrived during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, they noted the large number of villages dotting the periphery of San Francisco Bay.¹⁶ The Spanish named the people they encountered *costeños*, or “coastal peoples.” Today the term Ohlone is preferred by their descendents (Figure 3). The Ohlone spoke several languages within the Utian family. Although mutually unintelligible, the Ohlone language was related to the Coast and Bay Miwok languages spoken by their neighbors north and east of San Francisco Bay. The Ohlone who lived within what is now San Francisco belonged to the Yelamu group and spoke a dialect called *Ramaytush*, which was probably intelligible to other Ohlone bands living as far away as the Santa Clara Valley and the East Bay.¹⁷



Figure 3. Ohlone paddling tule boat in San Francisco Bay, 1776
Source: California Historical Society

Colder and less hospitable than the Santa Clara Valley or the East Bay, the northern tip of the San Francisco peninsula was probably settled by the Ohlone at a later date than surrounding areas. Knowledge of the precise location of Ohlone settlements is complicated by their ephemeral nature and because so many prehistoric sites have been destroyed to make way for later development. The earliest known occupation sites in San Francisco have been radio-carbon dated to between 5,000 and 5,500 years old.¹⁸ Due to its warmer microclimate, fresh water sources, and proximity to diverse tidal marshes, what are now the Bayview-Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley districts would have comprised one of the best locations for Ohlone settlements in what is now San Francisco. Several middens – heaps of discarded shells sometimes containing human remains and artifacts – were known to have existed on the shoreline of the peninsula, giving Hunters Point its first European era name, *Punta de la Concha*, or “Point of the Shells.”¹⁹ Nearby Visitacion Valley probably contained two seasonal villages: *Amuctac* and *Tubsinte*.²⁰ The Spanish also recorded finding the ruins of an abandoned village on Islais Creek that the Ohlone apparently called *Shiti*. The location of this settlement is unknown.

¹⁶ Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way* (San Francisco: Heyday Books, 1978), 1.

¹⁷ Allen G. Pastron, Ph.D. and L. Dale Beevers, *From Bullfights to Baseball: Archaeological Research Design and Treatment Plan for the Valencia Gardens Hope VI Project* (Oakland: unpublished report, December 2002), 16.

¹⁸ “An Unvanishing Story: 5,500 Years of History in the Vicinity of Seventh & Mission Streets, San Francisco” (Unpublished paper prepared by the Southeast Archaeological Center (National Park Center), <http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/sfprehis.htm> (accessed December 30, 2006).

¹⁹ Gerald Robert Dow, *Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change* (San Francisco: unpublished Masters Thesis submitted to the faculty of California State University, San Francisco, 1973), 188.

²⁰ Wirth Associates, Inc. *Potrero 7: Phase I Cultural Resources Overview and Inventory* (San Francisco: 1979), 28.

Ohlone society was based on the extended family unit, consisting of on average 15 individuals. The clan was the next largest unit, typically comprising several related families living together in one village. Families were divided into moieties—the Bear and the Deer—following typical practice of native societies in California. Above the clan was the tribelet, which consisted of several villages, comprising around 400-500 people under a single headman selected by the people. Each tribelet functioned as an independent political unit, although tribelets would occasionally cooperate in wartime and in food gathering expeditions.²¹

The Ohlone were semi-nomadic people who inhabited small seasonal villages near streams and tidal flats where they had ready access to fresh water and food sources such as waterfowl, fish, and shellfish. Hunting small terrestrial and marine mammals and gathering seeds, nuts, roots, shoots, and berries were also important sources within the Ohlone diet. Acorns provided one of the most important sources of nutrients to the Ohlone people as suggested by the presence of grinding rocks and *manos* and *metates* near most Ohlone settlements where oaks grew.²²

The Ohlone had a rich material culture that made use of both the materials at hand as well as goods traded with inland tribes. They harvested tules from coastal marshes and used them to build houses and to make baskets and boats. They also carved logs to make seafaring canoes used for trade, fishing, and hunting. The Ohlone manipulated stone and bone fragments to make arrowheads, scrapers, knives, spears, hooks, sewing needles, and other tools. Furs were used to create cold weather clothing and bedding. The Ohlone were particularly adept at decorative basketwork and making personal ornaments, such as necklaces and earrings, from feathers, shells, bones and other materials.²³

Their houses were temporary conical structures made with a branch frame covered in woven mats of tules or bark. These dwellings were periodically burned and built anew when they became too dirty or leaky. Other structures found in Ohlone villages included sweathouses or “*temescals*,” conical structures built adjoining creeks to take advantage of local water supplies to create a sauna-type situation.²⁴

The most notable physical manifestation of Ohlone settlement in the San Francisco Bay Area was the shellmound, or midden. Although many early shellmounds were destroyed during the early American period, several dozen were known to have survived into the early twentieth century. Many were surveyed in 1908 by an archaeologist named Nels C. Nelson. The typical shell mound was described by Nelson as an “oval or oblong (shell heap), with smooth slopes, steepest, of course, on the short transverse diameter; and the longer axis is generally parallel to the shoreline or stream to which the pile may be contiguous.”²⁵ Nelson identified nine shellmounds within the Bayview-Hunters Point district (out of 16 identified within the entire City and County of San Francisco). Nearly all were located along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay or alongside Islais Creek, mostly along the south shore of Hunters Point and along the former shoreline of South Basin and Candlestick Point. Undisturbed for most of the American era, all of these sites were impacted by extensive grading and filling activity during the World War II and

²¹ Allen G. Pastron, Ph.D. and L. Dale Beevers, *From Bullfights to Baseball: Archaeological Research Design and Treatment Plan for the Valencia Gardens Hope VI Project* (Oakland: unpublished report, December 2002), 17.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 18.

²⁴ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside: Historical Cultural Resource Survey* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 50.

²⁵ Nels C. Nelson, *Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1909), 328.

postwar periods. No above-ground shellmounds are known to exist, although remnants are probably buried beneath later fill.²⁶

Further evidence of a large indigenous population is anecdotal, dating from accounts of residents of the Bayview-Hunters Point district. According to the recollection of one Happy Viola, residents often encountered Ohlone artifacts when farming or excavating to building roads and buildings:

All three of the highway districts, Portola, Visitacion, and Bay View, and even part of the Potrero district, have given evidence of large population. Along the places where the waters of the San Francisco Bay and its various creeks and inlets formerly made their way, many Indian mounds-shellmounds-were found. These contained skulls, stone arrowheads, mortars and pestles for the grinding of grain and the acorns for Indian food, and the large stone sinkers used in fishing. Mr. James O'Brien of the Bay View district, in excavating portions of property...found the bodies of two Indians buried only four feet below the surface. His property must have been part of an old Indian burial ground. Other mounds were found near the present Bay View baseball park, one west of San Bruno Avenue, where the marsh section formerly extended, one near Islais Creek and one near Isolation Hospital (on Army Street – now Cesar Chavez Boulevard).²⁷

Today there are no known above-ground remains of Ohlone settlement and occupation of Bayview-Hunters Point, although as the evidence cited above points out, subsurface remains or shellmounds, burials, and other artifacts are likely to be encountered during excavation throughout the district, particularly along what used to be the shore of San Francisco Bay and along the now buried Islais and Yosemite creeks.

First European Encounter: Portolá Expedition: 1769

The first known European explorers to encounter San Francisco Bay arrived by land in 1769 under the leadership of Don Gaspar de Portolá. An agent of the *Visitador General* of Spain in Mexico City, Portolá was instructed to “take possession and fortify the ports of San Diego and Monterey in Alta California.”²⁸ In search of Monterey Bay, which Portolá failed to recognize, the party strayed north to the San Francisco peninsula and viewed San Francisco Bay from the top of Sweeney Ridge in Pacifica. Blocked from going any further north by the arm of the Pacific later named the Golden Gate, the party confined its activities to exploring the San Francisco Peninsula.

Spanish Exploration: Juan Bautista Aguirre Surveys San Francisco Bay: 1775

In 1775, San Francisco Bay was surveyed by Juan Bautista Aguirre under the direction of Lieutenant Ayála of the ship *San Carlos*. Aguirre gave names to many of the prominent natural features of the bay, including Mission Bay, which Aguirre called *Enseñada de los Llorenes* after encountering three Ohlone who were allegedly weeping on the shore of the 240-acre body of water.²⁹ He also gave Hunters Point its first European name: *Punta de las Conchas*, or “Point of

²⁶ Roger R. Olmsted et al, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo – The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Management Program, 1979), 67.

²⁷ Happy Viola, as quoted in Wirth and Associates, *Potrero 7: Phase 1, Cultural Resources and Inventory* (San Francisco: 1979), 20.

²⁸ Z.S. Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco, from the Expedition of Anza, 1774 to the City Charter of April 15, 1850* (San Francisco: self-published, 1912), 31.

²⁹ Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California Volume I* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886-1890), 292.

the Shells.”³⁰ From their journals, it seems unlikely that early Spanish explorers spent much, if any, time physically exploring what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district.³¹

B. EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT – SPANISH AND MEXICAN PERIODS: 1776-1847

First Spanish Settlements: Mission Dolores and the Presidio Founded: 1776

A year after the Ayala expedition, Lieutenant Joaquín Moraga oversaw the establishment of the first permanent Spanish settlements in what is now San Francisco: *Misión San Francisco de Asís* (later better known as Mission Dolores) and the *Presidio de San Francisco*. The first mission was little more than a brush chapel near the lake the Spanish named *Laguna de los Dolores*, a seasonal lagoon that periodically covered a portion of the eastern Mission and western Potrero districts. The first mass was held there on June 29, 1776. A more permanent adobe mission was completed in September 1776. Work on the third and final mission church did not begin until 1782.³²

At its peak prosperity, around 1813, Mission Dolores housed some 1,200 native neophytes representing various Bay Area tribes who maintained herds of 9,000 cattle and 10,000 sheep, and produced approximately 6,000 bushels of grain per year.³³ Due to the harsh climate of the northern San Francisco climate, much of this activity occurred in the northern part of what is now San Mateo County as well as parts of the present-day City and County of San Francisco that enjoyed the mildest climates, particularly what are now the Potrero, Bayview-Hunters Point, Portola and Visitacion Valley districts.

The indigenous neophytes were generally badly treated by the Spanish missionaries and were forced to work in conditions that resembled slavery. Many also sickened and died of European diseases to which they had no immunity. The missionaries suppressed native languages and religious traditions in what was then an attempt to both save souls and create a stable population of assimilated Spanish-speaking, Catholic Indians in Alta California.

Throughout the entire Spanish period, what is now Bayview-Hunters Point remained devoid of any permanent native or Spanish settlements. Most of the indigenous Ohlone who had once thrived there had been driven off by enemies prior to the arrival of the Spanish. The Spanish missionaries named this area - one of their richest pastures – *Potrero Viejo* or “Old Pasture,” an area comprising a vast swath of southeastern San Francisco, including what are now the Bernal Heights, Portola, and Bayview-Hunters Point districts. Although it was farther from Mission Dolores than their other major pasture, called *Potrero Nuevo* or “new pasture,” *Potrero Viejo* was evidently the best of the mission’s pastures, likely because it had ample sources of fresh water from local creeks and springs, as well as many coast live oaks. In contrast *Potrero Nuevo* (what is now Potrero Hill), although closer to the mission, had scant freshwater and no shade trees.

At some point, the Spanish had the mission Indians construct one or two adobe or stone walls between *Potrero Viejo* and *Potrero Nuevo* to prevent cattle from drifting south from the new pasture to the preferred old pasture. The exact locations of these walls are unknown; some early accounts place the largest along the north side of Precita Creek, extending east to the northwest

³⁰ Gerald Robert Dow, *Bay Fill in San Francisco: A History of Change* (San Francisco: unpublished Masters Thesis submitted to the faculty of California State University, San Francisco, 1973), 188.

³¹ Roger R. Olmsted et al, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo: The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1979), 35.

³² Allen G. Pastron, Ph.D. and L. Dale Beevers, *From Bullfights to Baseball: Archaeological Research Design and Treatment Plan for the Valencia Gardens Hope VI Project* (Oakland: unpublished report, December 2002), 32.

³³ John S. Hittell, *A History of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1878), 91.

corner of the Islais Creek Estuary, following the present-day alignment of Cesar Chavez Boulevard. Early American maps show another wall running along the southwest side of Potrero Hill, between the headwaters of Mission Creek and Precita Creek. Neither wall appears to have fallen within the boundaries of the Bayview-Hunters Point district or Area B, although it is possible that one or both penetrated the northwest corner of the district. Both walls seem to have been in a deteriorated condition by the early 1850s and were probably dismantled by Anglo-American settlers.³⁴ No above-ground remnants of the Spanish period are known to survive in what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district or Area B.

Regime Change: Mexican Independence and the Era of the Ranchos: 1822-1839

In 1821-22, the former Spanish province of New Spain threw off Spanish colonial rule and became the independent nation of Mexico. Mexico inherited all of the northern territories of New Spain, including Alta California. Following the Mexican government's decision to secularize the missions in 1833, Mexican settlers began acquiring the former mission lands and forming vast cattle ranchos throughout Alta California. Dispossessed Indians who had lived at the missions departed for the hinterlands or obtained work as hired hands on the ranchos.

Rancho Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo

During the Mexican period, what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district became part of the historic *Rancho Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo*, a vast rancho that occupied southeastern San Francisco. The rancho belonged to a man named Don José Cornelio Bernal. Born in San Francisco and baptized at Mission Dolores on September 17, 1796, José was the son of Juan Francisco Bernal and Maria Petrona Gutierrez. Like his father, José served as a soldier at the Presidio under the Spanish flag. In 1819, he married Maria Carmen Cibrian at Mission Santa Clara. At first the couple lived at San José. By 1833, Bernal and his wife moved to San Francisco, where he served as an elector on the *Ayuntamiento*, or the pueblo council. Bernal initially submitted a petition for *Rancho Rincon Salinas y Potrero Viejo* in 1834, although Governor Figueroa rejected the claim on the grounds that this tract was part of the common lands of the Pueblo of Yerba Buena. Nevertheless, by October 10, 1839, Governor Figueroa reversed the earlier decision and granted the tract to Bernal who had evidently been running cattle on the land since at least the mid-1830s. The original *diseño*, or sketch map of the rancho, indicated that Bernal had built a corral located in the gap between Mt. St. Joseph and Candlestick Hill. The *diseño*, which is extremely distorted and out of scale, also mentions the existence of fresh water springs – called *aguajitos* – along the south bank of Islais Creek. The rancho included most of southeastern San Francisco, including the Islais Creek watershed and all of what is presently the Bayview-Hunters Point district. The boundaries of the rancho are accurately depicted in a later plat map made in 1857 (Figure 4).³⁵

Bernal's rancho bordered Jacob Leese's *Rancho Cañada de Guadalupe Visitación y Rodeo Viejo* to the south. The boundary between the two ranches was Candlestick Hill and Visitacion Nob in McLaren Park (marked on early maps as the Black Hills) and today the boundary between Bayview-Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley roughly follows this old land ground boundary. In contrast to Bernal, Leese actually lived at his rancho, building a house in Visitacion Valley.³⁶

³⁴ Roger R. Olmsted et al, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo – The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1979), 36-37.

³⁵ Ibid., 39-40.

³⁶ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside: Historical Cultural Resource Survey* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 92.

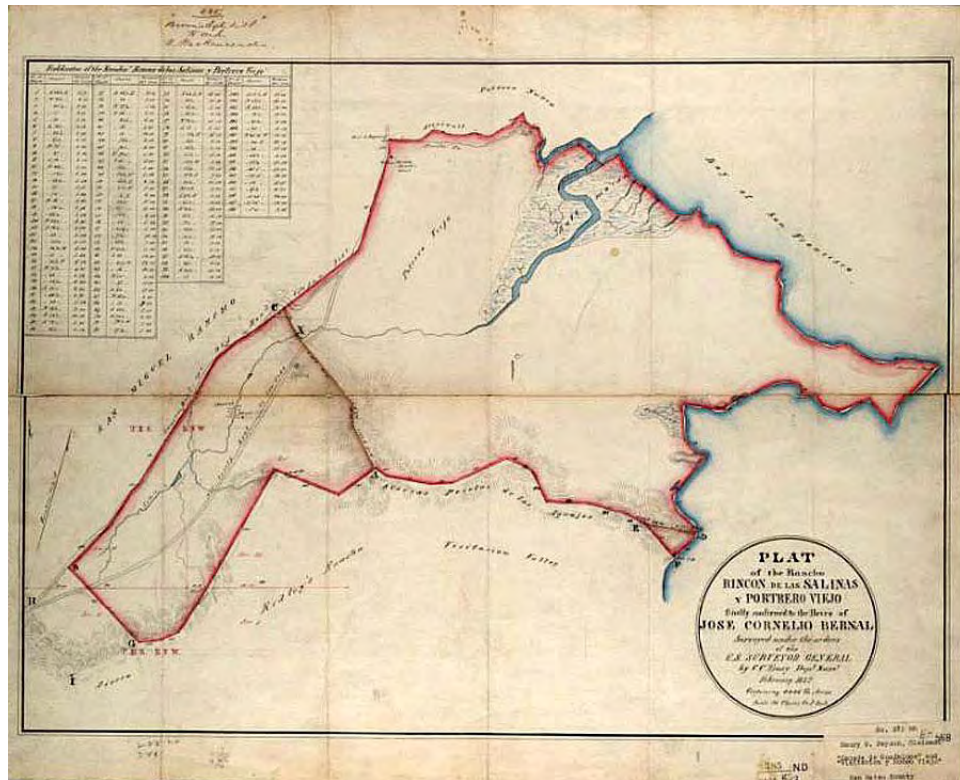


Figure 4. Plat of Rancho Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo, 1857
Source: Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Aside from the corrals, there is no evidence that Bernal built any permanent, or even temporary, structures on his rancho. He never lived there as far as we know; his primary residence was an adobe located on Duncan Street between San Jose Avenue and Valencia Street.³⁷ The corrals Bernal built on his rancho presumably disappeared after Anglo settlement in the 1860s. There are therefore no known above-ground resources surviving from the Mexican period in what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district.

William Beechy's Expedition: 1827

The Mexican-era ranches produced tanned cattle hides and tallow, products in demand in the United States and England. Mexico's liberalized trade laws resulted in increasing numbers of foreign traders visiting San Francisco Bay. Others came as agents of their national governments to scout the bay. In 1827, a British expedition commanded by William Beechy arrived on the ship *HMS Blossom*. Captain Beechy's chart of San Francisco Bay – the first to survey the coastline in detail – mislabeled *Punta de la Concha* as *Point Avisadera*, a name that remained on later English and American charts for the next three decades.³⁸

Stirrings of a City: Pueblo of Yerba Buena Founded: 1835

After visiting San Francisco Bay, American and British traders became increasingly interested in the apparent riches of Alta California. Entrepreneurs like Englishman William A. Richardson settled at Yerba Buena Cove, an uninhabited inlet between the ex-mission grounds and the

³⁷ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside: Historical Cultural Resource Survey* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 92.

³⁸ Neal Harlow, *The Maps of San Francisco Bay: From the Spanish Discovery in 1769 to the American Occupation* (New York: The Book of the Month Club, 1950), 64.

Presidio. In 1835, Richardson built a store and an adobe structure named “Casa Grande” at Yerba Buena Cove, forming the nucleus of what would soon become the Pueblo of Yerba Buena.³⁹

Manifest Destiny at Work: Mexican American War (1846-1848)

Motivated by the principle of Manifest Destiny, expansionist U.S. president James K. Polk goaded Mexico into war on May 12, 1846. After a year and a half of fighting, the Mexican government capitulated and on February 2, 1848, the two nations signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. By the terms of the treaty Mexico ceded 525,000 square miles of territory to the United States, including all of what are now the states of California, Nevada and Utah, and parts of Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, in return for a lump sum payment of \$15 million and the assumption of \$3.5 million of debt owed by Mexico to U.S. citizens. The imposition of American rule in Yerba Buena was effected without bloodshed. On July 9, 1846, Captain John B. Montgomery landed at Yerba Buena and raised the American flag above the Custom House of the community of 850 people.⁴⁰

C. EARLY AMERICAN SETTLEMENT: LAND SUBDIVISION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT: 1848-1864

Population Boom: The Gold Rush and American Annexation of California: 1848-1850

The discovery of Gold at Sutter’s Mill in Coloma in January 1848 launched an unprecedented population explosion in San Francisco. News of the discovery moved slowly at first; it was not until May 1848 that Sam Brannan, the exuberant publisher of the *California Star*, strode the streets of San Francisco crying out “Gold! Gold! On the American River!” The news spread quickly to ports throughout Central and South America, and eventually to Europe and the East Coast of the United States. By early 1849, thousands of gold-seekers from all over the world—dubbed “Forty-niners”—began making their way to San Francisco. Between 1846 and 1852, the population of the frontier city grew from fewer than one thousand people to almost 35,000.⁴¹

One of the inevitable consequences of population growth was the rapid increase in the value of real estate. A lot facing Portsmouth Square worth \$16.50 in the spring of 1847 sold for \$6,000 in late spring 1848, and resold for \$45,000 by the end of the year.⁴² By 1849, the city had physically expanded westward up the steep slopes of Nob Hill, southward to Rincon Hill and Steamboat Point, and north to North Beach, filling in much of the area platted in the 1847 O’Farrell Survey. Southward expansion was initially impeded by large sand dunes and estuaries covering much of what is now the South of Market Area. In order to travel to Mission Dolores from Yerba Buena Cove, one had to take a circuitous route around Mission Bay, a journey somewhat improved by the completion of the Mission Plank Road in 1851.⁴³

³⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁰ Oscar Lewis, *San Francisco: Mission to Metropolis* (San Diego: Howell-North Books, rev. ed. 1980), 41.

⁴¹ Rand Richards, *Historic San Francisco. A Concise History and Guide* (San Francisco: Heritage House Publishers, 2001), p. 77.

⁴² Oscar Lewis, *San Francisco: Mission to Metropolis* (San Diego: Howell-North Books, rev. ed. 1980), 55.

⁴³ Theodore H. Hittell, *History of California*, Vol. III (San Francisco: N.J. Stone Company, 1897), 342.

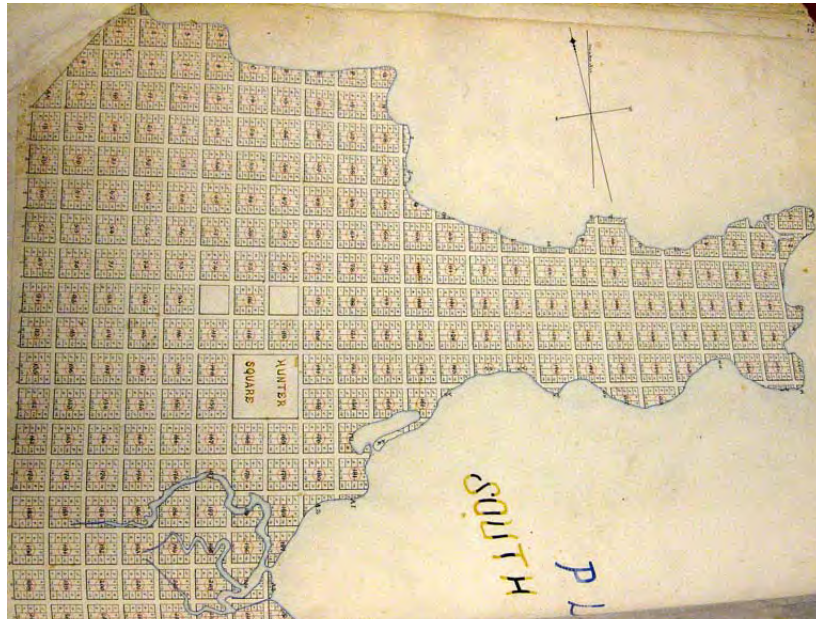


Figure 5. Portion of South San Francisco Subdivision, 1849
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Pioneer Speculators: Hunters Point Subdivided: 1849

Despite the difficulty in accessing lands that lay south of Mission Bay, real estate speculation reached a fevered pitch during the Gold Rush as wildcat speculators attempted to drum up interest in paper lots on the outlying ranchos. Hunters Point was almost six miles south of Portsmouth Square, well beyond the path of existing urban expansion. Regardless, in 1849, real estate speculators John Townsend and Corneille de Boom apparently convinced Bernal to let them subdivide the eastern portion of his rancho into house lots for sale to the Forty-niners. They evidently quickly conveyed their option to two brothers from the East Coast: Robert Eugene and Philip Schuyler Hunter (soon joined by their younger brother John), to subdivide, advertise, and market the lots.⁴⁴

The brothers' ambitions were not modest; the Hunters platted an entirely new city called "South San Francisco" on the peninsula portion of Bernal's holdings. According to the subdivision map filed with the City of County of San Francisco in November 1850, the subdivision encompassed the majority of the present-day Bayview-Hunters Point district east of 3rd Street (**Figure 5**). The entire tract, with the exception of a public market called Hunters Square, was subdivided into a grid of large square blocks measuring 340 feet square. Disregarding hills, creeks, or other topographical obstacles, each block consisted of 14 lots. Devising a pattern that would be followed by later subdividers, the Hunters laid out the east-west streets to be parallel to Hunters Point ridge, probably both to facilitate access to the steep upland portions of the tract, as well as to avoid the brunt of the afternoon onshore winds. To drum up business the Hunters built several houses and erected a flagpole and a large sign on the eastern tip of the peninsula. The Hunters' efforts came to naught and the still-born community became a kind of joke. An illustrated article that appeared in the *Sacramento Union* in 1854 (**Figure 6**) described it thusly:

⁴⁴ Archeo-Tec, *Historical Context for the Archeology of the Bayview Waterfront Project, San Francisco, California* (Oakland: 2008), 49. Note, some early accounts do not mention Townsend or de Boom in this venture; many early sources contradict each other regarding who began this venture.

This locality is about five miles south of San Francisco, on the Bay. A speculative effort was made in the fall of 1850, to bring it into notice, and a few buildings were erected on the ground. Little has been done since.⁴⁵

Undeterred by the failure of the venture, John Hunter started a dairy and vegetable farm on a smaller tract that he had purchased from Bernal on the south side of the peninsula, near what is now the corner of Fitch Street and Oakdale Avenue. He also established a small inn next to the stage road between San Francisco and San Jose (San Bruno Avenue). A Frenchman traveling between San Francisco and San Jose in 1850 described meeting Hunter:



Figure 6. Hunters Point, 1850
Source: Sacramento Union, n.d.

By ten we reached a hotel, incorrectly called the Halfway House. It is run by a Yankee called Hunter who speaks French....Hunter is a pleasant, courteous, well-mannered man who studied for a time in France at one of the polytechnic schools; graduating from there in 1834, he then went into the Navy. From this he was given his discharge to return home to his family in America. As he was leaving France with some valuable merchandise his ship was wrecked. He has already been ruined and re-established three times. No obstacles are too great for an American!

His last calamity was a life-sized affair; he attempted nothing less than to establish a new city on a well-selected site on the bay. This was named South San Francisco, since it adjoined the main city. Taking an option on the land he had plans made, lots mapped out, and an advertising campaign put on. His announcements and advertisements appeared in all the local papers. Large sums were spent, but purchasers were scarce. In the end nothing remained of this fine project but some uninhabited shacks and fifteen thousand dollars in unpaid bills.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ "Hunters Folly," clipping from the 1854 *Sacramento Union* at the California Historical Society.

⁴⁶ Roger R. Olmsted et al, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo – The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Management Program, 1979), 56-57.

The Hunters remained at Hunters Point until 1874, giving their name to the peninsula they had subdivided. The unnamed French visitor quoted above described the Hunters' Halfway House in 1850:

The Hunter House, which is not completely furnished, is a wooden edifice. The stages running between San José and San Francisco stop there both ways. It is fairly comfortable, and I dined passably for a dollar. Near the inn, seated on a bench, was a young and elegantly-clad woman, holding a novel in one hand and a parasol in the other. We were told that this woman poses as Madame Hunter. Be this as it may, certainly deep love and devotion would be needed to endure such isolation with the rain and mud of winters and the heat and dust of the summer without compensation. It is indeed a strong test.⁴⁷

No above-ground resources from the Hunter period of occupation are known to exist within Bayview-Hunters Point district or Area B.

Mapping South San Francisco: 1851-1853

A map of the northeastern part of San Francisco County drawn in 1851 by L.A. Brown of New York illustrate what remained of Bernal's Rancho (which by then belonged to a J. Hutchinson), as well as Hunter's South San Francisco tract (Figure 7). The map illustrates many vanished or otherwise modified topographical features. Hunters Point ridge is described on the map as a "rocky ridge" and notes indicate that the north side of the peninsula faced deep water whereas the south side faced shallow tidal flats. The map names Islais Creek but assigns no name to a network of now vanished creeks that empty into the bay in what is now the South Basin area. The map appears to engage in some wishful thinking when it came to manmade improvements. Two thoroughfares are shown passing over Visitacion Bay and through the future Bayview-Hunters Point district: New County Road and the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad. However, these must have been hypothetical because the railroad was not built until 1861-63 and it followed the Alemany Gap, not the shore of San Francisco Bay. The County Road, otherwise known as the San Bruno Toll Road, was not

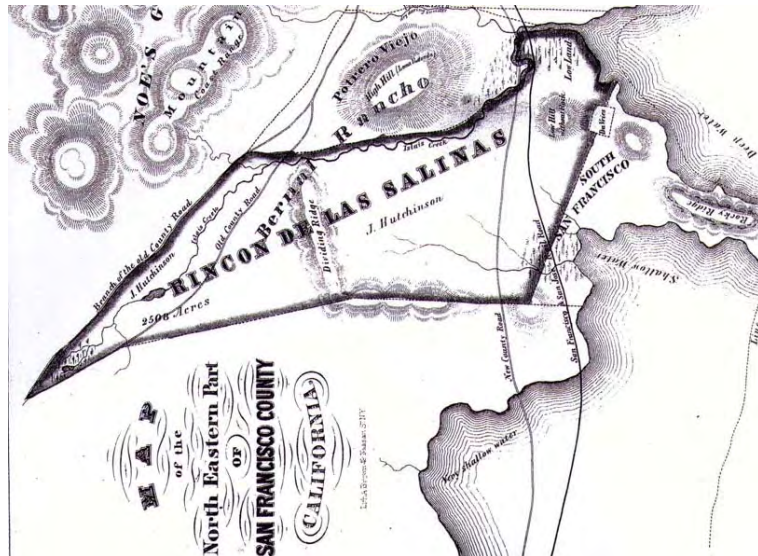


Figure 7. "Map of the North Eastern Part of San Francisco County, California," by L. A. Brown, 1851
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The map appears to engage in some wishful thinking when it came to manmade improvements. Two thoroughfares are shown passing over Visitacion Bay and through the future Bayview-Hunters Point district: New County Road and the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad. However, these must have been hypothetical because the railroad was not built until 1861-63 and it followed the Alemany Gap, not the shore of San Francisco Bay. The County Road, otherwise known as the San Bruno Toll Road, was not

⁴⁷ Roger R. Olmsted et al, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo – The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Management Program, 1979), 56-57.

built until 1858 and it followed a route further to the west to avoid the bay. The San Bruno Road was built by a private corporation and its investors included pioneer dairymen who owned small dairies in what is now the Portola District. It was apparently narrow and not well developed, requiring those using it to pull over into the tall grass to allow others going in the other direction to get by.⁴⁸

Garden Lots: First Section of Silver Terrace Subdivided: 1859

In 1859, José Cornelio Bernal had to give up a large portion of his ranch spanning from Islais Creek to the San Bruno Road. Like many Californios, Bernal had borrowed a good deal of money from American businessmen to pay for legal fees to defend his land from squatters and when he couldn't pay them back, the lien holders foreclosed, seizing the land as their security. In the case of Bernal, the mortgage holder was General William Tecumseh Sherman. The land in question was auctioned in 1859 for \$1,500 and was subsequently split up into smaller tracts that were subsequently sold to American speculators, including H.S. Brown, A.S. Haley, a Mr. O'Neill, and J.S. Silver.⁴⁹ Silver was the first to subdivide his land. A plan for such was submitted on November 15, 1859. The subdivision was the first part of a multi-unit subdivision called Silver Terrace. The first unit consisted of large "garden lots" intended for individuals who wished to maintain small farms.

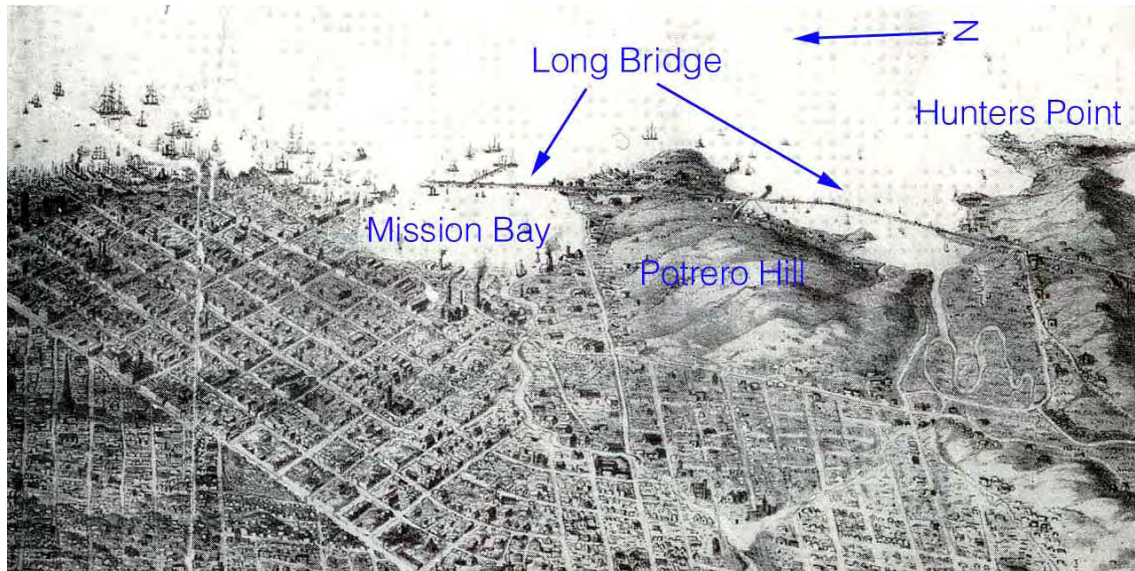


Figure 8. Long Bridge as depicted in George H. Goddard's Birdseye view of San Francisco, 1868

Source: Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Annotated by KVP Consulting

A New City? South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association: 1862-1867

Although John Hunter's scheme ultimately failed, his aborted subdivision bequeathed its name to the larger area and for over 60 years what is now Bayview-Hunters Point was known as South San Francisco. "South San Francisco" resisted further attempts at development for over a decade. Separated from downtown by Mission Bay and Islais Creek and several miles of ungraded dirt roads, it was easier to reach the area by boat in the period between the Gold Rush and the Civil War. The next attempt to market the area for residential development began in 1862 with the creation of the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association. The association was headed by Henry F. Williams as president and A.S. Gould as secretary. In contrast to Hunter's

⁴⁸ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside: Historical Cultural Resource Survey* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 92.

⁴⁹ "Bernal Death Severs Last Link in Old S.F. Regime," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 8, 1926), 6.

plan to sell the lots outright to buyers, Williams planned to market this still remote tract to working-class people looking for generous lots with room to plant a garden or keep livestock. As a homestead association, the lots would be sold as shares in a joint stock company. The impetus of the project was the announcement of the planned construction of Long Bridge, a causeway and bridge built in two sections between 1867 and 1869. The first (northerly) segment was completed across Mission Bay in 1867, connecting Steamboat Point and Point San Quentin. The second leg, which spanned the Islais Creek Estuary between Potrero and Hunters Point, was completed in 1869 (**Figure 8**). A railroad was also planned as part of the project. An article published in the *San Francisco Bulletin* in March 1868 summed up the prospects of the project:

Those who are acquainted with the tendency of growth and business of San Francisco know that it is in the direction of the localities included in the proposed railroad grant...Real estate values are more rapidly increasing in the direction of Mission Bay and South San Francisco than anywhere else.⁵⁰

Homestead associations became a common subdivision strategy in outlying parts of San Francisco and the Bay Region during the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly in southeast San Francisco where large Mexican-era ranchos had been subdivided into sizeable holdings ranging from fifteen to several hundred acres. Operating like a conventional joint stock corporation, speculators would purchase a large tract of land (often a former rancho) and subdivide it into either house lots or small farmsteads for resale on the installment plan to shareholders who would receive title to their share(s), typically once their final payment was received. The homestead associations of the era are vividly described in a passage from Langley's 1870 San Francisco Directory:

Owing to the number and general success that has attended the formation of these institutions, they may be considered one of the features of San Francisco, having been developed here on a grand scale and served as powerful auxiliaries in hastening forward the city's expansion. These associations, though inaugurated some years since, have rapidly multiplied during the past two or three years, numbering about one hundred and fifteen, the lands of the greater portion of these being situated near the city...So manifest had the plan of combining small amounts of capital for the purchase of land at wholesale prices become, that recently it has been adopted for securing not only city homes, but also tracts for horticultural, viniculture, and even farming purposes...Among other existing causes tending to encourage this method of acquiring small parcels of real estate has been the large aggregations of land growing out of the former system of Spanish grants, which being held mostly by men of wealth, could only be purchased in extensive tracts, thereby placing it beyond the reach of parties of small means.⁵¹

In 1864, the Board of Directors of the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association hired James H. Hoadley and William H. Bryan to survey and subdivide their 800-acre tract, a swath of land bounded by Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the west, 5th (Evans) Avenue and San Francisco Bay to the north and east, and 15th (Oakdale) Avenue to the south, into 2,000 75' x 100' lots.⁵² In contrast to Jasper O'Farrell's 1847 survey and the later 1855 Western Addition survey – both of which used the traditional Spanish vara – South San Francisco was surveyed

⁵⁰ "Bancroft Scraps," *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, reprinted from *Sacramento Union* (March 1868).

⁵¹ Langley's 1870 San Francisco City Directory.

⁵² Roger and Nancy Olmsted. *San Francisco Bayside Historical Cultural Resources Study* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 101.

using standard English feet. This accounts for the distinctive subdivision pattern of the district where standardized blocks measure 200' x 600', each yielding sixteen 75' x 100' lots. The 75' x 100' lots could either be homesteaded intact or re-subdivided into three 25' x 100' "house building lots" if and when the demand should arise. Each share owned in the homestead association entitled its bearer to claim three 75' x 100' lots. Many individuals owned several shares, entitling them to create holdings of up to several acres of land, although their lots might not all be contiguous.⁵³

The gridiron street and block pattern established by the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association endures in the street plan of much of the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Acknowledging the steep grades present on much of the peninsula, the surveyors laid out the 60-foot wide numbered avenues to align with Hunters Point ridge. For this reason many of the streets of the district are offset at an approximately 45 degree angle from the city's dominant orthogonal grid. Aligning the avenues with the ridge meant that the east-west avenues would have a gentler grade, thereby facilitating access to the highest blocks at the center of the tract. However, this scheme also ensured that many of the north-south streets would remain impassable, a problem that remains to this day. The east-west avenues were originally numbered from 1st (Arthur) Avenue to 24th (Yosemite) Avenue. The north-south streets were laid out to be 64 feet wide and they were originally designated by letters of the alphabet, beginning with 'A' (Alvord) Street and terminating with 'S' (Selby) Street.⁵⁴

The South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association subdivision map, filed with the City and County of San Francisco in April 1867, illustrates the plan of the tract. In contrast to John Hunter's 1849 scheme, there were no public open spaces and the street grid was extended over the adjoining tidelands. Aside from their orientation, the streets were laid out regardless of topography, the relentless gridiron encompassing both steep rocky ridges and submerged tidelands. The only areas not designated for sale were the Hunter Tract and the California Dry Dock Company facility. The former was a large in-holding belonging to the Hunter family roughly bounded by 14th (Newcomb) Avenue to the north, H (Hawes) Street to the west, 20th (Thomas) Avenue to the south, and San Francisco Bay to the east (**Figure 9**).

As an integral part of its development plan, the Board of Directors of the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association proposed building a horse-drawn street railway from downtown San Francisco to Hunters Point. Devised as a means to spark interest in the subdivision, the association levied \$25,000 from its subscribers to build it, with the ultimate goal of extending it to the proposed Bay View Park Racetrack. The line was to follow the present-day alignment of 3rd Street through the South of Market Area, Kentucky Street in the Potrero district, and a new street called Railroad Avenue in South San Francisco. Called the Potrero & Bay View Railroad Company, the line only made it as far as the so-called "Second Long Bridge" over Islais Creek, mostly because the association had neglected to properly grade Railroad Avenue. However, the failure to complete the railroad eventually doomed the subdivision. According to an article in the May 31, 1865 edition of the *Alta California*, the initial distribution consisted of 500 lots but the association was able to attract only a few prospective shareholders.⁵⁵ According to 1870 court testimony of a shareholder named Silas Selleck, only a dozen structures had been built during the first five years of the association's existence.⁵⁶

⁵³ "City Items: South San Francisco," *Alta California* (November 25, 1866), 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "South San Francisco and its Development," *Alta California* (May 31, 1865), 1.

⁵⁶ Roger and Nancy Olmsted. *San Francisco Bayside Historical Cultural Resources Study* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 102.

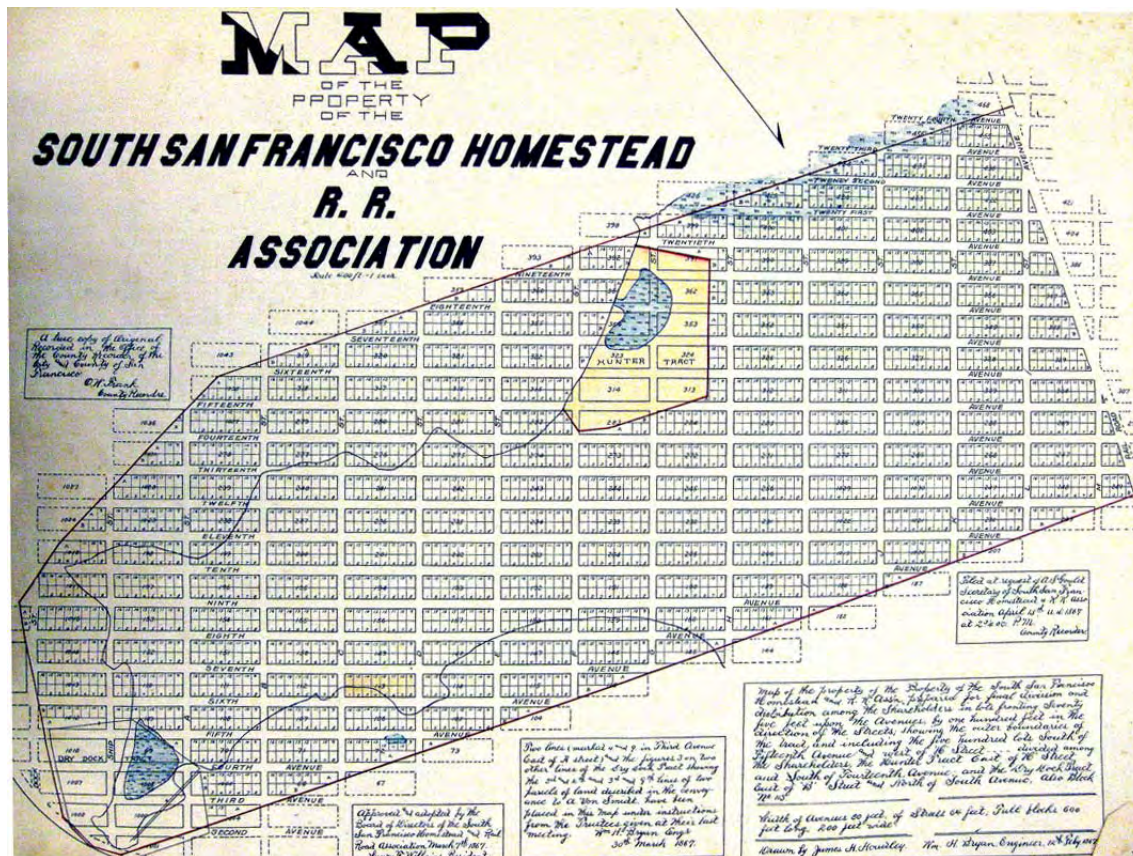


Figure 9. "Map of the Property of the South San Francisco Homestead and R.R. Association"

Note, south is toward the top of the page in this map. The Hunter Tract is in yellow.

Source: San Francisco Public Library

Drawing a Crowd: Bay View Park Built by George Hearst and William Crocker: 1863-1882

Even though residential development failed to take off with the second subdivision of South San Francisco, the area was still viable for other uses, particularly agriculture, manufacturing, and sports and recreation. Nevada mining millionaire George Hearst and other investors financed the construction of Bay View Park, a horse racing track, hotel, and stables on a low-lying tract of marshland located south of the Hunters Point peninsula, in what is now the Bayview/South Basin area. In 1864 San Francisco City Directory's chronologist described the project:

The ground is reclaimed and protected from the tide by a breakwater or bulkhead. A large and spacious hotel, with stables and outhouses attached, has been added, including the judge's stand and all modern improvements found upon first-class race courses in this country or in Europe. A beautiful shell road is being built from near the Mission to the Park, about three miles in length, and will cost probably \$30,000.⁵⁷

Horseracing had become a passion for many San Franciscans during the later half of the nineteenth century. Although betting was certainly popular, the racetracks fulfilled another function. Typically located on the outskirts of the city, like the Pioneer Racetrack in the southern Mission district or the Ocean House Race Course out by Lake Merced, racetracks like Bay View

⁵⁷ Langley's 1864 San Francisco City Directory, 10.

Park became popular weekend attractions in their own right, providing a destination for city dwellers wanting to take a ride in the country. The decision to build the Bay View Park does not appear to have been guided by any desire to increase the value of real estate in the area, rather to take advantage of the soggy underlying marshland, which was thought to provide a springy surface that enhanced the speed of the horses. The quote from the 1864 city directory mentions that a “beautiful shell road” was being constructed to the racetrack. This road was most likely built from excavating nearby Ohlone middens. A drawing of Bay View Park made in 1869 shows another shell road leading from Bay View Park out to the Hunter property on San Francisco Bay. The drawing also indicates that although dikes enclosed the racecourse, the interior of the track was not filled and that what became known as Yosemite slough continued to exist within the inner oval of the track (**Figure 10**). By the early 1880s, the hotel had burned and the race course abandoned to the tides that breached the dikes. By the time the 1883 Coast Survey Map was published, Bay View Park was no more, leaving little behind aside for its name, which eventually became applied to the surrounding flats south of the Hunters Point peninsula.⁵⁸

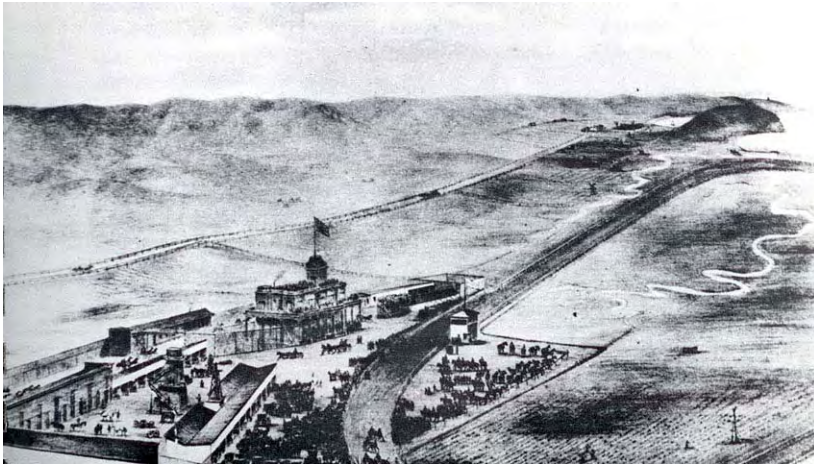


Figure 10. Rendering of Bay View Park in 1869
View toward east
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The 1861 Official Map of the City and County of San Francisco by C.E. Wackenruder provides a great deal of information on land uses in South San Francisco in the years leading up to the Civil War. Although still isolated from most of the rest of the city, the map indicates that the area bounded by Marin Street to the north, San Francisco Bay to the East, Candlestick Hill to the south, and San Bruno Road and Islais

Creek to the west, had been divided into several major holdings, most of which had been carved out of Bernal's rancho after he defaulted in 1859.

In addition to the South San Francisco tract – by far the largest – there was the future Bayview tract to the south. As yet unnamed, the map shows the Bayview Tract dominated by two natural features: the large tidal marsh/slough area that would become home to Bay View Park (Yosemite Slough) and Candlestick Hill, which was labeled as the “Black Hills” on the map. J.S. Silver's garden lots subdivision, a triangular tract bounded by San Bruno Avenue to the west, Thornton Avenue to the north, and Hudson's property to the southeast is shown, as well as Silver's newest tract bounded by Thornton Avenue to the north, Railroad Avenue to the east, and Hudson's tract to the south. This tract was labeled on the map as Silver Terrace. The map indicates that several roads were laid out if not graded, including Railroad Avenue (3rd Street), Thornton Avenue, and Silver Avenue. San Bruno Road formed the western boundary of South San Francisco. Very few structures are indicated on the map. Structures that can be identified include Hunter's ranch on

⁵⁸ Roger and Nancy Olmsted. *San Francisco Bayside Historical Cultural Resources Study* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 98.

the south side of Hunters Point, the new Roman Catholic orphanage on top of Mt. St. Joseph, as well as a handful of dwellings belonging to local landowners, including Haley, Case, Hudson, Weldon, and Paul (Figure 11). None of these structures are known to be extant.



Figure 11. Official (Wackenruder) Map of San Francisco, 1861
Source: San Francisco Public Library
Annotated by KVP Consulting

D. INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN "SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO" 1865-1906

Several major events led to the evolution of South San Francisco (as well as much of the Southern Waterfront) into one of San Francisco's most important industrial districts in the years following the Civil War. Although isolated from the rest of the Union, California's nascent industries contributed to the Union cause. Income earned by these industries, combined with riches from the silver mines of Nevada's Comstock Lode, caused San Francisco to enter a period of sustained prosperity. Between 1860 and 1890, the population of the city grew from 56,802 to almost 300,000, a five-fold increase. The city's population continued to grow, reaching 343,000 in 1900, making it the largest city west of St. Louis. Although the city contained a quarter of the state's population, San Francisco accounted for 65 percent of the state's manufacturing employment. San Francisco's port facilities handled nearly all of the state's imports and exports, serving a tremendous hinterland that comprised the entire western third of the United States.⁵⁹

Concerned during the early days of the Civil War that California was vulnerable to possible Confederate invasion, President Abraham Lincoln decided that communication between the eastern sea board and the isolated Pacific outpost should be improved through the construction of a transcontinental railroad. Authorized by the Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 and 1864 and supported by 30-year U.S. government bonds and extensive land grants of government owned land, construction of the railroad began in 1865. Jointly built by the Union Pacific (Omaha to Promontory Summit, Utah) and the Central Pacific (Sacramento to Promontory Summit) railroads, the line initially opened for service on November 6, 1869. San Francisco's business and civic leaders hoped that the railroad would advance the development of local industry by opening a direct outlet to eastern markets and providing an easier and cheaper means for European and eastern labor to cross the continent to California. Eagerly awaiting the completion of the railroad, San Francisco's business community invested in property throughout the outlying districts of the city and region, anticipating a dramatic jump in real estate values with the arrival of thousands of immigrants from the East.

Haley Tract: Residential Subdivision Too Soon?

The anticipated completion of the Transcontinental Railroad inspired several local land owners to subdivide their land for residential development in South San Francisco. One of the first tracts subdivided after the Civil War was the A.S. Haley Tract. This tract, an irregular swath of land on the south bank of Islais Creek, was evidently cultivated by Haley as an orchard. Haley subdivided his land into 700 individual house lots measuring 25 by 100 feet, which was described by contemporary sources as in the "New York Style." This was in contrast to the adjoining South San Francisco tract which was subdivided into larger 75 by 100 "garden lots." However, in keeping with the South San Francisco tract, Haley subdivided his ranch into rectangular blocks measuring 200 by 600 feet with streets averaging 80 feet wide. He also aligned the blocks with the streets of the adjoining South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association tract.⁶⁰

The survey map that Haley's agent R.H. Sinton of the firm of Cobb & Sinton prepared illustrates Haley's tract divided into regular blocks and house lots. Several blocks are only partially subdivided leaving blocks transected by adjoining property lines partially unsubdivided. Haley's residence is shown at 14th (Newcomb) Avenue and Q (Quint) Street. The map also illustrates the footprint of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum at the top of the hill at 18th (Revere) Avenue and

⁵⁹ Robert W. Cherny and William Issel, *San Francisco: Presidio, Port and Pacific Metropolis* (Sparks, NV: Materials for Today's Learning, Inc., 1988), 24.

⁶⁰ "City Items: South San Francisco and its Development," *Dailey Alta California* (May 31, 1865), 1.

Q (Quint) Street and the toll gate and bridge over Islais Creek on 15th (Oakdale) Avenue (Figure 12). None of these buildings or structures are extant today.

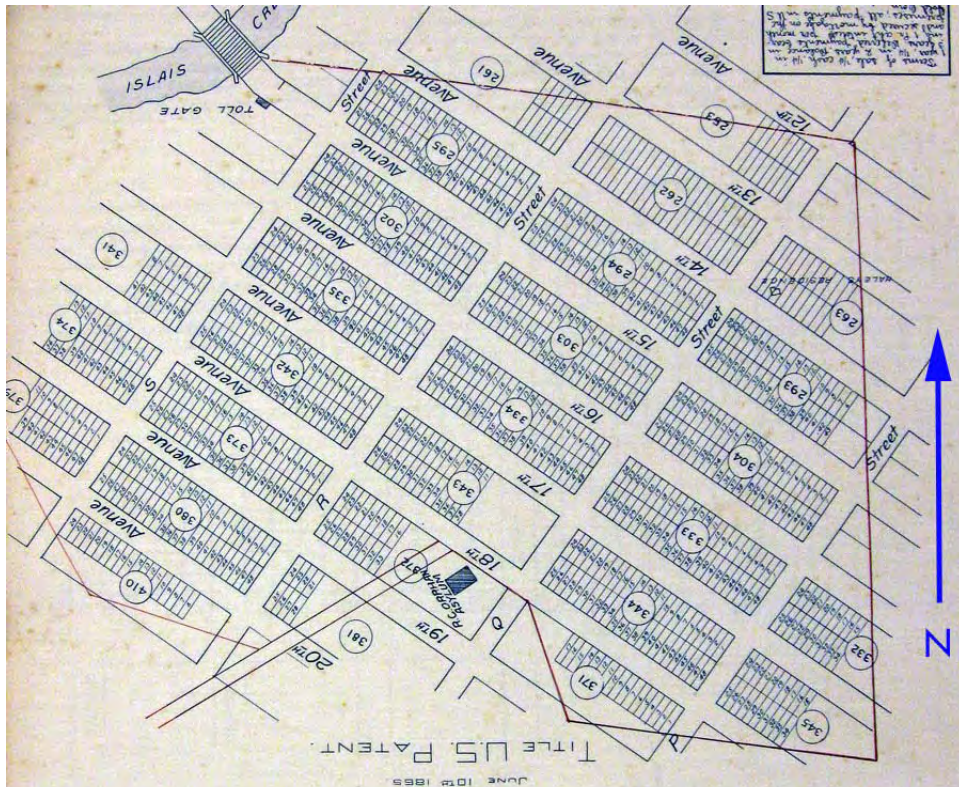


Figure 12. Plan of the Haley Tract, 1865
Note Haley's residence at 14th Avenue and Q Street
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The Haley Tract lots were to be auctioned by the firm of Cobb & Sinton on June 10, 1865. In contrast to the South San Francisco tract, the Haley Tract was not a homestead association. Successful bidders were expected to deposit one-quarter of the purchase price of each lot on the initial auction date with subsequent payments due each year for the next three years. An article that appeared in the May 31, 1865 *Daily Alta California* described the tract:

Haley's place is just this side of the South San Francisco property. It fronts on the bay, and slopes gently and regularly to the east and northeast. There will be no trouble about either grading or draining, which in some other districts costs nearly as much as the land. The soil is rich and moist, and is all now under cultivation. The tract begins at the tollgate of the Bay View Turnpike (Oakdale Avenue) and embraces most of the cultivated land to the east and south in the adjacent slope (Mt. St. Joseph).

The place is sheltered from the winds by the hills on the north, west and south, and the streets are laid out in such a manner as to break the force of those breezes which pass over the hills. Mr. Haley's orchard proves that the winds are not so strong and cold at his place as in the northern portions of the city. This sale of property so suitable for pleasant homes, will have a great influence in building up South San Francisco.⁶¹

⁶¹ "City Items: South San Francisco and its Development," *Daily Alta California* (May 31, 1865), 1.

Anticipating Growth: O'Neill & Haley Tract and Bayview No. 1 Tract Subdivided

Based on contemporary newspaper articles it becomes apparent that Haley Tract's residential lots did not sell very well and he eventually sold out to Henry F. Williams, president of the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association. In January 1867, Williams hired a surveyor named L.H. Shortt to resurvey the Haley Tract as part of a much larger homestead association called the O'Neill & Haley Tract. This large swath of land, which encompasses the majority of the northwestern portion of Area B, combined the Haley Tract with the adjoining O'Neill and Hewston tracts. Altogether the combined tract extended to the banks of Islais Creek to the north and to the west, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the east (with a small triangular section east of Railroad Avenue between 4th (Davidson) Avenue and 8th (Hudson) Avenue), and the Mt. St. Joseph Orphan Asylum and Silver Terrace to the south. The combined O'Neill & Haley Tract retained the lot and block pattern of the Haley Tract, itself derived from Williams' South San Francisco tract. Although the 25 by 100 foot lots were also kept, the map only assigns lot numbers to what were presumably the most desirable lots, mostly those with frontage on either Islais Creek or Railroad Avenue. The map is a valuable resource because it illustrates existing property lines, bridges, and roads and pathways that cut across the "paper" streets of the tract (**Figure 13**). An advertisement that appeared in the *Alta California* in 1867 described the tract: "...the lands cover the most beautiful locality in the city of San Francisco...famous for productiveness of soil and freedom from the prevailing winds and fogs of the city, as well as for picturesque and beautiful views."

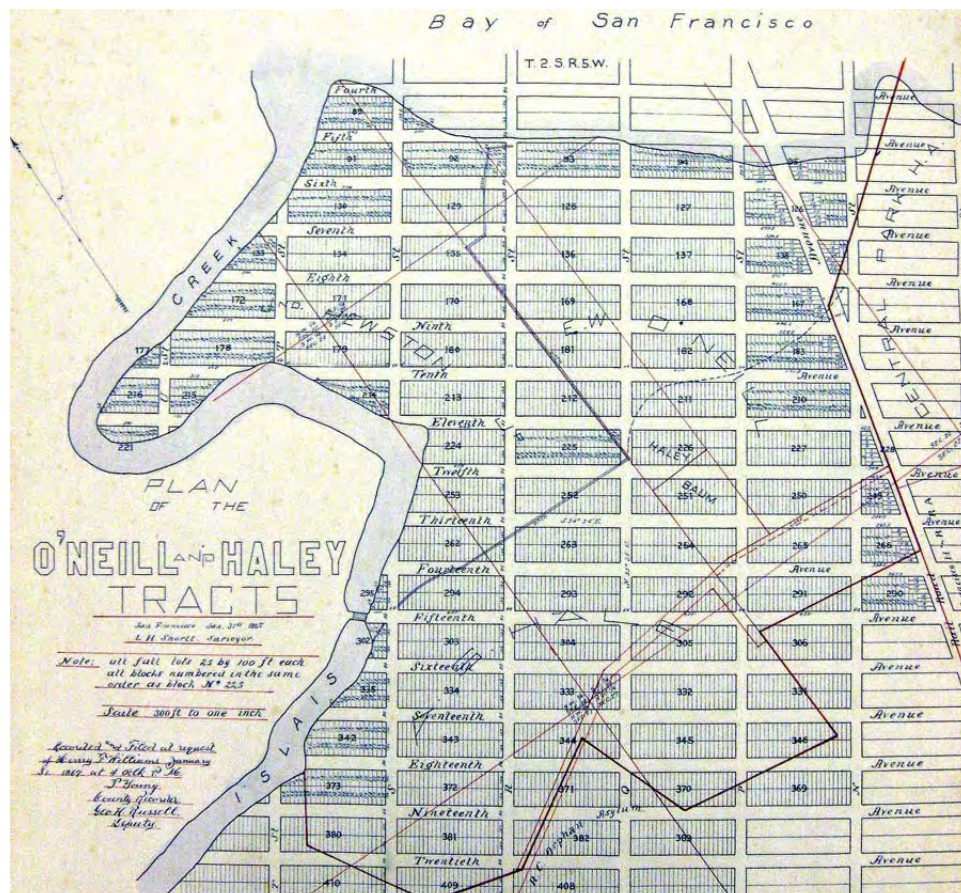


Figure 13. Plan of the O'Neill Haley Tract, 1867
Source: San Francisco Public Library

In addition to the South San Francisco and O'Neill & Haley tracts, Henry F. Williams had acquired the site of the old Bayview Race Course and the level, marshy land that surrounded it. This tract, which Williams named the Bayview Tract No. 1 Homestead Association, was bounded by the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association to the north, San Francisco Bay to the east, Candlestick Hill to the south, and Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the west. Williams hired surveyor L.H. Shortt to lay out the streets and blocks and the new subdivision was recorded at the Assessor/Recorder's Office on May 23, 1867. Williams retained the same street pattern and subdivision strategy as the adjoining South San Francisco Tract, dividing each block into 16 75 by 100 foot "garden" lots that could be subdivided into narrower 25 by 100 foot house lots in the future if so desired (**Figure 14**). Similar to South San Francisco, the lots were to be granted to shareholders in the homestead association once they finished paying for their shares. The majority of the Bayview Tract falls within the boundaries of Area B's Town Center and South Basin activity nodes.

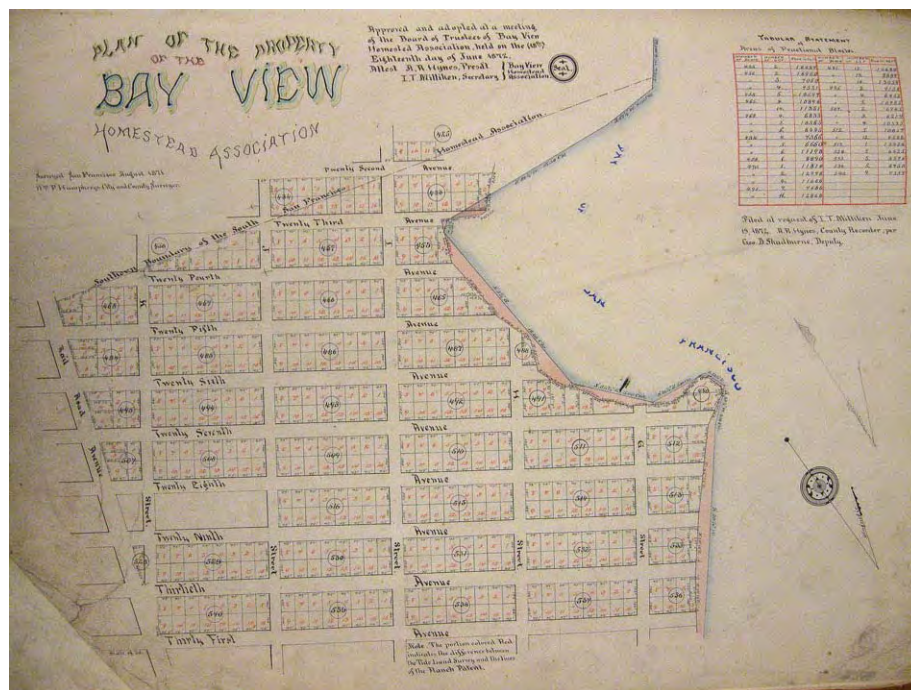


Figure 14. Plan of the Bayview Homestead Association, 1867
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Neither the new O'Neill & Haley Tract nor the South San Francisco or the Bayview Homestead Association tracts seem to have appealed to San Franciscans in search of inexpensive house or garden lots. The biggest obstacle was lack of easy access. Although the Potrero & Bayview Railroad initiated horse car service from downtown to the northern edge of the Second Long Bridge (approximately the present-day intersection of 3rd and Marin streets) as early as the 1860s, the railroad never made it beyond Islais Creek until 1888. Furthermore, horse car service was not particularly rapid, although railroad officials claimed that the trip from Montgomery Street to Hunters Point could be made in twenty minutes!⁶² In addition, working-class San Franciscans had plenty of other options, with ample vacant land remaining available in closer-in areas. According to an article in the November 25, 1866 edition of the *Daily Alta California*, approximately 150 acres of the most desirable land in the South San Francisco tract (mostly

⁶² "City Items: South San Francisco and its Development," *Daily Alta California* (May 31, 1865), 1.

those along Railroad Avenue) had been deeded over to shareholders, indicating that they had fully paid their subscriptions. This left another 200 acres of submerged property and 500 acres of terra firma that had not yet been distributed. The article concedes that considerable work remained before the tract could be fully utilized:

Hunter's Point must be graded – that may be considered settled. Its magnificent water front must not be allowed to remain useless. At first glance, it looks as though the expense would exceed any possible value, but after a little examination, the problem is solved. The hill must not be cut down to the water level. The length of the Point gives opportunity to have an easy grade lengthwise, so that every lot may be reached by loaded teams in one direction, though the cross streets might be quite steep. Since the Association owns the water property adjacent, it can use for filling all earth and rock obtained by grading.⁶³

By 1870, the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association had distributed a total of 1,500 lots to its shareholders. Nevertheless, one-quarter, or 500 lots, remained unsold. Eventually, the association went out of business, leaving 500 unclaimed lots and many unfulfilled promises. Recognizing that industrial development was probably a better bet, the company was reorganized as the South San Francisco Dock Company. This commercial real estate company marketed the submerged lots of Hunters Point for industrial development well into the twentieth century.⁶⁴

Heavy Industry Arrives: William Ralston Builds San Francisco Dry Dock Company: 1866

Partly seeking to recoup their losses from lack of interest in South San Francisco for housing, the Board of Directors of the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association granted 30 acres (including about twenty acres of submerged land) at the eastern end of the Hunters Point Peninsula to a German-born engineer named Alexander W. von Schmidt to build a modern dry dock for ship repair and construction. Although von Schmidt possessed the expertise to build and run such an operation, he did not have the capital to build it, which at build out was estimated to be \$1.2 million (in 1866 dollars). The work was considerable, including excavation and grading, mechanical work, buildings, and machinery. Accordingly, in October 1866, von Schmidt formed a partnership with San Francisco banker William C. Ralston to fund the project. According to von Schmidt, Hunters Point was an ideal location for a “graving” or stationary dry dock because of the impermeable character of the serpentine bed rock and the peninsula’s deep water access. Begun in 1866 and completed the next year, the \$250,000 dry dock, the largest in the West, was 400 feet long and 100 feet wide, diminishing to 60 feet wide at the bottom (**Figure 15**). Other structures erected on the site included a caisson, bulkheads, workshops, and machinery.⁶⁵ An article in the August 19, 1867 *Alta California* described the construction of the California Dry Dock facility in some detail:

The buildings erected on the point in the vicinity of the dock, necessary to accommodate the laborers and mechanics and for blacksmith’s shops, stables and other uses, give the locality the appearance of active life in striking contrast with the unbroken stillness pervading the narrow plain and bare hills on the main land. A new road has been cut from the line of the Bay View Railroad, beginning at a point about half a mile west of Islais Bridge, and winding in a southerly

⁶³ “The Grading of Hunters Point,” *Daily Alta California* (November 25, 1866).

⁶⁴ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside Historical Cultural Resource Survey*, (San Francisco: unpublished technical report prepared for the San Francisco Clean Water Program, April 1982), 102.

⁶⁵ “The Stone Dry Dock at Hunters Point,” *Daily Alta California* (October 21, 1866).

course around the hills until Hunter's Point Valley is passed. The view from the summit, in the early part of the day, when the wind don't (sic) blow, is truly charming.⁶⁶

The California Dry Dock Company opened for business in 1867 and subsequently incorporated on August 31, 1868, capitalized in the amount of one million dollars. Shortly thereafter the company petitioned the State of California for 16 additional acres of submerged land, bringing the total acreage up to 46.8 acres.⁶⁷ By July 1868, the *Daily Alta California* reported that the facility had added a portable wood dry dock, having purchased one and moved it from Steamboat Point to Hunters Point. The article reported that the stone dry dock would be used for larger ships whereas the wooden dry dock would be used for smaller sea craft. The article concluded: "It is evident that most of the ship building of the city will concentrate about Hunters Point, and it is expected that before many months 1500 men will be employed there."⁶⁸ Today, the stone dry dock and the associated brick shops are still extant although they are not located within Area B.



Figure 15. California Dry Dock, ca. 1867
Source: San Francisco Historic Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

A Reservation for Noxious Uses: Butchers' Reservation Relocated to Hunters Point: 1867

As early as 1855, San Francisco's civic leaders had prohibited dangerous and/or noxious industries – such as gunpowder manufacturers – from operating within densely built-up portions of the city. These prohibitions were eventually extended to butchers. As much as most San Franciscans may have enjoyed a fresh meat diet, nobody wanted to live within close proximity to what was by all accounts a gruesome and smelly business. The meatpacking industry – originally located on the northern shore of Mission Bay at 9th and Brannan streets – was closely allied with tanneries and glue and fertilizer manufacturers, also noxious industries. The original "Butchers' Reservation" was established at 9th and Brannan to take advantage of the daily tidal flows of Mission Creek, which would optimally flush the offal dumped into the creek out into San Francisco Bay. By the Civil War era, San Francisco had physically expanded into the Mission and Potrero districts, encompassing the original Butchers' Reservation. Accordingly, in 1867, the State of California Board of Tide Land Commissioners granted 80 acres of mostly submerged lands south of Islais Creek to the Wholesale Butchers' Association.⁶⁹ Over the next two years, San Francisco's meatpacking and allied animal byproduct processing industries relocated to the new Butchers' Reservation at Hunters Point. The boundaries of the reservation were described in

⁶⁶ "The Second Grand Enterprise of our City: The San Francisco Dry Dock," *Alta California* (August 19, 1867), 1.

⁶⁷ C. G. Tilton, *William Ralston, Courageous Builder* (Boston: Christopher Publishing Co., 1935).

⁶⁸ "The Dry Docks of South San Francisco," *Daily Alta California* (July 26, 1868).

⁶⁹ Roger R. Olmsted et al, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo – The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Management Program, 1979), 68-69.

Section 1 of San Francisco's Municipal Code under the heading of "Offensive Trades and Occupations and Nuisances":

No person shall establish or maintain any slaughter house, slaughter cattle, hogs, calves, sheep or any other kinds of business or occupation offensive to the senses, or prejudicial to the public health or comfort within the limits of the City and County of San Francisco, except with that tract of land lying and being within the boundaries of the City and County of San Francisco, and described as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the easterly line of Kentucky Street (3rd Street) with a southwesterly line of First Avenue (Arthur Avenue), thence southeasterly along the southwesterly line of First Avenue.⁷⁰

By September 1868, San Francisco's meatpackers had begun building new facilities on the 80-acre Butchers' Reservation (colloquially known as "Butchertown"). An article appearing in the September 15, 1868 edition of the *Daily Alta California* describes the reservation:

The property consists of eighty acres eastward of what is known at present as the Second Long Bridge, and lies about half-way between the (Pacific) Rolling Mill and the new (Hunters Point) Dry Dock. The amount of money required by the law for the possession of the property has been fully paid, but the signature of the Governor to the title deeds has not yet been granted. The Wholesale Butchers' Association have occupied the ground, considering themselves fully entitled to take possession thereof, and yesterday the inauguration of the first slaughter house was attended by a numerous concourse. The first building erected, the one inaugurated yesterday, is about fifty by thirty feet, and in every way adapted to the purpose designed. Outside of it are large corrals and pens, capable of containing from fifty to seventy-five head of cattle, while within from fifteen to twenty carcasses can be dressed with ease.⁷¹

Over the next few years, the Butchers' Reserve continued to grow and thrive. According to an article in the April 6, 1877 edition of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, Butchertown "daily killed about 325 head of cattle, 650 head of hogs, and 1000 sheep." The meat was shipped to market in San Francisco and the by products were sold to allied industries for processing. Horns were sold in bulk to manufacture combs and other articles. The blood was sent to the sugar refineries at Potrero Point to assist in the sugar refining process. The hides were used to make leather and the hooves were used to make glue. Some of the offal was saved for hog food. According to the article, Butchertown employed 400 men who received payments ranging from \$60 to \$250 a month.⁷²

The arrival of the butchers in the area quickly attracted a series of other affiliated industries dependent on animal byproducts generated by the meat packing plants, including tanneries, glue factories, wool processing plants, and fertilizer works. One of the first was the Legallet Tannery, which appeared at 6th (Fairfax) Avenue South, between Q (Quint) and R (Rankin) streets around 1879 (now the site of the Southeast Treatment Plant). Founded by a French immigrant named Dominique Legallet ca. 1876, the plant became one of the longest-running and largest tanneries in Butchertown.⁷³ Much of the company's workforce was French and these

⁷⁰ *San Francisco Municipal Report*: 1870-71, 508.

⁷¹ "Inauguration of the First Abattoir," *Daily Alta California* (September 15, 1868).

⁷² "Butchertown," *San Francisco Bulletin* (April 6, 1877).

⁷³ Roger R. Olmsted, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo: The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1979), 93.

people became the nucleus of a sizable French immigrant population in Bayview-Hunters Point that remained as a recognizable group until the Second World War. There are no extant above-ground resources related to this early phase of Butchertown remaining within Bayview-Hunters Point or Area B.

Waterfront: India Basin Reserved for Navigational Purposes:

Not long after granting the 80-acre Butchers' Reservation at Islais Creek to the Wholesale Butchers' Association, the State Board of Tide Land Commissioners named the previously unnamed inlet separating Potrero Point and Hunters Point "India Basin," reserving 32.5 acres of it for "docks, piers, slips, and basins, and other purposes of commerce."⁷⁴ India Basin was defined as extending from the mouth of Islais Creek to the eastern end of Hunters Point.⁷⁵

Tideland Sales: Submerged Water Lots of South San Francisco Sold: 1868

As mentioned above, the anticipated completion of the Transcontinental Railroad had brought land speculation to a fevered pitch in San Francisco and the outlying region. In addition to private speculators subdividing the terra firma of South San Francisco into homestead associations during the 1860s and 1870s, the State of California wanted to get into the game. As early as 1851 the federal government had granted all coastal tidelands to the jurisdiction of the states. Seventeen years later, the perennially underfunded California state government decided to sell its submerged lands to raise revenue. Drafted as the California Tidelands Act of 1868, the Legislature directed the newly formed Board of Tidelands Commissioners to complete a survey of the tidelands of Mission Bay and Hunters Point in preparation to sell the resulting submerged "water lots." The terms of the sale were 25 percent down in cash and the balance in equal payments of one, two, or three years at 7 percent interest. The first sale took place on June 2, 1869, with 139 blocks south of the Second Long Bridge (Hunters Point) put up for sale. The proceeds of these sales netted around \$1,000 to \$3,000 per acre.⁷⁶

South San Francisco Snapshot: U.S. Coast Survey Map of 1869

Despite the subdivision of most of the area – combined with extensive investment in industrial and transportation infrastructure – South San Francisco remained overwhelmingly rural. The 1869 U.S. Coast Survey map reveals few major changes since the first map was created in 1853. Although several new roads had been constructed since then, including Railroad Avenue, the Bayview Turnpike (Oakdale Avenue), and three roads out to the California Dry Dock, few buildings had been erected outside of the dry dock, Bay View Park, Butchertown, Mt. St. Joseph Orphanage, the Sisters of Mercy-operated Magdalen Asylum for "wayward girls," and a handful of scattered farmsteads (**Figure 16**). The most densely developed portion of the area appears to have been the intersection of Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) and 15th (Oakdale) Avenue within the O'Neill & Haley Tract.

⁷⁴ Allardt Map of San Francisco, 1868.

⁷⁵ Gerald Robert Dow, *Bay Fill in San Francisco* (San Francisco: 1973).

⁷⁶ Roger R. Olmsted, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo: The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1979), 108.

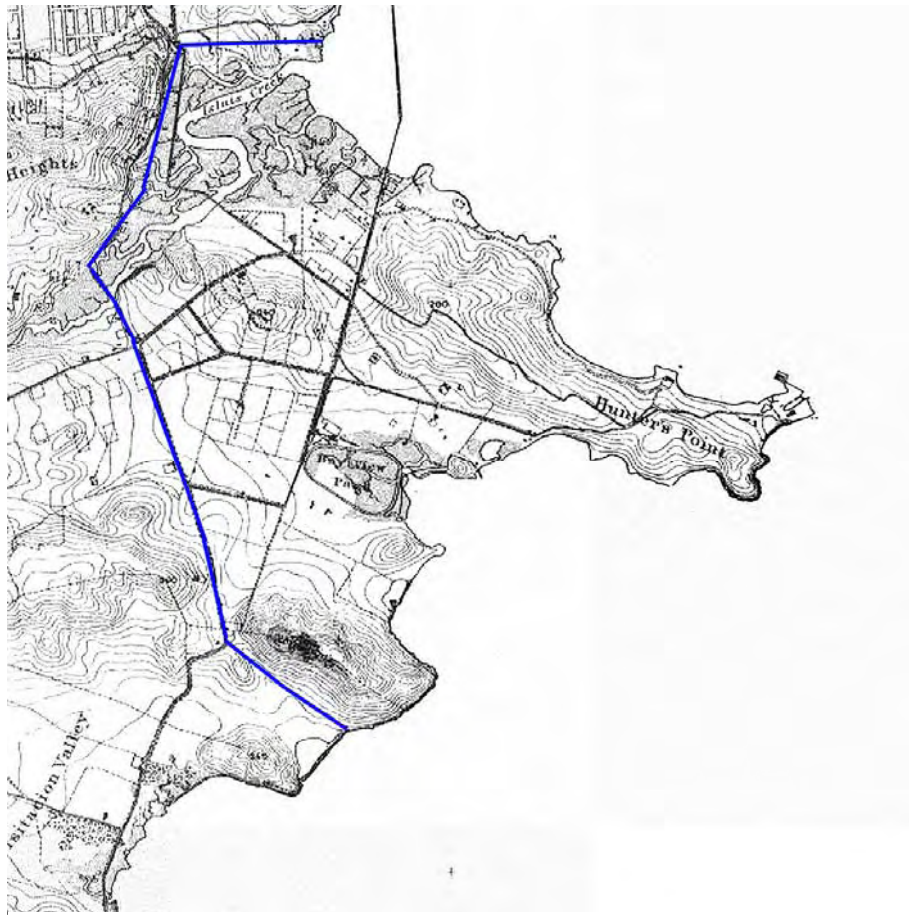


Figure 16. Bayview-Hunters Point, Coast Survey Map 1869
Source: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
Annotated by KVP Consulting

New Residential Activity: Haley & O'Neill Homestead Association: 1870

The O'Neill & Haley Tract evidently had little success attracting buyers despite its relative advantage over other tracts in South San Francisco, particularly its proximity to the terminus of the Potrero & Bayview Railroad at Second Long Bridge, as well as its level topography that did not require extensive grading or filling prior. Circa 1870, a real estate investment firm named Messrs. Duncan & Co. purchased 400 contiguous 25-foot wide lots of the O'Neill & Haley Tract for \$446 a lot. The new entity, known as the Haley & O'Neill Homestead Association (not to be confused with the O'Neill & Haley Tract), repackaged the tract as a homestead association. The terms of sale were easy, requiring only a \$10 down payment and payments of \$10 a month until the entire subscription price of \$510 was paid off. The association charged no interest and once the final payment was received, the shareholders were entitled to claim their lot(s). Although the investors stood to gain little profit from the sale of the land, they probably intended to benefit from the property they retained gaining value as shareholders built houses, stores, and industries.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside: Historical Cultural Resource Survey* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Program, 1982), 103.

Famed British pioneer photographer Eadweard Muybridge photographed an event staged by the directors of the Haley & O'Neill Homestead Association, presumably an excursion of prospective buyers who were brought out to the site to view the lots for sale. Muybridge photographed the goings-on with from near the corner of 15th Avenue and Q Street (the present-day intersection of Oakdale Avenue and Quint Street) ca. 1870, presumably for Messrs. Duncan as part of their marketing campaign. The photographs were shot as stereopticon images, meaning that they could be inserted into a device to provide a three-dimensional effect, most likely for the benefit of prospective buyers who stopped by their offices in downtown San Francisco. In addition to photographing excited prospective property owners, Muybridge captured several dozen wood-frame dwellings between 15th Avenue and Islais Creek, a church, a store, and other improvements. Also visible in the photographs are the Islais Creek Estuary, Long Bridge, and in another view to the south, the Magdalen Asylum for Wayward Women (Figure 17). Several of the dwellings in the photographs still stand today.

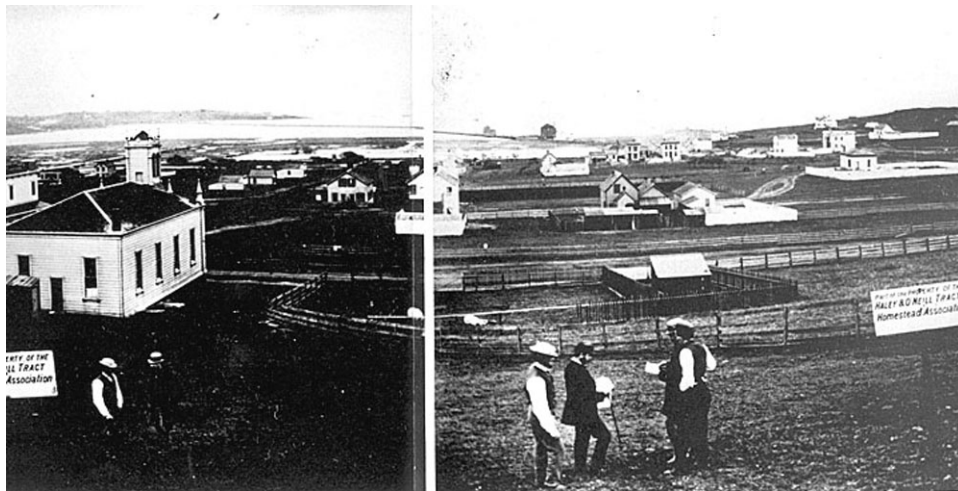


Figure 17. Section of the Muybridge Triptych of the O'Neill & Haley Tract
View toward north. Note Second Long Bridge at the top of the image
Source: Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

In addition to homestead associations, local landowners continued to subdivide their landholdings in South San Francisco during the post-Civil War era. The first was the Case Tract. Surveyed in 1868 by a local landowner named E.G. Case, the small tract was bounded by 15th (Oakdale) Avenue to the north, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the east, Parnassus (Bayview) Street to the south, and St. Joseph's Orphanage to the west. This tract, which was not recorded with the City and County until 1876, was laid out to intersect with the dominant street grid of the area with its constituent blocks platted in standard 25 by 100 foot "New York style" house lots. This tract comprises much of the western portion of the Town Center Activity Node within Area B (Figure 18).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Map of the Case Tract, South San Francisco, 1868.

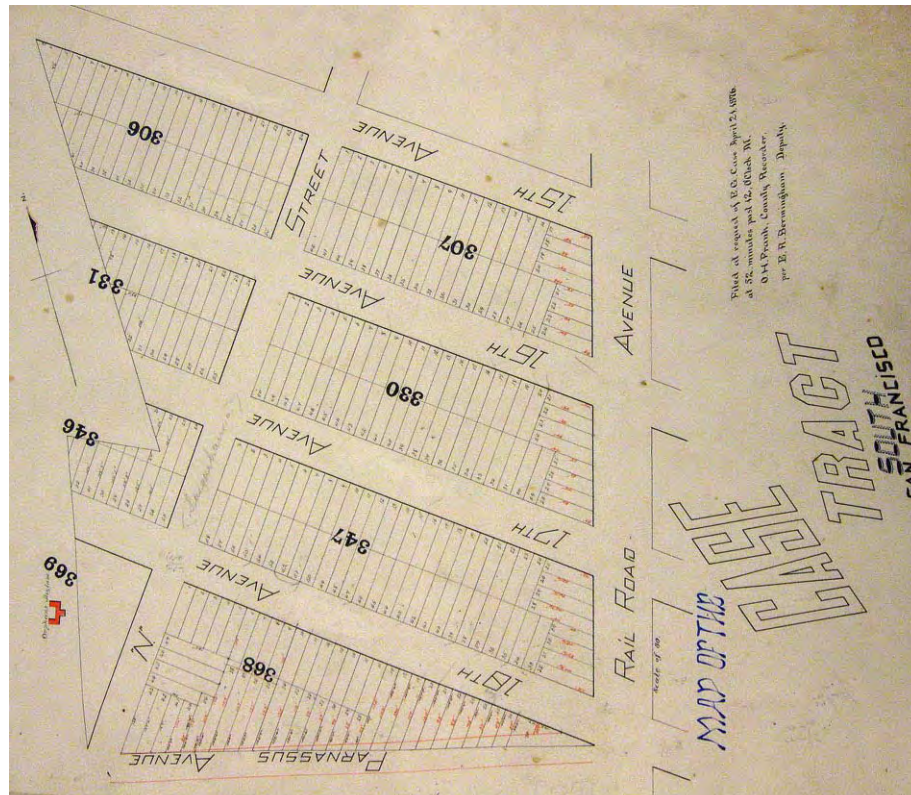


Figure 18. Case Tract, 1871
Note St. Joseph Orphan Asylum at lower left
Source: San Francisco Public Library

The next subdivision to be subdivided was the Bay Park Homestead Association, a tract bounded by Railroad Avenue to the west, 31st (Gilman) Avenue to the north, Griffith Street to the east, and 33rd (Ingerson) Avenue to the south. Surveyed in March 1870 by Julius H. Smith for Jess Rindleberger, president of the Bay Park Homestead Association, this small seven-block tract is now the Bret Harte neighborhood. It is presently located in the South Basin Activity Node within Area B of the Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan. This tract, which was recorded with the City and County of San Francisco in November 1870, featured standard 25 by 100 foot house lots and the streets were laid out to align with those of the adjoining Bayview Tract to the north.⁷⁹

Also surveyed and recorded in 1870 were the Garden Tract and Garden Tract Addition Homestead Associations. These two tracts, which were collectively bounded by Paul Avenue to the north, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the east, Salinas Avenue to the south, and San Bruno Avenue to the west, were surveyed by Julius Smith for F.B. Wilde, secretary of the Garden Tract Homestead Association, and recorded at the Assessor/Recorder's Office in November 1870. In regard to their layout, both tracts were subdivided in standard 25 by 100 foot house lots but unlike the earlier subdivisions, the Garden tracts did not conform to the dominant street grid. In contrast to its neighbors, the streets of the Garden Tract had streets that were aligned closer to the orthogonal points of the compass. In addition, their street names did not follow the standard

⁷⁹ Plan of the Bay Park Homestead Association, 1870.

convention of numbered east-west avenues and alphabetical north-south streets. Due to this idiosyncrasy, the Garden tracts remain readily distinguishable from the surrounding street grid.⁸⁰

In 1871, Henry F. Williams and F.B. Wilde (president and secretary, respectively, of the Paul Tract Homestead Association) hired William P. Humphreys to survey and lay out the streets of the Paul Tract, an irregular tract composed of two sections on either side of San Bruno Avenue. The tract on the east side of San Bruno Avenue was also bounded by 34th (Jamestown) Avenue to the northeast, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the southeast, and 39th Avenue (no longer extant) to the southwest. Similar to the Garden Tract Homestead Association, the Paul Tract was laid out as standardized 25 by 100 house lots but in contrast, its streets aligned with the dominant grid.⁸¹

The final major subdivision laid out in South San Francisco during the nineteenth century was Silver Terrace. As mentioned previously, J. S. Silver had subdivided a portion of his land in 1859. In 1873, he subdivided the rest, a tract bounded by Parnassus (Bayview) Street, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street), Williams Avenue, Thornton Avenue, Vermont (Mercury) Street, and Flora Street. Another section of the tract lay to the west; it was bounded by San Bruno Avenue to the west, Silver Avenue to the north, Nebraska Street to the east, and Thornton Avenue to the south. The tracts were recorded with the San Francisco Assessor/Recorder's Office in June 1873. In keeping with more recent subdivisions of the 1870s, Silver Terrace was laid out as 25 by 100 foot house lots although the streets did not align with the dominant grid of the district.⁸²

Charitable Operations: Mt. St. Joseph Orphanage and Magdalen Asylum

South San Francisco became a popular location to build charitable organizations, mostly due to it having large tracts of inexpensive land and relatively few neighbors to complain about institutional uses catering to poor and marginalized people. The largest and most well-known of these was the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum operated by the Daughters of Charity of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a charitable organization originally founded in France to help the poor. In 1852, the Daughters of Charity came to San Francisco to care for the large number of orphaned children. In 1867, the organization purchased 52 acres in South San Francisco and constructed a large wood-frame orphanage designed in the Second Empire style at the summit of Mt. St. Joseph. The 1886 Sanborn maps show a second building on the site designated for the care of orphaned infants; this building was originally the Magdalen Asylum for Wayward Girls, another institution operated by the Daughters of Charity. Capable of accommodating 300 orphans, the orphanage received its popular name from its location atop Mt. St. Joseph. Although it survived the 1906 Earthquake, the orphanage was destroyed by fire in 1910.⁸³ In 1911, a new brick orphanage designed by the architect Smith O'Brien was constructed on the site. This facility remained a working orphanage throughout the majority of the twentieth century, although the grounds were progressively resubdivided into smaller sections until the mid-1980s when the 1911 building was demolished to make way for a subdivision of townhomes.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Garden Tract and Garden Tract Addition Homestead Association Maps, 1870.

⁸¹ Map of the Lands of the Paul Tract Homestead Association, 1871.

⁸² Map Showing a Portion of Silver Terrace, 1873.

⁸³ "Asylum Rebuilding Creates Interest," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 6, 1911), 16.

⁸⁴ "Catholic Orphanage will be Built Anew," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 30, 1910), 4.

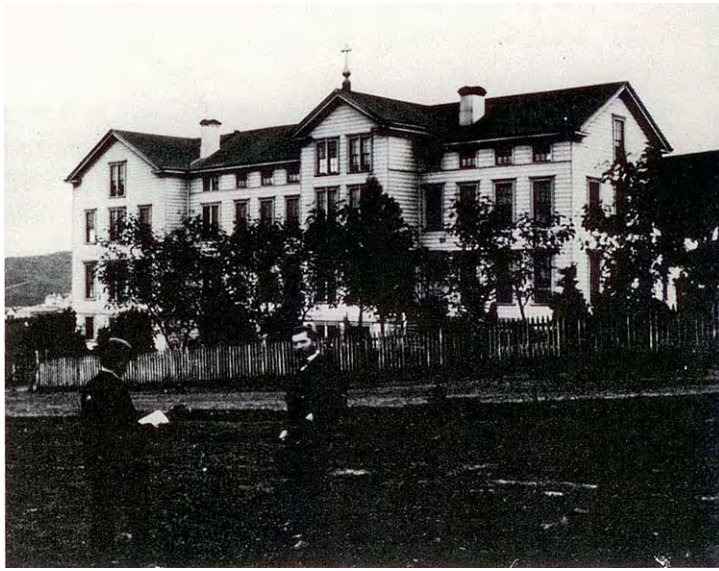


Figure 19. Magdalen Asylum, ca. 1868
Photograph by Eadweard Muybridge

Source: Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley

The other major charitable institution in the neighborhood was the Magdalen Asylum, a large wood-frame boarding home for “wayward girls” also operated by the Daughters of Charity. Built ca. 1867, the four-story wood-frame dormitory-style building appears in Muybridge’s 1868 photographs of the O’Neill & Haley Tract (**Figure 19**). It was located on Silver Avenue, near its intersection with Q (Quint) Street. Not much is known of this institution, although it appears that it was built around the same time as the Mt. St. Joseph Orphan Asylum on the eastern portion of the property. At some point

between 1882 and 1886, the Magdalen Asylum moved to Potrero Avenue and the building converted to the Infant Orphan Asylum. The building appears on the subsequent 1900 and 1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps. It occupied a portion of one of the first sections of the 52-acre Daughters of Charity tract to be sold off and it appears to have been demolished during the early 1940s to make way for a new phase of the Silver Terrace subdivision.

Resource Extraction: Chinese Establish Shrimp Camps at Hunters Point: ca. 1870

Beginning in the 1870s, we see the creation of small ad hoc communities focused on resource extraction in South San Francisco, particularly truck farming and fishing. Some of the first were camps built by Chinese shrimp fishermen. Chinese from Guangdong Province were initially lured to California by the promise of jobs on the Central Pacific Railroad. Upon completion of the railroad in 1869, Chinese immigrants fanned out across the West seeking employment in other industries. In San Francisco, Chinese immigrants soon came to dominate certain labor-intensive industries like cigar rolling, boot and shoe-making, and textile manufacturing. After raising enough capital, many Chinese opened their own businesses, such as laundries, restaurants, import-export businesses, and specialty businesses catering to other Chinese immigrants. Although they faced antagonism from many native and European-born Americans, Chinese began to move into various other extractive and agricultural businesses, including truck farming and fishing.

Within South San Francisco, Chinese shrimp camps began to appear in the early 1870s. Although Chinese fishermen established seasonal fishing camps all around San Francisco Bay, the most popular locations were China Camp near San Rafael, Point San Bruno and Point San Mateo in San Mateo County; and Potrero Point and Hunters Point in San Francisco. In 1882, historian John S. Hittell described the camps at Hunters Point:

They are divided into little camps, numbering from 12 to 40 men, each under a manager, who selects the fishing ground, directs the work, and determines how much of each daily catch is to be sent to the city and how much dried (for export). It is impossible to ascertain the average earnings, but they are

doubtless small. A funnel-shaped net, 30 feet long, with a mouth 18 feet wide, and meshes not more than half an inch in diameter, is set in water 20 to 25 feet deep when the tide begins to come in, and hoisted before the ebb. The average daily catch in that neighborhood is a ton and a half, for 200 fishermen, employed in 40 boats, with crews of 5 men each. The shrimps, when taken to shore, are boiled in weak brine for half an hour, when they are ready for the table.⁸⁵

The shrimp camps that housed the Chinese fisherman and their equipment were composed of rickety piers and rough wood shacks built of board and batten and covered with shingled roofs. They were sometimes perched on stilts along the shore. An architect described them in the July 23, 1893 *San Francisco Chronicle*:

Miserable things these villages are. Nothing but unpainted shanties, blackened by the weather and the sun. A three plank wharf sticks out seaward from the shore and inland from the planking is a platform with a long shelf or table, upon which the bearers that pack the fish from the junks to the shore dump the shrimps...⁸⁶



Figure 20. Chinese shrimp camp being burned, 1939
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

According to a map prepared by Roger A. Nash for the Chinese Historical Society of America, there were five Chinese shrimp camps at Hunters Point during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Four were located on the northern shore of Hunters Point. Three, including the Union Chinese Camp and two camps operated by a Fook on Look, were probably located near where Fairfax Avenue and Boalt Street once met. The other, which appears on Sanborn maps, was located on the block bounded by Evans Avenue, Ingalls Street, Fairfax Avenue and San

Francisco Bay. In 1910, the bag net used by the Chinese fishermen was outlawed, effectively putting an end to the industry. The redesign of the net in the 1920s caused a temporary resurgence of the industry but in 1939, the San Francisco Department of Health declared the camps unsanitary and ordered them burned.⁸⁷ Very little is known about the appearance of

⁸⁵ John S. Hittell, *The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast of North America* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Co., 1882), 366.

⁸⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 23, 1893).

⁸⁷ San Francisco Planning Department, Office of Major Environmental Analysis, *Candlestick Point-Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II Redevelopment Plan EIR* (San Francisco: 2009), III.J-15.

these camps, although several photographs show their destruction in 1939 (**Figure 20**).⁸⁸ There are no extant above-ground resources related to this context.

Resource Extraction: Freshwater Springs

As mentioned previously, the Hunters Point peninsula contains several freshwater springs, a rare and valuable commodity in semi-arid San Francisco. John Hunter was the first non-Ohlone settler to take advantage of these springs, harnessing them to irrigate his farm just north of the Bay View Park Racetrack. As early as 1855, Hunter began selling water for \$50 a month to the Independent Water Company of San Francisco. Daily supplies would be loaded onto boats and sent downtown. Hunter also sold water to ocean-going ships before they headed off to sea.⁸⁹



Figure 21. Albion Brewery, ca. 1925

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

Hearing of the year-round fresh water supplies at Hunters Point, English immigrant John Hamlin Burnell founded the Albion Ale and Porter Brewery in 1870. Born in 1849 in East Hoathly, Sussex, Burnell came to San Francisco via Vancouver, British Columbia in the late 1860s. After failing to make his fortune as a fur trader, he decided to establish a brewery in San Francisco that would make beer in “the English Tradition.” Large stocks of fresh water were necessary for Burnell’s undertaking and he found it in a natural outfall located at the corner of 9th (Innes) Avenue and G (Griffith) Street in the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association Tract. After acquiring a 75 by 100 lot, Burnell excavated tunnels deep into the hillside to increase the output. Above the tunnels he built a brewery out of

imported limestone and local “float rock” hewn from Candlestick Hill. In addition to the stone brewery, the facility originally featured fermenting kettles and malt mills. Following the death of John Burnell in 1890, his widow, brother and several nephews ran the brewery until 1919, when Prohibition took effect.⁹⁰ The buildings went to ruin until they were purchased by Adrien Voisin in 1938 and restored as a residence/art studio (**Figure 21**). The brewery building and tunnels are still extant at 881 Innes Avenue, within the Hunters Point Shoreline Activity Node in Area B. The former brewery is San Francisco Landmark No. 60.

Boat Builders’ Community Grows Up at Hunters Point: 1870-1906

Beginning around the same time as the Chinese shrimp camps and the Albion Brewery was a small enclave of boat yards and associated dwellings along the northern shoreline of the

⁸⁸ Roger and Nancy Olmsted, *San Francisco Bayside Historical Cultural Resource Survey*, (San Francisco: unpublished technical report prepared for the San Francisco Clean Water Program, April 1982), 123.

⁸⁹ San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, Case Report: “Hunter’s Point Springs and Albion Brewery, 881 Innes Avenue” (San Francisco: unpublished case report, approved October 17, 1973), 1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Hunters Point Peninsula facing India Basin. These boat yards, established by experienced English, Dutch, German, and Scandinavian immigrant boat builders, became an important mainstay of the area's economic and social landscape until the eve of the Second World War. Originally established at Steamboat Point, and gradually pushed south in advance of large scale industrial development along San Francisco's Central and Southern Waterfront, the boat builders settled upon India Basin because of its inexpensive lots with ample frontage on San Francisco Bay. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Hunters Point boatyards concentrated on the construction and repair of bay scow schooners, small shallow-draft sailing craft that were used to haul agricultural produce and manufactured goods back and forth from San Francisco to its hinterlands along the shoreline of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and their tributaries.

The San Francisco Bay Scow: 1860 – 1930

The precise origins of the San Francisco bay scow schooner are unknown. The sturdy, handcrafted sailing vessels were developed in direct response to the needs of the San Francisco Bay Region's economy and physical geography prior to the introduction of highways and motorized transportation during the early twentieth century.⁹¹ At a time when roads were poorly maintained or non-existent and railroads expensive, the waters of San Francisco Bay and its tributaries provided a cheap source of transportation for a variety of goods. Scow schooners navigated San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, the Carquinez Strait and the Sacramento Delta, and the rivers of the Central Valley, bringing farm produce – especially hay and construction supplies such as bricks and lumber – to San Francisco. The bay scows also transported manufactured goods from San Francisco back to the remote farms and communities of inland California.

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, as migrants from the eastern United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, Australia, and other parts of the world flocked to San Francisco, the need for reliable transportation continued to increase.⁹² Some of the Europeans arriving in San Francisco during this era possessed maritime carpentry skills. Aware that their skills were in demand, several immigrant boat builders set up shop in San Francisco. The expertise of these European shipwrights, particularly those from Northern Germany, Denmark, and England, was essential in the development of the design of the San Francisco bay scow.

There was no specific precedent to work from and designs of specific scows varied widely at first. However, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the prototypical shallow-draft bay scow had taken shape (**Figures 22 & 23**). A report on shipbuilding in the United States for the Tenth Census outlined the basic measurements and design of the San Francisco Bay scow schooner, indicating that they generally had a cargo capacity of around seventy tons.⁹³ Roger Olmsted, a prominent San Francisco scholar of maritime history and an expert on the development of the bay scow schooner, described the *Alma*, the National Historical Landmark scow schooner built at India Basin as "...a boxy scow, about as ordinary as they come. But it is her ordinariness that makes it so appropriate that she should represent this entire class of useful vessels that were the workboats of San Francisco Bay from the gold rush until the 1930s saw the advance of progress – primarily in the form of trucks – drive all but a few of the old scows to the boneyards along the shores of the bay."⁹⁴

⁹¹ Roger R. Olmsted, *Scow Schooners of San Francisco Bay, 1849-1949* (Cupertino, CA: California History Center, 1988).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.



Figure 22. Scow Jas. F. McKenna, ca. 1902
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph
Collection, San Francisco Public Library



Figure 23. Scow Wavelet, built in 1878 by J.
Dirks Source: San Francisco Maritime Museum
Library

According to Olmsted, the San Francisco bay scow, which was a specialty of the Hunters Point boatyards, was probably the most important sailing craft of the Bay Area's day-to-day economic life. One of their principle cargoes was hay. The nineteenth century moved on hay, much as the twentieth century moved on gasoline, and the hay trade was vital to the economy of urban areas, including San Francisco. The boatyards of Hunters Point were crucial participants in this economic web, building and maintaining the majority of scow schooners that plied the shallow waters and estuaries of the Bay from the 1860s through the first two decades of the twentieth century. Due to the shallow waters of the estuaries and sloughs of San Francisco Bay, the Delta, and the Central Valley, ships of greater draft could not reach the isolated farms and workshops of Northern California. Shallow-draft scows could go virtually anywhere and were therefore extremely useful in bringing products of the hinterlands, including wheat, hay, fruits and vegetables to San Francisco. Goods not consumed in San Francisco were then loaded on larger ocean-going vessels that would take the products of Northern California around the world.⁹⁵

Shipwrights Move to Hunters Point

San Francisco's bay scow builders followed the exodus of industry away from the more built-up portions of the city in the 1850s. Originally operating out of North Beach and Steamboat Point, San Francisco's family-run boatyards rarely had much capital, and consequently they were often outbid for choice sites by larger and better-financed shipyards. After departing from Steamboat Point, several future India Basin boatyards moved to Potrero Point in the 1860s. William Stone's yard was located on the corner of Illinois and Shasta streets and Johnson J. Dircks and John Mohr's yards were located at the corner of Texas and Marin streets.⁹⁶ Within a few years, these men were shouldered aside by well-capitalized industries such as Pacific Rolling Mills and later,

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Crocker-Langley Company, San Francisco City Directories (San Francisco: various years).

Union Iron Works. Consequently, San Francisco's small shipwrights began moving south to Islais Creek. In 1868, the Department of Health's designation of the creek as San Francisco's new Butchers' Reservation compelled the shipwrights to look even further south to escape this "great eyesore and olfactory offender."⁹⁷

In search of inexpensive waterfront land with water access for shipways and docks, the scow builders set their sights on the northern shoreline of the Hunters Point peninsula, then property of the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association. Although India Basin was shallow, this did not matter greatly to the boat builders, who mainly built shallow-draft bay scows. Upon relocating to Hunters Point, the immigrant shipwrights began building scows in this location for over 50 years without disturbance. Noting the concentration of family-run boatyards in the area, an article in the November 1869 edition of the *San Francisco Real Estate Circular* stated that "South San Francisco will undoubtedly be one of the most valuable locations for shipbuilding and manufacturing purposes in the county."⁹⁸ The boatyards that operated at India Basin were small-scale and tended to operate on the basis of informal verbal contracts. They were frequently home-based industries, with the boat builders' dwellings located among the boat lofts and storage sheds of the yards.

The first known boat builder to move to Hunters Point was Johnson J. Dircks. He established a boat yard at the corner of 5th (Evans) Avenue and L (Lane) Street in 1868. Not long after, in 1871, William Stone moved his yard from Potrero Point to 9th (Innes) Avenue, near G (Griffith) Street. In 1876, Dircks moved all of his operations to a site next to Stone's on 9th Avenue.⁹⁹ By 1880, Dircks' and Stone's sons began apprenticing to their fathers. The passing on of knowledge and craft was a common cultural practice among the boat-building families of India Basin; indeed most of the men who had migrated to the area had learned the craft from their fathers in Europe. The shipwrights in India Basin – Dircks, Stone, Siemer, and Anderson – passed on their craft to their native-born American sons, thereby developing a longstanding tradition of boatbuilding in the neighborhood that would last three generations.¹⁰⁰

According to the 1880 Census schedules, several of the first settlers in the boat builders' settlement at Hunters Point were English, including Albion Brewery's John Burnell and Reverend George E. Davis, a pioneer from London who moved to the corner of 8th (Hudson) Avenue and H (Hawes) Street in 1873. Other European immigrants who moved to Hunters Point in the 1860s and 1870s included Netherlands-born Johnson J. Dircks (1869), William Munder (1869), Hermann Metzendorf (1872), Edmund Munfrey (1875), and Fred Siemer (1886), all from Germany. Ireland contributed John McKinnon (1868) and James Pyne. Denmark was a primary source of boat builders, including O.F.L. Farenkamp (1877), Henry Anderson (1893), and Otto Hansen.¹⁰¹

In addition to Albion Brewery, there are three structures that date to the earliest era of wooden boat building at India Basin. One is located within the Hunters Point Shoreline Activity Node of Area B: the Stone House, built in 1873 at 911 Innes Avenue. The other two are located within Area C: the Dircks Residence, built ca. 1875 at 900 Innes Avenue (San Francisco Landmark No. 260) and a ca. 1893 shop located within the former Anderson & Cristofani boat yard near the

⁹⁷ City and County of San Francisco, *San Francisco Municipal Report* (San Francisco: 1867).

⁹⁸ *San Francisco Real Estate Circular* (November 1869).

⁹⁹ Crocker-Langley Company, San Francisco City Directories (San Francisco: various years).

¹⁰⁰ Roger R. Olmsted, *Scow Schooners of San Francisco Bay, 1849-1949* (Cupertino, CA: California History Center, 1988).

¹⁰¹ Crocker-Langley Company, San Francisco City Directories (San Francisco: various years). United States Census: 1880.

intersection of Innes Avenue and Griffith Street. An annotated photograph taken from the west side of India Cove sometime after 1900 shows the boat builders' community at Hunters Point as it appeared ca. 1900 (**Figure 24**).

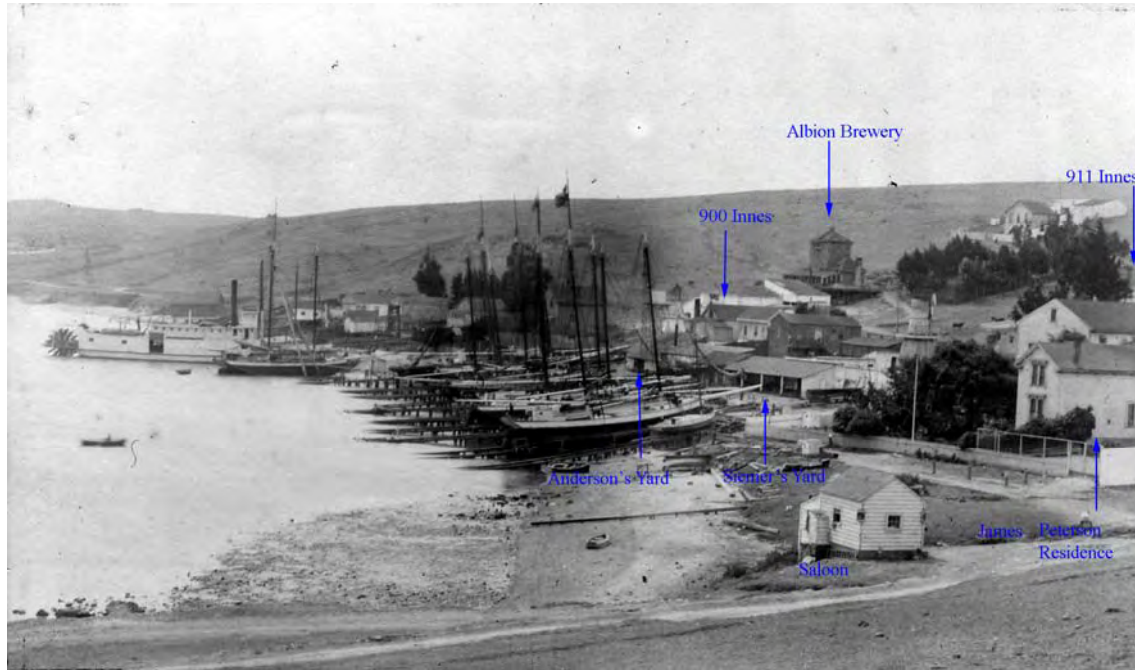


Figure 24. Boat builders' community at Hunters Point as it appeared ca. 1900
View toward east

Source: Collection of Ruth Siemer; annotated by KVP Consulting

Growth Causes Confusion: South San Francisco Street Names Changed: 1880

Ever since the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association was formed in the 1860s, the broader northwest-southeast avenues were numbered and the narrower northeast-southwest streets were designated by the letters of the alphabet. Unfortunately the western part of San Francisco then known as the "Park District" (today's Sunset, Parkside, and Richmond districts) used a similar system, with numbered north-south avenues and east-west streets named for the letters of the alphabet. Around 1880, the U.S. Postal Service petitioned the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to change the names of the streets in South San Francisco in order to avoid confusion. The Streets Commission thereby renamed the avenues in South San Francisco after exotic geographical locales, mostly islands and nations. Examples included Denmark (Burke), Bahama (Hudson), Servia (McKinnon), Teneriffe (Oakdale), Falkland (Palou) and Mauritius (Thomas) avenues. Meanwhile, the streets were named for American rivers, including Monongahela (Jennings), Platte (Lane), Tombigbee (Quint), and Potomac (Rankin) streets. Local residents never took kindly to the new names, finding them difficult to pronounce and most refused to use them in either conversation or for addressing correspondence. In September 1890, local residents successfully petitioned the Board of Supervisors to revert to the original nomenclature with the addition of the prefix "South" to distinguish between streets of the same name in South San Francisco and the Park District.¹⁰²

¹⁰² "South San Francisco Streets will be Renamed," *San Francisco Morning Call* (September 26, 1890), 7.

South San Francisco Snapshot: U.S. Coast Survey Map of 1883

The 1883 U.S. Coast Survey Map illustrates several changes that had occurred within South San Francisco since the last map was published in 1869. The 1883 map shows that the hillier and more remote portions of the district, particularly south of Teneriffe (Oakdale) Avenue and west of Railroad Avenue (3rd Street), as well as most of Hunters Point Ridge and Candlestick Hill remained undeveloped, with only a handful of farmhouses populating the Garden Tract, Paul Tract, Silver Terrace, and most of the Case Tract homestead associations. In contrast, the map shows that development lined much of Railroad Avenue between Islais Creek and Teneriffe Avenue, extending west of Railroad along Teneriffe and east of Railroad Avenue along the first three blocks of Honduras (Arthur), Denmark (Burke), Montenegro (Custer), Manila (Davidson), and St. Thomas (Evans) avenues. Other concentrations of buildings can be seen along the south shore of India Basin (the Hunters Point boat builders' community) on the site of the former Bay View Race Course within the Bay View Tract Homestead Association, and within the Bay Park Homestead Association. Larger institutional and industrial uses that can be identified on the map include Mount St. Joseph Orphanage, the Magdalen Asylum, Butchertown, and the California Dry Dock Company (**Figure 25**).

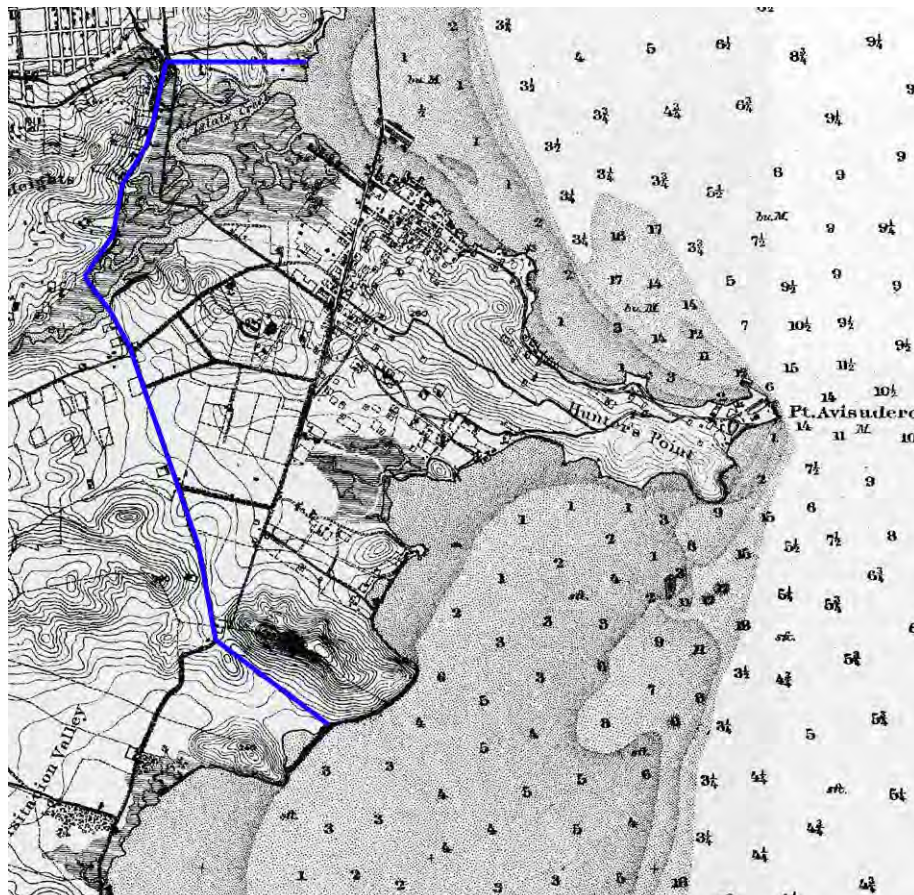


Figure 25. Bayview-Hunters Point, Coast Survey Map 1883
Source: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
Annotated by KVP Consulting

Improvements to Infrastructure: Gas, Water, Street-paving, and Rail Service: 1885-

As an isolated, semi-rural community inhabited primarily by working-class craftspeople, farmers, and fishermen, South San Francisco remained ill-served by infrastructure taken for granted by inhabitants of more affluent districts north of Market Street. In keeping with San Francisco's

nineteenth-century *laissez faire* business culture, nearly all utilities and transportation infrastructure were the responsibility of private, money-making corporations and not the municipality. Hence, if these companies did not think they would make a reasonable return on their investments, there was no incentive to build infrastructure in relatively out-of-the-way places like South San Francisco.

A good example of this semi-official neglect was the lack of rail service in South San Francisco throughout most of the nineteenth century. Although the Potrero & Bay View Railroad was supposed to provide horse car service from downtown as early as 1868, for two decades it stopped short at Islais Creek. From here passengers desiring to travel south into South San Francisco had to either walk or take a bone-jarring stage down the heavily rutted Railroad Avenue. The resulting lack of direct rail access delayed the development of most of the district for over two decades. In 1888, the South San Francisco Improvement Club (the earliest documented neighborhood association in the area) began meeting to strategize how to grade and macadamize Railroad Avenue to accommodate cable car service.¹⁰³

In October 1889, several men, including John H. Wise, I. Gutte, and several others, petitioned the Board of Supervisors to construct a street railway from 7th and Market streets to South San Francisco, ending at Railroad Avenue and Coreia (Innes) Avenue. This project does not seem to have gotten off the ground.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, within a year, the residents of South San Francisco threw a party at the newly completed South San Francisco Opera House in honor of the completion of the Omnibus Cable Company's line from 24th and Harrison to Railroad Avenue and Teneriffe (Oakdale) Avenue in South San Francisco. However, contemporary maps do not show this line; instead there appears to be only one line in the entire neighborhood, a horse car line extending partway down Railroad Avenue from Islais Creek to Thornton Avenue.¹⁰⁵

Similarly, neither water, nor sewers, nor gas, nor electricity were available to most of the district throughout much of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As a quasi-rural area, much of South San Francisco probably did not need urban infrastructure, especially because the area had ample water from streams and artesian wells. Nevertheless, the delay in providing services only slowed the pace of residential growth in the area. The earliest documented provision of utilities occurred in October 1886 when J.B. Crockett of the San Francisco Gas Company testified at a hearing of the Street Lights Committee that his company was in the process of laying 7,639 feet of gas pipe from Teneriffe (Oakdale) Avenue and Q (Quint) Street to San Bruno Road.¹⁰⁶

The earliest school in South San Francisco was the South San Francisco School, built in 1870 at the corner of Lane Street and Newcomb Avenue. A volunteer fire company was also organized that year, with a complement of 49 men.

Railroad Avenue Corridor: A Snapshot of South San Francisco in 1888

One of the best contemporary descriptions of South San Francisco during the nineteenth century can be found in an article entitled: "A Southern Suburb: A Flying Trip Made Through South San Francisco," published in the November 25, 1888 edition of the *San Francisco Morning Call*. Written from the perspective of a jaded local resident who thinks he has "seen it all," the trip to South San Francisco takes the form of an expedition to a heretofore unfamiliar part of the city via 4th Street, Kentucky Street, and Railroad Avenue. The section of the article devoted to South San

¹⁰³ "Effort to Macadamize Kentucky Street in South San Francisco," *Daily Alta California* (October 24, 1888).

¹⁰⁴ Petition for Railroad Franchise," *Daily Alta California* (October 6, 1889).

¹⁰⁵ "Banquet at the Potrero," *Daily Alta California* (May 16, 1890).

¹⁰⁶ "Light for South San Francisco," *Daily Alta California* (October 2, 1886).

Francisco begins at the Second Long Bridge where the writer had to disembark from the horse car and board a stage. The author then proceeded to describe the scenery as the stage headed south along Railroad Avenue. The author comments on the freshly painted cottages, groves of fir trees, and the impressive Roman Catholic orphanage crowning Mt. St. Joseph. The author also mentions "the imposing Catholic Church" and the "neat edifice in which the Presbyterians worship."¹⁰⁷

The first church referenced was All Hallows Catholic Church, which was built in 1886 to serve the neighborhood's growing Irish Catholic population, which originally worshipped in the chapel of the Mt. St. Joseph Orphan Asylum. This church still stands at 1440 Newhall Street. The second church was originally built in 1871 as the South San Francisco Methodist Episcopal Church (Figure 26). Later purchased by the Presbyterians and owned by several denominations since then, the building still stands at 15 Latona Street. All Hallows is located within the boundaries of the Town Center Activity Node of Area B. The latter church is located just outside the boundaries of Area B; it is now known as Pearlgate Tabernacle Church. Both continue to stand today with minimal alterations.

After leaving the more heavily built-up portion of South San Francisco behind, the author describes the belt of truck farms and dairies that occupied much of the former site of the Bay View Park racetrack in what is now the South Basin Activity Node of Area B:

...avoiding a stretch of marshy ground reaching to the edge of the bay, and a Sahara of sand dotted with here and there a dairy-house: entering Italian market gardens on the left, stocked with luxuriant vegetables, we followed a road winding toward the bay, and pausing to admire the surrounding prospect, agreed we had done well to go there.

Passing Dupont's powder magazine and wharf, espying a wreath of gorgeous flowers and orchard, and a multitude of poultry and pigeons, with other etceteras of a rural home, we found ourselves at the cottage marine residence of Mr. Partridge looking out on the peaceful waters of the bay. Further on a sandy and rocky beach appeared, so pleasant and attractive we pitied the many who have not knowledge or pluck enough for such a voyage of discovery and who never associate the name of South San Francisco with anything but slaughter-houses, desolate slums, a sugar refinery and a possible manufacturing quarter of the future.¹⁰⁸

Although not mentioned specifically in the article, the author would probably have noticed the recently completed South San Francisco Opera House, a local play house and community center that opened to the public on October 24, 1888 with a performance of John W. Sherman's

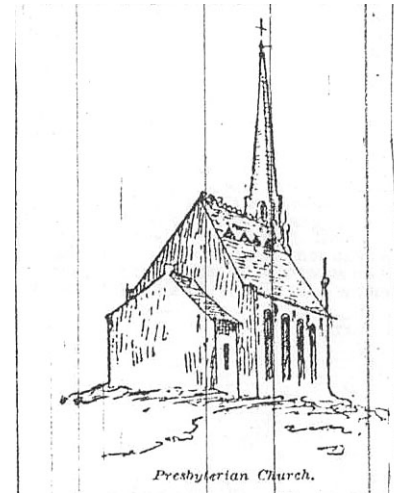


Figure 26. Bayview Presbyterian Church, 1888

Source: *San Francisco Morning Call* (November 25, 1888)

¹⁰⁷ "A Southern Suburb: A Flying Trip Made Through South San Francisco," *San Francisco Morning Call* (November 25, 1888).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Phantasma.¹⁰⁹ The South San Francisco Opera House still stands at 1601 Newcomb Avenue within the Town Center Activity Node of Area B. It is San Francisco City Landmark No. 8.

Butchertown: Economic Engine or Scourge? Expose of Butchertown: 1889

The above-quoted article provides many clues regarding the perceptions of South San Francisco among San Franciscans at large. Unable to attract much interest in housing development, early land speculators sold large tracts to institutional and industrial uses that would not be allowed in more densely populated or more prestigious parts of the city. Straddling Railroad Avenue, Butchertown marked the main entrance to South San Francisco. As such it was probably what most people thought of when they thought of South San Francisco. Butchertown's nasty stench and gruesome atmosphere probably deterred people of means from moving to South San Francisco, presumably sealing its fate as a working-class district.

Nonetheless, Butchertown provided jobs, and plenty of them. In addition to employing hundreds of workers in the slaughterhouses, the wholesale butchers collectively employed around 50 *vaqueros* –approximately half of whom were native-born, Spanish-speaking *Californios*. These *vaqueros*, or cowboys, were responsible for herding the livestock from the piers at the foot of 2nd Street, down 3rd Street and Kentucky Street, out to Butchertown. From there they either herded the livestock onto hillside pastures or into one of the several corrals located throughout the area. The *vaqueros* would herd the animals, once they were fattened and ready to slaughter, to the abattoirs built on pilings perched over Islais Creek. There the animals were butchered and their offal tipped into the creek to be flushed out into the bay.¹¹⁰

An article appearing in the January 1, 1889 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* describes Butchertown in extensive detail. The article, which appears to have written in response to criticism of the poor sanitation and squalor in Butchertown, adopts a sympathetic stance to the wholesale butchers. The article describes how the butchers had paid \$20,000 to build a new Second Long Bridge over Islais Creek and how they had also paved Railroad Avenue (although also acknowledging that the paving had since disintegrated). The article also provides a list of the companies doing business in Butchertown, a tally of their products, as well as woodcuts depicting the two major concentrations of Butchertown, including a row of gable-roofed abattoirs perched out over Islais Creek along 1st (Arthur) Avenue and a similar cluster along 5th (Evans) Avenue (**Figure 27**). The companies active in Butchertown at that time comprised most of the most important wholesale butchers in San Francisco, including Miller & Lux, Horn & Chapman, A.W. Shrader, Brown & Draper, Crummer & Hall, Welby & Judge, J.G. Johnson & Sons, M. Brandenstein, E. & H. Moffat, George & Gifford, Eugene Avy, and California Tallow Works.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ "South San Francisco Opera House Opens," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 24, 1888).

¹¹⁰ "Butchertown," *San Francisco Examiner* (November 12, 1888).

¹¹¹ "Butchertown: A Busy Section of San Francisco," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 1, 1889), 27.



Figure 27. Fifth Avenue, Butchertown
Source: *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 1, 1889).

In spite of the positive tone of the *Chronicle* article, Butchertown was evidently not as popular with many of its neighbors. Possibly in response to neighborhood complaints, in December 1889, City Attorney Fournoy drafted an ordinance to restrict the boundaries of Butchertown to an area bounded by 1st (Arthur) Avenue to the north, M (Mendell) Street to the east, 3rd (Custer) Avenue to the south, and Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the west.¹¹² Implementation of these boundaries would have dramatically curtailed the footprint of Butchertown and the ordinance was evidently not successful. The *Chronicle* quickly responded (again on the side of the butchers) in an editorial in the December 29, 1889 edition:

Butchertown has not a very savory reputation among the people of the city. The feeling is largely due to the efforts of sensational space writers who have gone journeying for something to write about and have by chance dropped upon defenseless Butchertown. The result was that any number of articles appeared descriptive of the manner of killing cattle, the obnoxious condition of the slaughterhouses and the filthy state of the pens and corrals. Much of this was untrue. Taking into consideration the nature of the business, there is not a cleaner place in the manufacturing portion of San Francisco.¹¹³

One year following the publication of the Butchertown pieces in the *Chronicle*, Butchertown caught fire and was partially destroyed in a conflagration that broke out at 1:30 AM in the stables of Horn & Chapman at Honduras (Arthur) Avenue and Railroad Avenue (3rd Street). The fire, which destroyed \$20,000 worth of property, quickly burned the stable and several adjoining buildings along Honduras Avenue.¹¹⁴

Although the destroyed zone of Butchertown was quickly rebuilt, local residents and other San Franciscans lobbied to have it closed down as a “menace to health.” In October 1895, the City Health Inspector Lovelace paid a visit to Butchertown and found incredibly unsanitary conditions. The inspector criticized the practice of dumping the offal directly into Islais Creek, stating: “...at low tide the stench which arise from the mud flats exposed to the sun’s rays and which are a mass of putrid and decaying animal and vegetable mater, is beyond the possibility of description.” In his report Inspector Lovelace stopped short of recommending the closure of Butchertown. Rather, he recommended halting the practice of disposing offal into the creek, moving secondary production associated with the slaughterhouses outside the city, and building sewer lines into the neighborhood.¹¹⁵

¹¹² “Slaughterhouses and Tanneries,” *Daily Alta California* (December 14, 1889).

¹¹³ “Butchertown,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 29, 1889).

¹¹⁴ “The Butchertown Fire,” *Daily Alta California* (June 1, 1890).

¹¹⁵ “Butchertown As a Menace to Health,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 9, 1895), 7.

In addition to the stench and pollution, the filth being dumped into Islais Creek had the effect of blocking the channel, allowing silt to build up further upstream. Originally navigable for some distance, by 1900, the Nuevo Potrero Improvement Club presented a petition to the Board of Supervisors to request that the creek be dredged, allowing boats to continue picking up and discharging cargo as far as what is now the intersection of Oakdale Avenue and Quint Street.¹¹⁶

There are now no known above-ground remnants of the original Butchertown located within the Bayview-Hunters Point district or Area B. Destroyed during the 1906 Earthquake and rebuilt afterward, nearly all of the post-1906 Butchertown was cleared away in the 1970s as part of the construction of India Basin Industrial Park.

New Immigrants: Farming Takes Off in South San Francisco: 1888

Census records provide anecdotal information on the ethnic makeup of South San Francisco residents during the late nineteenth century. In addition to listing the birthplace of current residents, the census schedules also record the birthplace and native tongue of their parents. However, overall statistical breakdowns of the white population are not provided. Nonetheless, an examination of census schedules from 1880 reveal that the vast majority of the population of the area consisted of native-born Americans of European ancestry and European-born persons of Northern European origin, including England, Germany, Ireland, and the Scandinavian nations. The largest non-white populations consisted of Chinese immigrants employed as fishermen in the shrimp camps of Hunters Point.

By the 1890s, however, the ethnic makeup of South San Francisco's white population began to change as an influx of Southern European immigrants began to stream into the neighborhood, including immigrants from Italy, Portugal, and Malta, most of whom took up farming, and French meat packers and tanners. An article in the November 17, 1889 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* mentions that immigrants from these three nations were gradually supplanting Chinese immigrants in the market gardening and dairy businesses of South San Francisco, particularly along San Bruno Avenue and in the Bayview Tract. Due to its sheltered location, generally good soils, and temperate climate, the area gained the reputation as being the best area in San Francisco in which to farm. The market gardeners – so-called because they grew vegetables and fruits for sale at the local San Francisco Produce Market – irrigated their crops with water pumped by windmill from underground aquifers and artesian springs. Popular crops included broccoli, asparagus, celery, carrots, radishes, leeks, potatoes, etcetera. An article in the November 17, 1889 *Chronicle* describes the market gardens of South San Francisco:

The Italian market gardens are chiefly located along the San Bruno Road, in the San Miguel Ranch, along the borders of the Presidio Reservation, and in South San Francisco. There are a few small gardens operated by the Chinese in the neighborhood of Black Point and between South San Francisco and Hunters Point. Where once the Chinese were the commonest sight with their vegetable baskets swung on poles, going from house to house, or pushing their carts heading for the market places, now they have been crowded out by the Italians and the Portuguese who have bought larger and larger plots of land. Like the Chinese, the Italian laborers in the local gardens are content with a little – so far as their wages are concerned. Most of these men live on the scene of their daily

¹¹⁶ "Wants Islais Creek Kept Open," *San Francisco Call* (August 9, 1900).

toil in light shanties, part of which is devoted to the storage of root crops and seeds, and the remainder to the domestic uses of the family.¹¹⁷

However, what the author failed to mention is that the Italians and the Portuguese, while content to live on little, could at least own land, unlike Chinese immigrants who were prohibited from doing so.

The market gardens of South San Francisco lived on for many years, dominating large sections of the area well into the twentieth century. Even today, there are a handful of greenhouses and until recently a small farm located above the Caltrain tracks on the block bounded by Thornton Avenue, Reddy Street, Williams Avenue, and Diana Street.

Institutionalized Racism: San Francisco Business and Political Leaders Propose Moving Chinatown to South San Francisco

Not only were Chinese immigrants forbidden from owning property, but they were also largely prohibited from living outside of designated Chinatowns throughout the West. San Francisco's Chinatown, a densely packed nine-square block enclave just west of Portsmouth Square, occupied what was originally the central business district of San Francisco. In 1890, Supervisor Bingham introduced an ordinance that would expel the Chinese from Chinatown and relocate its residents to Hunters Point.¹¹⁸ Although the ordinance was eventually struck down in court, schemes to remove San Francisco's Chinese populace to Hunters Point resurfaced over the next two decades. In October 1900, new plans submitted by John Partridge, secretary of the California Geographical Society, proposed working with the Six Companies in Chinatown to establish a Chinese homestead association which would purchase unsubdivided land in Hunters Point and build an "Oriental City" that would be owned and controlled by its residents. This plan, like others before and after it, failed to attract the support of San Francisco's Chinese population.¹¹⁹

1901 Coast Survey Map: A Snapshot of South San Francisco in 1901

A comparison of the 1883 and the 1901 Coast Survey maps reveal few significant changes in the 18-year interval between the two maps. The majority of the major streets and avenues that appear on the 1883 map remain the same, including Railroad Avenue, which appears to have a street railway line on it running at least as far south as Thornton Avenue. Also visible are Silver Avenue, Thornton Avenue, Paul Avenue, 15th (Oakdale) Avenue South (also known as the Bay View Turnpike), as well as the three unnamed roads connecting the California Dry Dock Company facility with Railroad Avenue. Also unchanged from the 1883 maps are the locations of the Mt. St. Joseph Orphan Asylum and the former Magdalen Asylum. Similar to 1883, the most densely built-up portions of the district were clustered along Railroad Avenue between 1st (Arthur) Avenue South and 15th (Oakdale) Avenue South, including Butchertown and several additional concentrations of housing located along the first blocks east of Railroad Avenue and the first two blocks west of Railroad between 6th (Fairfax) Avenue South and 15th (Oakdale) Avenue South. To this day, this area (mostly concentrated within the Town Center Activity Node) contains most of the oldest Victorian-era housing stock. Notable examples from this era include the Sylvester House at 1556 Revere Avenue (San Francisco Landmark No. 61), the Quinn House at 1562 McKinnon Avenue (San Francisco Landmark No. 63), as well as several other clusters of Italianate, San Francisco Stick, and Queen Anne style cottages and dwellings located throughout the area.

¹¹⁷ *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 17, 1889).

¹¹⁸ "The Bingham Order," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 19, 1890), 12.

¹¹⁹ "Plans a New Chinatown," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 6, 1900), 7.

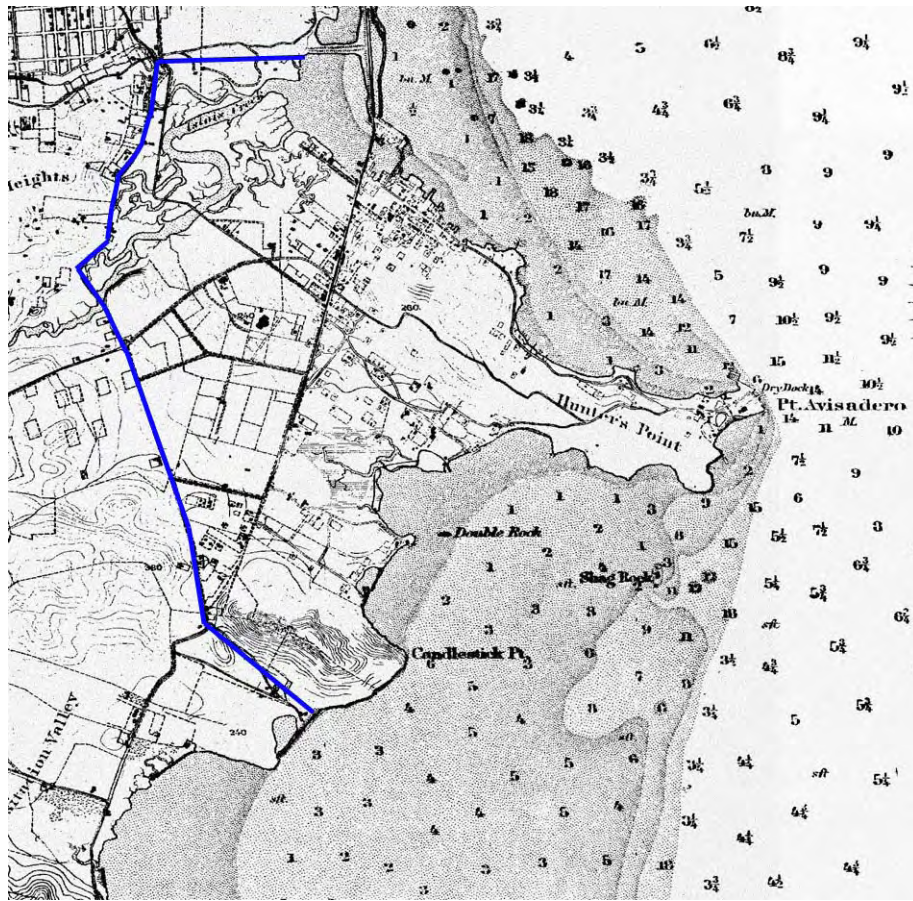


Figure 28. Bayview-Hunters Point, Coast Survey Map 1901
Source: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
Annotated by KVP Consulting

The biggest differences between the 1883 and 1901 Coast Survey maps include the greater density of residential construction within the Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) corridor, more market garden/truck farms in the Bayview, Bay Park (Bret Harte), and Paul Tracts, and evidence that preliminary filling activity was underway in the shallow mouth of Islais Creek, in particular to build the Western Pacific Railroad freight terminal at the eastern end of Army Street (Cesar Chavez Boulevard) (Figure 28).

1899-1900 Sanborn Maps

The 1899-1900 Sanborn maps that cover South San Francisco illustrate the built fabric of the district in more detail than the Coast Survey maps, identifying the uses, construction materials, and footprints of all buildings, structures, and general physical characteristics of the district. The Sanborn maps illustrate an increasingly built-up node (particularly along Railroad Avenue) with hundreds of one and two-story wood-frame dwellings located along the numbered avenues in fairly heavy concentrations within two blocks of either side of Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) between 5th (Evans) Avenue South and 15th (Oakdale) Avenue South, most of it within the Town Center Activity Node. This development spanned parts of the O'Neill & Haley Tract, the South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association, the Case Tract, Silver Terrace, and the Bay View Tract. Based on their diverse footprints, most of the dwellings in this area appear to have been built by individual homeowners as primary residences and not as speculative housing,

which often appears as clusters of dwellings with identical footprints. Nevertheless, there are also some rows of identical cottages and duplexes, as well as some tenements, most of which were presumably built on speculation as rental property for local industrial workers.

The 1899-1900 Sanborn maps continue to illustrate open fields, cattle corrals, and some vegetable gardens interspersed among the dwellings of South San Francisco. The areas platted as in larger 75 by 100 lots in the old South San Francisco Homestead & Railroad Association tract east of Railroad Avenue display slightly lower densities. Some of these lots appear to have been in use as small farmsteads, with stables, tank houses, and other rural-type outbuildings. In other cases these larger “garden” lots appear to have been subdivided into smaller 25 by 100 house lots and developed with single-family dwellings and multiple-family tenements. Today the residential blocks on either side of 3rd Street between Hudson and Palou avenues contain dozens of well-preserved Victorian era dwellings, including several rural-type farmhouses, such as 1510 and 1548 Palou Avenue.

South of 15th (Oakdale) Avenue South, the blocks of the Bay View, Bay Park (Bret Harte), Paul Tract, and Garden Tract take on a rural feel, with on average only two or three dwellings per block. The Sanborn maps label much of this area as being cultivated by market gardeners or in use as pasture for local dairies. A handful of Victorian farmsteads remain throughout this area.

The 1899-1900 Sanborn maps also identify several industrial districts within South San Francisco. Butchertown, by then bounded by Islais Creek to the north, K (Keith) Street to the east, 6th (Fairfax) Avenue South to the south, and Islais Creek to the west, had clearly grown beyond its original boundaries, particularly as affiliated businesses dependent on processing animal byproducts such as glue, fertilizer, soap and tallow, and leather began to move to the area. The heart of Butchertown was still 5th (Evans) Avenue South, with another major concentration along 1st (Arthur) Avenue South. From these two areas, the slaughter houses, rendering plants, tanneries, etcetera radiated out in all directions, although most were sited on or near Islais Creek so that they could dump their waste products into the water. In terms of design, most were gable-roofed wood sheds built atop piers and wharves jutting out over the water, with dozens of outbuildings and structures, including corrals, water tanks, stables, sheds, blacksmiths' shops, and various structures built to house specialized functions. In addition to the two major concentrations of butchers, some of the biggest animal processing plants included the Leggallet & Hellwig Tanning Company at 6th (Galvez) Avenue South and P (Phelps) Street (no longer extant), the California Tallow Works at 1230 5th (Evans) Avenue South (no longer extant); Bayle, Lacoste & Company's California Fertilizer Works at 5th (Evans) Avenue South and M (Mendell) Street (no longer extant); and the South San Francisco Tannery at 6th (Galvez) and R (Rankin) Street (no longer extant). There was also a concentration of glue works located along San Francisco Bay in the Bayview Tract. No above-ground remnants of these plants are known to exist today within the Bayview-Hunters Point district or Area B.

The 1899-1900 Sanborn maps indicate that wood boat building and ship repair were still important industries in South San Francisco. The most notable concentrations include Henry “Pop” Anderson's boat yard at 9th (Innes) Avenue South and G (Griffith) Street and the California Dry Dock Company at the eastern end Hunters Point. Remnants of these shipyards remain today, including a shop at 894 Innes Avenue and the graving dock and brick power house and shop at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

Other industries not related to meatpacking or shipbuilding included the Albion Brewery at 837-39 9th Avenue South (extant), and the California Fireworks Company plant at 16th (Palou) Avenue South and L (Lane) Street (no longer extant).

In addition to the residential industrial resources described above, South San Francisco had developed a mixed-use linear commercial district along Railroad Avenue (3rd Street), reaching from the southern edge of Butchertown at 7th (Galvez) Avenue South to the then southern edge of the built-up area at 17th (Quesada) Avenue South. Consisting mainly of one and two-story, wood-frame buildings with commercial space – usually housing stores, restaurants, or saloons – on the first floor and flats above, remaining examples of this nineteenth-century building type are often designed in the Italianate style. Other commercial buildings were mixed in with Butchertown, presumably providing food, services, and entertainment to the laborers who worked there. Today 3rd Street has several examples of mix-use public buildings that survive from this era, including 4408-42, 4742, and 4702-04 3rd Street.

The 1899-1900 Sanborn maps reveal very few public, civic, religious, or institutional uses in South San Francisco. The maps reveal several religious buildings mentioned earlier, including Memorial Presbyterian Church at 15 Latona Street and All Hallows Roman Catholic Church at 1715 Oakdale Avenue, both of which still exist in nearly their original appearance. The only two civic buildings in the area depicted on the maps are the Burnett School, at the southwest corner of 14th (Newcomb) Avenue South and L (Lane) Street (no longer extant); the Buford Free Kindergarten, near the southwest corner of 15th (Oakdale) Avenue and L (Lane Street) (no longer extant); and San Francisco Fire Department Fire Engine House No. 11 at 1634 15th (Oakdale) Avenue South (no longer extant).

Continued Industrialization of South San Francisco: 1900-1906



Figure 29. San Francisco Dry Dock, ca.1920
Dry Dock No. 2 on left and Dry Dock No. 1 on right
Source: California Historical Society

Although transit access to South San Francisco had improved somewhat during the last decade of the nineteenth century, it was still basically limited to one line down running partway down Railroad Avenue (3rd Street). Even though access had improved, the presence of the slaughterhouses and affiliated industries had diminished the desirability of South San Francisco as a residential district. According to contemporary census records most of the residents of the area worked in local industries and did not commute elsewhere, making South San Francisco an

informal company town consisting primarily of manual laborers of various origins who lived in the area because they worked in the local slaughterhouses, shipyards, breweries, and truck farms.¹²⁰ In addition to having a thriving industrial base of its own, South San Francisco was solidly within the path of expansion of heavy industry then coalescing around the Potrero Waterfront on the north side of Islais Creek, including Union Iron Works, Pacific Rolling Mills, Atlas Iron Works, Western Sugar Refinery, Tubbs Cordage Company, San Francisco Gas & Electric Company, the Western Pacific Railroad, and many others. Furthermore, the Southern

¹²⁰ United States Census, 1900.

Pacific Railroad was then beginning to formulate plans to establish a new rail line and maintenance yard in the area.

One of the first industries to begin expanding in the area was shipbuilding. The California Dry Dock Company had existed since the 1860s. Despite the size of the dry dock, the facility had continued to operate as fairly small-scale facility throughout much of the nineteenth century, completing mainly private repair contracts. According to the 1899-1900 Sanborn maps, the California Dry Dock Co. consisted of little more than its original graving dock, pump house and boiler room, and a long wooden shed. The rest of the site was occupied by the Alaska Codfish Company's packing and curing operations. The Spanish-American War of 1898 led to the enlargement of the U.S. Navy's Pacific and Asiatic Squadrons (later combined as the Pacific Fleet in 1907), resulting in a larger Navy presence on the West Coast. In 1903, anticipating a growing number of Navy contracts, the San Francisco Dry Dock Company (successor to the California Dry Dock Company) constructed a second dry dock (Dry Dock No. 2) south of the original Dry Dock No. 1 (**Figure 29**). Dry Dock No. 2 was also a graving dock excavated from the impermeable bed rock of Hunters Point Ridge.¹²¹ The dry dock was completed in 1903, accommodating its first large battleship, the U.S.S. Ohio, on January 29, 1903.¹²²

The Southern Pacific Railroad was the other major industry to drastically expand its operations in South San Francisco in the years leading up to the 1906 Earthquake. The arrival of the competing Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe and Western Pacific railroads in San Francisco around 1900 provided a major impetus for the Southern Pacific's long-delayed improvements to its local track network. In 1904, the Southern Pacific embarked upon a colossal project called the Bayshore Cutoff. The project, which was completed in 1907, consisted of building a direct line along the

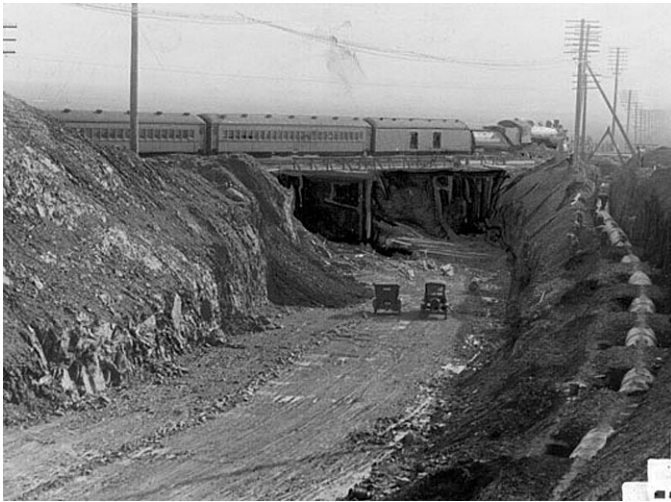


Figure 30. Bayshore Cutoff, ca. 1910

Location unknown, possibly Jerrold Avenue undercrossing
Source: San Francisco Historic Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

western shore of San Francisco Bay from San Bruno to the railroad's main terminal at 4th and Townsend streets in San Francisco. The new line was more direct than the old Colma Valley/San Jose Avenue line and sped up service to the Peninsula and San Jose. The project involved blasting and filling a causeway across San Mateo County's Visitacion Bay and building a massive new freight yard and maintenance facility in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley neighborhood and the adjoining San Mateo County community of Visitacion City (now Brisbane). A new partially below-grade alignment funneled trains through trenches and tunnels from the Visitacion Valley

yard to the Southern Pacific's main terminal at 4th and Townsend streets. This leg tunneled beneath Silver Terrace Hill and the eastern arm of Potrero Hill, emerging near the corner of

¹²¹ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of Hunters Point Shipyard, Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, 2000), 3-134.

¹²² Ibid.

Mariposa Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.¹²³ Within what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district, the project required tunneling under hills and constructing viaducts to maintain continuous grade separation between the new Bayshore line and local streets. In addition, the railroad built a 4,110 bridge/viaduct over the Islais Creek Estuary. This undated photograph shows one of these viaducts, possibly Jerrold Avenue not long after its completion (**Figure 30**).

The Western Pacific Railroad was also quite active within the northern portion of the Bayview-Hunters Point district during this time. On January 25, 1905, George Jay Gould announced his company's plans to extend the new Western Pacific Railway from Salt Lake City to San Francisco. In a press release, Gould stated that the Western Pacific Railway had purchased a right-of-way in San Francisco that would begin at the company's proposed car ferry terminal at Islais Creek, tunnel beneath Potrero Hill, and terminate at the company's proposed freight and passenger terminal at 7th and Brannan streets.¹²⁴ Beginning around 1905, the Western Pacific began filling in its submerged water lots on the north side of Islais Creek, constructing a jetty and freight slip into San Francisco Bay east of Illinois Street along 26th Street. By 1942, the fill had advanced as far south as Army Street (Cesar Chavez Boulevard). Part of this area became used as the San Francisco garbage dump, and evidently much of the area was filled using garbage. Several structures were built in the area, including several railroad buildings and other associated with the dump. These structures were destroyed when Pier 80 was built in the early 1960s.¹²⁵

Early Possible Settlement by African Americans in South San Francisco: 1906

As discussed above, the population of South San Francisco throughout the nineteenth century remained primarily Caucasian – both native-born and immigrant – of northern and southern European origin. In addition to European Americans, there were small communities of Latino *vaqueros* (who were classified by the U.S. census as white) and Chinese shrimp fishermen. Census records record only a few African Americans.

One of the earliest possible communities of African Americans in what is now Bayview-Hunters Point may have gotten its start in the months leading up to the 1906 Earthquake. According to an article in the February 22, 1906 edition of the *San Francisco Call*, Reverend James H. Kelley (**Figure 31**), pastor of the Third Baptist Church on Powell Street (at Bush), set up an organization called the Home Builders Association to buy and develop land in outlying neighborhoods of San Francisco for African Americans. Operating on a similar principle



Figure 31. Pastor James H. Kelley

Source: *San Francisco Call*
(February 22, 1906)

¹²³ "Will Shorten Line to South: Ordinance Granting Track Privileges for the Bay Shore Route to be Passed," *San Francisco Call* (August 14, 1904). San Francisco Planning Department (N. Moses Corrette), *Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record: "Bayshore Cutoff Tunnels No. 1 & 2"* (San Francisco: March 26, 2001).

¹²⁴ "Soon to Begin Gould Road: Western Pacific Railway will Start Actual Construction within Two Months," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 26, 1905), 9.

¹²⁵ Federal Transit Administration – U.S. Dot and City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, *Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report for the Third Street Light Rail Project* (San Francisco: 1998), 4-46.

as the homestead association, members would make regular payments to become fully vested in the association, after which point they were entitled to acquire a plot of land. The association would then complete the real estate transaction and assist with the planning and building of a dwelling on the lot. According to Kelley, "It has not been the desire of the promoter to colonize, but rather to locate his people at different parts of the city's outskirts."¹²⁶ In addition to outlying land being cheaper, Kelley contended that San Francisco's African Americans had a difficult time finding suitable accommodations near the center of the city, stating: "(African Americans were)...living in condemned homes, for which they are paying an enormous rent, and in numerous cases they are made to pay more than is asked of the white man."¹²⁷ According to Kelley the association had acquired dozens of lots in the outlying parts of the city, including the Richmond, Ingleside, and South San Francisco districts. Unfortunately, nothing follows this story in the local newspapers, and it is unknown if the organization was successful in its mission.

Earthquake! 1906 Earthquake in San Francisco



Figure 32. Destruction at Butchertown
Source: Collection of Theodore White

On April 18, 1906, a major earthquake with a magnitude of approximately 8.3 on the Richter scale hit Northern California, causing thousands of deaths and creating a swath of destroyed and damaged buildings from Pt. Arena to Salinas. Filled areas, including former creek beds and inlets, were especially hard hit, causing a significant amount of damage within the South of Market, Mission Bay, and Islais Creek areas. The filled areas of South San Francisco suffered heavily with most of the slaughterhouses along 1st (Arthur) Avenue South and 5th (Evans) Avenue South wrecked and the South San Francisco Tannery slipped off its foundations on 6th (Fairfax) Avenue South (**Figure 32**). At the San Francisco Dry Dock Company yard, the chimney on the boiler room cracked. In

addition, one house on 1st Avenue slid into the bay, killing its occupant. Filled lands aside, the 1906 Earthquake was reported to have caused relatively little damage in South San Francisco. First, the substantial bedrock beneath much of the district mitigated the effects of the temblor and second, the fires that devastated so much of the city center were stopped miles away from South San Francisco.¹²⁸

In the aftermath of the earthquake, hundreds of refugees made their way to largely undamaged South San Francisco to seek refuge. The *San Francisco Call* reported that "Kentucky street and Railroad avenue, which were crowded with refugees for several days after the shake, are now

¹²⁶ "Negroes to Locate in Rural Outskirts," *San Francisco Call* (February 22, 1906).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ "Damage is Quite Small South of Channel Street," *San Francisco Call* (May 31, 1906).

deserted.”¹²⁹ The article also mentioned that the San Francisco Fire Department’s Engine House No. 11 was in good condition, one of a minority of fire houses that had escaped destruction. The Burnett School also survived needing only \$141.59 worth of repairs to bring it back into service.¹³⁰ In the immediate aftermath of the quake, the combined Potrero and South San Francisco districts were patrolled by U.S. Army Company A, stationed on Kentucky (3rd) Street between 21st and 22nd streets.

Many earthquake refugees whose homes had been destroyed in the burned parts of the city sought shelter in South San Francisco, which had ample open space to set up temporary encampments. According to the San Francisco Red Cross and Relief Corporation, 14,896 earthquake refugees took up residence in District VI, which included the Potrero and South San Francisco districts, as well as parts of Bernal Heights and the Outer Mission. This was the second-highest figure of all seven relief districts, although there were only two official relief camps: Camp 10 in the Potrero district and Camp 23 in Bernal Park, neither of which were located in what is now Bayview-Hunters Point. According to anecdotal evidence, many refugees in South San Francisco were either taken in by local residents or set up temporary encampments at the San Francisco Dry Dock Company.¹³¹ After the disaster, some new residents hauled the temporary wood refugee cottages (nicknamed earthquake shacks) from the official Red Cross camps and set one or more up on inexpensive lots in outlying parts of San Francisco. South San Francisco was no exception and there are several potential refugee shacks within the Town Center Activity Node, such as 1758 La Salle Avenue, 1524 Newcomb Avenue, 1759 Newcomb Avenue, and 1631 Palou Avenue.

E. INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT: 1907-1929

Industrial Development: Bethlehem Steel Purchases San Francisco Dry Dock Company in 1908

The completion of Dry Dock No. 2 in 1903 increased capacity of the San Francisco Dry Dock Company, attracting the interest of outside capitalists and the U.S. Navy. In May 1908, the Navy’s Great White Fleet, under the leadership of Rear Admiral Sperry, called on San Francisco on its round-the-world journey. While in San Francisco, the *U.S.S. Maine* and *Alabama*, two dreadnought-era battleships, needed to be serviced. Unfortunately, they could not access the Navy’s Mare Island base because the water was too shallow. Instead, the two battleships were taken to the private San Francisco Dry Dock Co.’s facility at Hunters Point where they were easily accommodated. This event first attracted the Navy’s interest in acquiring the facility, although this would not actually happen until 1939.¹³²

In 1908, Charles M. Schwab, acting on behalf of the Bethlehem Steel Company, purchased the San Francisco Dry Dock Company for \$1,875,000. Bethlehem Steel had recently purchased also the nearby Union Iron Works at Potrero Point, and Schwab initially planned to sell the Union Iron Works facilities to the Western Pacific and consolidate all of its shipbuilding and repair operations at Hunters Point. An article in the November 12, 1908 *San Francisco Call* describes the extent and appearance of Bethlehem Steel’s new Hunters Point facility in 1908, which by that time included three floating dry docks and two permanent graving docks.¹³³ When Bethlehem Steel purchased the San Francisco Dry Dock Company, it spanned ten acres and was the

¹²⁹ “Damage is Quite Small South of Channel Street,” *San Francisco Call* (May 31, 1906).

¹³⁰ Office of the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, *San Francisco Earthquake and Fire: 1906* (San Francisco: Board of Supervisors, 1906), 716.

¹³¹ San Francisco Relief Corporation, “Map of San Francisco,” 1906.

¹³² Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Committee and San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Long Range Planning/Technical Advisory Staff, *Bayview-Hunters Point Community Revitalization Concept Plan* (San Francisco: March 2002), 23.

¹³³ “Hunters Point Drydock Merged with Union Iron Works: Schwab Pays \$1,875,000 for Plant and Aims to Build Greatest Shipyard,” *San Francisco Call* (November 12, 1908), 2.

largest ship repair facility on the West Coast. Schwab planned to further expand the facility to that it could accommodate five battleships at one time. Workers at the dry docks either lived on company property or in boarding houses located just outside the company gates.

Industrial Development: Butchertown Courted by New City of South San Francisco

The 1906 Earthquake rendered much of Butchertown useless. The temblor wrecked the pilings upon which most of the slaughterhouses stood and destroyed many of the flimsily built outbuildings and corrals. Faced with having to reconstruct Butchertown, some of the companies based in the area began making plans to move elsewhere where opposition from neighboring residences was less intense and transportation facilities superior. Two years after the disaster, the newly incorporated City of South San Francisco (formerly known as Baden) in nearby northern San Mateo County passed a resolution formally inviting Butchertown to move to their city, promising to build new abattoirs on city-owned land at Pt. San Bruno.¹³⁴ Although some companies did move, other longtime San Francisco meatpackers like Miller & Lux, as well as allied firms like Bayle LeCoste's Tripe Works, San Francisco Tallow Works, and the Legallet-Hellwig-Norton tanneries stayed put rather than become associated with the new city of South San Francisco, which was in reality a company town built by and for the much-hated Chicago meat trusts, in particular Armour.¹³⁵

Clash of Identities: City of South San Francisco (Baden) Incorporates in San Mateo County: 1908

The decision of the city fathers of the City of South San Francisco to name their community after the nearby existing San Francisco district caused much confusion. Two years following the incorporation of the City of South San Francisco, members of the Bay View and Silver Terrace Improvement Clubs petitioned the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to officially change the name of the district from South San Francisco to "Bay View."¹³⁶ Although initially denied due to opposition from residents of Hunters Point who did not want their identity swallowed up by the smaller Bay View neighborhood and by others who resented being upstaged by the upstart suburb, the name "Bay View" or simply "Bayview," gradually caught on with many local residents of the southern part of the district. Meanwhile, residents of Butchertown and Hunters Point began using their neighborhoods' individual names.¹³⁷ This nomenclature appears to have survived until the 1970s when the term Bayview-Hunters Point, or less frequently, Hunters Point-Bayview, began to catch on.

Street Names in Bayview-Hunters Point Changed for a Third Time: 1909

The name of the district was not the only thing up for grabs. As it may be recalled, the original street naming convention used in South San Francisco consisted of numbered avenues and alphabetical streets. Around 1880, the Board of Supervisors assigned a series of exotic geographical names to the district streets in response to a request by the Postal Service to end ongoing confusion with similarly named streets in the Sunset and Parkside districts. The new names were largely rejected by local residents who continued to use the old numbered avenues and alphabetical streets. In 1890, the Board of Supervisors voted to restore the old names with the addition of the prefix "South" in hopes that would end the confusion with the streets of the West Side. Unfortunately people did not regularly use the prefix when addressing correspondence, resulting in continued confusion and reams of incorrectly delivered mail. Therefore, in December 1909, the San Francisco Street Names Commission voted to change the names of the streets in the Bayview-Hunters Point a third time.

¹³⁴ "New Location is Offered Butchers," *San Francisco Call* (March 4, 1908).

¹³⁵ Roger R. Olmsted, *Rincon de las Salinas y Potrero Viejo: The Vanished Corner: Historical Archaeological Program, Southeast Treatment Plant* (San Francisco: San Francisco Clean Water Management Program, 1979), 128-131.

¹³⁶ "New Street Names are not Wanted," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 23, 1910), 9.

¹³⁷ "Change of District Name," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 25, 1913), 25.

In the new system, which remains largely intact to this day, the east-west avenues were assigned a new roster of names of seemingly randomly selected “American heroes,” with a few local heroes thrown in. The names of the avenues are arranged in alphabetical order from north to south, beginning with Arthur Avenue (formerly 1st Avenue South) and proceeding through the following names: Burke, Custer, Davidson, Evans, Fairfax, Galvez, Hudson, Ingalls, Jerrold, Kirkwood, La Salle, McKinnon, Newcomb, Oakdale, Palou, Quesada, Revere, Shafter, Thomas, Urbano (later changed to Underwood), Van Dyke, Wallace, and Yosemite avenues. There were no X or Z streets. The series started over with Armstrong, Borica (later changed to Bancroft), Carroll, Donner, Egbert, Fitzgerald, Gilman, Hollister, Sugarson (later changed to Ingerson), Jamestown, Keates (later changed to Key), Le Conte, and Meade avenues. The names of the north-south streets were named after local pioneers, and they are also arranged in alphabetical order from east to west, beginning with Alvord Street (formerly A Street) and extending west to Upton Street (formerly U Street).

Several of the names originally proposed, in particular Paine Avenue (in honor of American patriot Thomas Paine) for 16th Avenue South, had to be changed to Palou (after Father Palou) to respond to vehement opposition by Father D.O. Sullivan of All Hallows Church (and other Catholics) who stated: “He was an infidel, and in South San Francisco, we are all Christians.” Father Sullivan and his cohort Father Ford also objected to naming streets after Belfast or Cromwell as being objectionable to Irish Catholics, who according to Father Sullivan constituted three-quarters of the local population.¹³⁸

The Official Map of San Francisco, published in 1910 (otherwise known as the Chevalier Map), is the first official map to depict the new street names. The map also illustrates many other important physical features, including tidal marshes, bodies of water, and mountains, as well as manmade features, including bridges, railroad tracks, and street railways. Another instructive feature of this map is that it indicates which streets were open and which ones were merely “paper streets.” The map also shows the waterfront bulkhead line of 1877 and the proposed areas to be filled, including proposed streets, canals, and turning basins (**Figure 33**).

¹³⁸ John Freeman, “Street Naming Controversy – 1909,” *Encyclopedia of San Francisco*: <http://www.sfhistorvencyclopedia.com>, accessed October 30, 2009.

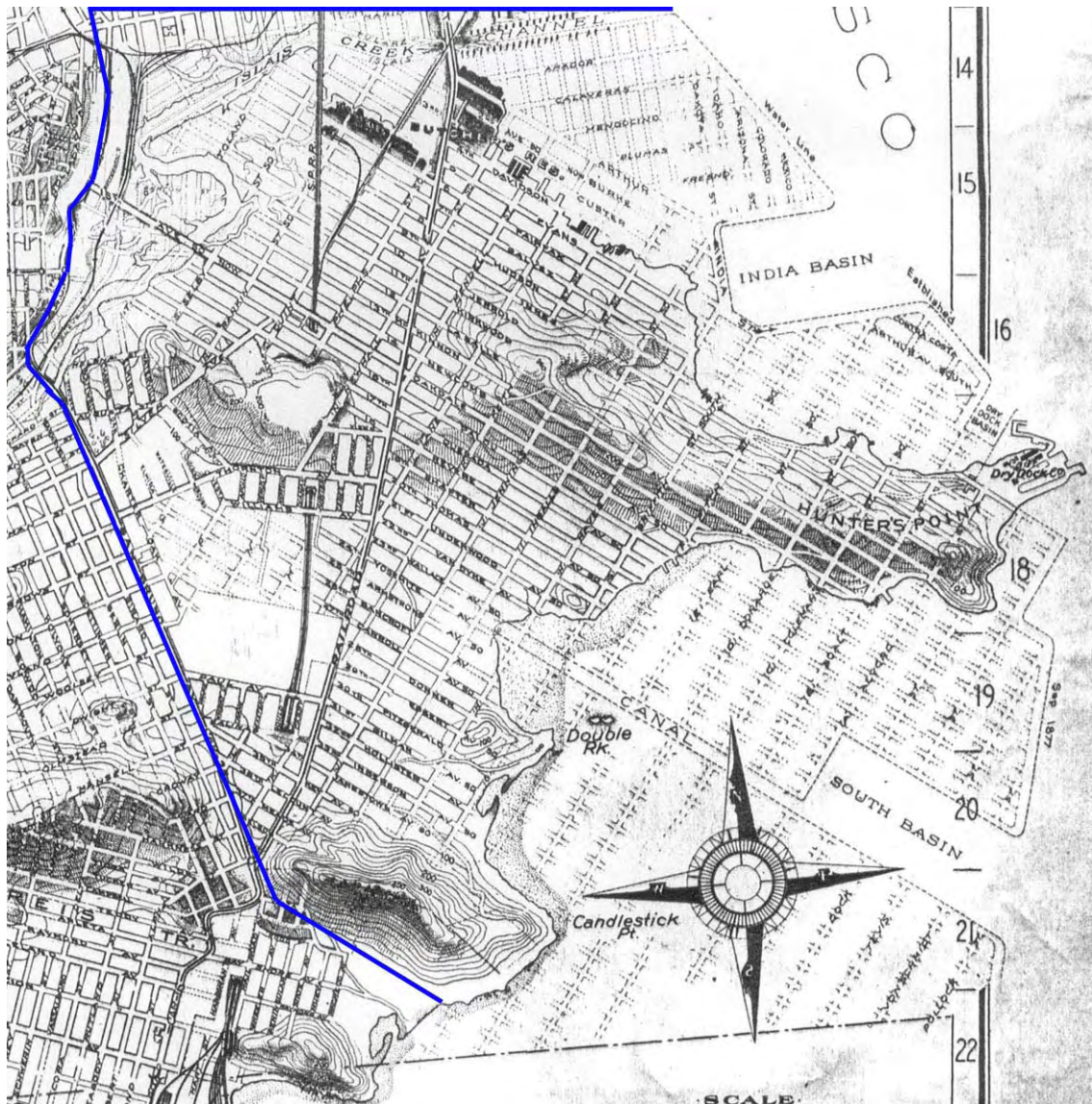


Figure 33. Official (Chevallier) Map of San Francisco, 1910
Source: San Francisco Public Library
Annotated by KVP Consulting

Room for Expansion: Bayview-Hunters Point Envisioned as an Industrial Zone: 1909

Prior to the adoption of San Francisco's first zoning ordinance in 1921, which restricted where industrial uses could occur, San Francisco's industrialists could generally build wherever they could acquire suitable property. With most of San Francisco's waterfront north of Islais Creek fully built out with docks, wharves, and industrial and rail facilities, the only place left on the bay with plenty of vacant land and deep water access was what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Another factor in favor of the district's industrialization was that its demographics were largely blue collar, meaning that there was a local source of labor and that its residents would be less likely to oppose industrial development.

Industrialists interested in what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district faced many challenges, not the least of which was the quickening pace of residential development in the area after the 1906 Earthquake. During the previous half-century, residential development had filled in much of the area bounded by Evans Avenue to the north, Lane Street to the east, Quesada Avenue to the south, and Phelps Street to the west. Additional residential development had also begun to infiltrate the level outlying market gardens of the old Bay View and Bay Park (Bret Harte) tracts. However, there was still abundant vacant land in the more topographically challenging parts of the district, including the rugged Hunters Point peninsula (part of which is in the Hunters Point Shoreline Activity Node), the marshy waterfront between Hunters Point and Candlestick Point (now the South Basin Activity Node), and the steep hillsides of Silver Terrace, Mt. St. Joseph, and Candlestick Hill (parts of which are in the Town Center and Candlestick Point Activity Nodes). Another area with almost no building encompassed the extensive tidal marshes of the Islais Creek Estuary.

In addition to conflicts with existing residential uses and challenging topography, another complicating factor was that there was very little unsubdivided land remaining within the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Indeed, most of the remaining un-built portions of the district had been subdivided by the homestead associations into a dense network of smaller house lots or slightly larger “garden” tracts. Even if the lots were undeveloped, in most cases these properties belonged to a variety of private individuals, making the acquisition of large contiguous tracts of land for industrial development difficult, if not impossible. Nevertheless, several sections of the district had never been subdivided, in particular the Hudson Tract, and some of the truck farms, although composed of multiple lots, were generally under unified ownership, making these areas popular acquisition targets for industrialists.

One final challenge was presented by the existing street and block pattern, particularly within the sprawling Islais Creek Estuary, most which had been subdivided in the nineteenth century into a network of narrow winding streets that followed the course of Islais Creek and its tributaries. These streets created a network of small, irregular lots that remained largely unusable until 1909 when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to realign the street pattern in the area in anticipation of it being filled for industrial development.

Prior to the 1906 Earthquake, industrial development in what is now Bayview-Hunters Point mostly fell into two categories: ship and boat building and meat packing/animal product processing. During the post-quake era, the real estate section of local newspapers began touting the advantages of the Southern Waterfront as being appropriate for all types of industrial development, citing the area’s large tracts of vacant land and accessibility via the Southern Pacific’s new Bay Shore Cutoff. An article in the June 12, 1909 edition of the *San Francisco Call* sums up the contemporary attitude toward the area:

An important section of San Francisco apparently overlooked by a great number of people lies south of the Southern Pacific tracks. In this part of the city are located a large number of industries and daily it is receiving accessions in the way of warehouses and new manufactories. Since the fire vast sums of money have been expended here. Both the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe have extended their railroad facilities and on China basin alone a small fortune has been spent.

The Western Pacific, too, is spending large sums of money here. Freight slips are being built. Big terminals are planned and work has been commenced already upon the construction of incoming and outgoing freight sheds. South of

Channel Street is destined in a short time to be one of the most important and also the busiest sections of the city, and as new and larger industries are to be located in this district there will be a corresponding growth of homes in South San Francisco.¹³⁹

The article described in some depth the physical and economic characteristics of the area that the author continued to call South San Francisco, citing the large number of people who had recently taken up residence in the area after the quake, many of whom would presumably welcome the anticipated influx of industrial employers:

With the return of many industries now across the bay to San Francisco, South San Francisco will experience something in the nature of a boom. This is the only part of the city where industries can be established to good advantage owing to railroad facilities, where track and ship can be brought together. This will attract population, and it may be expected that within a short time a large city will be built up here.

The residents of South San Francisco assert that this district has not made correspondingly as large a growth as other portions of the city. To the man not familiar with South San Francisco the presence of so many well built houses and cottages in a section which it was thought was given over to factories is little short of astonishing.¹⁴⁰

The article concludes with a plea from the author to the United Railroads of San Francisco (the holding company owning the Market Street Railway) to provide better streetcar service to Bayview-Hunters Point district, citing the fact that many residents of the district who work downtown were perennially late to work due to poor service.¹⁴¹

An article that appeared in the December 18, 1909 edition of the *San Francisco Call* discussed the influx of industries into the previously undeveloped portions of the Southern Waterfront and the adjoining Bayview-Hunters Point district. The article lists the businesses in Butchertown and the tally reveals that despite that departure of several slaughterhouses to the new city of South San Francisco, that the majority of the local businesses were still devoted to meat packing and the processing of animal byproducts, including Roth Blum & Company, the California Fertilizer Company, California Tallow Works, the South San Francisco Packing & Provision Company, Miller & Lux, J.C. Johnson, and the H. Moffat Company. The article also mentions the boat and ship building yards out on Hunters Point.¹⁴²

Planned Grading and Filling

As discussed above, the challenging topography of the remaining vacant land in Bayview-Hunters Point would have to be resolved before large-scale industrial development could occur, particularly the filling of the area's extensive marshlands. After nearly six years of considering the proposed "reclamation" of the Islais Creek Estuary, the Federated Harbor Improvement Association of San Francisco, an organization composed of private and public parties interested in the development of San Francisco's waterfront, put together a plan that called for the purchase of 173 acres (63 city blocks) of privately owned land in the Islais Creek Estuary by the State of California through condemnation proceedings (**Figure 34**). Heavily promoted by the San

¹³⁹ "Southern Part of City Prosperous," *San Francisco Call* (June 12, 1909).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "Rapidly Growing Factory District," *San Francisco Call* (December 18, 1909).

With the future development of the Islais Creek Estuary assured, private corporations got underway on their own filling projects. One of the district's largest landowners was the influential Southern Pacific Railroad. As mentioned above, the railroad had entered Bayview-Hunters Point with its construction of the Bayshore Cutoff in 1904-07, a project that required the acquisition of a right-of-way through the district from Salinas Avenue and Gould Street in the south to Army Street (Cesar Chavez Boulevard) and Pennsylvania Avenue on the north. In 1909, the Southern Pacific began buying up marshland on either side of its right-of-way, beginning with a tract bounded by Quint Street to the west, Arthur Avenue to the north, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to

KELLEY & VERPLANCK.

the east, and Hudson Avenue to the south. This tract, now largely occupied by the Southeast Water Treatment Plant, was mostly tidal marsh.¹⁴⁴

Meanwhile, local neighborhood promotion associations began working on filling projects of their own. In July 1909, the influential Mission Promotion Association, in concert with local industrialists, signed contracts with contractors to fill and pave five blocks of Jerrold Avenue across the Islais Creek Estuary, with the goal of linking what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district with the Mission district via San Bruno Avenue and Kansas Street. The purpose of the project was described in a statement given by C.J. McEnerney, a civil engineer employed by the Mission Promotion Association:

The new street will open a large manufacturing district. It was mainly through the activity of the Mission Promotion Association that the work has been brought to a consummation at this time. At present the butchers and wholesalers of South San Francisco have to haul over bad grades to Railroad Avenue, to Fifteenth avenue (Oakdale Avenue), and thence along Fifteenth avenue to the San Bruno road. They will be saved ten blocks hauling over bad grades, and much time will be saved to all persons going to or coming from South San Francisco. This is, furthermore, the beginning of a filling in of swamp lands which will add eventually about 600 acres of level land to the manufacturing sites of San Francisco, so the work is of unusual importance.¹⁴⁵

Joining the Mission Promotion Association in its bid to grade and fill Jerrold Avenue, the Bay View Improvement Association lobbied the Board of Supervisors to contribute \$10,000 to grade Oakdale Avenue from Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to Bayshore Boulevard, further improving communication between the fast-growing and politically powerful Mission district and the Southern Waterfront, which many influential Mission district businessmen viewed as a path of expansion for Mission district industries.¹⁴⁶

At the same time that private industry was beginning the process of filling the Islais Creek Estuary, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (at the urging of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce) began investigating the possibility of filling India Basin for additional industrial sites east of Railroad Avenue (3rd Street). Ever since India Basin had been reserved for piers, slips, basins, and “other purposes of commerce” in 1868, city, state and federal authorities had periodically developed ambitious plans to implement this vision. Stalled by economic slowdowns throughout the late nineteenth century, plans for filling India Basin were revived after the 1906 Earthquake. In 1908, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors placed a bond measure on the state ballot to fund the construction of a seawall as an initial step prior to filling India Basin. The measure was defeated, mostly due to heavy opposition from voters in Los Angeles, San Francisco’s up-and-coming rival to the south.¹⁴⁷

Cognizant of the fact that opposition from Los Angeles voters would likely kill future state-financed harbor projects in San Francisco, in 1921 the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce developed a plan that would use a combination of city revenue and private capital to remove the top of Hunters Point ridge and use the spoils to fill India Basin, leaving only a turning basin at the center. The filled land would then be developed with privately financed factories and warehouses, and publicly operated piers and wharves. It was hoped that a new port on the

¹⁴⁴ “Railroad Buying in Butchertown,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 22, 1909), 13.

¹⁴⁵ “Filling Street Across Marsh,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 3, 1909), 12.

¹⁴⁶ “Bay View Association will Aid Street Work,” *San Francisco Call* (October 3, 1909).

¹⁴⁷ “Los Angeles Beats Islais Creek Act,” *San Francisco Call* (November 18, 1908).

Southern Waterfront would restore San Francisco's competitive advantage versus Los Angeles and other West Coast ports.¹⁴⁸ Despite these ambitious plans, very little filling activity occurred at India Basin after the earthquake. Many impediments stood in the way of this work, not the least of which was the fact that Hunters Point was divided among a tangled web of competing property owners. Similar to the Islais Creek Estuary, only government-led eminent domain actions could assemble the land and resources required to execute the project.¹⁴⁹

World's Fair? PPIE Committee Considers Bayview-Hunters Point as Potential Fair Site: 1910

Planned before the quake, the Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) was ostensibly being held to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal and joining of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Seeking to demonstrate to the world that San Francisco had fully recovered from the 1906 Earthquake, the city's business leaders decided to pull out all the stops for the proposed world's fair. Although the fair was avidly supported by the city's business community, there was lingering uncertainty over where to hold it in the city, with Golden Gate Park, the Presidio, the future Marina district, and Bayview-Hunters Point all vying for the honor. For a while Bayview-Hunters Point was the top contender, mostly on the basis of the large amount of vacant land on the Hunters Point peninsula, with potential for expanding the site through land fill. Other factors in the district's favor included its relatively benign climate, dramatic views, and good regional railroad access, with a new Southern Pacific railroad depot at Newcomb Avenue and Phelps Street (now the site of the Southeast Community College Branch of San Francisco City College). In January 1910, the South San Francisco Merchants Board of Trade adopted the following resolution:

Resolved that we, the Merchants' board of trade of South San Francisco heartily indorse the holding of the Panama Pacific exposition at San Francisco, that we recommend the splendid site at South San Francisco as a suitable place for holding said exposition, and that, was we desire to do more than pass a resolution, we hereby declare our readiness to do all we can to assist in making said exposition a success.¹⁵⁰

In the final analysis, the Board of Directors of the PPIE decided to select the unfilled tide lands in what is now the Marina district due to its closer proximity to downtown San Francisco, better potential street railway access, and easier post-fair development potential.

Deep Water Advantage: U.S. Navy Recommends Hunters Point as a Naval Shipyard: 1910

Seeking a favorable and strategic location for servicing its growing Pacific fleet, in 1910, the General Board of the U.S. Navy recommended the acquisition of Bethlehem Steel's San Francisco Dry Dock facility, as well as the rest of the Hunters Point peninsula, for use as a naval repair base. Factors listed by the board in favor of Hunters Point included its sheltered location within San Francisco Bay, its position mid-way along the West Coast, deep water access, and strategic location in San Francisco, at that time still the largest and most important city in the West, and a likely target of hostile forces.

Growing Pains: Bayview-Hunters Point Lobbies for Improved Infrastructure: 1911-1914

City-funded and private utility infrastructure lagged far behind residential, commercial, and industrial development in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Similar to other working-class districts in San Francisco, the district had received little investment, lacking basic utilities, as

¹⁴⁸ "Big Terminal Project Outlined," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 22, 1921).

¹⁴⁹ "Suit to Condemn India Basin Property Filed," *San Francisco Call* (June 30, 1912), 6.

¹⁵⁰ "Proposed Sites for Exposition Swamp Leaders," *San Francisco Call* (January 30, 1910).

well as amenities like parks and libraries, taken for granted in wealthier districts north of Market Street. Throughout this period, what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district had not one public park. Not all of this was the City's fault, because none of the homestead associations active in the area had set aside land for public open space or playgrounds. Seeking to correct this, in October 1911, the Bay View Improvement Club lobbied the Board of Supervisors to purchase land to build a public park and playground for the district's "rapidly growing population." The association proposed purchasing one of two available undeveloped blocks: the first one bounded by Railroad Avenue (3rd Street), Revere Avenue, Lane Street, and Quesada Avenue; the second bounded by Keith Street, Shafter Avenue, Jennings Street, and Thomas Avenue. The Board of Supervisors appears to have taken no action because both blocks were subsequently developed with housing.¹⁵¹



Figure 35. Bay View Park, 1943
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library



Figure 36. Hunters Point School, 1917
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

In December 1914, three years after the first attempt to build a park in what is now Bayview-Hunters Point, the San Francisco Department of Parks and Recreation accepted a joint donation of 17 acres at the top of Candlestick Hill from the Bay View Land Company and the Crocker Estate Company. The two real estate companies offered the land (which at that time was probably unbuildable due to its steep grades) on the condition that eight acres of adjoining City-owned land be added to the proposed park. This land had been previously been earmarked by City for a hospital, something local real estate interests opposed.¹⁵² Six months later the district's first public park – Bay View Park – was dedicated in a ceremony attended by approximately 500 local residents and city officials. Improvements to the land were minimal but included the construction of an access drive at the end of Jamestown Avenue and the planting of several hundred eucalyptus saplings (Figure 35). The ceremony concluded with dancing and a concert by the City Band and dancing on the hill.¹⁵³

Bayview-Hunters Point residents and neighborhood groups continued lobbying for infrastructure during the period immediately preceding the First World War. During the administration of Mayor James Rolph, the district was successful in acquiring several new schools, sewers, and

¹⁵¹ "Bay View Wants a Park," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 15, 1911), 47.

¹⁵² "Officials View Land Offered to the City," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 12, 1914), 14.

¹⁵³ "Bay View Park is Opened to Public," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 24, 1915), 8.

street improvements. During this period, the Board of Education constructed at least two new primary schools in the Bayview and Hunters Point neighborhoods, including the Hunters Point School at 901 Innes Avenue in 1911 (no longer extant) (**Figure 36**) and the Bayview School, which opened around the same time on Bay View Street (no longer extant). High school-age students could attend Mission, Commerce, or Galileo High Schools. The Department of Public Works graded new streets and laid out miles of new sewers, asphalt and basalt paving.¹⁵⁴ District residents were also partially successful in ending discriminatory lending practices. With assistance from the Mission Promotion Association, district leaders convinced banks to provide mortgages to residents living in the area.

In addition to lobbying for improvements to neighborhood infrastructure, local neighborhood groups also begin working to oppose projects that they believed to be harmful or damaging to the district. Local neighborhood groups were instrumental in efforts to resist the expansion of the slaughterhouses at Butchertown and their attempts to house swine and other prohibited livestock within the neighborhood.¹⁵⁵ They also for a while opposed the construction of a "Pesthouse" and Tuberculosis Hospital on City-owned land in the district in 1914, although this facility was eventually constructed on the north side of Islais Creek. Summarizing their opposition to these projects, J. Butler, president of the Bay View Club, stated: "We're poor people out here, but we pay our taxes, and have paid them for thirty years. The proposal to put those institutions out here is not right."¹⁵⁶

1913-1915 Sanborn Maps

In the decade and a half since the 1899-1900 Sanborn maps had been published, the Bayview-Hunters Point district had undergone fairly extensive changes, although nothing to rival the changes the district would undergo during the next two decades. In general, the 1913-1915 Sanborn maps reveal a neighborhood in transition from a semi-rural outlying suburb into an important manufacturing and residential center. In regard to residential construction, development was still sparse beyond the Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) corridor, with most development concentrated within what were the old O'Neill & Haley, Case, South San Francisco, and Bay View tracts. Most of the district's most heavily built-up residential areas were located within an area bounded by Hudson Avenue to the north, Lane Street to the east, Quesada Avenue to the south, and Quint Street to the west, an area that roughly corresponds to the Town Center Activity Node. Other areas that had become moderately built-up with housing during this period included the original Silver Terrace subdivision: an area bounded by Bay View Street to the north, Railroad Avenue to the east, Williams Avenue to the south, and Apollo Street to the west. The Hunters Point boat builders' community had grown as well, although most of the rest of the peninsula remained undeveloped.

In regard to industrial development, Bayview-Hunters Point was still largely dominated by two industries: meat packing and animal processing and shipbuilding. The meatpacking district of Butchertown, destroyed in 1906, had been rebuilt. In the process of reconstruction, many of the smaller slaughter houses that had previously operated in the area had either moved to South San Francisco or gone out of business. The section of Butchertown formerly located along 1st Avenue South (Arthur Avenue) was completely rebuilt and by 1914 it was occupied mostly by one company: the giant conglomerate of Miller & Lux, a holding company that owned thousands of acres of ranch land in the Central Valley and several meat packing operations throughout the state. The company's Butchertown plant, bounded by Arthur Avenue to the north, San Francisco

¹⁵⁴ "City's South End Makes Progress," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 17, 1912), 9.

¹⁵⁵ "Swine Industry not Wanted Here," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 8, 1913), 20.

¹⁵⁶ "Bay View Doesn't Want Pesthouse," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 22, 1914), 4.

Bay to the east, Davidson Avenue to the south, and Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the west, consisted of dozens of structures, including slaughterhouses, sheds, corrals, stables, and shops, a cold storage facility, an engine room, a box factory, and various other structures housing specialized functions. Only two other slaughter houses remained: the H. Moffat & Company (wholesale butchers) and J.G. Johnson's slaughter house. Allied animal processing facilities in the district included the California Glue Works and the A.B. Patrick Co. Tannery at Fairfax Avenue and Rankin Street, the Legallet-Helwig Tanning Co. at 1660 Fairfax Avenue, the Norton Tanning Co. at Jerrold Avenue and Quint Street, and the Imperial Glue Company at 901 Oakdale Avenue. No above-ground remnants of these industries are known to exist within Area B.

The boat yards at India Basin were still going strong, although several of the older yards had been consolidated under the ownership of Henry "Pop" Anderson by this time, creating a large yard along the north side of Innes Avenue between Hawes and Fitch streets. Similarly, the San Francisco Dry Dock Company facility at the eastern end of Hunters Point was also thriving. Neither yard was located within Area B.

In addition to ship building and meatpacking, the Bayview-Hunters Point district had begun to attract wood-working facilities, in particular lumber storage yards and planing mills. The Southern Pacific Railroad was responsible for much of this new activity, having bought up land in the area after the 1906 Earthquake in order to relocate lumber yards from its property at Mission Creek Channel. The largest lumber yard was Howes Lumber Co. at 1001 Railroad Avenue (3rd Street).

The 1913-1915 Sanborn maps indicate that most of Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) was lined with two and three-story commercial buildings, mostly wood-frame, with a few masonry structures. Most of the two-story commercial buildings featured stores or saloons on the first floor and apartments or offices on the second floor. In addition to these general-purpose commercial buildings, there was at least moving picture house, the Bayview Theater at 1135 Railroad Avenue (no longer extant).

In regard to civic, assembly, and public buildings, the two major churches in the neighborhood: All Hallows Catholic Church (extant) and Memorial Presbyterian Church (extant: just outside Area B) had been joined by St. Joan of Arc, a French Catholic Church at 1578 La Salle Avenue (no longer extant), built to minister to the large number of French immigrants employed at the meat packing plants and tanneries of Butchertown. The original Burnett School that appeared on the 1899-1900 Sanborn maps had been rebuilt and relocated to the southwest corner of Newcomb Avenue and Lane Street (no longer extant). By 1911, it was joined by the Hunters Point School at 901 Innes Avenue (no longer extant), the Bayview School at Bay View and Flora streets (no longer extant and outside Area B), and the Harrison School (later renamed the Bret Harte School) on the southwest corner of Jamestown Avenue and Jennings Street (extant: part of the Church of St. Paul of the Shipwreck). In addition, there was the Buford Free Kindergarten at 1509 Oakdale Avenue (no longer extant).

The 1913-1915 Sanborn Maps indicate that the Islais Creek Estuary – an area roughly bounded by Army Street (Cesar Chavez Boulevard) to the north, Quint Street to the east, Revere Avenue to the south, and San Bruno Avenue to the west – were gradually being filled in, linking the Bayview-Hunters Point district to the adjoining Bernal Heights and Potrero districts. Although the large-scale fill projects of the 1920s had not yet commenced, incremental filling undertaken by the Southern Pacific alongside its Bayshore Cutoff viaduct had gradually encroaching upon the last major reserve of tidal marshland in San Francisco. Another major agent was the Ocean

Shore Railroad, which constructed a raised track bed along the present-day alignments of Alemany and Bayshore boulevards, and a large repair facility southeast of the intersection of Army Street and San Bruno Avenue (no longer extant). These projects filled in much of the Islais Creek bed and the western portion of the estuary. Meanwhile, various public projects along the south side of Army Street (Cesar Chavez Boulevard), including the San Francisco Garbage Incinerator at 1685 Kansas Street (no longer extant), the San Francisco Isolation Hospital (otherwise known as the “Pesthouse” – no longer extant), and the U.S. Public Health Service Laboratory (no longer extant), resulted in the filling of much of the northern edge of the estuary.

Wartime: Helm Commission Recommends Acquisition of San Francisco Dry Dock by Navy

The entry of the United States into the First World War ushered in an industrial boom in San Francisco as local shipyards and armaments manufacturers increased production to fill the increased demand for their products. Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy increased its presence in the San Francisco Bay Region. In 1916, a special commission headed up by Rear Admiral J. M. Helm was established by Congress to study the “necessity and desirability” of establishing a naval installation on San Francisco Bay. Four sites were initially under consideration, including Alameda, Yerba Buena Island, Richmond, and Hunters Point. The Helm Commission ultimately decided on Hunters Point because of its deep water access, extensive anchorage grounds, a stable resident work force, and the proximity of two private dry docks at Bethlehem Steel’s San Francisco Dry Dock facility. Although the Helm Commission was enthusiastic about the capabilities of Hunters Point, nothing was done to facilitate its acquisition. Instead, the U.S. Navy decided to subsidize the expansion of Bethlehem Steel’s Union Iron Works facility located nearby in the Potrero district.¹⁵⁷

During the waning days of the First World War, the U.S. Navy continued to hint that its acquisition of Hunters Point was imminent. In April 1917, the U.S. Health Department issued an order that the “hog hotels,” otherwise known as the slaughterhouses of Butchertown, had to go and the shoreline of Hunters Point cleaned up before the Navy would consider moving in.¹⁵⁸ Although interpreted as a sign of an imminent government takeover, the acquisition of Hunters Point by the Navy still did not happen, although the Navy did support the \$2 million expansion of Bethlehem Steel’s Hunters Point Dry Dock to include shipbuilding operations in addition to its existing repair facilities.¹⁵⁹

Following the end of the First World War, the Navy again announced its interest in building a new base somewhere on San Francisco Bay. Although the Helm Commission had originally favored Hunters Point, Navy brass began to show more interest in Alameda, where the western portion of that East Bay island community could offer approximately 3,000 acres of undeveloped wetlands. Seeking to up the ante, the State Harbor Commission, cooperating with San Francisco officials, agreed to commit to fill South Basin in the Bayview neighborhood to provide an additional 2,000 acres of submerged tidelands that could be combined with almost 1,000 acres of contiguous land at Hunters Point.¹⁶⁰

Big Plans for Industrial Expansion: Plans Announced for Massive Industrial Zone: 1917

Interest in the industrial development of the Southern Waterfront resumed again during the waning years of the First World War. According to an article in the February 8, 1917 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, several massive government-funded and private projects would

¹⁵⁷ Edwin G. Schmidt, *History of the Development and Operation of a Naval Repair Yard at Hunters Point during World War II*. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Naval History, n.d), p. 16.

¹⁵⁸ “Hunter’s Point Shores Ordered Cleaned by U.S.,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 17, 1917).

¹⁵⁹ “Union Iron to Construct Big Ship Plant at Hunters Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 30, 1918), 1.

¹⁶⁰ “3,000 Acres Available for Naval Base,” *San Francisco Examiner* (December 22, 1919), 9.

transform Bayview-Hunters Point into a massive factory zone and inland harbor after the war (Figure 37). The map that accompanied the article showed some of the \$50 million “improvements,” including an 869-acre naval base at Hunters Point and a new state-funded “inland port” consisting of two large wharfs projecting out into India Basin. The map also showed 63 blocks of marshland in the Islais Creek Estuary that had been taken by the state by eminent domain and were to be filled in and reserved for industrial plants and lumber yards. The article mentions improvements to local transportation infrastructure designed to better integrate the district into San Francisco’s waterfront, including a \$150,000 bascule bridge recently completed over Islais Creek, the widening of 3rd Street and Railroad Avenue to 100 feet wide from downtown to the San Mateo County line, the grading and paving of Evans, Jerrold, and Oakdale avenues across the Islais Creek Estuary, and the proposed extension of Muni’s Potrero Avenue streetcar line out to Hunters Point.¹⁶¹

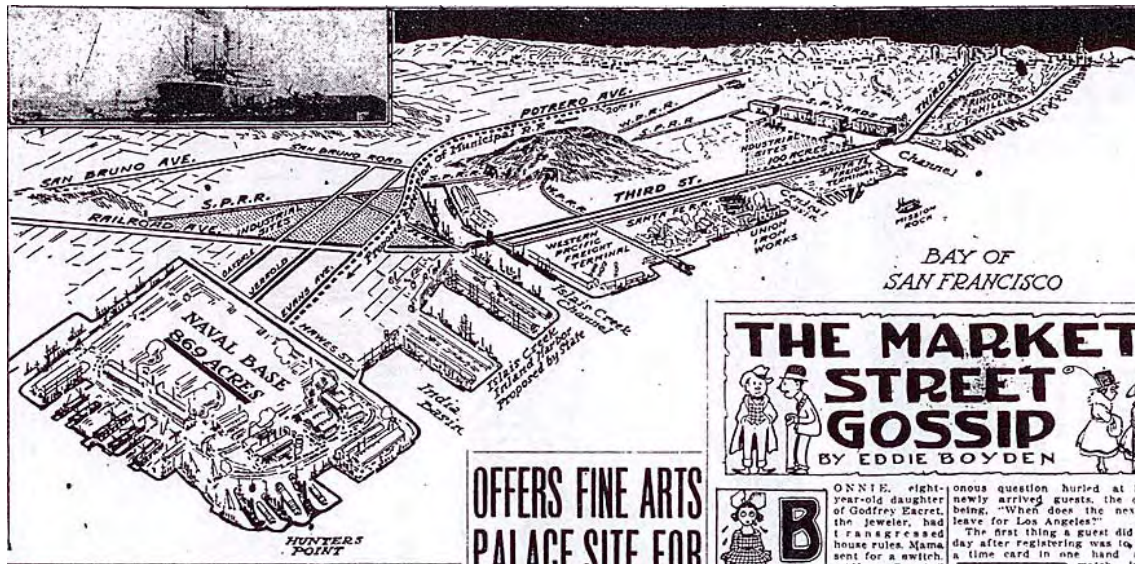


Figure 37. Plans for the Southern Waterfront, 1917
Source: *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 8, 1917)

“Reclamation” of the Islais Creek Estuary – planned for nearly two decades – officially began in 1925 with the passage of California Senate Bill 196. The existence of the estuary had long been blamed by businesses for the slow rate of industrial development in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. The project, which took nearly a decade and a half to complete, consisted of enclosing Islais Creek within a subterranean culvert and filling the tidal marshes to either side to official city grade. The area to be filled lay within an area roughly bounded by Army Street (Cesar Chavez Boulevard) to the north, Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the east, and Mt. St. Joseph and Silver Terrace to the south. The project also involved vacating dozens of ungraded, “paper” streets in the area. An article in the 1925 edition of *San Francisco Business* summarized the hopes of many local businessmen for the project’s success:

...that more than 200 acres of land that has bisected the industrial section will be reclaimed. This area has been an eyesore for years. It has prevented the development not only of the territory within the district itself but that surrounding it...The reclamation of Islais Creek is but the beginning of the utilization of the

¹⁶¹ “Perspective of Projects on Southern Waterfront of City,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 8, 1917), 1.

land and facilities that are available to industry and commerce lying between the Potrero and Bay View District.¹⁶²

The fill used was mostly mud dredged from Islais Creek, as well as rock quarried from nearby hills, including possibly Irish Hill and the south slope of Potrero Hill. According to *Western Construction News*, "During the construction of Bayshore Boulevard (along the western edge of the reclamation area), clay, serpentine, and natural adobe obtained from road cuts (including 181,452 cubic yards from one cut) was dumped at Islais Creek."¹⁶³ According to Sharpsteen, the reclamation of Islais Creek was officially completed in 1936, although he notes that as late as 1942 that few streets or other improvements had been completed.¹⁶⁴

Decline of the Bay Scow Industry at India Basin: 1919-1930

The 1913-15 Sanborn maps provide a snapshot of the boat building community at India Basin at the height of its scow building prosperity. Conditions would soon begin to change as the scow schooner industry succumbed to competition from the gasoline-powered short-haul truck. Prior to 1910, much of the Bay Area's goods were still transported by water. The construction of bridges and highways ended the isolation of many of the region's far-flung communities long dependent on the bay scow. Initially the response was to convert the scows to gasoline power, which made them faster than the traditional wind-powered version. The conversion process required the labor of a shipwright to mount the engines, cut off the bowsprit and remove the mainmast. In the cases where the vessel was over 65 feet, the work often included reducing its length to comply with the requirement that a licensed engineer be present in all motorized vessels over 65 feet. Nevertheless, the bay scow quickly succumbed to the competition. By 1925, only four sail-powered scow schooners remained in use in the Bay Area.¹⁶⁵ With business drying up, many of the smaller boat yards folded, accounting for the consolidation of the India Basin yards into one facility, Anderson & Cristofani.

Between 1925 and 1930, as the bay scow industry came to a close, the boat builders' community at Hunters Point began to decline. Within four years, school attendance at the Hunters Point School declined from 75 to 47 students, likely reflecting the exodus of shipwrights from the neighborhood. In 1930, the school closed for good and was eventually removed.¹⁶⁶ As trucks took the place of the scows (symbolized by the completion of the nearby Islais Creek bascule bridge in 1917), the boatyards consolidated their operations in a process eloquently described by Roger Olmsted:

In the second quarter of the (20th) century the grinding of great trucks on freeways replaced the boats winding on backwaters with their calm reflections and independent scowmen making a modest living at an imminently practical way of life...In a way the scow schooner trade was so ordinary that it existed below the level of most observers' consciousness and could have been as quietly erased from the 20th century as the horse-drawn ice wagon or the family doctor making housecalls in his buggy.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² *San Francisco Business* (1925), 5-7.

¹⁶³ *Western Construction News* (1928).

¹⁶⁴ William C. Sharpsteen, "Vanished Waters of Southeastern San Francisco: Notes on Mission Bay and the Marshes and Creeks of the Potrerillos and Bernal Rancho," *California Historical Society Quarterly* (2) (1942), 116.

¹⁶⁵ Roger R. Olmsted, *Scow Schooners of San Francisco Bay, 1849-1949* (Cupertino, CA: California History Center, 1988).

¹⁶⁶ San Francisco Unified School District: *San Francisco Department of Public Schools Annual Reports* (San Francisco: various years).

¹⁶⁷ Roger R. Olmsted, *Scow Schooners of San Francisco Bay, 1849-1949* (Cupertino, CA: California History Center, 1988).

1921 Zoning Ordinance

One of the most important factors behind land-use trends in Bayview-Hunters Point during this period was the passage of San Francisco's first zoning ordinance on September 20, 1921. Largely codifying prevailing land use patterns, the ordinance aimed to establish clear lines of demarcation between residential on one hand, and commercial and industrial zones on the other. In contrast to the dozens of different use districts recognized today, the 1921 Zoning Ordinance recognized only six: First Residential District, Second Residential District, Commercial District, Light Industrial District, Heavy Industrial District, and Unrestricted District. According to the maps prepared as part of the ordinance, Bayview-Hunters Point was large designated for industry, including the Islais Creek Estuary, Butchertown, South Basin, and the entire Hunters Point shoreline. Commercial zones were established along Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) and Oakdale Avenue. What was left over, mostly Bayview, the interior sections of Hunters Point, and portions of the southern part of the district were earmarked for residential development.¹⁶⁸

1920s-era Industrial Development in Bayview-Hunters Point

While local industrialists eagerly awaited the filling of the Islais Creek Estuary, several new industries began appearing in the Bayview-Hunters Point. Most bore little relation to the traditional industries of meatpacking and shipbuilding. One of the most prominent examples was the Western Power Company's Hunters Point Power Plant. Constructed In 1929 northeast of the intersection of Evans Avenue and Jennings Street, the \$30 million steam-powered plant opened for service on December 3, 1929 with a capacity of 42,000 kilowatts. Serpentine excavated to construct the plant's foundation was dumped into San Francisco Bay, forming two parallel dikes. These dikes housed pipelines so that oil could be pumped directly from barges moored offshore into the plant. Water for the steam boilers was supplied by a nearby Spring Valley Water Co. pumping station.¹⁶⁹ After the Western Power Company became part of Pacific Gas & Electric, it became known as Station P. Long blamed for many health problems in the Bayview-Hunters Point district, Station P was closed and subsequently demolished in 2008.

¹⁶⁸ "New Zoning Law Text and Maps Printed Today," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 20, 1921), 1, 22-25.

¹⁶⁹ "P.G. & E. Station 'P'," *Western Pipe & Steel News*, Vol. VI, No. 8 (November 1929), 1.

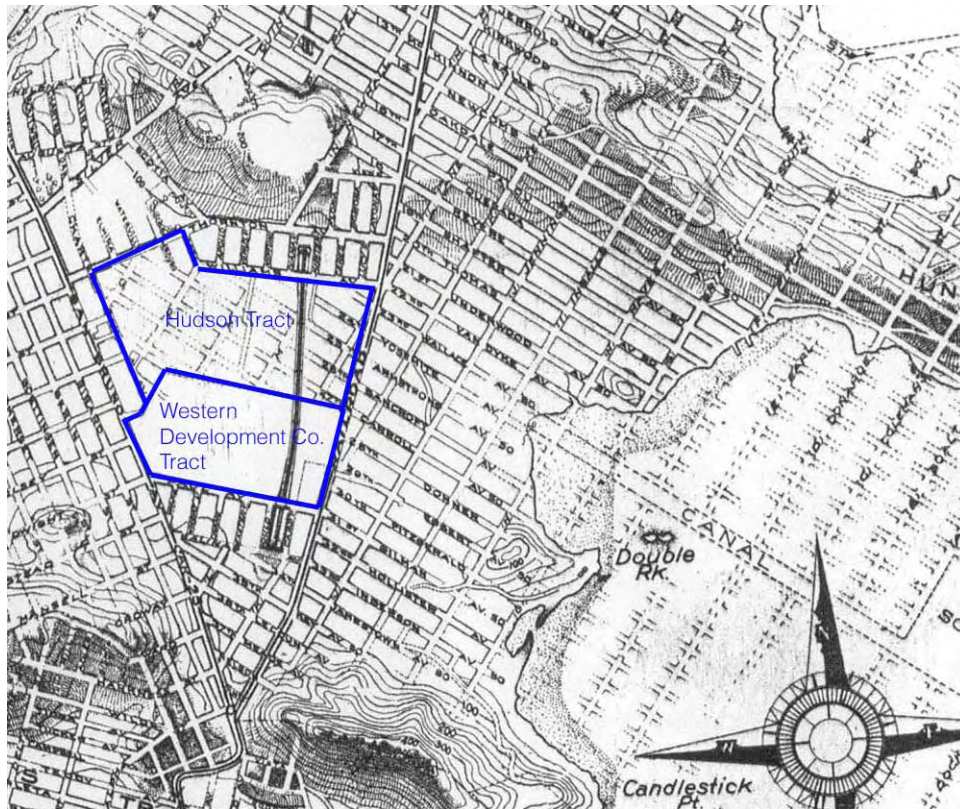


Figure 38. Section of the 1910 Chevalier Map showing location of Hudson and Western Development Company tracts

Source: San Francisco Public Library; annotated by KVP Consulting

Located within the southern portion of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, just east of San Bruno Avenue, were two large adjoining tracts that were not subdivided into house or garden lots during the 1860s and 1870s (Figure 38). Furthermore, both evidently remained under single ownership until the early 1920s when they were subdivided and the constituent lots sold or leased to manufacturers who developed some of the largest and most ambitious industrial plants in San Francisco. The northernmost of the two landholdings was traditionally known as the Hudson Tract, a swath of land bounded by Williams Avenue to the north, 3rd Street to the east, Egbert Avenue to the south, and Phelps Street to the west. Appearing on early maps of San Francisco as an agricultural holding, this tract was apparently never subdivided like its neighbors to the north (Silver Terrace), east (Bay View Tract), or west (Paul Tract). Although maps show that the dominant Bayview street grid transected the tract, dotted lines indicate that the streets were unpaved much further west of Railroad Avenue. The tract gained value for potential industrial development after 1905 when the Southern Pacific's Bayshore line bisected the tract. Nevertheless, it remained undeveloped for at least a decade, with the 1914 Sanborn maps showing the Hudson Tract cultivated in vegetable gardens. The tract was gradually subdivided and developed, beginning around 1915, with build-out occurring in the 1930s.

South of the Hudson Tract was a smaller tract bounded by Egbert Avenue, 3rd Street, Paul Avenue, and San Bruno Avenue. Labeled on older maps as the Western Development Co. Tract, this property was never even subdivided into blocks, much less house or garden lots. Penetrated by several spur tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad during the early 1920s, the tract was subdivided ca. 1925 and developed with several sprawling manufacturing plants, most of which survive today. Examples include the Vermont Marble Co. marble works (1931), a gable-

roofed corrugated-steel warehouse at 6000 3rd Street (extant); the Link Belt Co. plant (1930), a sprawling industrial plant consisting of a Mediterranean-style masonry office building, a concrete pattern shop, and a steel-frame and steel-clad machine shop at the rear capped by a sawtooth roof, at 320-350 Paul Avenue (extant); the Ferry-Morse Seed Co. plant (1928), a plant consisting of a four-story concrete warehouse with a central tower and a one-story weed warehouse, at 500 Paul Avenue (extant) (**Figure 39**); and the L & E. Emanuel Inc. store fixture factory complex (1927), a large three-story, concrete, L-plan industrial building at 1485 Bayshore Boulevard (extant).

1920s-era Building Boom: Residential Development in Bayview-Hunters Point

The improvement of streets and public transit infrastructure during the 1910s physically linked the Bayview-Hunters Point district to the larger city, making commuting downtown or to other job centers more feasible. This factor, combined with the continued availability of developable land, unleashed a major residential building boom in the area during the mid-1920s. Part of a nationwide building frenzy that occurred between 1924 and the Stock Market Crash of 1929, the 1920s building boom was characterized by rampant overbuilding in many fringe areas of the city, in particular the Sunset and Parkside districts on the West Side and the Bayview-Hunters Point, Excelsior, Portola, and Outer Mission districts on the East Side.

In Bayview-Hunters Point, most of the residential development occurred where it always had, typically within a block or two of 3rd Street. Much of the earliest residential development during this decade consisted of infill construction, mostly occurring on vacant midblock areas or on unbuilt portions of existing house and garden lots that had escaped development when the area was more rural. In addition to this finer grained development, many of the former truck farm areas in the southern Bayview neighborhood, particularly the areas east of Railroad Avenue, were developed during the 1920s with rows of nearly identical, one-story-over garage, wood-frame, stucco-finished rowhouses designed in the Mediterranean, Mission Revival, or Spanish Colonial Revival styles. The builders were many of the same active in other parts of the city, including the Heyman Brothers, the Stoneson Brothers, and others. This wave of development represented a fundamental shift in settlement patterns as individual homestead building made way for mass speculative development. The new housing pushed the urban frontier of southeastern San Francisco east toward San Francisco Bay and south toward the San Mateo County line, filling in much of the formerly rural Bayview, Silver Terrace and Bret Harte neighborhoods. For the most part this development avoided the more rugged parts of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, including the Hunters Point peninsula, Mt. St. Joseph, and Candlestick Hill, most of which remained either undeveloped or in the hands of civic or institutional uses. Examples of 1920s-era housing within the Town Center Activity Node include rows built on the south side of the 1700 block of Palou Avenue and on the north side of the 1700 block of McKinnon Avenue.

Infrastructure in Bayview-Hunters Point during the 1920s

Seemingly always in a game of catch up with the rest of the city, Bayview-Hunters Point had to fight for its share of city services even during the prosperous 1920s. In contrast with wealthier



**Figure 39. Industrial Building at
500 Paul Avenue, 1952**

**Source: San Francisco Historical
Photograph Collection, San
Francisco Public Library**

and more politically connected districts, which received infrastructure improvements as a matter of course, local community groups in Bayview-Hunters Point had to often raise a ruckus to acquire even the simplest of improvements, or do the work themselves. In February 1920, neighborhood residents celebrated the opening of the district's first official playground and ball field at 3rd Street and Jerrold Avenue. Built using volunteer labor, the project was paid for by various service organizations, including the Native Sons of the Golden West and the Knights of Pythias. Upon its completion, the park was donated to the San Francisco Department of Parks and Recreation. This playground joined the Bay View Park as the second public park in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. This facility does not exist at this location anymore, having been moved to the block bounded by Armstrong Avenue, Keith Street, Carroll Avenue, and 3rd Street.¹⁷⁰

By the mid-1920s, the widening and repaving of 3rd Street and the construction of Bayshore Boulevard made the Bayview-Hunters Point district a major conduit for vehicular traffic to and from San Francisco to The Peninsula and points south. This roadwork was primarily for the benefit of local industrialists, who had long complained about the physical isolation of Bayview-Hunters Point from the rest of the city. In addition to improving connections between the district and downtown and the waterfront, these roads, particularly Bayshore Boulevard, opened up acres of recently filled land in the Islais Creek Estuary.¹⁷¹

In 1924, the privately held Spring Valley Water Company began to extend water and sewer service to many parts of Bayview-Hunters Point previously unserved by these essential utilities. For most of its history, much of the district depended upon wells, artesian springs, and leach fields and septic systems. While these areas remained semi-rural, these crude systems worked. However, by the mid-1920s, speculative residential development required more advanced services before banks would loan money to build new housing.

F. BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT DURING THE DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II: 1930-1945

The collapse of the New York Stock Exchange in 1929 brought an end to the bullish prosperity of the 1920s. Within a year or so, most market-driven construction in the country came to a halt. San Francisco did not suffer as intensely as many other American cities. None of its banks failed and many of the city's white collar workers escaped nearly unscathed. Port facilities and some industries also remained largely unaffected, at least initially. Furthermore, publicly funded construction began to play a big role in San Francisco's economy, especially after San Francisco's Congressional delegation successfully lobbied the Roosevelt administration for Public Works Administration (1933) and Works Progress Administration (1935) funds to build dozens of public works projects, including several within Bayview-Hunters Point.

Nevertheless, the decade of the 1930s was characterized by a tremendous amount of social upheaval. Class conflict revived San Francisco's long-dormant labor movement, as well as the local Democratic Party, forming an opposition block to the Progressive Republicanism of Mayor Rolph and his successor, Mayor Angelo Rossi.¹⁷² Although San Francisco was better off than many cities, things were by no means ideal. By 1932, one in four San Francisco residents was collecting unemployment relief, mostly production workers. Industrial employers, perhaps trying to take advantage of the situation, clamped down on efforts by unions to secure reasonable pay and shorter work hours for their members. In May 1934, the West Coast locals of the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA) struck for better wages and working conditions. In the face of

¹⁷⁰ "Playground at Bay View will be Gift to City," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 21, 1920), 10.

¹⁷¹ "Industrial San Francisco," *San Francisco Examiner* (February 27, 1921).

¹⁷² Robert W. Cherny and William Issel, *San Francisco: Presidio, Port and Pacific Metropolis* (Sparks, NV: Materials for Today's Learning, 1988), 61-62.

brutal employer resistance, San Francisco exploded into violence and disorder, culminating in the pitched street battles between longshoremen and police on “Bloody Thursday,” on July 5, 1934, and the citywide General Strike that followed.

Depression-era Industrial Development in Bayview-Hunters Point: 1930-1945

By the time the Depression began, San Francisco was running out of vacant land zoned for industrial use. Already some local industries were beginning to move out of San Francisco in search of large tracts of inexpensive land, not to mention lower wages, weaker unions, and better access to transcontinental railheads and highways.¹⁷³ Bayview-Hunters Point’s remaining stock of undeveloped tidal marshes surrounding Islais Creek and at South Basin, both areas with good rail and highway access, prolonged the district’s long term viability as a potential industrial district. Although the reclamation of the Islais Creek Estuary had begun as early as 1925, an aerial photograph taken of the area in the 1930s indicates that much additional work remained. Although Islais Creek itself appears to be channelized, much of the surrounding former tidal marshland appears to remain unfilled. Streets crossing the estuary include Oakdale Avenue, which cuts across in the center of the view, and Bayshore Boulevard, the former Ocean Shore right-of-way, which snakes along the eastern slope of Bernal Heights. Also visible is Army Street at the upper edge of the view, and the Southern Pacific trestle and Railroad Avenue (3rd Street) to the right (**Figure 40**).

Development of the Islais Creek Estuary industrial district (Oakinba) proceeded slowly. Although the area contained some of the earliest buildings in the district, in particular the 1861 Old Clam House (extant) at the corner of Oakdale Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard, most of the area remained vacant until World War II. Industrial development was held back by several factors, including the slow pace of filling, the demise of the Ocean Shore Railroad in 1921, and lack of graded and paved street access to much of the area. Development of the Islais Creek Estuary’s extensive belt of one and two-story concrete and corrugated steel warehouses and industrial buildings only began to take off with the completion of Bayshore Boulevard in the mid-1920s. This highway provided access to the western portion of the area just as the widening and paving of Army Street had done for the northern edge after 1916.¹⁷⁴

San Francisco’s “Forgotten District”: Bayview-Hunters Point Residents Lobby City Hall: 1930s

Throughout the Depression, Bayview-Hunters Point appears to have changed little in terms of its socio-economic status or built fabric. A review of Census records from 1930 reveals a diverse neighborhood comprising working-class residents of various ethnicities. Although the vast majority of the district’s residents were classified as being white, they represented an astounding variety of national origins and ancestries, ranging from Mexican and Latin American vaqueros and railroad workers, to descendents of Scandinavian boat builders, to Irish American laborers and Italian and Maltese truck farmers and fishermen. A small community of Chinese shrimp fishermen still plied the waters of Hunters Point as late as 1930 as well.

¹⁷³ Richard Walker, “Industry Builds Out the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940,” in Robert Lewis, ed., *The Manufactured Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 108-110.

¹⁷⁴ “Improvers Plan Year’s Programme,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 29, 1916), 9.

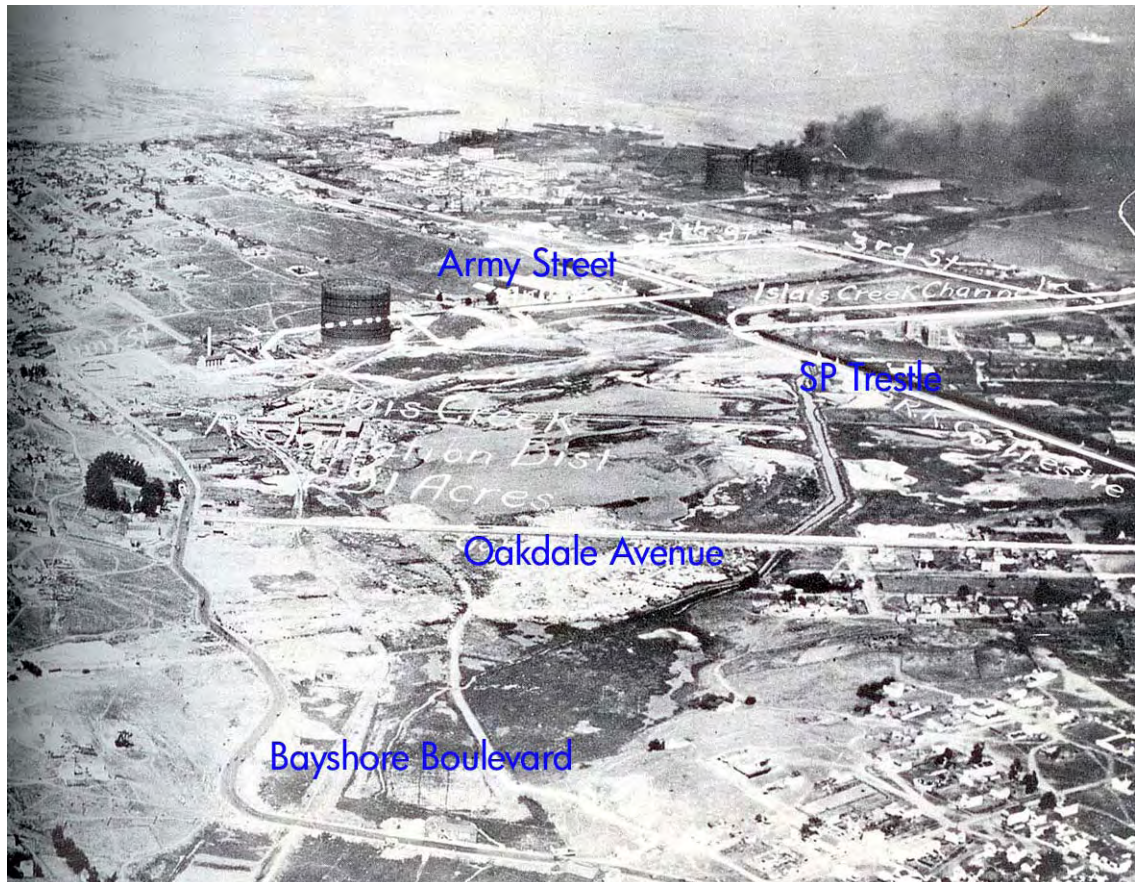


Figure 40. Islais Creek Reclamation Area, ca. 1930
Source: San Francisco Engineering Archives
Annotated by KVP Consulting

Regardless of their origins, residents of Bayview-Hunters Point were generally unified in their desire for better services. Local neighborhood improvement clubs led the way, with Hunters Point, Bayview, and Silver Terrace all represented by groups working for better infrastructure, cleaning up Butchertown and the waterfront, and the provision of neighborhood “amenities” taken for granted by wealthier districts. According to an article in the November 4, 1932 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the Hunters Point Improvement Club announced the completion of the first phase of neighborhood improvements, including the installation of water mains and fire hydrants, new street signs, and an appropriation of \$3000 from the county road fund for oiling unpaved streets. Work had also started on an extension of gas mains from Evans Avenue and Hunters Point Boulevard east along Innes Avenue, providing service to an additional twenty families and thereby encouraging residential development in an area still largely devoid of houses.¹⁷⁵ Neighborhood residents were not afraid to get their hands dirty in securing improved infrastructure. In January 1937, 200 members of the Hunters Point Improvement Club worked together to dig a 1,000-foot trench for a water line along Innes Avenue that would supply water to 40 households out on Hunters Point, many of whom still depended on wells or carried water from their neighbors’ houses.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ “Hunters Point Improvement Club,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 4, 1932).

¹⁷⁶ “Now That That’s Done – We’ll have Coffee and Water!” *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 11, 1937), 13.

Two years later, in February 1939, representatives of San Francisco's "Forgotten District" made a spirited bid to the rest of the city for recognition that although the citizens of Bayview-Hunters Point paid taxes like any other city resident, that the district was frequently passed over and unsanitary conditions allowed to fester. President Lynn P. Hockensmith of the Hunters Point Improvement Club announced several projects that his group was fighting for. The first was the grading of Innes Avenue from 3rd Street east to the entrance to the Hunters Point Dry Docks. Citing the existence of Butchertown at Evans Avenue – the main entrance to the Hunters Point neighborhood – Hockensmith advocated for a "more convenient and less odorous" front door to the area. Also on the table was the removal of several abandoned ship hulks and pilings from India Basin. Hockensmith listed several other successfully completed projects, including the grading and paving of 18 blocks of "badly needed" new streets and sewers, as well as the promised installation of new streetlights. Hockensmith said:

We have been San Francisco's forgotten district too long. This has been largely the result of unintentional but abusive newspaper publicity, reference to Hunters Point linking it with slaughter house odors. I except the Chronicle from that statement. It has always been co-operative in publicizing district betterment projects.

The rest of the city apparently has forgotten the panoramic view to be enjoyed from the point, the wonderful residential district it might well become. Our club program this year will attempt to make Hunters Point a district of standing once again in San Francisco.¹⁷⁷

In keeping with the district's reputation for self-reliance, in 1939, local resident Chester Winningsted established a cooperative grocery store called the Hunters Point Cooperative Society to provide fresh vegetables and meat to neighborhood residents. The project caught the eye of famed *Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen who described the grocery:

Chester Winningsted lives out on Hunters Point, far out near the drydocks. From here it's more than two miles to the nearest grocery store on Third Street. That's quite a distance, especially for some of the people without cars because there is no transportation.

Early this year Chester Winningsted got an idea, talked it over with some of his friends. "Why couldn't we start a consumer-owned grocery store?" he asked. "It would save us time and money."

The friends agreed, so six months ago Hunters Point Co-operative Society was organized with five member families, and a store was opened on Innes Avenue. That was the start. The original stock was comprised of one case of canned milk....¹⁷⁸

The Hunters Point Cooperative Store was eventually moved from Winningsted's house at 690 Jerrold Avenue (no longer extant) to a building at 615 Galvez Avenue (no longer extant). The number of stockholding families grew from the original five to eighty, comprising several

¹⁷⁷ Bill Simons, "Hunters Point Projects Mapped," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 5, 1939), C6.

¹⁷⁸ "It's News to Me: Herb Caen's Column, Saturday Scrapbook," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 18, 1939), 7.

nationalities. Perhaps influenced by the progressive tendencies of the era, the co-op planned to expand its services to include a health care clinic and a neighborhood credit union.¹⁷⁹

After the completion of the store, the construction of gas, water, and sewer lines; and the paving of Innes Avenue, the Hunters Point Improvement Association became mostly concerned with obtaining better bus service to and from the neighborhood. In 1940, the Market Street Railway established a bus line along Innes Avenue to the Hunters Point Dry Dock. Although the Association would have preferred a less expensive 5-cent Municipal Railway (MUNI) line to the Hunters Point Dry Docks, such a line was not forthcoming and the group decided to support the Market Street Railway line.¹⁸⁰ During the 1920s and 1930s, the district was also served by two streetcars running along 3rd Street: the No. 16 and 26 lines.¹⁸¹

The New Deal in Bayview-Hunters Point

The election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 and the passage of the first New Deal acts in 1933 initiated a series of work relief programs throughout the United States under the aegis of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA). San Francisco's powerful congressional delegation was quite successful in obtaining funding for dozens of public works projects. These projects, which ranged from street building, hospital and school construction, to park improvements and public art work, transformed the appearance of



Figure 41. WPA work at Bayview Park, ca. 1938
Source: California New Deal Project

San Francisco. Although projects were distributed throughout the city, certain neighborhoods seem to have been more successful than others. The Bayview-Hunters Point district only benefited from two major New Deal projects, both centered on local parks. The first project – completed by 1939 – involved the construction of the Gilman Playground at Gilman Avenue and Griffith Street, next to what is now Bret Harte Elementary. The second project entailed making several badly needed improvements to Bayview Park on the top of Candlestick Hill. The work

consisted of laying 6,500 feet of oiled macadam and an equal amount of rock gutter, and building a stone rubble wall, a water supply system, a convenience station (toilet room), a “rustic” shelter, and two playfields. The project also resulted in the cultivation of 6,500 existing trees and the planting of 2,500 more. The project was completed by the WPA in 1938 (Figure 41).¹⁸²

The Navy Comes to Town: U.S. Navy Purchases Hunters Point Naval Shipyard: 1940

With war brewing in Europe and tensions rising in the Pacific with Japan, Congress authorized the acquisition of Bethlehem Steel's Hunters Point Dry Docks in June 1939. Initially, it was to be an annex to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, but the decision was made to maintain

¹⁷⁹ “Hunters Point is Proud of its Own Co-operative Store,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 16, 1940), 7.

¹⁸⁰ “Districts: Hunters Point Club Give Stand on Bus Line,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 1, 1940), 29.

¹⁸¹ Conor Casey, “San Francisco's Butchertown in the 1920s and 1930s: A Neighborhood and Social History,” *the Argonaut* (Spring 2007).

¹⁸² California's Living New Deal Project: <http://livingnewdeal.berkeley.edu> Accessed November 5, 2009.

them as separate facilities. Negotiations with Bethlehem Steel took around six months and on December 29, more than three months after the outbreak of war in Europe, the Navy completed the purchase agreement. The site conveyed by Bethlehem Steel to the Navy consisted of 48.6 acres of land, as well as the appurtenances thereon, including the two existing dry docks and the shipway. The total purchase price came to \$4 million. On November 12, 1940, the Navy acquired title to the property but then promptly leased it back to Bethlehem Steel to operate the facility.¹⁸³ On December 18, 1941, eleven days after Pearl Harbor, the Navy took formal possession of the facility and eventually renamed it the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.¹⁸⁴

Prewar Snapshot: Demographic Profile of Bayview-Hunters Point Prior to World War II: 1940

The acquisition of the Hunters Point Dry Docks by the U.S. Navy was the most significant event in the history of the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Construction of the facility and the influx of civilian and Navy personnel who came to the area to live and work changed the district forever. Prior to the arrival of the Navy, the vast majority of the residents of the Bayview-Hunters Point district were white and working-class. In comparison with San Francisco as a whole, which had a total population of 634,536 – 94.5 percent of whom were white – Census Tracts L-4 and L-5 (which comprise what is now the Bayview-Hunters Point district) contained 14,011 people, less than two percent of whom were non-white, including a total of 7 African American residents. The district also contained 136 residents of “other races,” the majority of whom were probably Chinese shrimp fishermen.¹⁸⁵ Mexican-Americans and other Latinos were classified by the Census Bureau as white. Of the white population, which comprised around 98 percent of the district’s population, approximately 30 percent were foreign-born, in comparison with 20.5 percent for the city as a whole. Of the district’s foreign-born residents, the largest contingents were from Italy (1,627), Other Europe – mostly Malta (473), France (368), Mexico (233), Germany (228), and Spain and Portugal (219). National origins of native-born whites were not provided in the population statistics.¹⁸⁶ In regard to occupational categories, the largest categories for both census tracts were “operatives and kindred workers” (1,625) and “laborers” (996).

An article that appeared in the December 19, 1940 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* summarized the character of the Bayview-Hunters Point district on the eve World War II. Defined by the author as the “pioneering spirit,” the article describes the close-knit and cooperative nature of poor and working-class residents who made do with what was available and worked hard to improve their hardscrabble lives through political action and socializing, mainly in the form of community dances, such as the “Hunters Point Round Up Dance” and the annual Christmas party. Although neglected for decades by the city at large, local residents could boast a community spirit not seen in wealthier or better-served neighborhoods, as well as a spectacular natural setting that lent itself to recreational opportunities:

We have the living space here that millions of city dwellers long for; we have the freedom of the outdoor life; we have recreation beaches at the edge of the bay

¹⁸³ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of Hunters Point Shipyard, Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, 2000), 3-134.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Census Tract L-4 was a triangular area bounded by 25th Street to the north, 3rd Street to the east, and Bay Shore Boulevard to the west. Census Tract L-5 was bounded by 25th Street to the north, San Francisco Bay to the south, and Bay Shore Boulevard and 3rd Street to the west.

¹⁸⁶ Bureau of the Census, *Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts L4 and L5, San Francisco California* (1940).

where one can enjoy swimming, bathing, motor boating, sail boating, surf riding, fishing and picnicking.¹⁸⁷

War! Pearl Harbor and the Creation of the Hunters Point Shipyard: 1941

While the United States was preparing for possible war with the Axis powers, Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor, Midway, and other U.S. bases in the Pacific on December 7, 1941. This event, which dragged the United States into World War II, accelerated preparations at the Hunters Point Dry Docks. On December 18, 1941, eleven days after Pearl Harbor, the Navy officially took possession of the facility and renamed it the Hunters Point Naval Dry Dock. Using emergency war powers granted to it in the wake of the national emergency, the Navy initiated condemnation proceedings against surrounding properties on Hunters Point. Using funds provided by the War Powers Act, the Navy purchased four tracts totaling 537.19 acres west of the shipyard on the Hunters Point peninsula. Initially, 86 homes and 23 businesses were displaced by the Navy's actions and many more were displaced before the end of the war.¹⁸⁸ By the end of the War, Hunters Point Naval Shipyard had grown to include 979 acres of filled and unfilled tidal lands, including six dry docks ranging from 420' to 1,092' in length, two hundred buildings, five miles of berthing space, and 17 miles of railroad tracks.¹⁸⁹ Major grading and filling campaigns removed the hills at the eastern end of the peninsula and filled the shallow tidal flats on the south side. An aerial photograph taken in 1942 shows the preliminary work underway (Figure 42).



Figure 42. Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, March 1942
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco
Public Library

Labor: War Manpower Commission Recruits War Workers to the Bay Area: 1942-1945

The Navy needed workers – lots of them – to work on the expansion of the Hunters Point facility as well as to work on the ships that would be repaired there. The U.S. War Manpower

¹⁸⁷ Herman J. Lehrbach, "Districts: At Hunters Point, A Real Pioneering Spirit," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 19, 1940), 25.

¹⁸⁸ The area vacated was bounded by Coleman Street to the west, Fairfax Avenue to the north, Oakdale Avenue to the south, and San Francisco Bay to the east. "100 Hunters Point Families Out," *San Francisco News* (March 10, 1942).

¹⁸⁹ Edwin G. Schmidt, *History of the Development and Operation of a Naval Repair Yard at Hunters Point during World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Naval History, n.d), 27.

Commission actively recruited workers from across the country to come to the Bay Area to work (**Figure 43**). By 1943, San Francisco had become the largest shipbuilding center of the world, with major Navy and private installations ringing the Bay from South San Francisco to Sausalito and Richmond. Suddenly the San Francisco Bay Area became a primary destination for workers from across the nation, particularly the Old South and the Southwest states of Texas and Oklahoma.¹⁹⁰ Although many were Caucasian workers – especially former Dust Bowl migrants from Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas – approximately half were African Americans attracted by the prospect of high-paying jobs, government assistance with moving expenses, and the chance to escape the Jim Crow South. The Navy paid well, regardless of race, and by the end of the war, the Navy was providing \$22.5 million worth of salaries to workers employed at Hunters Point, creating a prosperous (if monocultural) local economy.¹⁹¹



**Figure 43. War Manpower
Commission Poster, 1943**

Between 1940 and 1943, approximately 94,000 people migrated to San Francisco. Although the racial makeup of this influx is not known, anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority were African American. According to Davis McEntire, a professor at the University of California's School of Social Work, the population of African Americans in the six-county Bay Area region had grown by some 324,000, transforming what had been a tiny minority before the war into the region's largest non-white population. Writing in 1943, McEntire said: "Negroes are rapidly becoming the most significant minority group in California and if the six Bay counties are taken together, it is seen that the largest growth of population, both absolutely and proportionately, occurred in this section of the state."¹⁹² By August 1945, blacks comprised over one-third of the total 18,235 workforce at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.¹⁹³ In that year San Francisco's population was believed to have grown to 827,000, an increase of 30.4 percent in five years. While the city's white population also grew by 28.1 percent during this

period, the black population had leapfrogged by an astonishing 665.8 percent. By 1945, approximately 32,000 African Americans were thought to have lived in San Francisco.¹⁹⁴

Initially upon arriving in San Francisco, many African Americans settled in the Western Addition, where most of San Francisco's tiny pre-war black community had been located. Not only were African American businesses plentiful in the area but abundant rental housing had recently become available in Japantown in the wake of the internment of thousands of Japanese-American residents. In order to be close to their jobs at the shipyard others chose to live at Hunters Point. Initially, they had a difficult time finding housing in the area. In addition to housing shortages that affected all workers, black workers encountered stiff discrimination by potential landlords. In response, the National Housing Authority, in cooperation with the Navy and the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA), condemned most of the remaining non-Navy property on Hunters Point ridge, demolished or moved several dozen existing structures, and hastily

¹⁹⁰ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 133.

¹⁹¹ "City Fights to Block Hunters Point Closing," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 9, 1949).

¹⁹² As quoted in: Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 134-5.

¹⁹³ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-6.

¹⁹⁴ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 133.

constructed 4,000 family apartments and 7,500 dormitory units for single workers. The projects were built quickly. To expedite construction, the “paper” streets dating back to the original South San Francisco Railroad and Homestead Association tract were vacated and replaced with a curvilinear street pattern that better suited the steep topography. By the end of the war, the SFHA administered an astounding 12,233 units of housing at Hunters Point.¹⁹⁵ Additional war workers’ dwellings were constructed near Double Rock and at Candlestick Point, as well as in the nearby Potrero and Portola districts. An aerial photograph taken of Bayview-Hunters Point records the physical impact that these projects had on the district (**Figure 44**).

Segregation vs. Integration: Influx of African Americans Leads to Conflict: 1943-1945

The expansion of operations at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard during the 1940s led to an upsurge in private market construction as well. Typically built on speculation to accommodate white war workers at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, the typical wartime house was a five-room-over-garage plan known as a “Full Five,” or the slightly smaller version called a “Junior Five.” Designed to comply with FHA guidelines and erected in rows on virgin land or as infill projects throughout the city by builders like Henry Doelger, the Stoneson Brothers, and Fernando Nelson, these houses are easily identified by their simple stucco-finished façades embellished with Moderne trim, built-in garages, recessed “tunnel” entrances, and false parapet roofs. Within the Bayview-Hunters Point district, these rowhouses are mostly contained within the Bayview, Town Center, Silver Terrace, and Bret Harte neighborhoods.¹⁹⁶ One of the biggest concentrations of junior fives was completed between 1939 and 1941 by Fernando Nelson on the north and west side of Mt. St. Joseph. These Mediterranean and Moderne-style rowhouses were built on land sold off by the Roman Catholic Orphanage, including the site of the former Magdalen Asylum, which was demolished to make way for the new houses. In regard to pre-war construction activity, the years 1940 and 1941 were the heaviest in San Francisco, with 3,972 houses completed in 1940 and 4,216 in 1941.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 1, 1945), 135.

¹⁹⁶ Construction dates for most post-1906 structures are on file at the San Francisco Office of the Assessor/Recorder.

¹⁹⁷ San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder.



Figure 44. Aerial view of Bayview-Hunters Point, 1945
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection,
San Francisco Public Library

Speculative builders largely avoided building integrated housing for both African Americans and whites. According to an article in the June 5, 1945 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) required that at least one-quarter of the market-built housing be “unrestricted as to racial occupancy.” According to the article, only one builder was willing to build unrestricted homes in San Francisco. All the rest refused, arguing that they would not be able to sell units to white buyers. However, it is interesting to note that the FHA itself would not guarantee loans for open-occupancy homes purchased by African Americans in majority white neighborhoods.¹⁹⁸

The continued influx of African Americans into the previously nearly all-white Bayview-Hunters Point district began to cause friction between newcomers and longtime residents, not to mention hand-wringing among the city’s elites, who began to express concern over the development of “ghettos” in the Western Addition and Hunters Point. In September 1945, a New York-based social worker named Lester Granger weighed in on the situation by encouraging San Francisco to prevent the development of a “substandard” “Harlem” in San Francisco. He argued that the best way to avoid “ghettoization” was to help African Americans find suitable housing in areas throughout the entire city “comparable with their economic and cultural background.”¹⁹⁹ Granger also recommended instituting legislation that would prevent landlords from discriminating on the basis of race and encouraged the SFHA to adopt a policy of integrating public housing projects, which up to this point had not been done in San Francisco.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ “Segregation Issue Halts San Francisco Building,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 5, 1945).

¹⁹⁹ “Authority Warns of ‘S.F. Harlem,’” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 19, 1945).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

As the war began to wind down, federal and local officials began to grapple with the question of what would happen to the thousands of units of temporary war workers housing once the war was over. During the final months of the war, many of the white war workers managed to leave the all-white projects, moving to market-rate housing elsewhere. This option was simply not open to most African American war workers who faced pervasive discrimination in the private housing market. The exodus of white workers had, in the interim, freed up some units in the war workers housing, some of which became available to 340 Japanese Americans recently released from the internment camp at Topaz. Others soon joined them at Hunters Point; their children were bussed to public schools throughout Bayview-Hunters Point and adjoining districts.²⁰¹

World War II came to an end on September 2, 1945 with the Japanese surrender onboard the *USS Missouri*. With the cessation of hostilities, American military personnel began the long journey home. Many veterans returning to San Francisco found themselves crowded out of their own city by the large number of war workers that had arrived between 1942 and 1945. Seeking to address the acute shortage of private housing, the SFHA announced that 300 vacant units in the Bayview-Hunters Point district war workers dwellings would be opened to veterans. The SFHA announcement was accompanied by some basic statistics on its properties in the Bayview-Hunters Point: "Now being housed at the Ridge Point, Middle Point, Middle Point Annex, South Basin, South Basin Annex, Doublerock and two annexes, Candlestick Cove, and Wisconsin War Dwellings are some 26,000 persons, 42 percent of them Negroes."²⁰²

Immediate Postwar Snapshot: Demographic Profile of Bayview-Hunters Point: 1945

The U.S. Census Bureau conducted a special census of San Francisco in 1945. Published August 1 of that year, the data provide a snapshot of San Francisco's demographics mid-decade and accounts for the influx of war workers not recorded in the 1940 Census. Although individual schedules are not yet available, the population statistics collected at the census tract level provide significant insight into the extent of the demographic changes underway in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Similar to San Francisco as a whole, whose population had increased from 634,536 in 1940 to 827,400 in 1945, the population of census tracts L4 and L5 had exploded, growing from 14,000 in 1940 to a little over 43,000 in 1945, an increase of nearly three-fold. Of the total population of the two census tracts comprising the Bayview-Hunters Point district, 9,547 residents were defined as being "non-white," nearly a quarter of the entire district's population. Although the non-white population is not broken down, it can be assumed that the majority were African American because Latino/as were still classified as being white and Asians were still only a tiny percentage of the population.²⁰³

G. EVOLUTION OF BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT DURING THE POST-WAR ERA: 1946-1974

Changed nearly beyond recognition during World War II, the Bayview-Hunters Point district embarked upon its new status as an industrial district dependent largely on the fortunes of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, whose very reason for existence had basically ended with VJ Day. By 1949, the total workforce at the shipyard had declined from an all-time peak of 18,235 to 6,000, severely impacting area residents. Added anxiety stemmed from Navy studies that advocated closing the shipyard down altogether.²⁰⁴ Compounding the situation was the presence of thousands of mostly hastily built war workers dwellings that were increasingly filled

²⁰¹ "340 Japanese Americans Move into Hunter's Point," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 21, 1945).

²⁰² "Project Offers Housing to Public," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 1, 1945), 11.

²⁰³ Bureau of the Census, *Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts L4 and L5, San Francisco California* (1945).

²⁰⁴ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-14.

with unemployed war workers, as well as more recent newcomers lured to San Francisco from the South.

Workforce at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Stabilizes at 6,000: 1949

At least initially, the conclusion of World War II severely reduced the amount of ship repair work going on at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Nevertheless, the installation was kept busy through the early years of the postwar era by virtue of its involvement with Cold War-era nuclear testing activity. Among other things, workers at the installation were responsible for cleaning and disposing of the contaminated ships targeted by a hydrogen bomb in Operation Crossroads at Bikini Atoll. However, employment at the yard declined precipitously from its wartime high of 18,235 to 5,500 in 1949. For some time the Navy considered closing the shipyard because it was thought to be in competition with the older Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo. Hunters Point Naval Shipyard was ultimately saved when the Navy decided to devote Mare Island's facilities to repairing nuclear-powered submarines and Hunters Point for other naval craft. In this capacity, Hunters Point Naval Shipyard was initially used to mothball the Pacific Reserve Fleet. The outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula in June 1950 restored the wartime footing of the shipyard and increased the need for ship fitters, welders, sheetmetal workers, boilermakers, electricians, and general laborers. Indeed, the revival of high-paying industrial jobs at the shipyard induced another wave of migration of African American workers from the South and the Southwest to San Francisco.²⁰⁵

San Francisco Housing Authority Takes over the War Workers Housing: 1946



Figure 45. SFHA Housing Projects at Hunters Point, 1961
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

In 1946, the SFHA assumed control of many of the former war workers dwellings, including complexes at Hunters Point Ridge, South Basin, Double Rock, and Candlestick Point. As mentioned above, the SFHA initially leased many of the vacant units (in formerly white-only complexes) to returning war veterans and Japanese Americans returning from the internment camps. As these groups gradually decamped, the SFHA began to open some of them to African Americans. To meet the increased demand for public housing, the SFHA also began building new public housing projects throughout the

city, with several located in Bayview-Hunters Point. Similar to the war workers housing, these projects were segregated and on October 28, 1949, the SFHA voted to uphold its controversial "neighborhood pattern" policy, meaning that the racial makeup of a particular project would match the population of the surrounding neighborhood. This policy was criticized by many for its unfairness to African Americans, who had far fewer opportunities in the private housing market.

²⁰⁵ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-13.

Nevertheless, this policy was retained despite the fact that by 1949 38 percent of all SFHA units were occupied by black residents.²⁰⁶ Initially, many African American newcomers welcomed the opportunity to live in the new SFHA projects in Bayview-Hunters Point (**Figure 45**). Finding housing outside the area was difficult and, unlike the decaying Victorians of the Western Addition, the projects of Bayview-Hunters Point were relatively new and well-maintained, with splendid views of San Francisco Bay. Former project resident Carol Tatum remembers:

Most people had a view, particularly up on that hill. There is almost a view from every angle...Everything was clean. It was well-tended by the San Francisco Housing Authority at that time. They had yard people that went around and cleaned up. There was no garbage outside...There was not graffiti. That was just unheard of. So it was a well-tended place.²⁰⁷

The temporary war workers housing was not nearly as desirable. Again, according to Carol Tatum: (the) “barrack-type housing...had been evacuated by Navy people and that was used for mainly African Americans who migrated from the South to work.”²⁰⁸ Espanola Jackson describes this housing which her family moved into in the late 1940s:

During that time we did have electric lights, but we didn't have ice boxes, so the iceman came...And a lot of people had to make boxes and put them in their windows at night so the food wouldn't spoil...I don't believe that full electricity came in where you could have a washer or dryer until the '50s and '60s, but [in] the '40s you just did not have that.²⁰⁹

Many African American residents remember the cozy, village-like nature of life in the public housing projects and former war workers housing of postwar Bayview-Hunters Point, recalling that life resembled that of a small Southern town. Because many of the wartime and postwar migrants came from Texas, many residents celebrated “Juneteenth,” the commemoration of the day that word arrived in Texas that the slaves had been emancipated. Although Abraham Lincoln announced his second Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, word did not reach Texas until June 19, 1863. Again, Espanola Jackson remembers:

[Juneteenth Day] was celebrated by everyone; cooking, barbecuing, and just coming together and talking about the old times and doing little play things with the children. We would watch the old folks pick the guitar, and they would just enjoy themselves. It was just a day of being together and being a family with everyone.²¹⁰

In 1953, the SFHA acquired formal ownership of all of the former war workers housing on Hunters Point ridge. Already a decade old, the housing was overcrowded, deteriorating, and without amenities. Replacing the last of the whites who departed the projects in the early 1950s was a continuing influx of African Americans, many relatives of existing residents. Although jobs were hard to come by in most industries, the Navy was still hiring, particularly during the Korean

²⁰⁶ “S.F. Housing Board Keeps Racial Policy,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 28, 1949).

²⁰⁷ Carol Tatum, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-15.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-16.

²¹⁰ Ibid., D-17.

War and anything was better than the Jim Crow society that many had left behind in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.²¹¹ In 1954, neighborhood activist Gene K. Walker and several others organized the Hunters Point Project Committee to lobby SFHA to make improvements to the aging war workers housing and to build a community center for its residents.

Speculative Housing: Residential Builders Construct Housing on Remaining Parcels

Residential builders active in the Bayview-Hunters Point before the war resumed activity after wartime restrictions on building materials were lifted. With most of the level, easily developable sites taken throughout Bayview-Hunters Point, builders had to concentrate on infill construction in built-up portions of the district or on harder-to-develop lots requiring extensive filling or grading, especially the steep hillsides of Mt. St. Joseph, Hunters Point Ridge, and Candlestick Hill. Builders especially active in the area included Fernando Nelson, who developed hundreds of stucco-finished rowhouses on the steep slopes of Mt. St. Joseph, adding to similar housing stock built before the war (**Figure 46**). During this era, most of the remaining vacant land in the district was developed, although a handful of truck farms remained in business until the 2000s.

Postwar Race Relations

Despite the increasing ethnic diversity in Bayview-Hunters Point, many individuals of different racial backgrounds remember a period of relatively little conflict between the races. In contrast to racial strife seen in many urban centers after the war, *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen positively described the situation in Bayview-Hunters point in his 1949 guidebook to San Francisco called *Baghdad-by-the-Bay*:

And if he's quick to point out that the bars and restaurants are often patronized 'by people from downtown,' and that the whites and Negroes and Chinese get along fine as neighbors, and that right over there is one of the town's biggest industries with thousands of workers on a monthly pay roll in the millions – he lives, laughs, and loves in the Bayview district at Hunter's Point.²¹²

This postwar prosperity and relative racial harmony continued, with periodic interruptions, as late as the early 1960s. Memories of an integrated, diverse, and friendly Bayview-Hunters Point district are included in Ben Adams 1961 guidebook: *San Francisco: An Informal Guide*:

Negro leaders see more hopeful signs in [Bayview-Hunters Point]. Negroes have long owned small homes among Italian and other white families. Although more Negroes have moved in, few white families have moved out. Real estate values have not declined. Negro and white neighbors generally get along, belonging to the same community improvement clubs, and PTAs. Interestingly enough, the social problems found in areas of more concentrated negro population are largely absent.²¹³

²¹¹ Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-17.

²¹² Herb Caen, *Baghdad-by-the-Bay* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957).

²¹³ Ben Adams, *San Francisco: An Informal Guide* (San Francisco: Hill & Wang, 1961).



Figure 46. View of speculative housing constructed in Silver Terrace, n.d.

View from Candlestick Hill toward north

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

Creation of Special Industrial Zones: Apparel City and the Wholesale Produce Market

In the wake of the Second World War, San Francisco's civic leaders became alarmed about the exodus of industry to the suburbs. This process had begun before the war but slowed down in response to wartime exigencies. After the war local industrialists resumed their search for large tracts of inexpensive land, better freeway and rail access, and local governments less friendly to organized labor. San Francisco was also substantially built out, with very little land available for building modern industrial plants, most of which required extensive sites in order to accommodate large single-story buildings with exterior loading docks. Aside from infill lots in older industrial districts such as the South of Market Area, the Northeast Mission, and the Potrero district, Bayview-Hunters Point was the last part of the city with ample undeveloped industrial land. Unfortunately, most of it lay in areas that still required extensive grading and filling before it could be used – mostly in the Islais Creek Estuary (Oakinba) and South Basin areas. In addition to topographical challenges, areas like the Islais Creek Estuary were crippled by a twisted network of obsolete street alignments and house lots, which required intervention by the City before development could occur.

In a bid to simultaneously halt the exodus of the lucrative textile assembly industry from San Francisco, as well as to make a large section of the Islais Creek Estuary usable, in the summer of 1946, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to close sections of several streets in the area including sections of Barneveld Avenue and Toland, Charter Oak and Waterloo streets; as well as all of Hecker, Stringham, and Adele streets, to make way for an industrial park called "Apparel City." This triangular area, which still exists, is bounded by Barneveld Avenue to the west, Oakdale Avenue to the northeast, and Industrial Avenue to the southwest. The complex consists of ten one and two-story utilitarian industrial buildings occupied by various apparel-related businesses (Figure 47).



Figure 47. Apparel City, n.d.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

in the Islais Creek Estuary in 1956 (Figure 48). Completed in 1963, the new Wholesale Produce Market consisted of four two-story utilitarian warehouses with recessed loading docks lining their first stories. The interior sides of the four buildings faced Jerrold Avenue. The entire complex was soon also bisected by an elevated section of Interstate 280 when it was completed in the late 1960s. The Wholesale Produce Market was part of a larger industrial park bounded by Toland Street to the west, Hudson Avenue to the north, Rankin Street to the east, and Newcomb Avenue to the south. The Produce Market and the surrounding industrial park are still extant.

Demographic Transformation: Snapshot of Bayview-Hunters Point in 1950



Figure 48. Site of the future Produce Market, 1956
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph
Collection, San Francisco Public Library,

The Wholesale Produce Market was a second City-sponsored industrial park constructed in the Bayview-Hunters Point district during the postwar era. For most of city's history, the San Francisco Produce Market had been located within a section of the Northeast Waterfront bounded by Washington Street to the north, the Embarcadero to the east, Sacramento Street to the south, and Sansome Street to the west. Beginning in the early 1950s, the newly formed San Francisco Redevelopment Agency began making plans to redevelop this area with high-rise commercial and residential towers. In partial recompense, the Redevelopment Agency offered the produce wholesalers a new 25-acre tract

By 1950, the US Census Bureau calculated the population of San Francisco to be 775,357, significantly lower than the high mark of 827,400 recorded in the special 1945 Census but still higher than any other time in the city's history. In contrast, the population of Bayview-Hunters Point (census tracts L-4 and L-5) was estimated to be 51,406, a figure significantly higher than the district's population in 1945, which at that time was a little over 43,000. In 1950 the population of Bayview-Hunters Point was well over one-quarter non-white, mostly African American, a percentage roughly equal to 1945. At this time, the African American population was primarily confined to the former war workers

housing and the newer SFHA projects on Hunters Point ridge. Meanwhile, the rest of the district's population – nearly three-quarters of whom were white – lived in the aging Victorians and rows of pre and postwar Junior Fives in Bayview, South Basin, Bret Harte, and Silver Terrace. Similar to the pre-war Census statistics, the largest groups of whites were American-born and foreign-born whites from Italy, Malta, France, Mexico, Germany, Spain, and Portugal.

1950 Sanborn Maps

The 1950 Sanborn maps illustrate a Bayview-Hunters Point district that had been radically transformed in the 35 years since the 1913-15 maps had been published. In regard to residential construction, most of the older Victorian and Edwardian-era area – especially the area bounded by Hudson Avenue to the north, Lane Street to the east, Revere Avenue to the south, and Quint Avenue to the west – had been almost entirely built out with mostly single-family housing allowed in the 1921 Zoning Ordinance. Additional housing had cropped up on areas previously occupied by truck farms or pasture land, especially in the Bayview, South Basin, Bret Harte, and Silver Terrace neighborhoods. Some small-scale agricultural uses – especially dairies and vegetable and flower growing operations – remained in some of the older homestead association tracts located next to San Bruno Avenue or in the extreme southerly parts of the district, particularly in the vicinity of South Basin.

Traditional multiple-family housing was primarily located along 3rd Street and on the first block of intersecting east-west streets. In addition, the 1950 Sanborn maps illustrate hundreds of war workers' dwellings remaining throughout the district, including the Ridge Point, South Gate, Middle Point, and Harbor Slope war dwellings located on Hunters Point Ridge; Double Rock and Double Rock Annex War Dwellings in the South Basin/Bret Harte neighborhood; and Candlestick Cove War Dwellings south of Candlestick Cove. None of these original war workers dwellings are known to exist.

Industrial development had also grown tremendously in Bayview-Hunters Point since 1915. In keeping with the 1921 Zoning Ordinance, most industrial uses were located along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay and within the South Basin and Islais Creek Estuary industrial areas, which by this time had both been filled and developed with a variety of new buildings housing manufacturing, food processing, and warehousing operations. Most of these postwar utilitarian buildings still stand and many display characteristics of late 1940s and early 1950s-era construction techniques, including poured-in-place or pre-cast "tilt-slab" concrete perimeter walls devoid of ornamentation and few windows and flat or bowstring truss roofs. Others are wood-frame structures clad in corrugated steel and capped by gable-roofs. Most were built with perimeter truck and rail loading docks adjoining the railroad spur tracks that once interlaced the area. Characteristic examples include the former Goodman Lumber building at 445-479 Bayshore Boulevard (demolished), a concrete and wood-frame building with a combined flat and bowstring truss roof (**Figure 49**).



Figure 49. Goodman's Lumber, 445-479 Bayshore Boulevard, 1964

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

Further east, the remnants of Butchertown continued to operate within an area bounded by Arthur Avenue to the north, Lane Street to the east, Fairfax Avenue to the south, and Quint Street to the west. Businesses located within Butchertown included the Bayle, Lacoste & Co. plant located on a block bounded by Mendell Street, Davidson Avenue, Lane Street, and Evans Avenue, Union Products Co., a rendering and tallow manufacturing operation at 1198 Evans Avenue; and the H. Moffat Co.'s huge slaughterhouse complex bounded by Arthur Avenue, 3rd Street, Davidson Avenue, and other properties to the east. None of these are extant, having been demolished in the late 1960s to make way for the India Basin Industrial Park.

In regard to religious, civic, and institutional uses, the 1950 Sanborn maps indicate that the Bayview-Hunters Point district had acquired a large number of institutions, many of which served the growing African American population in the area. In addition to long-time neighborhood institutions such as All Hallows Catholic Church at 1715 Oakdale Avenue and Memorial Presbyterian at Bay View Avenue and Latona Street, newer churches on the maps hinted at the growing ethnic diversity of the district. One of the most significant examples within Area B is the former St. Paul of the Shipwreck Roman Catholic Church at 1515 Oakdale Avenue. Built in 1874 and remodeled in 1922-23 as a combined church and social hall by members of the district's Maltese population, the church building is still use as a church, although in the late 1950s the Maltese congregation sold their old church and built a new St. Paul of the Shipwreck in the Bret Harte neighborhood. Another important Catholic church built for one of the area's larger ethnic populations was St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church and School at 1601 Quesada Avenue. Built in 1922 for the district's French and French-Canadian population, this building still stands, although it is no longer in use as a church. In 1949, the congregation built a new church on the opposite side of Lane Street.

The 1950 Sanborn maps indicate that the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum still stood atop Mt. St. Joseph, although the institution had sold off much of the western portion of its property to housing developer Fernando Nelson in the early 1940s, including the area where the old Magdalen Asylum had stood. Around 1945, the institution sold off the northern part of its property to a developer who then built a new street called Bridgeview Drive and developed a cluster of stucco-finished rowhouses.

Gene K. Walker and the Hunters Point Project Committee: 1954

The mid-1950s was marked by the beginning of a sustained period of activism by African American residents. Most had been in the area for at least a decade, and like longer-term white residents, they objected to the City's unofficial policy of benign neglect. An African American activist by the name of Gene K. Walker formed the Hunters Point Project Committee in the early 1950s to advocate for physical improvements to the Hunters Point neighborhood, where the majority of the district's African Americans still lived. Living conditions in the aging war workers housing had deteriorated rapidly since the war ended and the barren Hunters Point peninsula was devoid of any parks or amenities for children, or adults for that matter, in which to play or relax. To that end, the Hunters Point Project Committee asked the SFHA for \$12,000 to buy and rehabilitate the old South San Francisco Opera House for use as a community recreation center. Although this effort was ultimately unsuccessful, the group brought citywide attention to the plight of Bayview-Hunters Point's growing African American community.

Bayview Neighborhood Community Center

Another important event in the cultural history of Bayview-Hunters Point's African American community was the founding of the Bayview Neighborhood Community Center in 1954. Originally the Crispus Attucks Club (named for a famous black Revolutionary War-era patriot) the

community center evolved into an important cultural center in the Hunters Point neighborhood during the postwar era. The Bayview Neighborhood Community Center was originally located in a 1908 house located at 1201-05 Mendell Street (extant). Circa 1966, the center moved into the old South San Francisco Opera House. The center provided a variety of services to neighborhood residents, including space for public meetings, job training and counseling, games and activities for youth, and arts and crafts programs (**Figure 50**).²¹⁴

War Workers Housing Demolished and Replaced by Hunters View Housing Development: 1956



Figure 50. Bayview Neighborhood Community Center, 1956
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

As mentioned above, many of the “temporary” war workers dormitories constructed in Hunters Point during World War II were still inhabited over a decade after the war. Constructed quickly and cheaply, these buildings – which were not designed to last more than a few years – were heavily deteriorated when they were taken over by the SFHA in 1953.²¹⁵ Appalled by the substandard conditions in these units, Gene K. Walker’s Hunters Point Project Committee demanded that the SFHA remedy the situation in 1954.²¹⁶ In response to local activism, the SFHA

decided to tear down most (but not all) of the war workers housing atop Hunters Point ridge and replace it with the new Hunters View Housing Development in 1956. The new development consisted of 55 buildings containing 10 one-bedroom units, 130 two-bedroom units, 112 three-bedroom units, 64 four-bedroom units, and 9 five-bedroom units (**Figure 51**). All buildings were sited on a steeply sloped, 17.15-acre tract with views to the north and east of San Francisco Bay.²¹⁷ Although designed in a no-frills architectural vocabulary with little landscaping, they were vastly superior to what had preceded them and were therefore greeted with enthusiasm by local residents.

²¹⁴ “The Bayview Neighborhood Community Center,” *The Spokesman* (n.d. 1966).

²¹⁵ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-10.

²¹⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 20, 1954).

²¹⁷ Carey & Company, *Hunters View Housing Development San Francisco* (San Francisco: 2007).



Figure 51. View of Housing Projects at Hunters Point, 1964.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

Expansion of the Industrial Zone – Proposed Filling of South Basin: 1955

In 1955, the Hunters Point Reclamation District, a state-funded agency representing local business interests, began formulating plans to fill the large cove between Candlestick Point and Hunters Point with 40 million cubic yards of rock, at a projected cost of roughly \$10 million. Aware that San Francisco was fast running out of usable industrial land, the agency stated that this project would make San Francisco “again able to compete for new industries.” The reclamation district comprised a triangular area bounded at the south by the County Line, the Bayview shoreline, and the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, with the apex of the triangle located 7,000 feet out in the bay. Most of the area to be filled was shallow, much of it less than 10 feet deep. The agency forecast that the project would raise the value of the water lots in the area from \$365 to \$25,000 an acre. The main problem in this pre-BCDC era was where to find the fill.²¹⁸ The agency hoped to level Candlestick Hill and dump the resulting debris into the bay, increasing the size of the industrial zone at South Basin by 600 acres, or 2 percent of the city’s area.²¹⁹ The project never happened, likely due to increased environmental concerns over bay fill and because the removal of Candlestick Hill would have destroyed a city park and several streets of private housing.

Candlestick Park: 1959

As a part of the city with relatively large reserves of potentially developable land with good freeway access but correspondingly little political clout, Bayview-Hunters Point was often selected as an ideal site for major public works projects. In response, local critics claimed that Bayview-Hunters Point was merely a “dumping ground” for undesirable projects that would never be proposed for wealthier districts. Candlestick Park is a good example of this. In 1958, the New York Giants moved to San Francisco, becoming the West Coast city’s first major league baseball team. Initially they played at Seals Stadium in the Mission district, but this facility was

²¹⁸ The creation of the Bay Conservation and Development Corporation – a state agency – in 1965 essentially ended the unregulated filling of San Francisco Bay.

²¹⁹ Tom Matthews, “Hunters Point Tidelands May Take 40 Million Yards of Fill,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 4, 1955).



Figure 52. View of Candlestick Park, 1963.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

deemed too small and too inaccessible for suburban fans arriving by private automobile. Funded by a 1954 bond issue, in 1958, the San Francisco Department of Parks and Recreation began building a new \$25 million bond-funded stadium on filled land at Candlestick Point (Figure 52).²²⁰ The fill was taken from the east side of Candlestick Hill and used to expand the southeastern corner of San Francisco out into Yosemite Slough/South Basin. The stadium, designed by architect John Bolles with assistance from the engineering firm of Chin & Hensolt, was intended to be a multi-purpose facility,

accommodating both professional baseball and football teams. Indeed, after the Giants played their first season at Candlestick in 1960, the Oakland Raiders, a new NFL expansion team, played their first season at Candlestick as well. The San Francisco 49ers, formerly based at Kezar Stadium in Golden Gate Park, moved to Candlestick Park in 1971 and continue to play there to this day. Candlestick was also used as a concert venue, hosting the last concert of The Beatles on August 29, 1966. Despite its well-deserved reputation for fierce winds, several baseball records were broken at Candlestick, most notably Willie Mays' 512th home run on May 4, 1966, breaking Mel Ott's National League record.²²¹ Candlestick is presently scheduled to be demolished as part of the combined Candlestick Point/Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Redevelopment Plan.

Constructed in the vicinity of Candlestick Park in 1962 was the Alice Griffith Housing Project. It replaced the Double Rock War Workers Dwellings that had been built in the 1940s. At the time, the Alice Griffith project was one of the few SFHA sites outside of Hunters Point and the Western Addition that accepted African American tenants due to the neighborhood policy that only allowed tenants of the dominant ethnicity of the surrounding neighborhood.²²²

Demographic Transformation: Snapshot of Bayview-Hunters Point in 1960

According to the 1960 U.S. Census, San Francisco's total population was 740,316, a significant decline from the three-quarters-of-a-million residents recorded in 1940. Of the total population, nearly 75,000 were classified as African American. Bayview-Hunters Point was divided into three census tracts: L4, L5A, and L5B. Cumulatively, these three census tracts had a population of 37,486, a significant decline since 1950 when the population was then over 50,000. Much of this

²²⁰ Chester Hartman, *The Transformation of San Francisco* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984), 209.

²²¹ San Francisco Giants, *Candlestick Park*, www.baseball-statistics.com/Ballparks/SF/Candlestick.htm, website accessed November 10, 2009.

²²² San Francisco Planning Department, Office of Major Environmental Analysis, *Candlestick Point-Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II Development Plan EIR* (San Francisco: 2009), III.J-8.

decline was likely the result of white flight. As early as the late 1940s, African American families began moving from the SFHA projects on Hunters Point ridge and Double Rock and Candlestick into adjoining areas of single-family housing, purchasing homes from departing Italian and Maltese families. By 1960, African Americans had moved into most of the Bayview and Bret Harte neighborhoods east of 3rd Street. Meanwhile, the areas west of 3rd Street remained predominantly white, especially Silver Terrace. In total, the three census tracts contained an African American population of 17,541, almost 50 percent of the entire district's population. Furthermore, African Americans were more than two-thirds of the population in census tract L5A. In addition to African Americans, there were a little over 2,000 people of "other races," probably mostly Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3,594 residents with Spanish surnames, who could have been Mexican, Spanish, or other Latin American. A brief review of occupational characteristics reveal that unemployment was relatively low for all three census tracts, with the total employed labor force heavily concentrated in the categories of "craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers" and "operatives and kindred workers," two categories reflective of shipyard work.²²³

Tracing the exact trajectory of African American residents from the projects into the single-family neighborhoods of the Bayview-Hunters Point district is impossible to quantify because the individual census schedules for 1960 will not be available until 2030. Nonetheless, the aggregate census tract data provided above, combined with anecdotal information such as oral histories suggest that the district's black population gradually expanded from the projects "on the hill" into the single-family residential neighborhoods of the "flats," beginning with Bayview and Butchertown, and then into Bret Harte and increasingly west of 3rd Street into the Paul Tract and Silver Terrace. Espanola Jackson remembers the process:

Then in the '40s Black people started buying homes in this area. As Blacks would buy homes, they would call it "blockbusting" in the '40s and '50s – to get the Italians out of the community...The house that I owned [had been occupied by] an old Italian couple that had retired. They moved out, so this area became mostly Black people.²²⁴

African Americans did not just move into established neighborhoods; many bought the new junior fives and other speculative rowhouses going up in the Bret Harte neighborhood and elsewhere. Many newcomers were renters who had been living in the older Western Addition. Longtime homeowner Jessie Banks explains:

They said we could move out here and they was going to build schools out here, they was going to build swimming pools, they was going to do all this. I said, "Hell, that's the place for me." And we were going to be able to get brand new homes, get them cheap and everything. I said, "I'm going out there to Hunters Point."²²⁵

²²³ Bureau of the Census, *Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts L4, L5A, and L5B San Francisco California* (1960).

²²⁴ Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-120.

²²⁵ Jessie Banks, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-20.

The rapid influx of African Americans buying houses in Bayview-Hunters Point gave the district the highest rate of homeownership in the city, a point of pride for many of the district's pioneering African Americans. Says Espanola Jackson:

This community has 52 percent homeowners and most of those are Black people. We don't buy, speculative, and move and rent. We are stationary. So this community is built on mostly people from Texas and Louisiana.²²⁶

The 3rd Street commercial corridor took longer to evolve to reflect the district's evolving demographics. Many of the old-line white-owned businesses, including grocery stores, bars, dry cleaners, drug stores, etcetera, catered to long-term residents and many early African American residents of Bayview-Hunters Point reported that they were not always welcomed. In response, some pioneering African Americans, including Sam Jordan, opened their own businesses to better serve the area's growing black community. Nevertheless, the opportunities for blacks to socialize in the Bayview-Hunters Point district remained slim throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Longtime resident Espanola Jackson remembers having to leave the area for recreation: "You had to go all the way over to Fillmore, what we call now Western Addition."²²⁷

Gradually throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, many of the older commercial operations along 3rd Street began to close as older white residents left the area. The closure of these businesses, particularly grocery and clothing stores, inconvenienced the remaining local residents of any race, forcing many to take buses across town to the Mission district or downtown to do their shopping. One of the most unfortunate chapters in the decline of the 3rd Street corridor was the closure of the grocery co-op located at 3rd Street and Paul Avenue.

Southern Waterfront: Port of San Francisco Announces Pier 90: 1962

As part of ongoing efforts of government and industrialists to take advantage of the last stock of vacant industrially zoned land in San Francisco, in 1962 the Port of San Francisco announced its plans to enclose and fill 22 blocks of tidelands located on the south side of the Islais Creek to build Pier 90. The project included the construction of a 6,000-foot dike and filling the enclosed lagoon with 2.5 million cubic yards of mud dredged from the construction of its Army Street Terminal project on the north side of Islais Creek. The dike was partially made of construction debris from the Redevelopment Agency's redevelopment of the Western Addition. The project, intended to create additional space for the Port of San Francisco's new container port facility, added nearly 150 acres to the Bayview-Hunters Point district.

Throughout much of this period, San Francisco relied on the Bayview-Hunters Point district's ample remaining supply of submerged water lots to expand the city's industrial and port zone. By the early 1960s, however, many environmentalists began actively opposing further filling of San Francisco Bay. Their efforts culminated with the founding of a state commission called the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in 1965. BCDC essentially put an end to major bay fill operations, devaluing the hundreds of water lots that extended east from the shoreline of Bayview-Hunters Point to the bulkhead line. The last major filling operation in the Bayview-Hunters Point district occurred in 1965 when a local water lot owner and highway contractor filled 25 acres of submerged water lots in India Basin, using fill taken from the construction of I-280 in Daly City.

²²⁶ Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-20.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, D-21.

Transportation Infrastructure

In addition to having reserves of land zoned for industrial use, the Bayview-Hunters Point district had the transportation infrastructure necessary for modern industrial development, in particular good highway and railroad access. By the late 1960s, the district had acquired access to two major regional freeways: U.S. Highway 101 (the James Lick/Bayshore Freeway) and Interstate 280 (the John F. Foran Freeway). In addition, the district also had several local highways that predated the two freeways, including the Old Bayshore Highway (Bayshore Boulevard), Army Street (now Cesar Chavez Boulevard), and Alemany Boulevard. Equally important to local industries was access to the railroads. The industrial zones of the Bayview-Hunters Point district contained large networks of freight spurs and sidings that provided direct access to the Southern Pacific, Western Pacific, and Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe lines. Altogether, this combined transportation infrastructure allowed local manufacturers to remain competitive by being able to purchase raw materials and ship out finished goods cheaply and efficiently, that is until the railroads began to pull out of San Francisco in the mid-1960s.

Highway 101, San Francisco's main artery to the Peninsula and San Jose, was preceded by the "old" Bayshore Highway. The Bayshore Highway was initially constructed in the 1920s parallel to San Bruno Avenue, which for generations had served as San Francisco's southern gateway to the Peninsula. Designed and built by the State Division of Highways to provide a safer and faster alternative to overcrowded San Bruno Avenue and El Camino Real, the four-lane highway roughly followed the western boundary of the Bayview-Hunters Point district from the intersection of San Bruno Avenue and Army Street to the San Mateo County line. The highway remained in use from 1925 onward, though its lack of grade separation made it dangerous, earning it the nickname the "Bloody Bayshore." Efforts to widen the highway and convert it into a ten-lane, modern limited-access "freeway" began in the 1940s, with the construction of the Bayshore Freeway. Construction began in northern San Mateo County in 1945 and moved into San Francisco in the early-1950s. The modern, elevated, limited-access highway closely followed the alignment of the old Bayshore Highway, allowing the older road to remain as an arterial boulevard renamed Bayshore Boulevard.²²⁸

The Bayshore Freeway was the first installment in a network of freeways that the State Division of Highways (now the California Department of Transportation, or "Caltrans") planned to ring San Francisco. Although presumably good for local industries and suburban commuters, the Bayshore Freeway wrought tremendous physical changes on the neighborhoods it passed through. Constructed atop a raised berm, with double-decked viaducts between Paul Avenue and Alemany Boulevard, the freeway (and the adjoining Bayshore Boulevard) created a formidable physical barrier between Bayview-Hunters Point and the adjoining Portola and Bernal Heights districts to the west (**Figure 53**). Although the freeway alignment was apparently determined by the path of least resistance (i.e., the least number of properties that would have to be condemned to build it), others have accused Caltrans of acting to "contain" the growing African American community of Bayview-Hunters Point to the area east of Bayshore Boulevard.²²⁹ Indeed, for decades the freeway formed a relatively rigid boundary between the heavily African American Bayview-Hunters Point district and the largely Italian and Maltese-American Portola district.

²²⁸ California Highways, "California Highways: The History of the San Francisco Bay Area Freeway Development," Website: <http://www.cahighways.org/maps-sf-fw.html>, Accessed December 23, 2007.

²²⁹ "New Vistas to be Opened," *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 17, 1954).



Figure 53. Construction of the Bayshore Freeway in Hunters Point, 1954.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

Following the completion of the Bayshore Freeway in 1958, the northwestern corner of the Bayview-Hunters Point district got a second major regional freeway, the John F. Foran Freeway (originally the Southern Freeway and now U.S. Interstate 280). Construction of the federal interstate highway linking San Francisco to San Jose via the eastern foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains began in 1958. Massive amounts of earthmoving and grading had to occur to route the freeway along the northern bluff of Mt. St. Joseph, resulting in the demolition of dozens of homes and the severing of many streets that once connected Bayview-Hunters Point to the adjoining Bernal Heights district. Interstate I-280 was largely in place by 1968, providing yet another major barrier, severing many east-west streets that once led to adjoining districts, and effectively walling off Bayview-Hunters Point from the rest of the city. The isolation was more than just physical; with freeways reducing the need for others to enter the district, and public transit options almost non-existent, Bayview-Hunters Point became a place where few outsiders would ever go outside of the occasional game day at Candlestick Park.

The postwar era witnessed the gradual demise of most of San Francisco's railroad service. The first to fall was the Ocean Shore, which ceased service in San Francisco 1921. In 1930, the Southern Pacific ended passenger service on the Mission district/Colma line, although it retained service on the Bayshore/Peninsula line for several more decades. The Western Pacific Railway was the next to leave. In 1960, due to rapidly declining ridership, the railroad discontinued its passenger service from Salt Lake City to San Francisco. Two years later, the Western Pacific's local freight haulage business sustained a major blow after the Potrero Hill tunnel, which connected its freight slip at Islais Creek to its terminal at 7th and Brannan, caught fire and collapsed in July 1962. As soon as the fire was extinguished, the Western Pacific announced that

it would abandon the tunnel and therefore its San Francisco freight service.²³⁰ Within a few years, the Western Pacific sold its freight terminal at 7th and Brannan streets and dramatically curtailed its San Francisco operations. The Santa Fe Railroad continued its local operations somewhat longer, retaining its freight depot and rails until the early 1980s. The Southern Pacific lasted the longest. Its commuter service to the Peninsula continued unabated until it was taken over in the early 1980s by the Joint Powers Authority and Caltrans and renamed Caltrain.

During the postwar period, San Francisco's Municipal Railway (Muni) began the process of eliminating streetcar service in favor of buses and electrified "trackless trolleys." For nearly three decades, Muni had competed against the privately held Market Street Railway, gradually absorbing the latter system's routes as its franchises expired. In May 1944, San Francisco voters approved Muni's purchase of the Market Street Railway for \$7.5 million and on September 29, 1944, the two systems were merged.²³¹ The absorption of the Market Street Railway led to many changes in the City's transit system as Muni management eliminated outdated and/or redundant lines. The abandonment of Muni streetcar lines accelerated in 1947 after voters approved a bond to overhaul the combined system. By 1949 most of the former Market Street Railway streetcar lines had been converted to trolley coaches and by 1951, most of the Muni streetcar lines south of Market Street had been converted to bus service as well. While the trolley coaches required overhead electrical lines similar to the streetcars, they did not operate on tracks and consequently most of the old streetcar tracks were either ripped out or paved over.²³²

Never suffering from an overabundance of transit routes, the Bayview-Hunters Point district made due with only a handful of bus lines following the dismantling of the streetcar network south of Market Street. For much of this period the district's two major bus routes consisted of the No. 15 Third Street (discontinued in 2007 after the opening of the T-Third Muni Metro line) and the No. 9 San Bruno lines, both of which connected the neighborhood to downtown San Francisco; as well as various cross town routes the periodically operated along Evans and Innes avenues, Oakdale Avenue, and Gilman Avenue.²³³

Socio-Economic Conditions in Bayview-Hunters Point: 1965

As the Bayview-Hunters Point district entered the 1960s, growing divisions began to emerge among different sectors of the district's population. First off, although the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard offered employment opportunities to many district residents, white Navy personnel stationed on the base tended to avoid the surrounding neighborhood, maintaining an insular, on-base lifestyle that many black residents of Bayview-Hunters Point perceived as racism. Many black residents of Hunters Point recall hearing Navy personnel recount how they were told: "Don't go to Hunters Point (meaning 3rd Street)." Espanola Jackson remembers:

They had jitneys at that time and the sailors would get in on the base and they would go downtown. They did not make a left turn to come into where our area is; they would make a right turn to go downtown. So the Navy was not contributing to the neighborhood. It was the residents that actually lived in this area that was doing the shopping and the buying...²³⁴

²³⁰ "Railroad Abandons Potrero Hill," *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 7, 1962).

²³¹ Anthony Perles, *The People's Railway: The History of the Municipal Railway of San Francisco* (Glendale, CA: Interurban Press, 1981), 122.

²³² *Ibid.*, 175-6.

²³³ *Ibid.*, Appendix.

²³⁴ Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-25.

Another division that emerged during the 1960s was the widening social and economic gulf between the largely African American residents of the public housing projects at Hunters Point, Double Rock, and Candlestick Point, and the homeowners (also increasingly predominantly African American) of the adjoining single-family neighborhoods of Bayview, South Basin, and Bret Harte. Residents of the projects on Hunters Point began to feel isolated, not only from the city at large because of the lack of local shopping and recreational opportunities, but also social isolation from more middle-class African Americans, many of whom had lived in the district a longer time and had steady jobs at the shipyard. As time went on, the social divisions between tenants in the Hunters Point projects (“the hill”) and single-family homeowners in Bayview (“the flats”) hardened, leading to escalating tensions.



Figure 54. Aircraft carrier being repaired at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, 1963

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

Growing tensions between residents of the hill and the flats aside, many who lived in Bayview during the early 1960s remember a relatively close-knit district where an African American majority lived peaceably among representatives of many different nationalities, including Chinese, Filipinos, and Samoan immigrants, as well as longer-term residents of Mexican, Maltese, and Italian extraction. Drugs had not yet caught on and youth violence was relatively rare. Before the upheaval of the late 1960s and the mass unemployment caused by the closure of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, local resident Pat Womack remembers the district as being a close-knit place: “People in Hunters Point were large families, caring families, people who migrated with

other people which brought other people into the community.”²³⁵

During the early 1960s, many local residents continued to depend on well-paying jobs as skilled craftsmen and operatives at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Rising to a postwar peak of around 10,000 during the Korean War, the number of those employed at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard gradually subsided approximately 7,500 during the 1960s (**Figure 54**). Among many local residents, advanced education was not really a necessity because job training and steady employment were available at the yard.²³⁶ As the 1960s wore on, the number of local jobs at the shipyard, as well as other local industries and commercial enterprises, began to decline as blue collar industries began shifting their operations to the suburbs, and eventually overseas. Some light industry remained, in particular food-packing and some light manufacturing operations but

²³⁵ Pat Womack, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-25.

²³⁶ Steve Arcelona, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-29.

the general sense among neighborhood residents was that economic opportunity was waning.²³⁷

Further exacerbating issues of declining industrial employment and continued white flight was the influx of larger numbers of African Americans pushed out of the Fillmore district, then being cleared and redeveloped by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. In total, close to 20,000 residents –most of whom were African American – were forced out. Although some moved to other outlying neighborhoods in San Francisco, particularly Visitacion Valley and the Oceanview/Merced Heights/Ingleside (OMI) and suburbs like East Palo Alto and Pacifica, many moved to Bayview-Hunters Point because of its existing black population. Between 1950 and 1960, the black population in Bayview-Hunters Point grew by 58 percent and another 17 percent between 1960 and 1970. The era also witnessed a precipitous decline in the area's white population as longtime residents took advantage of favorable mortgage rates available to war veterans to move to the suburbs.²³⁸

Churches in Bayview-Hunters Point

Churches have long played an important role in the cultural life of residents of Bayview-Hunters Point; no less for the thousands of African Americans who made the district their home after World War II. During the war, many African American preachers and ministers arrived along with their flocks, seeking jobs along with the others in the shipyard. However, as soon as they could, many began holding religious services in their homes. As white-owned businesses began to leave 3rd Street during the 1950s, some ministers began opening “storefront churches” along the district’s principal shopping street. Others bought the churches of departing white congregations, such as Memorial Presbyterian or St. Paul of the Shipwreck, and converted them to Protestant denominations serving local congregations. A large contingent of African Americans in Bayview-Hunters Point – especially those from Louisiana – were Catholics, and they joined existing Catholic congregations at All Hallows, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St. Joan of Arc on Quesada Avenue. Local ministers, many of whom also worked in the shipyard, often served as community leaders within the African American community of Bayview-Hunters Point.²³⁹ Still others worshipped in the old-line African American churches that had existed in San Francisco prior to the war, including such stalwarts as Third Baptist, A.M.E. Zion, and Bethel A.M.E.²⁴⁰

During the early 1960s, some members of the African American community in Bayview-Hunters Point criticized their ministers for their lack of effectiveness in confronting the poverty and discrimination facing the lives of their parishioners. The void in this area was soon filled by what many called the “Big Five,” five “strong Black women who took a stand.”²⁴¹ Many were members of the Crispus Attucks Club and today many streets in the Hunters Point neighborhood are named for these women. Longtime resident and “strong black woman” Espanola Jackson describes the first generation of leadership:

²³⁷ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-30.

²³⁸ *The Fillmore: It was Called the Harlem of the West, Then Urban Renewal Came to Save It*, PBS, 2001.

²³⁹ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-32.

²⁴⁰ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 113.

²⁴¹ Pat Womack, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-33.

Eloise Westbrook – she was a big voice in Bayview-Hunters Point. You had Mrs. Julia Commer, Rosalie Williams, Ms. (Bertha) Freeman, and Ocela Washington. They were the Big Five and I tell people that we was the bitty ones because we were following them. But Mrs. Westbrook was the woman I admired so.²⁴²

Other important political leaders during the 1960s include Sam Jordan, known by many as “the mayor of Butchertown.” A one-time mayoral candidate (1963) who ran on a progressive platform dedicated to improving local schools, ending police brutality, and instituting a 30-hour work week to increase overall employment, Jordan was also a pillar of the local business community. He made it a principal cause of his to encourage black residents to support black-owned businesses like his own. By the late 1960s, many of the former white-owned businesses were being purchased by Chinese and Palestinian-Americans, most of whom did not live in the area, further estranging local residents and business owners.

Long Hot Summer: Bayview-Hunters Point Uprising: 1966

By the mid-1960s, tension had been growing in urban African American communities throughout the United States. The tensions were the result of many different causes, ranging from growing ranks of unemployed youth to frustration with what many came to view as officially sanctioned police brutality. In addition, the Vietnam War was escalating and many African Americans wondered what they were fighting for when they were still forbidden from using public facilities and patronizing businesses in many parts of the country. In August 1965, the Watts district of Los Angeles experienced almost a week of intense rioting in response to a traffic stop of a black motorist by a white police officer that quickly escalated. The events of August 11-17 resulted in the deaths of 34 people and the injury of 1,032, as well as an estimated \$40 million in damages to mostly white-owned businesses. In San Francisco, tensions rose gradually over the spring and summer of 1966, beginning with community action to resist the eviction of Ollie Wallace and his family from a dilapidated SFHA property.²⁴³

Meanwhile, on the national stage, President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty programs had disbursed millions of dollars to local Economic Opportunity Councils (EOCs) to spend on helping communities to combat unemployment (estimated by some to run between 15 and 20 percent in Bayview-Hunters Point by 1966). Local EOCs soon came under the direction of more radical members of the community who bypassed the local ministry as the mouthpiece of the community. Using federal moneys, the EOCs began demanding that the City provide services to Bayview-Hunters Point that many believed were being provided to other communities, including day care, Head Start, legal assistance, youth programs, etcetera. The mindset of many community leaders during these heady days is summarized by Lavone King:

We're tired of living like this. You guys are giving all the other parts of the City money, and we get nothing and we want something!²⁴⁴

Activism within the black population of Bayview-Hunters Point, by then estimated to comprise roughly 90 percent of the core area of the district, reached a head in 1966 and 1967. Many effective programs came out of it, including a youth job training program called Youth for

²⁴² Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-33.

²⁴³ *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 9, 1966).

²⁴⁴ Lavone King, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-37.

Service. Groups like Black Men for Action were also founded with the mission of improving the lives of the youngsters in the community. This group was instrumental in founding the Afro Pride Festival which was held every year in the community from 1967 onward. Other organizations that were founded during this time include the second Hunters Point Food Cooperative, at 6190 3rd Street (now Cornerstone Mission Baptist Church). Spinning off of an earlier cooperative that existed during the late 1930s, the second Cooperative Market supplied inexpensive groceries to cooperative members and neighborhood members ill-served by traditional grocery stores, many of which had closed in recent years.²⁴⁵

The War on Poverty programs of the mid-1960s empowered a group of youthful radicals who increasingly supplanted the traditional church-based leadership of Bayview-Hunters Point's African American community. And it was this group that would play a major role in the events that followed the shooting of an African American youth by a white policeman on September 27, 1966. The shooting occurred after a 16-year old teen named Matthew Johnson fled from a car that was reported stolen. After giving chase, the police officer claimed that he fired two shots in the air and one at the youth, but witnesses claim that he fired all three at Johnson. Johnson, who was shot in the back, died in a ditch on the north side of Navy Road on SFHA property. A crowd gathered at the scene while police investigators and medical personnel responded. Word of what happened spread and by that evening crowds of several hundred youth began roaming 3rd Street breaking shop windows, throwing bricks and Molotov cocktails at police, and looting stores. The first call to the police was from a store at 4917 3rd Street. Mindful of the Watts Riots, the SFPD instituted a curfew and closed all bars and liquor stores in the area (**Figure 55**). Following a night of disorder on the streets of Bayview-Hunters Point and The Fillmore, Police Chief Thomas Cahill requested Governor Edmund G. Brown to send 2,000 National Guard troops to San Francisco. With troops on the way, Cahill sent in more than 500 police armed with shotguns to stop the looting. At the request of local leaders, Mayor John Shelley and Police Chief Cahill attended a meeting at the Bayview Community Center to answer questions but they were quickly evacuated when bricks began flying.²⁴⁶ Following this incident, the police marched down 3rd Street firing live ammunition over the heads of the protesters, clearing 3rd Street of protesters from Newcomb to Palou.

Local activists tried to calm down the youths who participated in the rioting on 3rd Street. Sylvester Brown, a youth organizer at the Economic Opportunity Council in Hunters Point, told a reporter: "We're going to work, we're going to talk to them as best we can." Brown, whose voice was bitter and close to tears, told the reporter from the *Chronicle* that the youth who had been killed by the police had attended a youth meeting the previous week about jobs.²⁴⁷ Another civil rights worker told the same reporter: "All bedlam is breaking loose. I hate to see this happen. I really feel bad about his happening here." But he said, the "anger and rage" of the neighborhood youths might be too much for anyone to stop.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-38.

²⁴⁶ "The City's Troubled Night -Looting and Arson Erupt," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 28, 1966), 1.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The next day, on September 28, 1966, a crowd assembled at 3rd Street and Newcomb Avenue. The temperature was a record-breaking 86 degrees and the mood was tense. Around 11 AM, members of the crowd, which had grown to around 700, began throwing bottles and other objects at the police and at white motorists. With the situation clearly out of control, Chief Cahill requested back up. At 4:00 PM, tactical squads made up of police and highway patrolmen began blockading 3rd Street. After about an hour-and-a-half, while waiting for more back



Figure 55. Scene from Bayview-Hunters Point Uprising, 1966
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection
San Francisco Public Library

up, the combined forces began attempting to push the protesters south along 3rd Street. When they reached Newcomb Avenue, the police began taking rifle shots and Molotov cocktails from the windows of the Bayview Community Center. The police fired at the Community Center, silencing the gunshots. Seven people were injured by police gunfire. Meanwhile, the National Guard began marching north along 3rd Street with bayonets drawn.²⁴⁹

Recovery: Post-riot Commissions Promise to Bring Jobs, Education and Fair Housing to Bayview-Hunters Point: 1966

The combined force of police and highway patrol, in concert with the National Guard troops, put a stop to further rioting in Bayview-Hunters Point. In the final analysis, seven people were shot (all Bayview-Hunters Point residents) and several police officers and fire fighters were injured by rocks. Eighty people were arrested citywide in the disturbances. Miraculously, no one was killed. In the days that followed the disturbances, the City and County of San Francisco sponsored a series of commissions, panels, and reports designed to discover the origins of the disturbance and what remedies that could be undertaken to prevent something similar from happening again. Even before the fires had died down, the media began publishing a series of articles on the previously little-known district of Bayview-Hunters Point. According to an article in the September 28, 1966 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Bayview-Hunters Point was "one of the city's most segregated neighborhoods." The article described the physical and social makeup of the district, providing a description of the dilapidated housing projects on the hill, some of which date back to World War II as former "temporary" "shanty-like" war workers' housing. The article concluded by suggesting that none of the \$3.5 million spent by government agencies in the area over the last three years would be enough to tamp down the rising tensions that resulted from growing unemployment and alienation.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ City and County of San Francisco Police Commission, *This is the Official Report by the San Francisco Police Department of the Civil Disturbance in San Francisco and the Events Related Thereto* (San Francisco: n.d.), 16-18.

²⁵⁰ "City Sore Spot that Erupted," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 28, 1966), 10.

Over the next few months, a series of articles appeared in local newspapers assessing what could be done to give San Francisco's 35,000 African Americans "the sort of opportunities and hope that will prevent a recurrence of the bloody riots that exploded in Hunters Point and the Fillmore District this week."²⁵¹ Within a week of the disturbances, Mayor Shelley, federal and state officials, and local business and labor leaders convened a summit to search for the answers. According to the summit participants, everyone agreed that jobs "could supply that hope and sense of participation in the life of the community."²⁵² In response, Chamber of Commerce director Cyril Magnin organized an effort to provide 2,000 jobs for "members of racial minorities." Congressman Philip Burton announced that he would make 1,000 jobs available in local post offices. The San Francisco Civil Service Commission stated that it had 80 vacancies for jobs with Muni and that 700 additional jobs were available in other departments for posts such as stenographers, kitchen helpers, and hospital orderlies. The federal government also stepped in with an announcement that the Office of Economic Opportunity would provide a list of vacant federal jobs in upcoming days.²⁵³

Recognizing that declining employment opportunities at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, combined with the gradual exodus of other high-paying manufacturing jobs from San Francisco, was partly to blame for the troubles in Hunters Point, the executive director of the State Fair Employment Practice Commission called for the formation of a "blue ribbon commission" to conduct a "thorough and dispassionate" study of the disturbances in Bayview-Hunters Point and the Fillmore district in September 1966. Edward Howden, chief officer of the state agency also recommended that efforts be made to "break down the color bars which surround much housing in San Francisco."²⁵⁴ This latter comment hinted at the pervasive problem of housing discrimination that still plagued San Francisco nearly two decades after racial covenants were declared unconstitutional by state and federal courts. The reality for many African Americans was that housing (both rental and for purchase) was difficult to obtain in other districts because realtors, landlords, and sellers were reluctant to rent or sell to blacks.

Several initial solutions proposed by Howden included working with banks and realtors to end "red-lining," a practice making it nearly impossible for residents of inner city (often African American) neighborhoods to obtain mortgages, as well as any formal or informal practices used to enforce segregated residential districts. Howden cited the need to reduce the high rate of youth unemployment amongst African Americans, which was thought to run three times the rate of white youth. High unemployment was frequently cited as a major cause of youth alienation, which often takes the form of "restless or destructive actions." Howden also mentioned the persistence of police brutality in the SFPD despite changes in top management and the institution of training programs designed to curb overt prejudice and violence toward African American residents. Howden also recommended that the SFPD institute regulations that would clarify what officers were allowed to do when confronted with a variety of situations, but that the "weight of the officer's decision would be against, rather than for, firing at a suspect."²⁵⁵

The reactions to the 1966 disturbances and their aftermath varied. Although some welcomed the efforts of outside organizations and government officials to ameliorate longstanding problems in Bayview-Hunters Point, others reacted with disbelief and disgust at the amount of ignorance evident in the actions of those who clearly knew so little about the issues facing residents of

²⁵¹ "Grim Questions for S.F. Leaders in Riot's Wake," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 1, 1966).

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Jerry Burns, "A Call for Full Study of S.F. Riot," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 22, 1966).

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

Bayview-Hunters Point. Despite the good intentions of some in the business community and government offices, the hopes of many in the local community were bound to be dashed by unrealistic expectations. According to Eunice Elton of the Private Industry Council:

It was very interesting. As a result of the riot, the Chamber of Commerce decided to get into the problem and help with the employment problem, and they were so naïve. They went out on the radio and said to everybody, saying "Give us your job opening so the young people can be employed." Well, a job opening for a secretary has to be able to do this, this, this, this. The jobs that came in were jobs that nobody in the unemployment group was going to be able to qualify for.²⁵⁶

Government programs also attempted to provide jobs to local residents of Bayview-Hunters Point but these agencies often assumed that there was little overt prejudice in the workplace and that business and government agencies would be willing to provide extensive on-the-job training to those with few formal job skills. Unfortunately, this level of commitment in the business world was in short supply. Others in Bayview-Hunters Point criticized the Johnson-era anti-poverty programs for spending so much money on setting up expensive new organizations, such as the Economic Opportunity Councils, with extensive payrolls that in the final analysis accomplished very little in the realm of solving specific problems. Some estimate that nearly \$6 million of the \$8.6 million spent on anti-poverty programs in Bayview-Hunters Point were spent on payroll alone.²⁵⁷

San Francisco authorities were perhaps more effective in addressing physical problems, in particular the blighted Hunters Point housing projects. According to an article in the September 7, 1967 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the City's primary aim was "to make the area's ramshackle housing less ugly and more livable."²⁵⁸ To that end, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors appropriated \$350,000, combined with \$150,000 from the San Francisco Housing Authority, to replace the roofing, paint, and make exterior repairs to the projects. Although residents applauded the improvements, there was resistance to the circumstances that forced so many black San Franciscans to live in public housing. According to the Reverend Hamilton T. Boswell, Chairman of the San Francisco Housing Commission:

I have mixed opinions. As chairman, I am proud of this accomplishment...it expresses the spirit of a new day. But as a citizen, I say that this points up the dismal failure of the private housing industry to provide adequate housing for the city's people. I hope the day will come when this will not be necessary.²⁵⁹

The ineffectiveness of government programs to solve the increasingly intractable problems in Bayview-Hunters Point, combined with a growing suspicion of outsiders of any stripe, influenced many to reject mainstream white-dominated organizations and government agencies altogether. One byproduct of the Economic Opportunity Councils was the empowerment of a group of young, radical activists who surged into positions of leadership in the wake of the 1966 Uprising.

²⁵⁶ Eunice Elton, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-40.

²⁵⁷ Tom Flemming, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-41.

²⁵⁸ William Chapin, "A New Look for an Ugly Old Ghetto," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 7, 1967), 1.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Groups that were formed in the days following the disturbances included the San Francisco section of the Black Panther Party. Dedicated to the premise of self-defense and protecting the dignity of African Americans, the Oakland-based Black Panther Party adhered to an ideology of self-help and established programs to benefit members of the community such as free breakfast for children. Other groups that became involved in the community at this time include the Nation of Islam. Founded in Detroit in 1930, the Nation of Islam became active in the Bay Area during the 1960s. The controversial group established ministries in San Francisco and Oakland and made self-help a central part of its mission, including the establishment of bakeries, moving companies, and other black-owned and operated enterprises.

Industrial Development: India Basin Industrial Park: 1970-1972

Although proposals by the Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) to rebuild parts of Bayview-Hunters Point date back to the early 1960s, the 1966 riots in Bayview-Hunters Point provided momentum for funding major redevelopment projects in the area. However, the SFRA faced a good deal of opposition and mistrust among San Francisco's African American community, in large part because of the agency's ongoing redevelopment of the Fillmore district. This project resulted in the demolition of thousands of housing units and the displacement of many of the area's African American residents. Seeking to avoid wholesale displacement again, the SFRA changed its approach in Bayview-Hunters Point, emphasizing projects that would remove "blight" and provide jobs. In 1967, the SFRA designated the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district – an area defined by the San Mateo County line and Candlestick Hill in the south, Bayshore Boulevard to the west, and Army Street to the north – a redevelopment area. Within this area, the SFRA denoted several individual project areas, beginning with Butchertown (Figure 56).²⁶⁰

In August 1968, City Planning Director Allan Jacobs and Redevelopment chief Justin Herman unveiled plans developed by the two agencies to remake "the city's desolate Bayshore area south of Army Street into an American 'Riviera.'" The plan, which quickly ran into trouble with the Port of San Francisco, proposed to redevelop approximately "2,500 acres of buildable acres of land South of Army street and East of the Bayshore freeway."²⁶¹ In addition to other features, the plan proposed 150 units of housing to be built on the slopes of Bayview Hill (Candlestick Hill), 450 to 600 homes on 30 acres at Candlestick Point, and 700 on the water's edge at Candlestick Cove. The plan called for a mixture of subsidized and market-rate housing.²⁶²



Figure 56. SFRA Project Areas in Hunters Point
Source: SFRA

Within six months, this ambitious redevelopment plan had been drastically scaled back to deal with the most pressing issues within the area, in particular the redevelopment of Butchertown and the deteriorating public housing on Hunters Point ridge, the latter area called Project Area A by the SFRA. Funded by a \$30.4 million grant from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the grant would pay for the demolition of the remaining slaughterhouses and rendering plants in Butchertown and their replacement with a modern industrial park. A separate grant of \$33.9 million would fund improvements to housing in the adjoining Hunters Point Project Area. Both

²⁶⁰ Ron Markowitz, "South Bayshore Renewal Project," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 21, 1968).

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

project areas were approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on January 14, 1969. Although separate projects, the adjoining Butchertown and Hunters Point project areas were designed “to provide a one-two punch to deliver housing and jobs to the Hunters Point-Bayview area.”²⁶³

Redevelopment director Justin Herman announced the details of the Butchertown project on January 14, 1969. He talked about how the SFRA would use eminent domain powers to acquire the site – bounded by 1st Street to the north, Jennings Street to the east, Hudson Avenue to the south, and 3rd Street to the west – an area roughly corresponding to the original Butchers’ Reserve. Although some of the slaughterhouses remained, much of the area was apparently vacant or utilized for low-intensity uses such as auto dismantling. Once the site was assembled, the SFRA relocated the 82 existing businesses (including 42 auto wrecking businesses) and demolished 276 of the existing 309 buildings on the site. In addition, the project relocated 62 families who also lived in the project area. After clearing the site, the SFRA re-surveyed the streets to provide larger parcels suitable for industrial or commercial development and installed utilities and other site improvements. Once this was completed, the SFRA began negotiating with potential tenants, who could either lease a parcel and build their own building or occupy a section of the proposed 81-acre, landscaped industrial park (Figure 57). The project, which was to get underway in late 1969, was forecast to be completed by 1973. The SFRA hoped that the project, when completed, would provide up to 3,900 well-paying jobs to local residents of Bayview-Hunters Point. Priority would be given to industrial firms such as clothing and textile manufacturing, printing and publishing, food processing, and electrical works.²⁶⁴

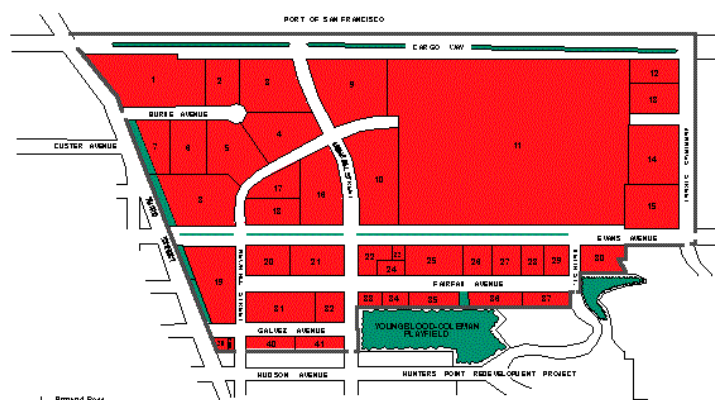


Figure 57. Plan of the India Basin Industrial Park
Source: SFRA

In July 1969, the SFRA officially renamed Butchertown the “India Basin Industrial Park” in recognition of its future use. SFRA director Justin Herman said that the India Basin Industrial Park was an important component of the overall redevelopment of Bayview-Hunters Point district: “Hunters Point will provide the homes, India Basin the jobs for the area’s present, and it is hoped, future residents.” According to Herman, the name India Basin was suggested by “the community” and that a name change was essential to remove the “negative connotations” of the old Butchertown.²⁶⁵

Moving concurrently with the India Basin Industrial Park was the SFRA’s reconstruction of the final World War II-era war workers’ housing at Hunters Point with new townhouse-style units throughout the early 1970s. According to the original plan, the Hunters Point Project Area would

²⁶³ Scott Blakey, “Federal OK to Rebuild Butchertown,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 15, 1969), 1.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ “Butchertown is Renamed Officially,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 16, 1969).

eventually have 2,000 new homes, child care centers, schools, churches, parks, playgrounds, a shopping center, and a community center. Although this project got underway during the early 1970s, in November 1973, the Nixon Administration withdrew \$15 million of funding when the project was only one-third completed. In response to this, members of the “Big Five” discussed previously traveled to Washington, D.C. to have the funding restored for the project, which they were successful in doing.²⁶⁶ Today, the Hunters Point project area is fully completed and built out and the project area was recently retired.

Demographic Snapshot: Bayview-Hunters Point in 1970

Between the census years of 1960 and 1970, Bayview-Hunters Point had evolved into a more solidly African American district, with proportionally fewer numbers of other ethnicities present. Census methodology had changed in the interim as well, with Hispanic surnamed individuals categorized separately from non-Hispanic whites. Bayview-Hunters Point was also divided into a larger number of census tracts, presumably to develop a better understanding of the city’s ever-changing demographics. According to the 1970 Census, San Francisco as a whole had a population of 715,674, a decline of almost 25,000 from 1960. By 1970, San Francisco was well in the grips of major white flight as large numbers of native-born white residents departed for the suburbs. Of the city’s total population, 96,078 were classified as “Negro,” comprising 13.4 percent of the city’s population, the highest percentage that African American residents would ever reach in the city’s history.

Tabulating the totals of eight census tracts comprising Bayview-Hunters Point yields a total population of 30,064 in 1970. Of this figure, 20,586, or roughly two-thirds of the entire district’s population, were African American. Other city estimates put the figure at 79 percent, but the census statistics included some neighborhoods such as Silver Terrace that had not shed all of its white residents. The 1970 Census reveals relatively few foreign-born European or Latino residents, although some census tracts had several hundred foreign-born residents, mostly Italian or Mexican. In regard to occupational status, the 1970 census statistics indicate that the percentage of employed residents remained comparable, or in some cases, higher than surrounding neighborhoods, although there were large numbers of younger people not in the labor force. In regard to occupational categories, residents of Bayview-Hunters Point appear in all categories, although they are most heavily concentrated in the categories of “Clerical and kindred workers” and “Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers.”²⁶⁷

An in-depth series of articles covering Bayview-Hunters Point appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* from February 14-18, 1972. Written for the benefit of curious outsiders who would probably never venture forth to the district, the articles provide an impressionistic sketch of the district’s public housing, suspicion of outsiders (especially whites), and crumbling commercial corridor along 3rd Street. The first article in the series provides some general statistics, arguing that if it was its own city, Bayview-Hunters Point (along with the adjoining community of Visitacion Valley) would be a “fair-sized city in its own right” consisting of roughly 60,000 people, half of whom were under the age of 25. According to the author, unemployment was rampant, with 15 percent of the total population remaining without jobs. The figure was far higher for those younger than 20, who had an unemployment rate of 53 percent. The article also mentions that a high percentage of district residents were on city, state, or federal payrolls and that industrial jobs in the nearby Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and adjoining scrap yards had plummeted.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ William Moore, “A U.S. Shocker for Hunters Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 8, 1973), 2.

²⁶⁷ Bureau of the Census, *Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 606, 608, 609, and 610, San Francisco California* (1970).

²⁶⁸ Tim Findley, “Inside Hunters Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 14, 1972), 1.

The second article in the series described the origins of the Hunters Point “ghetto” and how the generation born to the first influx of war workers was increasingly at loose ends, subject to the influence of gangs like the Sheiks, the Savoy, and the Magnificent Seven; and that drugs, especially heroin, had begun to flood the district after the 1966 riots.²⁶⁹

The third article in the series describes the history of the public housing projects at the top of Hunters Point Ridge and the back and forth over their fate between the SFHA and community leaders, particularly the group of women known as “The Big Five,” who were instrumental in preventing the City from clearing the site entirely and selling it off to private developers. According to the article, some of the war workers’ housing survived as late as the 1970s, even though the SFRA had begun replacing the buildings in the early 1970s.²⁷⁰

The fourth article in the *Chronicle* series describes the so-called “poverty industry” spawned by President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty programs, in particular the Economic Opportunity Councils and how jobs were distributed among jobless young people as a form of unofficial patronage that angered others excluded from the federal largesse. The article also discusses the grass roots organizations that sprang from the wake of the 1966 riots, in particular the group Young Men for Action, the Black Panthers, and individuals such as Adam Rogers and Sylvester Brown.²⁷¹

The fifth and final article in the *Chronicle* series discusses the election of Joseph Alioto and how he had carried Bayview-Hunters Point largely on the basis of his promises to divert federal money into rebuilding the neighborhood. The article discusses how Mayor Alioto founded the 21-member Model Cities Commission, which included such local heavy hitters as Elouise Westbrook, Julia Commer, Espanola Jackson, Adam Rogers, and Ernie Mitchell, and others. In September 1971, the commission established its priorities; including new housing, new direct legal services, strong efforts to lure new industry, and the establishment of a medical clinic.²⁷²

Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Closes: 1974

In 1974, the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard closed, shedding 5,060 workers, many of them residing in Bayview-Hunters Point. Although the Navy tried to find jobs for the laid-off workers at other bases and offered early retirement to others, the impact on the community was devastating, signifying the collapse of the economic monoculture imposed upon Bayview-Hunters Point by local and federal governments. The closure of the shipyard, combined with declining industrial jobs elsewhere, impoverished the neighborhood, with double-digit unemployment and a poverty rate of 20 percent.²⁷³ Many who had taken early retirement were not financially prepared. Furthermore, the base’s closure removed the promise of well-paying skilled jobs for young people in the community. Espanola Jackson describes the impact of the base closure succinctly: “The community died when the shipyard left. There was nothing. Everything that was here disappeared.”²⁷⁴ The closure of the shipyard was yet another economic difficulty for the Bayview-Hunters Point district to overcome during the next several decades.

²⁶⁹ Tim Findley, “The Growth of Hunters Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1972), 1.

²⁷⁰ Tim Findley, “Hunters Point – The Power of Violence,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 16, 1972), 6.

²⁷¹ Tim Findley, “The Poverty Industry in Hunters Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 17, 1972), 8.

²⁷² Tim Findley, “Outside’s Impact on Hunters Point,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 18, 1972).

²⁷³ Daniel Jacobson and Chris Stallworth, *Bayview-Hunters Point: Urban Transformations and Community Cooptation* (Paper prepared for Urban Studies Class at Stanford University, 2009), 13.

²⁷⁴ Espanola Jackson, as quoted in: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal and Reuse of the Hunters Point Shipyard: Vol. 1: Main Text and Appendices* (San Diego: BRAC Operations Office, Southwest Division, 2000), D-44.

H. POSTSCRIPT: BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT: 1975-2009

The period of significance for this context statement ends in 1974, the year that the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard closed. After this year, aside from the construction of some SFHA properties at Hunters Point, the physical fabric of the neighborhood has remained largely the same until recent years. In regard to socio-economic and demographic data, the district has evolved significantly since 1974. In 1980, the black population of San Francisco was 86,414, a decline of almost 10,000 since 1970, indicating that many blacks pushed out of the Western Addition had left the city altogether. Meanwhile, the population of the Bayview-Hunters Point district was 21,638, a decrease of almost 10,000 as well. Of the total figure, 15,793 were black, comprising 73 percent of the total population, a somewhat lower percentage than 1970. Accompanying this decline was a slight increase in other ethnicities, mostly immigrants from Asia (China, Vietnam, and the Philippines), Latin America (Mexico and Central America), the South Pacific Islands (Samoa and Tonga), and the Middle East (Palestine), who began moving into Bayview-Hunters Point and surrounding communities in search of inexpensive housing, good freeway access, and a generally benign climate.²⁷⁵

During the 1980s, Bayview-Hunters Point was ravaged by the crack cocaine epidemic and the health problems and violence associated with it. Gangs and drug dealers became a fixture of many corners and public housing projects, compromising the tight-knit, family-centered atmosphere that had prevailed during the 1950s and 1960s. Murder became an epidemic in the area. Despite comprising only 5 percent of the city's population, in 2004 Bayview-Hunters Point accounted for half of the city's homicides. According to sociologist William Julius Wilson, "High rates of joblessness trigger other neighborhood problems that undermine social organization, ranging from crime, gang violence, and drug trafficking to family breakups."²⁷⁶ According to an article that appeared in the December 16, 2001 *San Francisco Chronicle*, these conditions rendered Bayview-Hunters Point a "no-hope outpost hundreds of miles away from the city's glittery center."²⁷⁷



Figure 58. Hunters Point Power Plant from Heron's Head Park, ca. 2007

Source: Unknown

Environmental health problems have been another perennial worry for residents of Bayview-Hunters Point. As a traditional dumping ground for many of the City's least desirable infrastructure and most polluting industries, Bayview-Hunters Point has recently suffered from some of the highest rates of cancer and asthma in San Francisco, and the nation as a whole. In addition to a 500-acre Superfund site on the shipyard grounds, the district is home to an aging sewage treatment plant and

formerly two older power plants: PG & E's Hunters Point and Potrero Point Power Plants (**Figure 58**). Over the last two decades, the community has tried to have many of these sources of pollution removed or cleaned up, with varying degrees of success. Although the Hunters Point Power Plant was closed and demolished, the Superfund site remains at the decommissioned

²⁷⁵ Bureau of the Census, *Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 606, 608, 609, and 610, San Francisco California* (1980).

²⁷⁶ *Guide to the Joseph Alioto Papers: 1958-1977*, Online Archive of California.

²⁷⁷ Susan Sward, "The Killing Streets: A Cycle of Vengeance," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 16, 2001).

shipyard. Although critics have leveled the charge of “environmental racism,” it is important to note that many of these noxious uses were in place well before the district became predominantly African American in the 1950s. Nonetheless, the response to remedying these situations has been very slow to non-existent, exposing local and federal authorities to the charge.²⁷⁸

Although the Navy closed down its operations, the shipyard continued to operate in a limited capacity as Triple A Ship Repair. In contrast to the Navy, Triple A made few attempts to hire and train local residents and the volume of work was very low, never approaching the employment levels of the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, Triple A was not a very good steward of the shipyard, and when it was found guilty of environmental infractions and fined, it abandoned the shipyard altogether. The abuses of Triple A added insult to injury to a district subjected to the tremendous amount of pollution left behind by the Navy, including buried nuclear waste left over from the cleaning and disposal of ships damaged by the hydrogen bomb dropped on Bikini Atoll during the Cold War.

Not all of the news to emerge from Bayview-Hunters Point was grim. By the 1990s, the SFHA had rebuilt all of the decrepit projects, although many of the 1950s and 1960s-era projects were by then deteriorating. As restrictive housing practices subsided, many African American residents of the district were able to find housing in other neighborhoods, reducing the demand for SFHA housing during the 1980s and 1990s. Although the shipyard never fully recovered its role as a local neighborhood employer, the Bayview-Hunters Point district retains several significant enclaves of industrial uses, providing limited employment opportunities to local residents.

Census records between 1990 and 2000 only hint at the radical changes underway in Bayview-Hunters Point, most of which have only accelerated after 2000. In 1990, the population of the district was 24,893, an increase since 1980. Of the total population, blacks comprised 15,510, or 62 percent. However, it is notable that the absolute number of African American residents only declined a little since 1980, indicating that other groups were moving to the district. Nonetheless, their percentage of the overall population declined. In terms of the entire city, the population of African Americans was 79,039, out of a total population of 723,959, comprising a little over 10 percent. By 2000, the population of San Francisco had skyrocketed to 776,733 but its black population was only 60,515, comprising 7.8 percent of the population. Between 1990 and 2000 San Francisco’s African American population declined by 23 percent. Meanwhile, the black population of Bayview-Hunters Point had declined slightly from its absolute peak in 1990.

By the late 1990s, the fierce drug wars in many parts of the city had subsided, including the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Declining murder rates coincided with the first dotcom boom and subsequent housing bubble of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Housing prices throughout San Francisco skyrocketed, including many districts that not seen such increases for decades, including much of southeast San Francisco, including Bayview-Hunters Point, Visitacion Valley, the Portola, Excelsior, and Outer Mission districts. During this era many longtime African American residents, many of whom owned their houses free and clear, began taking advantage of escalating property values by selling their houses to newcomers and moving to suburbs like Hayward, Antioch, Pittsburg, and Fairfield. There they were able to use the proceeds to make large down payments on new houses in these fast-growing suburban regions. While the absolute and relative changes in the demographic make up of Bayview-Hunters Point will not be known until the 2010 Census is complete, anecdotal evidence suggests that African Americans are only about half of the total district population.

²⁷⁸ Jaimal Yogis, “What Happened to Black San Francisco?” *San Francisco Magazine* (September 2006).



Figure 59. Groundbreaking for 3rd Street Light Rail, 2002
From left: U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi, Bayview
activists Enola Maxell, and District 10 Supervisor Sophie
Maxwell

Source: Office of Nancy Pelosi

The housing boom and the construction of the Third Street Light Rail line (Muni's T-Third light rail line) brought about some of the first major changes to the physical fabric of the Bayview-Hunters Point district. The construction of the light rail line, a 5.1-mile long line connecting downtown San Francisco to the San Mateo County line, represents a huge investment in the Bayview-Hunters Point district and other eastern neighborhoods of San Francisco (Figure 59). In addition to reintroducing street car service to the district for the first time since the 1940s, the line (opened in 2007) resulted in the construction of 10 stations and accompanying street improvements, including new street

lighting, sidewalks, and furniture. Although the construction of the line temporarily disrupted businesses along the alignment, it also provided the impulse for public and private investment in the area, including several new subsidized and market rate condominiums and apartments, new retail businesses, and public open spaces.

Other major projects are underway in the district, not the least of which is the redevelopment of Candlestick Point and the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Encompassing nearly 3 percent of the city's land area, it is hoped that the shipyard and stadium redevelopment projects will bring at least 10,500 new residential units to the district, including one-third of those being below market rate. This SFRA-sponsored project will bring upwards of 20 to 25 thousand new residents to the area over the next decade.²⁷⁹ The project will also result in the construction of new commercial districts and public parkland. Nevertheless, local residents are not all enamored with the project, fearing continued gentrification and the environmental effects of the project, including the grading of asbestos-laden serpentine bedrock.

Today, it is estimated that approximately 34,000 people reside in Bayview-Hunters Point, a little over half of whom are African American. In contrast to many neighborhoods in San Francisco that are heavily immigrant, over half of all residents are California-born, with another quarter born in a southern US state. Most of the remaining 20 percent were born overseas, although this figure is growing as more Asians, particularly Chinese and Filipino immigrants, take up residence in Bayview-Hunters Point. A significant number of Mexicans and other Latin American people have moved to the district, taking advantage of inexpensive single-family properties. Anecdotally speaking, many of the Chinese who have moved to the area are ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. Household size is also growing, a marker of increasing numbers of immigrants in the area.²⁸⁰ The population of native-born whites has also appeared to increase slightly after

²⁷⁹ San Francisco Office of Workforce and Economic Development, *The Bayview Waterfront: Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Point* (San Francisco: 2009).

²⁸⁰ Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Committee (PAC) and San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) Long Range Planning/Technical Staff. *Bayview Hunters Point Community Revitalization Concept Plan* (San Francisco: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 2002), 28-29.

many decades of decline. By 2000, only 11 percent of the district's population was white but since then some white "urban pioneers" have moved to the district, particularly those seeking affordable homes or those desiring historic properties to rehabilitate. Rates of homeownership remain high at 55 percent, significantly higher than the 35 percent for the city as a whole. The 2010 Census will reveal the true diversity of the district.

I. AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1841-2009

African Americans have lived in San Francisco ever since there was a San Francisco. One of the earliest persons of African heritage to take up residence in what is now San Francisco was William Alexander Leidesdorff (**Figure 60**). Born in the Virgin Islands to a Danish sugar planter father and a native-born woman of mixed African and Carib ancestry, Anna Marie Spark, Leidesdorff left the Virgin Islands for New Orleans as a teenager to engage in maritime trade. As his fortunes increased, he became a ship captain, regularly sailing between New Orleans and New York. Heartbroken in the wake of a broken engagement, Leidesdorff decided to leave New Orleans and sail to Yerba Buena to trade. He sold his personal property and purchased a 106-ton schooner called the *Julia Ann* and sailed around Cape Horn to Yerba Buena Cove. Upon arriving in what is now San Francisco, Leidesdorff launched the first steamship in California, the *Sitka*. Leidesdorff captained this vessel on scheduled trips to Sonoma, Santa Clara, and eventually Sacramento. Among other business ventures, Leidesdorff built the first hotel in San Francisco, the City Hotel, located at the corner of Clay and Kearny streets. Meanwhile, he continued his trading business, building a warehouse on the corner of what is now the intersection of California and Leidesdorff streets. In 1845, prior to America's conquest of California, Leidesdorff was appointed vice counsel to Mexico (Leidesdorff himself became naturalized in 1844). In 1846, he gave assistance to the John C. Fremont and the participants in the Bear Flag Revolt. As the owner of Yerba Buena's largest and best-appointed house, Leidesdorff hosted most out-of-town dignitaries. A political figure, Leidesdorff sat on the ayuntamiento, the pueblo council. He was also the town treasurer and sat on the school board when the first school in Yerba Buena was built. William Leidesdorff died of a fever in 1848 at the young age of 38. After an elaborate state funeral, Leidesdorff was buried at Mission Dolores.²⁸¹



**Figure 60. William
Leidesdorff**
Source: California State
Library

At the middle of the nineteenth century, following the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, the San Francisco Bay Area quickly became a place both rife with opportunity and relatively unfettered by historical prejudices. This unique combination of conditions attracted a widely varied influx of opportunity-seekers, and African Americans represented a slim but successful fraction of this influx [This chapter will use the term African American consistently, while recognizing that preferred language has both changed over time and may again change]. The state census of 1852 lists the African American population of San Francisco at 464 persons, slightly over one percent of the total city population of 34,776. By 1860, the number had jumped to 1,176, slightly over two percent of the total city population of 56,776. This group of earliest African Americans was of diverse origin: in a city that consistently boasted high percentages of foreign-born residents, the African Americans in San Francisco had a higher rate of foreign-born status than those in any other city besides New York. Residents claimed origins from the East Indies,

²⁸¹ Sue Bailey Thurman, *Pioneers of Negro Origin in California* (San Francisco: Acme Publishing Co., 1952).

Canada, Central America, South America, the Cape Verde Islands and the African continent, as well as European countries including Portugal, Spain, France, and England.²⁸²

Arrivals from other areas of the United States were roughly split between northern and southern states in the early years, although later decades of the nineteenth century saw an increase in southerners and people from within California.²⁸³ The early census lacked nuanced language necessary to draw an accurate racial portrait of a city like San Francisco, and combinations of ethnicities and racial mixtures likely led to vagaries and census recording errors during this era.²⁸⁴ However, much like other arrivals to the city, early African American settlers in San Francisco were characterized by certain self-selecting traits: they were adventurous, they were opportunistic, they were self-motivated and unburdened by the extreme poverty that would prohibit such a large journey of relocation, they were largely single, young, and they were here to work and make money.

Despite the promise implicit in the formation of a new city, endemic racial prejudice largely prohibited African Americans from attaining professional-level jobs in this emerging merchant city. However, the live-and-let-live attitude that characterized the bustling city enabled African Americans to both find and create a range of employment opportunities for themselves. Many African Americans arrived in San Francisco as employees on ships, and remained employed as mariners, both on tall ships traveling worldwide and on steamboats that navigated the local waterways to Sacramento and other gold rush towns. Some transferred skills they had learned on the ships to mainland occupations, with recorded instances of ship cooks starting restaurants, waiters opening dining halls, and porters establishing boarding houses.²⁸⁵



Figure 61. William T. Shorey and family, ca. 1890

Source: National Park Service

Other African Americans were active as seamen employed in the local whaling industry. Whaling had historically been centered in New Bedford, Massachusetts. There, a large percentage of the crews had been black – mostly from the West Indies – or mulattoes from the Cape Verde Islands. This tendency to have mixed-race crews remained the norm long after the epicenter of the American whaling industry relocated to San Francisco in the 1870s. At least one African-American whaler rose to the rank of captain, William T. Shorey (**Figure 61**). Shorey was born in Barbados, the son of a Scottish sugar planter and a local woman of mixed African and Amerindian ancestry. Whaling brought him to San Francisco in the 1870s and in 1886 he became a captain. He married the daughter of a prominent African American family and prospered in his new life in San Francisco, remaining in the business until 1908 when steam ships took the place of sailing vessels.

²⁸² Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 18.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

Some African Americans came to town with traveling entertainment shows and stayed to set up permanent venues, such as The Iron Clad at 420 Pacific Street or The Lincoln Exchange on Washington Street.²⁸⁶ These venues employed African Americans at all levels, from proprietors and entertainers down to chefs, waitresses and doormen. A small number of African Americans arrived as soldiers in African American regiments stationed at the Presidio during the Spanish American War. In later decades, as the railroad supplanted ships as the main method of commerce and travel, African Americans found work on the transcontinental rail lines as redcaps, cooks, waiters, and porters. These and similar service positions emerged as the dominant occupations available to the African American population: the 1860 census recorded over 80 percent of San Francisco's African American population working in service positions, with men employed largely as cooks and in hotels, and women working as domestics.²⁸⁷ Over 200 African Americans were employed in these service positions by the Palace Hotel in the 1870s and 1880s, before union demands saw them dismissed in 1889.²⁸⁸ However, despite the limitations placed on the types of jobs they were permitted to attain, African Americans enjoyed fairly stable work security through the early decades of their settlement in San Francisco, registering the lowest percentage of people living in dire poverty of any ethnic group in the city.²⁸⁹ Additionally, a small but significant number of African Americans were able to amass considerable fortunes, primarily through diligent savings and investments in real estate, laying the foundation for the later emergence of a black middle and upper class in San Francisco.

Early African American residential patterns mainly reflected the necessity of living within walking distance of employment. Thus, the earliest years saw many African Americans living at or near the waterfront, from just south of Market Street, around the edge of the waterfront north towards Fort Mason.²⁹⁰ Others lived scattered around the entertainment district bounded by Stockton Street, Kearney Street, Washington Street, and Broadway.²⁹¹ As employment shifted toward the railroads and hotel service, residential patterns expanded south of Market Street, closer to the rail terminal at 3rd and Townsend streets, and the Palace Hotel at Market and New Montgomery streets. African Americans were recorded as residing in houses both as owners and renters, in rented flats, in small rooms above storefronts, and in boarding houses both segregated and integrated. Some African Americans chose to live with groups with which they felt cultural affinity, with documented cases of African Americans living in Mexican, Chinese, and Italian neighborhoods.²⁹²

While the small emerging middle and upper class African American community lived along Sacramento Street and Washington Street, more typically, African Americans and their families settled on the brick lanes near Broadway and Powell Street or the secondary streets south of Market Street. By the later decades of the nineteenth century, several African American families could be found on each of the blocks of the long narrow streets of Minna, Tehama, and Natoma.²⁹³ Notably, in a city characterized by ethnic enclaves, no distinctly African American neighborhood emerged during these years. Although racial prejudice certainly did affect African Americans as they made individual housing choices, no overarching external restrictions and no internal compulsions motivated the formation of a distinctly African American residential enclave.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 80.

²⁸⁷ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 14.

²⁸⁸ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 16.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 26.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 76.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 79.

²⁹² Ibid., 81.

²⁹³ Ibid., 97.

Almost immediately upon settling in San Francisco, African Americans began to organize and advocate for civil rights which, while routinely denied in eastern states, they had hope might be available to them in this emerging new city. Several African American newspapers and journals were established to educate people about issues and actions. The first African American newspaper on the west coast, *The Mirror of the Times*, was established in San Francisco in 1857, and was followed by dozens of others, including the *San Francisco Pacific Appeal*, the *Elevator*, the *San Francisco Vindicator*, and the *San Francisco Sentinel*.²⁹⁴

The right to testify in court against whites was prominent on the agenda of early African Americans in San Francisco, a right that African American leaders demanded in print in the *Alta California* in 1851.²⁹⁵ Without this right, African Americans remained extremely vulnerable to the piratical atmosphere of the city during its early years. In 1852, the Franchise League was established with the goal of securing equal voting rights for African Americans.²⁹⁶ Despite the tireless work of petition drives and the establishment of an African American state convention, these basic civil rights were slow in coming; the right to testify in court was not achieved until 1863, and African Americans did not receive suffrage any earlier than the federal passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870.²⁹⁷

The integration of San Francisco public schools, which had been officially segregated starting in 1854, was also a persistent issue through these decades. In the mid-1870s, equal access to education was described as “paramount to all other considerations” in the *Pacific Appeal*.²⁹⁸ After a court decision which briefly created a “separate but equal” mandate in 1872 (twenty-two years before *Plessy v. Ferguson*), San Francisco schools were integrated, largely as a cost-cutting measure, in 1875.²⁹⁹ Further along the educational spectrum, the University of California at Berkeley matriculated its first African American students in 1881.³⁰⁰

Despite these slow but steady advances, larger changes were beginning to constrict African Americans’ ability to achieve success in San Francisco. As noted earlier, San Francisco’s first decades of existence were characterized by a chaotic, live-and-let-live attitude, which enabled African Americans and other ethnic minorities to pursue their individual goals within a teeming crowd of opportunists. As the city became more economically and socially established, this live-and-let-live attitude waned, and was supplanted by creeping nativism and increasingly overtly racist prejudices. Labor unions, including the Building Trade Council and the San Francisco Labor Council, developed strict racial exclusionary policies, which severely curtailed African Americans’ ability to achieve industrial and manufacturing work.³⁰¹ Increasingly, even service work was affected by racial policies of unions; in 1889, over 200 African American were dismissed from service positions at the Palace Hotel, a move largely attributed to the emerging power of the all-white Cooks and Waiter’s Union.³⁰²

African Americans who had been free to settle where they wished began to report housing discrimination. In 1889, author and newspaperman Richard C. O. Benjamin complained, “Right here in San Francisco, is it impossible for respectable [African American] families to rent homes

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 217.

²⁹⁵ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 16.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 17.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 18.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 60.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 13.

³⁰² Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 37.

except in certain communities.”³⁰³ The combination of labor discrimination and housing discrimination, along with disillusionment about the slow achievement of civil rights, likely diminished African Americans’ enthusiasm for the city, and word of mouth likely deterred African American migration to San Francisco during these decades. Better employment opportunities in manufacturing existed in the cities of the northeast, and the sheer distance of San Francisco from the south and from other African American population centers combined to keep the number of migrants low. These factors, combined with the low birth rate and small family size of San Francisco’s African Americans, served to actually diminish the total African American population in San Francisco, which dropped from 1,847 in 1890 to a mere 1,654 in 1900, or less than one half of one percent of a total city population of 342,782 people.³⁰⁴

At the time of the 1906 earthquake, the African American population of San Francisco, already on the wane, was dealt another serious blow by the location and the scope of the damage (Figure 62). Many African Americans still resided downtown, in flats and boardinghouses which were destroyed and not replaced in the course of rebuilding.³⁰⁵ Former downtown dwellers had to move out to other neighborhoods, and African Americans often found themselves at the bottom of the prospective pile in a new city landscape which was short on housing for everyone. Some settled in the Western Addition, renting flats along Bush, Pine, Sutter, and Post Streets, or in rooms above storefronts on Divisadero and Fillmore Streets. However, many African Americans chose to move across the Bay to Oakland, where large plots of available land, a lower cost of living, and less restricted employment opportunities in the rail yards proved to be a mighty draw.³⁰⁶ The 1910 census registered another drop in San Francisco’s African American population, now a miniscule 1,642 people, or less than one third of one percent of the city population of 416,912.

For the small group of African Americans who remained in San Francisco, the decades after the earthquake proved difficult in terms of finding and keeping quality employment. Although the economy of the city was expanding, African Americans experienced little occupational advancement and continued to be relegated to work in service positions. The 1910 census registers close to 50 percent of African American men and over 70 percent of African American women employed at domestic or personal service work.³⁰⁷ No other segment of the economy employed African Americans in even remotely similar percentages; the next largest percentage finds 10 percent of both men and women working in manufacturing and 10 percent of men working in transportation. Ten years later, African American men had made gains in manufacturing (up to 27 percent) and had reduced their personal service employment down to 40 percent, but there were only negligible single point gains in other areas, including professional, clerical, and transportation employment.



Figure 62. African American couple standing outside their house during the 1906 Earthquake and Fire
Source: Library of Congress

³⁰³ Ibid., 102.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.

³⁰⁵ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 23.

³⁰⁶ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 102.

³⁰⁷ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 41.

For African American women, the situation had actually become worse, with domestic employment now up to over 80 percent and static percentages or decreases in all other areas, including clerical employment, at a time when overall clerical employment for women was rapidly expanding.³⁰⁸ These disheartening statistics earned San Francisco a reputation as a city to be avoided by African Americans and describe the imbalanced economic situation in which African Americans were already immersed as the country began to head into the Great Depression.

During these decades, African Americans formed and participated in a myriad of political organizations and social clubs which served to defend and protect them from the social and economic injustices to which they continued to be exposed. After a 1913 speaking tour which brought W.E.B. Dubois to San Francisco, the Bay Area chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), headquartered in Oakland, was established in 1915.³⁰⁹ The NAACP supported a range of issues during these decades, both national issues like federal anti-lynching legislation, and local issues, including conducting an investigation into a slight but noticeable rise in police brutality cases within the city.³¹⁰



Figure 63. Bethel A.M.E. Church, 916 Laguna Street, 1964 (demolished)

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

During its earliest years, the NAACP boasted membership across the economic spectrum of the African American community. However, by the mid 1920s, the United Negro Improvement Association, a pan-African education and support group established by Marcus Garvey, began to attract a greater portion of the African American middle and working class community.³¹¹ Despite rivalries between leadership of the groups, both organizations promoted similar agendas of education and activism for civil rights. On a social level, African Americans established social and fraternal clubs, such as the Booker T. Washington Country Club, the Kalender Klub, Cosmos Club, as well as smaller groups like the Monarchs, the Socialettes, the Alexander Dumas Club, and the Carpe Deum Club.³¹² The activities of these groups ranged from dancing and card playing to collection and

distribution of money and resources to low-income families. These political and social clubs, in addition to the large African American churches such as Third Baptist, A.M.E. Zion, and Bethel A. M. E. (**Figure 63**), served to knit together the small African American community, and provide a network of protection from ongoing civil and economic injustices.³¹³

At the start of the Great Depression, in 1930, San Francisco's African American population stood at 3,803, about one half of one percent of the total city population of 634,394. Oakland, with a total population less than half that of San Francisco, had an African American community twice

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 44.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 76.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 81.

³¹¹ Ibid., 82.

³¹² Ibid., 67.

³¹³ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 113.

the size of San Francisco's. And Los Angeles, the largest city in California with double the total population of San Francisco, boasted an African American community ten times the size of San Francisco's.³¹⁴ When the national economy began its precipitous slide, California, with its large agricultural and manufacturing sectors, quickly found itself staggeringly affected. As early as 1931, one in three of Los Angeles's African Americans, who had worked disproportionately in the heavily affected manufacturing sector, were out of work.³¹⁵

In San Francisco, due both to the relative diversity of the economy and to their general exclusion from manufacturing occupations, African Americans were initially sheltered from the downturn and lost their jobs at slower rates and in lower percentages than their counterparts in Los Angeles and Oakland.³¹⁶ Additionally, small family size and the longstanding prevalence of African American women in the workforce further served to shelter African Americans from the effects of the Depression. However, as the Depression wore on, early statistics reversed, and African Americans eventually found themselves unemployed at higher percentages than other groups in the city.³¹⁷

African Americans made the necessary adjustments, which often included consolidating households of extended families, accepting boarders into their homes, taking on second jobs, and accepting work at jobs which they may have previously considered below their class or status level. African Americans welcomed the federal relief programs of the New Deal, particularly the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration, which quickly came to employ a disproportionately large percentage of African Americans.³¹⁸ Though these programs were socially progressive, they were by no means racially progressive and took no steps to dismantle the status quo of racial segregation in employment. The majority of African American relief workers were relegated to the same type of service and unskilled labor positions they had traditionally been employed at before the Depression.³¹⁹

However, some improvement in the variety of occupational types available to African Americans did come during this time, especially for African American women. Employed at over 80 percent as domestics before the Depression, the lack of relief employment in the domestic field necessitated reassignment for these women, often to semiskilled jobs. Although half of African American women remained employed as domestics in 1937, over 40 percent now worked at semiskilled jobs, a percentage over three times higher than their male counterparts.³²⁰ Another occupational development during this time which benefited African American male workers was the 1934 racial integration of the International Longshoreman's Union, which, after the maritime strike of 1934, brought African American men under Union employment protection and paid them at salaries equivalent to those of their white counterparts.³²¹

As the Depression waned and the economy began to rebound, persistent racial discrimination and the limited availability of new jobs combined to ensure that African Americans were often the last to transition to work in the private sector. African Americans remained enrolled in the various labor relief programs of the New Deal for significantly longer than their white

³¹⁴ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 22.

³¹⁵ Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor, ed. *Seeking El Dorado* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 23.

³¹⁶ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 117.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 129.

counterparts.³²² It was not until the outbreak of the Second World War that the city was able to again employ its full population.

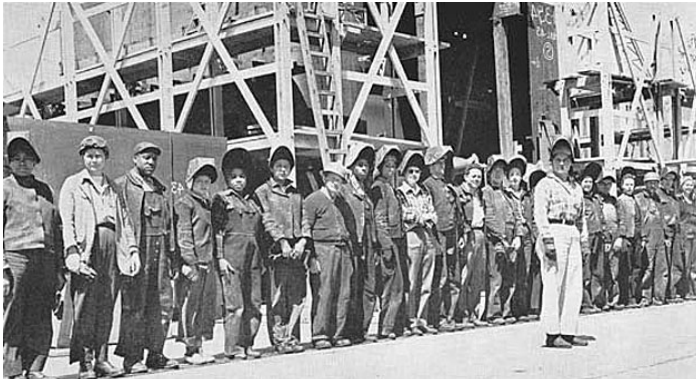


Figure 64. Workforce at Marinship, Sausalito, ca. 1943
Source: National Park Service

The Second World War brought a demographic convulsion to San Francisco unmatched by anything since the Gold Rush had transformed a sleepy village into a booming metropolis nearly 100 years prior. The years between 1940 and 1945 saw a 30 percent increase in the total population of San Francisco, and an astounding 665.8 percent increase in the African American population.³²³ The rapid emergence of San Francisco and the entire Bay Area as the

nation's shipbuilding and defense production center was behind this influx. Federal agencies like the United States War Manpower Commission and private employers like the Kaiser shipbuilding yards were aggressively recruiting workers from around the country to move to the Bay Area to work in these industries (Figure 64).

A new federal guarantee, in the form of Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, forbade discrimination "in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin," paving the way for African Americans to participate fully in the new wartime economy.³²⁴ This Order opened a window for African Americans to enter into the skilled and semiskilled occupations that made up a large part of the new defense industry and that had long been the purview, in San Francisco, of white workers. However, during the early years of the war, industries were slow to change established patterns of racial discrimination in hiring. Enforcement of the Executive Order fell to another federal agency, the Fair Employment Practices Committee, which had a regional office in San Francisco and took an active role in investigating complaints of discrimination and guiding contractors towards compliance with the law. The FEPC successfully guided *every* reported case of racial discrimination towards acceptable resolution, using an aggressive follow-up procedure to ensure lasting compliance.³²⁵ These heroic efforts, combined with continued activism by African Americans to fully integrate the area's labor unions, fundamentally restructured African American employment patterns in San Francisco. By 1943, over three-quarters of African Americans were working in industrial employment.³²⁶

At the start of the war, in 1940, San Francisco's African American population stood at slightly less than 5,000 people. Most of these people were long standing residents of the city, many descended from pioneer African American settlers. They were largely a close-knit and cosmopolitan group, with a clearly defined class structure and a well developed pattern of interconnection through years of club and church affiliations.

³²² Ibid., 113.

³²³ Ibid., 135.

³²⁴ U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/eo-8802.html>.

³²⁵ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 147.

³²⁶ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 167.

Between 1941 and 1945, San Francisco gained over 27,000 African American migrants.³²⁷ In addition to their sheer numbers and rapid arrival, different cultural and generational associations characterized these migrants, quickly reshaping the demographic profile of African Americans in San Francisco. The World War II migrants were overwhelmingly from the southern states; just over 50 percent came from the states of Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, and Arkansas, and Mississippi contributed another large sector.³²⁸ They were, on average, slightly younger than the existent San Francisco population, with the average age being 23 as opposed to the native San Franciscan's 26 years.³²⁹ Most migrants arrived as family units, or quickly sent for their family after their arrival. Their families were of larger size and headed by dramatically younger heads-of-household; one third of migrant family heads were younger than thirty years old, compared to only one seventh of non-migrant heads.³³⁰

The promise of well-paid industrial employment, backed by federal law, brought a certain level of confidence to the new arrivals. Additionally, arrivals from the South had left restrictive Jim Crow laws behind, and the elevated level of personal freedom likely also contributed to this confidence. This confident attitude, however, occasionally brought the new arrivals into conflict with native-born African Americans, who, despite decades of tireless activism, had not been able to achieve the occupational advances that had so rapidly been bestowed on the new arrivals. Race was not an immediate bond, as often the cultural gap between the new southern arrivals and the sophisticated city dwellers seemed impossibly wide. Natives and newcomers were described as "like two different peoples," and the newcomers were characterized as "backwards" by some natives.³³¹ However, the bustle of good employment, the similar goals of improving the lives of their families and children, the increasing density of racially segregated neighborhoods, and the eventual intermarriage and merging of families soon brought these groups into general accord, creating a multifaceted and largely cohesive African American community through the later years of World War II.

The difficulty of finding housing in a city that had been rapidly stretched beyond its limits was a persistent complaint of all new migrants to San Francisco – both black and white. Housing shortages were so acute that recruitment of workers for the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard was halted for the first half of 1943 because the city had literally run out of housing.³³² In the search of decent housing, the African American population experienced the additional burden of increasing racial discrimination. Before World War II, African Americans had experienced housing discrimination in particular sections of particular neighborhoods, but in general African Americans were free to settle wherever their social class and income allowed them to throughout the city. The rapid influx of African Americans may have exacerbated racist attitudes in San Francisco that had, in the face of such a small African American population, been able to lay dormant through the city's history. Restrictive covenants, which had been developed to exclude Chinese Americans from certain neighborhoods during early settlement of the city, were reinvigorated during World War II, and over half a dozen neighborhoods now explicitly prohibited African Americans from renting or purchasing real estate.³³³

As early as 1930, a noticeable concentration of African Americans lived along Fillmore Street, thoroughly intermingled with a large population of Japanese Americans, as well as Filipino and

³²⁷ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 166.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

³³¹ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 173.

³³² Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 172.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 173.

white residents. During the 1940s, especially after Japanese American removal in 1942, African Americans began settling in the Fillmore district and the Western Addition, to the exclusion of almost all other neighborhoods in San Francisco. Researcher Charles S. Johnson, writing in his book *The Negro War Worker in San Francisco*, observed: "a concerted effort is being made by neighborhood groups, merchant associations and improvement clubs to restrict the area of living for Negro families to the present boundaries of the Fillmore district."³³⁴ By 1943, in the Western Addition, approximately 9,000 African Americans were crowded into a neighborhood that formerly housed just under 5,000 Japanese Americans.³³⁵ For the first time in its history, San Francisco now had what could be truly described as an African American neighborhood.



Figure 65. Temporary war workers housing at Hunters Point, 1944
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

In Hunters Point, in the neighborhood surrounding the shipyards, the federal government intervened in San Francisco's housing problem in 1942 by constructing 5,500 units of temporary housing ranging from plywood dormitories to house trailers (Figure 65). By 1945, federal building had created over 12,000 housing units in Hunters Point, housing 26,000 persons.³³⁶ This housing was

intended for Navy employees and their families, and as the workforce was integrated, the housing was, by default, completely integrated: in 1945, 42 percent of the population of Hunters Point was African American.³³⁷

Another intervention in the housing market during this decade came in the form of public housing projects, constructed by the San Francisco Housing Authority. These projects offered some relief from the housing shortage, but the Housing Authority's policy of preserving "neighborhood pattern" meant that the projects would be racially segregated. Only one project, Westside Courts in the Western Addition, was constructed in a neighborhood with a preexisting concentration of African Americans, and therefore was the only project that accepted African American tenants. Exclusion from the other public housing projects had the result of concentrating San Francisco's African American population ever further in the Western Addition and the Fillmore district. One visiting scholar warned that San Francisco was rapidly developing a "substandard Harlem" in the Fillmore district, where the concentration of poverty and racial isolation would permanently hobble the African American community's chances for achievement.³³⁸

As the war came to a close, San Francisco was a demographically transformed city. The African American population stood at 43,402 in 1950, an astonishing nine hundred percent increase over the 1940 population.³³⁹ And, despite crowded housing conditions and the rapid

³³⁴ Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 169.

³³⁵ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco's African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 74.

³³⁶ Broussard, 175.

³³⁷ "Project Offers Housing to the Public," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 November 1945, Section A, page 11.

³³⁸ "Authority Warns of S.F. Harlem," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 September 1945, Section A, page 17.

³³⁹ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 205.

demobilization of the wartime industries, there was no indication that the African American population of San Francisco would return to its pre-war numbers, as only 15 percent of the migrants who had arrived for wartime employment opportunities had arrived with the intention of returning home after the war.³⁴⁰ Persistent Jim Crow conditions and the continued lack of economic opportunities in the South probably drew these numbers down even lower. Public officials in San Francisco, fearing flooded welfare rolls after the wartime boom receded, offered many recent arrivals to the city one-way tickets back to their places of origin, but this scheme was not appealing to very many residents.³⁴¹

Rather, the African Americans who came to San Francisco for the war chose to stay in San Francisco. Unfortunately, the fears expressed by public officials regarding the effect post war deindustrialization would have on the African American community were not unfounded. While African Americans had expanded their range of occupations during the war years (33 percent of African American union members were working in the building trades, 26 percent in the food and clothing production industry, and 14 percent in metal-making and machinery), industrial employment remained the main sector of employment, and these jobs quickly dried up after the war.³⁴² Between 1944 and 1946, employment at the Kaiser shipyard alone dropped from 47,000 to just 9,000.³⁴³

The return of GIs to the city crowded an already tight job market, and private industries, after the completion of their government contracts, were under no obligation to hire without discrimination. Efforts to create local and state-wide Fair Employment Practices Committees were proposed and defeated during these years.³⁴⁴ Further damage was levied by unions, which essentially closed the door behind African Americans as they left union jobs, returning to all or mostly white membership and creating African American auxiliaries, which offered reduced membership protections.³⁴⁵

In areas of white collar employment, African Americans made moderate gains in many fields that had been largely unavailable to them before the war. African American men and women began to permeate the offices of San Francisco's banks, insurance companies, and corporations, as clerks, stenographers, office personnel, and secretaries.³⁴⁶ African Americans began teaching in the San Francisco Unified School District in 1944, and the San Francisco Police Department integrated its workforce in these years as well.³⁴⁷ These advances, while important, affected a relatively small percentage of the African American population. By 1949, unemployment among African American men stood at double that of the white population, and among African American women, it was an astonishing six times that of white women. Medium income for African Americans in San Francisco was \$1,924 compared to \$2,545 for whites and \$2,050 for other non-whites.³⁴⁸ At the close of the decade which had begun with so much promise, the overall economic situation of the African American community was in a precipitous slide.

Housing in San Francisco continued to be in short supply in the years after the war, with returning GIs and Japanese Americans joining the existing city population and adding to the demand. African American faced specific challenges at this time in the search for housing.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 206.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid., 209.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 212.

³⁴⁵ Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage* (New York: Garland Publishing Group, 2000), 59.

³⁴⁶ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 206.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 208.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 219.

Restrictive covenants were still in place in many parts of the city, and many of the new suburban developments springing up around the Bay Area also practiced racial exclusion; of the 75,000 building permits issued between 1949 and 1951, only six hundred were for units available to African Americans.³⁴⁹ African Americans who were financially able occasionally enlisted the help of a sympathetic white friend or acquaintance who would act as a middle man, purchasing a home in a restricted neighborhood and then turning around to resell it to them.³⁵⁰ To assist African Americans refused residential financing by larger banks, financier Jefferson Beaver established the Bay Savings and Loan Association, lending money to more than 1500 people, mostly African Americans, by 1956, and recording only two repossessions in that time.³⁵¹

For the most part however, rental and real estate agents continued to funnel African Americans into the neighborhoods where they already had a residential presence, specifically the Western Addition. In Hunters Point, temporary war housing became permanent housing for many African Americans, while white residents left to pursue housing opportunities in other neighborhoods or outside the city entirely. In public housing, the practice of selecting tenants based on “neighborhood pattern” was struck down by San Francisco Superior Court in 1952.³⁵² However, rather than opening up ample quality apartments for African Americans, this ruling merely allowed African Americans to wait on the waiting lists of all projects rather than the one they had been conscribed to before the ruling.

Throughout the early 1950s, quality housing was increasingly unavailable to African Americans, and neighborhoods became more rigidly segregated. By 1950, the Fillmore district’s 26 block area, originally designed to hold fifty people per acre, was reportedly holding upwards of two hundred people per acre.³⁵³ By 1960, more than one-third of San Francisco’s African American community lived in the Western Addition, comprising 46 percent of the neighborhood’s population.³⁵⁴ The combination of overcrowding and economic disparity created sub-par conditions soon to be diagnosed as “blight” by the San Francisco Housing Authority. This diagnosis made the neighborhood a target of extensive federal housing interventions that would have a disproportionate impact on the African American community.

As San Francisco’s black population continued to increase in size after the war, the African American community experienced both the positive and the negative social changes an increased population can create. Comprising for the first time a sizable minority, African Americans’ demands for political voice and representation began to gain traction within the city government. At the polls, African Americans were able to demand and receive information about potential candidates’ positions on racial policy. Although no African American candidate won elected position during these years, several high-level appointments did go to African Americans; in 1949, Cecil Poole was appointed to head the Superior Court Trial Division of the District Attorney’s office, and Raymond J. Reynolds was appointed the first African American deputy District Attorney in 1954.³⁵⁵ Cecil Poole and his family were unfortunately the victims of a cross burning on the lawn of their Ingleside Terraces Home shortly after moving there in 1958 (Figure 66).

³⁴⁹ Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage* (New York: Garland Publishing Group, 2000), 43.

³⁵⁰ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco’s African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 155.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁵² Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 224.

³⁵³ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco’s African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 142.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁵⁵ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 236.

The NAACP, reflecting the increased intensity of the national push for full civil rights, was very active in San Francisco during this time, successfully defending the 1952 case which led to the desegregation of San Francisco Housing Authority housing projects.³⁵⁶ Younger African American leaders emerged on the city's college campuses as well, with Bert Phillips elected student body president at San Francisco State in 1953, and Freddie Hicks winning the same position at City College in 1958.³⁵⁷



Figure 66. Cecil and Charlotte Poole standing in front of their house in 1958

Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*

However, despite these advances, the African American community was not spared the negative aspects of that often accompany a rapid population increase. In addition to struggles created by limited employment and housing opportunities, crime within the community was on the rise, leading to an aggressive campaign by the city's African American press to expose and eliminate vice and corruption in the Fillmore district.³⁵⁸ In addition to the increase in serious crimes like homicide and drug violations, arrests for petty crimes like vagrancy, street gambling, and public drunkenness were twice as likely to affect African Americans as white citizens.³⁵⁹ These arrests were often accompanied by police violence, which was chronicled on the front pages of the African American press.³⁶⁰ Attempts to create a citizen-controlled police review board were unsuccessful, and a pervasive distrust of the San Francisco Police Department developed within the African American community which would intensify in the upcoming decades.³⁶¹

Through the 1960s and 1970s, San Francisco's African American population was still on the rise, comprising a full 10 percent of the city's population in 1960 and over 13 percent of the city's population in 1970.³⁶² In addition to the rising African American population, the urban trend of white flight saw 90,000 white people depart the city for suburban homes by 1960, and additional loss of 36,700 city residents by 1970.³⁶³ Despite their increase in population percentage, African Americans were not experiencing commensurate economic gains; in 1970, 21.1% of African Americans were living below the poverty line, as compared to just 4.1% of the overall city population.³⁶⁴

This disparity reflected the persistence of racially unequal engagement with the workforce. The years spanning 1960 to 1970 saw manufacturing employment in San Francisco decline 19 percent.³⁶⁵ This, coupled with the 1974 closure of the Naval Ship Yard at Hunters Point, dealt a

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 224.

³⁵⁷ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco's African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 107.

³⁵⁸ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 233.

³⁵⁹ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco's African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 232.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 141.

³⁶¹ Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage* (New York: Garland Publishing Group, 2000), 218.

³⁶² Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor, ed. *Seeking El Dorado* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 33.

³⁶³ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco's African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 164.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 53.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

serious blow to a historically strong area of African American employment. When these jobs moved to suburban industrial campuses down the peninsula and in the East Bay, most African Americans were unable to follow. Additionally, the job sectors that were surging in San Francisco – mainly white collar occupations – which comprised 61 percent of the workforce by 1970, had historically been not open to African Americans.³⁶⁶ Despite mild gains in employment equality, many companies continued to exclude African Americans either explicitly or by tradition.

In the area of municipal employment, African Americans had long experienced unequal unemployment, particularly in the fire and police departments. After hiring one African American, Earl Gage, in 1955, there had been no other African Americans hired by the fire department in the following 12 years.³⁶⁷ At the police department, the racial imbalance was so notable that, in 1973, a Federal Judge ordered minority cadets to be hired at a 3 to 2 ratio to white cadets for as long as it would take to reach 30 percent minority employment within the patrolmen's ranks.³⁶⁸

Advances were made in inclusion of African Americans in the building trades, but these advances were tied to specific Federal construction programs, and no successful attempt was made to transfer these mandates to private industry. The African American-owned small businesses that had flourished for decades along Fillmore and 3rd streets also suffered during these decades. Despite the dedicated efforts of a booster club known as the Committee for Community Solidarity, which formed in the 1950s, these small businesses began to disappear as the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's plans for blight removal dismantled the social structure of the surrounding Western Addition neighborhood.³⁶⁹

Through the 1960s and 1970s, African Americans continued to struggle to find satisfactory housing in San Francisco. By 1960, more than one third of San Francisco's African American community lived in the Western Addition, comprising 46% of the neighborhood population (**Figure 67**).³⁷⁰ Thus, when the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency undertook the A-1 redevelopment project in the Western Addition in 1956 and the massive A-2 redevelopment project eight years later, the African American population was disproportionately affected. These two projects combined displaced an estimated 12,000 to 20,000 residents. Despite relocation certificates issued by the Redevelopment Agency to facilitate relocation, African Americans continued to experience discrimination in their search for new housing.

Restrictions on where African Americans could live were still the order of the day through much of the city and the surrounding suburbs. In 1963, the state legislature passed the Rumford Fair



Figure 67. Fillmore Street, mid-1960s
Source: African American Historical and Cultural Society

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 54.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 290.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco's African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 294.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 165.

Housing Bill, which attempted to eliminate these problems by prohibiting discrimination against minorities in the sale and rental of housing.³⁷¹ However, the Rumford Fair Housing Bill was quickly overturned by the passage of Proposition 14 in 1964, which restated a property owner's "absolute discretion" in selecting tenants.³⁷² Proposition 14 was overturned in 1966, but it wasn't until the 1968 passage of the federal Fair Housing Act that barriers to residential discrimination began to disappear.

By the mid 1970s, a small number of African Americans could be found, fairly evenly dispersed, throughout the suburban communities of San Francisco, with predominantly black communities to be found in East Palo Alto, Sausalito, Menlo Park, Daly City, and Pacifica.³⁷³ However, within the city boundaries, many African American searching for housing, whether displaced from the Western Addition or for independent reasons, relocated to the existing African American residential hub in Hunters Point and the surrounding Bayview area, or also the Oceanview/Merced Heights/Ingleside (OMI) district. The population of Hunters Point area doubled between 1955 and 1965, largely due to this influx of former Western Addition residents.³⁷⁴



Figure 68. Bill Bradley, Rev. T.R. Provost and Pug Kilpatrick announce racial hiring plan at Bay Area food stores, 1963

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

The social and civil rights climate of the city was dynamic during the 1960s and 1970s, and reflected the shifting agenda of the national movement for civil rights. A mini baby boom in the Bay Area – the product of the first wave of migrants who arrived during World War II – had created a large generation of younger activists, who began to challenge the longstanding dominance of the NAACP.³⁷⁵ The younger generation of activists often preferred direct action to challenge racial discrimination, rather than the incremental changes advanced by the NAACP.

On the national stage, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) engaged in non-violent direct actions including sit-ins, jail-ins, and freedom rides to advance the agenda of full civil equality. San Francisco had an active CORE group, which led protests that highlighted employment discrimination throughout the city. In Hunters Point, an early CORE protest against the grocery Lucky Stores, which employed no African Americans before 1948, successfully compelled the chain to begin hiring African Americans (**Figure 68**).³⁷⁶ An outgrowth of CORE known as the Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination led a

large protest at the Sheraton Palace Hotel in 1964, which ended when the Hotel Employers Association agreed to bring minority employment levels up to between 15 and 20 percent.³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage* (New York: Garland Publishing Group, 2000), 110.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor, ed. *Seeking El Dorado* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 416.

³⁷⁴ Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage* (New York: Garland Publishing Group, 2000), 69.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 199.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 119.

³⁷⁷ Paul T. Miller, *The Interplay of Housing, Employment, and Civil Rights in the Experience of San Francisco's African American Community, 1945-1975* (Dissertation: for Temple University, 2008), 196.

Nationally, CORE was founded by an interracial group, and the activism during these decades in San Francisco continued to be thoroughly interracial. Many of the largest protests, however, were led by African Americans, including Tracy Sims, the 19 year-old woman who spearheaded the protest at the Palace Hotel. Opinions in the larger African American community were split over the effectiveness, or perhaps the propriety, of these direct action protests. The NAACP's methods of constant pressure and incremental legal victories brought change at a pace too slow for the younger generation of activists. Towards the end of the 1960s, even the successes of CORE proved too subtle for some in the civil rights movement, and the non-violent direct action agenda of CORE in San Francisco began to morph into a more militant branch of activism.



Figure 69. Bobby Seale speaking at Black Panther Rally in front of the U.S. Federal Building in San Francisco, 1969

Source: Ilka Hartmann

This new wave of militant activism, led by the Black Panther Party, had a broad agenda, which encompassed improved education, housing, and employment opportunities for African Americans, as well as armed protection against pervasive police violence against the community (**Figure 69**). Through the 1960s, tension between the African American community and the San Francisco Police Department had become epidemic. In 1960, although just 10 percent of the city's population, African Americans represented 35 percent of all arrests.³⁷⁸ Through the 1960s, the African American newspaper the *Sun-Reporter* regularly published illustrated front page stories detailing occurrences of police brutality towards African Americans.³⁷⁹ In September of 1966, the shooting death of an unarmed 16 year-old African American youth in Hunters Point by a white policeman sparked a five-day riot that brought the issue of police violence, as well as the many other issues that plagued the African American community, to the attention of the larger city population. Despite weeks of broadly investigative

articles published in the *Chronicle* and other area newspapers after the riot, a federally appointed task force eschewed a nuanced analysis of the deep-rooted and multifaceted problems faced by the African American community. Instead, the findings of the task force focused on a narrow solution, the necessity of creating more opportunities for employment for African Americans.³⁸⁰ Although increased access to employment certainly stood to alleviate some of the struggles faced by African Americans, it by no means absolved the broad range of issues, resulting from decades of unequal access, which continued to affect the African American community.

In 1970, African Americans represented over 13 percent of the population of San Francisco. Since that time, the African American population in San Francisco has declined continuously, and as of the 2000 census, the African American population stood at just 58,791 people, or just over 7 percent of the city population overall.³⁸¹ In part, this demographic shift can be explained by the movement of African Americans into surrounding Bay Area suburbs. As the illegality of racial covenants and racially discriminatory loan policies became more commonly enforced, African Americans who could afford to move to the suburbs faced fewer obstacles toward this

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 176.

³⁷⁹ Daniel Crowe, *Prophets of Rage* (New York: Garland Publishing Group, 2000), 85.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 205.

³⁸¹ MTC-ABAG Library: Bay Area Census (<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/index.html>)

end. By the 1980s, over half of African Americans leaving the major cities of California were moving into suburban communities within the state.³⁸² Within the city, the elimination of restrictive covenants saw movement by middle- and high-income African Americans into formerly homogenous neighborhoods, including the Marina, St. Francis Wood, and Sea Cliff. Additionally, greater numbers of African Americans were able to afford these residential moves, as the number of African Americans attaining college degrees in the Bay Area doubled between 1980 and 1990.³⁸³

However, an exhaustive 1993 report by the Committee on African American Parity of the Human Rights Commission of San Francisco, titled *The Unfinished Agenda*, warned that the myriad positive developments within the African American community should not overshadow the entrenched difficulties still faced by the majority of San Francisco's African Americans. The decrease in population in San Francisco was not solely a result of increased opportunities elsewhere; many African Americans left San Francisco because of the loss of affordable housing. Despite the distribution of Certificates of Preference to people displaced by the redevelopment projects in the Western Addition, the pace of rebuilding was so slow that many people had resettled outside of the city once the redevelopment projects were finished. Remaining property within the Western Addition was largely bought up by real estate investors, who were able to buy the remaining Victorian housing stock inexpensively and sell them for profit, casting out much of what was left of the African American population. *The Unfinished Agenda* report also detailed the ways in which the employment profile of San Francisco continued to shift away from manufacturing and towards highly specialized white collar occupations. Many of these new occupations required advanced education or training historically unequally accessible to African Americans.

Since the publication of *The Unfinished Agenda*, the positive trends detailed in that report have continued, while the negative trends have not reversed in any significant way. In 2008, an African American Out-migration Task Force, assembled by Mayor Gavin Newsom, determined that in the past ten years, the number of African Americans living in very low income households has increased, the number of African American owned businesses has declined, and African Americans have the lowest rate of home ownership in the city. Additionally, African Americans make up almost half of San Francisco residents in public housing.³⁸⁴ African Americans continue to be largely residentially concentrated in neighborhoods with long histories of African American presence, namely Bayview-Hunters Point and the Western Addition, and African American unemployment in San Francisco stood at five times that of white unemployment in 2008.³⁸⁵ The recent task force report offers many recommendations for halting the out-migration, including implementation of a violence prevention plan, rebuilding public housing, improving schools, and promoting minority-owned business development.

³⁸² Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor, ed. *Seeking El Dorado* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 419.

³⁸³ MTC-ABAG Library: Bay Area Census (<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/index.html>).

³⁸⁴ *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 10, 2008) (<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/08/10/BA5B1272U1.DTL#ixzz0TUKO3tQo>)

³⁸⁵ Joy M. Tyler, "The State of African American Business: Surviving the Economic Crisis?" (August 31, 2009) (<http://cityflight.com/?p=528>).

J. MALTESE AMERICANS IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1900-2009

Figure 70. Maltese-American parade in New York City, 1970s

Source: www.everywhereculture.com

Malta is an island nation in the Mediterranean Sea, located 58 miles south of Sicily and 180 miles north of Libya. The small size, scarcity of natural resources and lack of industrial development combine to limit the population that this geographically small nation can realistically support. In the early nineteenth century, under British colonial rule, the government of Malta began to encourage out-migration in order to avoid competition for strained resources. Although most migrants traveled to North Africa and other British colonies in the Mediterranean and West Indies, by the mid-nineteenth century a small number of

Maltese were emigrating to the United States, primarily to the port cities of New Orleans and New York (**Figure 70**). After the turn of the century, the number of Maltese settling in the United States began to rise, and distinct Maltese communities began to emerge. The largest Maltese communities were founded in the industrial cities of Detroit, Chicago, and New York. However, by 1910, there were about 200 Maltese living in northern California, and by 1920, San Francisco boasted the fourth-largest Maltese population in the United States.³⁸⁶

The Maltese pattern of immigration was characterized by the initial arrival of the family patriarch, who after several years would send for the rest of his family to join him. The ample opportunities for employment, specifically in railroad work, likely drew Maltese men to the Bay Area: as early as 1900, over 60 Maltese men were recorded working for Northern Pacific Railroad, earning close to four dollars a day. The Maltese community in San Francisco settled in the still rural area of Bayview, known then as Butchertown. As the community grew in size, Maltese religious groups and community organizations began to form. In 1914, the Maltese community welcomed the Reverend Andrew Azzopardi, who organized the first ethnic parish of Roman Catholic Maltese in California. In 1915, the San Francisco archbishop donated an 1874 gathering hall to the Maltese congregation in Bayview. In 1922, the building was officially consecrated by the archbishop of San Francisco and given the title of St. Paul of the Shipwreck, in reference to the passage in the New Testament which describes the Apostle Paul's shipwreck on the isle of Malta in 60 A.D.³⁸⁷ This building still stands at 1515 Oakdale Avenue; it is now Bayview Baptist Church (**Figure 71**).

By the late 1920s, the Maltese population in San Francisco was estimated at five thousand members. The Great Depression left this tightly knit community relatively unscathed, unlike the Maltese communities in Detroit and New York, which experienced severe reverse migration due in part to the loss of industrial employment in those cities. In 1930, the Maltese Club of San Francisco was formed, under the directorship of a Maltese-American named Francis Grech. At the opening ceremony of the club's headquarters at 1789 Oakdale Avenue in Bayview, the

³⁸⁶ Diane Andreassi, *Maltese American*: <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Maltese-Americans.html>, accessed November 24, 2009.

³⁸⁷ "Maltese Church Formed," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 14, 1917).

crowd was so large that people had to be turned away from entering. The club supported a traditional Maltese band and a theatrical group which performed shows in the Maltese language, as well as participating in philanthropic work and the eternal diversion of all immigrant communities: keeping the language and the customs of the old country familiar to the young American-born generation. In 1935, the Maltese Club of San Francisco had an enrolled membership of over 750 people. Although the building still stands, it has been heavily altered. It is now the home of Saint Paul Tabernacle Baptist Church.

The Maltese migrants by all accounts mixed amenable with other ethnic groups, and intermarriage – especially among other predominantly Catholic ethnic groups such as Italians, French, and Irish – as well as prolonged settlement in the area eventually led to the dispersal of the tightly knit Maltese population to other districts of the city and far-flung suburbs. Today, the estimated population of Maltese Americans living in the Bay Area is around 20,000, living in almost complete integration with the larger urban population. In the city, the largest remaining concentration of Maltese Americans is located in the Portola district.³⁸⁸



Figure 71. Bayview Baptist Church (formerly St. Paul of the Shipwreck), 1515 Oakdale Avenue, 2009
Source: KVP Consulting

K. REDEVELOPMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1948-2009

Urban areas are born, mature, and age in response to the needs of their occupants. In the decades of the industrial revolution, the cities of Europe and North America were shaped by the rapid growth of manufacturing and the need for proximate housing for the associated workforce. Decades of rapid industrial development, lack of meaningful land-use regulation, hasty residential construction, and the poverty of much of the workforce led to urban conditions well documented in the work of writers such as Charles Dickens and reporters and photojournalists like Jacob Riis. Thus, the impulse to both comment on and intervene in the physical condition of the city is almost as old as the existence of the conditions themselves.

In an early example of urban intervention, Baron Haussmann, as the appointed prefect of Paris after 1853, dramatically reshaped a chaotic and dense medieval city to reflect new concerns with urban health and manageability. American Progressive reformers, guided by a philosophy of environmental determinism, believed that “slum” conditions affected the moral condition of the residents. These reformers promoted the introduction of upper- and middle-class amenities such as parks, public schools, wider streets, and larger apartments to lower-class and poor neighborhoods. In New York City, the completion of Central Park in 1873 was touted (by the wealthy) as a healthy influence on the poor. Similarly, Daniel Burnham’s 1909 Plan of Chicago was another early attempt to impose control over urban form and minimize associated urban problems.

³⁸⁸ Michael Vick, “Maltese Prime Minister Visits San Francisco Parish, Confers Honor on Local Priest,” *Catholic San Francisco: Online Edition*: http://www.catholic-sf.org/news_select.php?newsid=24&id=56426, accessed November 24, 2009.

Perhaps the most influential American urban interventionist of the twentieth century was Robert Moses, an appointed official who relied entirely on top-down planning in his dramatic reshaping of New York City. Throughout Moses' tenure, which spanned the elected tenure of five mayors, he advanced an aggressive agenda of slum clearance and automobile primacy in an era that predated contemporary land use restrictions and environmental controls. Aggressive interventions like Moses' were repeated to various degrees in cities throughout America through the middle decades of the twentieth century. As this style of planning wanes, many cities are still coping with built environments constructed during the era in which large architectural plans were believed to best solve urban ills.

Federal involvement in urban redevelopment began with the Federal Housing Act of 1937. While earlier legislation had been enacted to halt the wave of foreclosures associated with the Depression, this had little effect on the urban poor, who primarily occupied rental housing. The 1937 modification of the Housing Act incorporated provisions for federal funding for the construction of low income or "public" housing, most of which was, in fact, urban. This brief surge was undercut, however, at the outbreak of World War II, by the mandatory conversion of newly constructed or under construction public housing, especially in defense industry centers like San Francisco, into housing for war workers and their families. Instead, it was the Housing Act of 1949 which came to most directly affect the long-term agenda of urban redevelopment. In addition to expanding funds for public housing projects and allowing the Federal Housing Authority to insure mortgages, the Act authorized federal subsidies for land acquired for slum clearance and urban renewal programs, and allowed for the creation of local redevelopment agencies to oversee these programs.³⁸⁹ The Federal government would cover two-thirds of the cost of land purchases, while local governments were to cover the remaining third; without these subsidies, large scale redevelopment projects had been financially unrealistic for cities. After acquiring these large bundles of land, either through purchase or eminent domain, local governments were to give or sell sites to private developers who would in turn build new housing. In 1954, the Supreme Court decision *Berman v. Parker* upheld the legality of the new urban redevelopment statutes, and an era of federally financed large-scale urban interventions began.

In California, legislation addressing slum conditions in urban areas actually predated Federal legislation; the Community Redevelopment Act, passed in June of 1945, was described as the first of its type in the nation.³⁹⁰ The new legislation authorized cities and counties in California to establish redevelopment agencies, which were charged with the multifaceted agenda of addressing urban decay. To this end, redevelopment agencies received the authority to acquire real property, either through purchase or eminent domain, the power to develop the property acquired (though not by constructing buildings themselves), the authority to sell real property without bidding, the obligation to relocate owners and tenants of property acquired by the agency, the ability to finance their operations by borrowing from federal or state governments and by selling bonds, and the power to impose land use and development controls which reflect the comprehensive plan for redevelopment.³⁹¹ The Community Redevelopment Act was codified and renamed the Community Redevelopment Law in 1951, and was amended in 1952 to include the authority for tax increment financing, which allows redevelopment agencies to receive and spend property tax revenues attributed to the increase in assessed values that has occurred since the redevelopment project was adopted. Despite the initial absence of adequate federal

³⁸⁹ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 78.

³⁹⁰ *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 25, 1945).

³⁹¹ California Department of Health Services, *Economic Development and Redevelopment: A Toolkit on Land Use and Health*. (Sacramento, CA: Planning for Healthy Places, in partnership with the California Department of Health Services, 2007), 56.

funding to support these goals, these broad powers allowed cities to begin thinking about broad solutions to their slum problems.

Both federal and state redevelopment legislation language relies heavily on the concept of blight. However, the definition of blight has proven both elastic and elusive through the years of its use in the context of redevelopment. In order to establish a redevelopment area, the Community Redevelopment Law requires the proposed area meet two major requirements; it must be urbanized and it must be blighted.³⁹² To be considered urbanized, the project area must be not less than 80 percent developed for urban use, or an integral contributor to areas developed for urban use.³⁹³ Deciding if an area is blighted is more complex, and a designation of blight often resonates emotionally for residents, rather than as a purely analytical assessment. California law defines two kinds of blight: physical and economic. Physical blight is evidenced by safe or unhealthy buildings, or incompatible land uses that prevent economic development of the area. Early interpretations of redevelopment law, reflecting its roots in Progressivism, focused primarily on findings of physical blight. Thus, incidence of tuberculosis, availability of neighborhood facilities, building dilapidation, overcrowded conditions, percentage of new residents, and similar factors dominated early redevelopment recommendations.

Economic blight is evidenced by depreciated or stagnant property values, high business vacancies or vacant lots, high crime, or the lack of commercial facilities that are normally found in neighborhoods (grocery and drug stores, banks, etc). Many recent redevelopment projects have focused on these economic indicators of blight. However, state law mandates that *both* kinds of blight must be present in order to create a redevelopment area. Additionally, the blight designation goes to an overall area, not individual properties: some clearly non-blighted properties, along with surprised and angry property owners, may end up in designated areas. A 1954 amendment to the Housing Act created provisions in which structures within redevelopment areas that were not blighted could remain standing, and structures that were on the verge of becoming blighted were eligible for subsidized rehabilitation loans. Additionally, the legislative definition of blight has become more restrictive over time, with the intended effect of reducing the trauma to redevelopment areas that early projects brought.

In San Francisco, wartime conditions profoundly affected implementation of the Community Redevelopment Act. The years between 1940 and 1945 brought a 30.4 percent population increase to the city of San Francisco.³⁹⁴ The clear language in the state law mandating suitable relocation of displaced residents of redevelopment areas was effectively impossible in a city already suffering a severe housing shortage. Despite agreement that large swaths of the city were desperately in need of renewal, it was clear that plans would need to be deferred to a time when the city had a more "settled population."³⁹⁵ Thus, redevelopment plans in the first decade after enactment of the Community Redevelopment Act were more hypothetical ideas rather than practical realities.

One such proposed redevelopment project involved tideland reclamation in the Bayview area for industrial sites, residential buildings, local streets, and highway use. This dramatic plan illustrated the potential for massive tax revenue increases (the current tax revenue on the underwater sites was negligible, compared to projected income generated by developed land) and seemed almost designed as a teaser to get people behind the relatively new idea of public

³⁹² Ibid., 63.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas Press, 1993), 14.

³⁹⁵ *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 9, 1945).

development of formerly private land.³⁹⁶ In 1947, the San Francisco City Planning Commission developed a plan for the Western Addition which rivaled Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* in its re-envisioning of the existing urban landscape. In an area that stretched from California Street to Duboce Avenue, and from Van Ness Avenue to Masonic Avenue, apartment towers would replace Victorian houses, described as the "dilapidation and disorder of more than half a century."³⁹⁷ The towers would be amply spaced, surrounded each by a half city block of parkland, with easy access to scientifically engineered motorways which "reduce accident potential", and a modern community shopping center which would replace the congested Fillmore shopping district. The massive scale of the plan seems to suggest that it could only have been proposed at a time when it was impossible to build. However, many of the elements of this plan would persist into the redevelopment plan that eventually reshaped the Western Addition.



Figure 72. Western Addition Redevelopment Area A1, 1954
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection,
San Francisco Public Library

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was formed in 1948 and took over the role that the San Francisco City Planning Commission had filled before that. While projects were concurrently initiated in Diamond Heights and in the waterfront area just north of Market Street known as the Golden Gateway, the Redevelopment Agency directed its primary focus at the Western Addition. The area was characterized by well-built Victorians, many close to one hundred years old, built when the neighborhood was an upper-class residential node of the city. After the 1906 earthquake, the relatively unscathed neighborhood became inundated by refugees of the

destruction and fire. Large homes were subdivided into smaller units, and additional structures filled in vacant land. With this crowding came a mix of land uses, classes, and ethnicities. The area became a point of entry for arriving ethnic groups, and eventually, Japanese and African Americans.³⁹⁸ By the mid-1940s, however, the mixture seems to have turned sour; in a 1947 series of expose articles, the Chronicle summed up the Western Addition as "an octopus of crime and disease...in the heart of the city."³⁹⁹ The combination of strategic location within the city and deterioration into physical blight made the area a prime target for redevelopment. In 1948, 280 blocks in the Western Addition were declared blighted by the Board of Supervisors and qualified for redevelopment (**Figure 72**). The era of large-scale federally funded urban intervention in San Francisco was set to begin.

The first redevelopment project in the Western Addition, known as A-1, was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1956. With the expressed intent of eliminating blight conditions in the area centered on the intersection of Fillmore Street and Geary Boulevard, the project involved widening Geary into an eight-lane highway which could smoothly connect the western neighborhoods with the downtown business district. The newly widened boulevard would be

³⁹⁶ *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 8, 1945).

³⁹⁷ John Lorinc, *New City* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006), 5.

³⁹⁸ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 172.

³⁹⁹ *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 28, 1947).

lined with new construction, including high-rise housing and the Japanese Cultural Center. The commercial strip on Fillmore Street was to be bypassed via an underpass, with direct access granted to a large shopping center at the rise of Geary Street (at Masonic Avenue). Certain roads would be closed; and land parcels reconfigured to facilitate large construction projects. The redevelopment plan shifted land uses, creating higher density housing in the form of mid- and high-rise towers, interspersed with parks, schools, and commercial use. Industrial uses



Figure 73. Demolition of buildings in the Western Addition, 1953
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

were to be removed from the area completely. The plan removed the dwellings of over 4,000 people (Figure 73), and although federal language mandated the relocation of all residents displaced by redevelopment, interpretations of the success of the relocation effort varied widely.⁴⁰⁰ Almost uniformly low-income, many recent arrivals to the city or elderly, displaced residents were often intimidated or overwhelmed by the paperwork and the legal framework of the official relocation offices.⁴⁰¹ Many of the residents who were forced to relocate left the city, some moved into the homes of friends or family, and some moved to neighborhoods that featured similar blighted conditions as the

one they left. Many ended up just a few blocks away, and were hit by a second demand to relocate when the area surrounding A-1, known as A-2, became the second redevelopment area in the Western Addition.

The A-2 redevelopment project in the Western Addition was adopted in 1964; it affected 60 square blocks, surrounding most of the A-1 redevelopment area. Created with the intent of eliminating blight through a larger area of the Western Addition, the methodology of the A-2 plan was influenced by the Housing Act of 1954, which amended the 1949 Act to provide funding not only for demolition and new construction, but also for the physical rehabilitation of deteriorating areas.⁴⁰² Loans would be offered at low rates, with generous repayment schedules, to owners of property within the redevelopment area judged to be on the verge of blight and in need of rehabilitation. Thus this project was touted as the first neighborhood *rehabilitation* project in San Francisco.⁴⁰³ Despite this slightly more nuanced approach to redevelopment, over 4500 of the 6900 housing units in the area were destroyed.⁴⁰⁴ The majority of residents displaced were renters, and absentee property owners often chose to accept the payment offered for relocation rather than initiate rehabilitation.⁴⁰⁵ Additionally, most African American property owners were

⁴⁰⁰ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 172.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁰² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD Historical Background*: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguides/history.cfm>, accessed November 24, 2009.

⁴⁰³ *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 5, 1955).

⁴⁰⁴ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 179.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

often unable to get the loans needed to rehabilitate their buildings and were required to leave when their properties became ineligible for rehabilitation, driving relocation figures even higher.

Estimates of the number of Western Addition residents who were affected by relocation range from 8,000 to 20,000, and similar to the A-1 project, interpretations of the success of the relocations vary widely.⁴⁰⁶ Certificates of Preference, a system which guarantees displaced residents and business owners priority of return in new residential and commercial construction, were first issued during the A-2 redevelopment plan. However, due to the extensive lag time between demolition and construction of new real estate, only 25 percent the Certificates of Preference issued in the A-2 project were apparently ever redeemed.⁴⁰⁷



Figure 74. Grading Diamond Heights, 1963
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

The trauma of the redevelopment and relocation experiences was sufficient to galvanize a series of neighborhood organizations that attempted to affect the trajectory of redevelopment. Starting with the group Freedom House in 1963, which advocated against the urban renewal plan for the Western Addition, a series of community groups questioned, fought against, and aimed to modify the plans that were being handed down to them by the Redevelopment Agency. By 1967, the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO) was organizing the neighborhood through door-to-door efforts and community meetings, concentrating its efforts mostly on the issues of displacement and relocation. In 1968,

WACO successfully sued the Redevelopment Agency for a better execution of the relocation plan. This lawsuit was also successful in halting further progress of the A-2 redevelopment plan, and eventually led to a change in federal law on how redevelopment agencies would be allowed to implement programs.⁴⁰⁸ Additionally, WACO was able to affect the introduction of legislation mandating that an elected group of community members, known as the Project Area Committee (PAC), must be in place for all redevelopment areas that affect residential areas. The struggles between the Redevelopment Agency and the community of the Western Addition created tangible changes in the structure of redevelopment planning, as well as initiating the “community revolution” wherein community members actively participate and feel entitled to guide plans in their neighborhood.⁴⁰⁹

As the redevelopment projects in the Western Addition were unfolding, several redevelopment projects were also reshaping other parts of San Francisco. In the semi-rural neighborhood which came to be known as Diamond Heights, the Redevelopment Agency initiated its first project in 1953 (**Figure 74**). With the goal of developing housing during an era of intense housing shortage in the city, the Redevelopment Agency described the 300-acre site (then used as a

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ben Malley, *Western Addition Displacement Reparations Bill Moves Forward*:

<http://www.beyondchron.org/news/index.php?itemid=5968>, accessed November 24, 2009.

⁴⁰⁸ Chester Hartman, *The Transformation of San Francisco* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1984), 76.

⁴⁰⁹ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 180.

dairy) as a “predominantly open, blighted area, characterized by the following conditions: economic disuse; faulty planning; the subdividing and sale of lots of irregular form and shape and inadequate size for proper usefulness and development.” The Redevelopment Agency promoted a plan that would house upwards of 9,000 people in new single family houses and mid- and high-rise apartment buildings. However, a lawsuit instigated by a small coalition of landowners uncomfortable with the definition of blight used to claim their property stymied construction. The California State Supreme Court upheld the Redevelopment Agency’s position late in 1955, and the project moved ahead, with a modified plan that abandoned the high-rise apartments but came to include some below market housing.⁴¹⁰



Figure 75. Golden Gateway Plaza, 1967
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph
Collection, San Francisco Public Library

In 1959, the Redevelopment Agency initiated the Golden Gateway project, which removed the city’s historic wholesale produce market from its waterfront location north of Market Street. The area had been declared blighted in 1955, with unsafe buildings, shifting uses, faulty planning, and economic dislocation stated as the primary blighting factors.⁴¹¹ The character of the downtown neighborhood had changed, and though some merchants did protest, most were happily relocated at a modern distribution facility built for them at Islais Creek, in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. The Golden Gateway redevelopment area now contains 1,400 housing units, the 3.5 million square-foot Embarcadero Center complex, a hotel, and 12 acres of public

plazas and open space (Figure 75).⁴¹²

Though the Diamond Heights and Golden Gateway redevelopment projects both encountered certain levels of resistance from affected residents, the Redevelopment Agency’s plan for an 87-acre area south of Market Street became the most bitterly contested struggle almost immediately after the project was announced. Long the site of industrial manufacturers and the “workingman’s institutions” that accompany this use—hotels, lodging houses, lunch rooms, pawnshops, and saloons—the Redevelopment Agency’s plan would clear and rebuild the area, to be called the Yerba Buena Center, including a convention center, a sports arena, as well as high-rise office buildings and hotels.⁴¹³

Early opposition to the project came from labor leaders, concerned about the loss of industrial sites of production, as well as housing for blue-collar employees. These voices were soon joined by those of social workers concerned about the loss of housing for the area’s 4,000 low-income people.⁴¹⁴ Area residents organized into the group Tenants and Owners in Opposition to

⁴¹⁰ Peter Booth Wiley, *National Trust Guide/San Francisco: America’s Guide for Architecture and History Travelers*. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 382.

⁴¹¹ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Golden Gateway Redevelopment Plan*: <http://www.sfdevelopment.org/index.aspx?page=56>, accessed November 24, 2009.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Chester Hartman, *The Transformation of San Francisco* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1984), 47.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

Redevelopment (TOOR) in 1969 with the primary goal of assuring decent replacement housing in the same area for displaced residents.⁴¹⁵ Inspired by the success of the WACO lawsuit a year earlier, TOOR filed a complaint in 1969 against HUD and the SFRA claiming that the relocation effort was not sufficient and therefore illegal.⁴¹⁶ TOOR was successful in temporarily halting demolition and relocation until the Redevelopment Agency could revise the relocation plan to meet legal standards.⁴¹⁷ This settlement saw the building of 1800 additional low-income housing units as well as “super-priority” for displaced South of Market residents.⁴¹⁸

The Bayview-Hunters Point district has been the location of several redevelopment projects over the past forty years. As discussed above, over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bayview-Hunters Point became the site of several industries, primarily meatpacking and shipbuilding. During the Second World War, the district grew quite rapidly as a result of the Navy's acquisition of the Hunters Point Dry Dock and its subsequent conversion into the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, one of the Navy's most important ship repair facilities on the West Coast. As discussed above, many of the workers brought in to work at the facility were African American. Although both whites and blacks shared the barracks-like multiple-family housing projects hastily erected on open tracts of land during the war, after hostilities ended, many white families departed for the suburbs. Prevented from moving to the suburbs by racial covenants and the prejudice of landlords, African Americans gradually made moved out into the outlying sections of Bayview-Hunters Point, making the district their home during the 1950s.

Initially benefiting from the availability of relatively high-paid industrial jobs available at the shipyard and other industrial plants in the area, many African Americans prospered, bought their own houses, and established families. However, by the mid-1960s, this state of affairs was unraveling, with the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard shedding jobs and other industries relocating to the suburbs. Joining the ranks of the newly unemployed were many African Americans displaced by Redevelopment Agency projects in the Western Addition, which at that time was the largest African American community in San Francisco.⁴¹⁹

Meanwhile, the decline of blue collar employment in San Francisco, racial discrimination in employment, and substandard housing conditions combined to create an overarching sense of dissatisfaction in the neighborhood. A police shooting of an unarmed teenager in the summer of 1966 sparked a brief riot and brought citywide attention to a district that had long been overlooked. Attempts to address the conditions in Bayview-Hunters Point were initiated by the Redevelopment Agency in the years immediately following the riot.

The Redevelopment Agency began the process of surveying the residential conditions at Hunters Point Hill in 1968. The temporary wartime housing, which had been declared “uninhabitable” in 1948, still housed over 700 families by the mid 1960s (**Figure 76**). The area was unarguably blighted, but residents, many recently relocated from the redevelopment areas in the Western Addition, sought to forge a compromise with the Redevelopment Agency that would minimize displacement. In 1969, the Redevelopment Agency, in close collaboration with a community advisory group known as the Joint Housing Committee, initiated two projects in Hunters Point. At Hunters Point Hill, the Redevelopment Agency oversaw the construction of 2,000 new dwellings, along with schools, childcare centers, churches, a recreation center, and a

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 77.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 80.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ David Jacobson and Chris Stallworth, *Bayview-Hunters Point: Urban Transformations and Community Cooptation*: <http://21stcenturyurbansolutions.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/hunters-point-essay1.pdf>, accessed November 24, 2009.

shopping center. The housing was to be constructed incrementally, and the Joint Housing Committee negotiated a stipulation that no old housing be torn down until new housing had been constructed, thus minimizing displacement.



Figure 76. War workers dwellings at Hunters Point, 1943

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library

Meanwhile, in the area formerly known as Butchertown – newly christened India Basin – a new industrial park would hopefully bring in thousands of sorely needed medium-and low-skilled manufacturing jobs. These two projects, launched concurrently, were hailed as “one of the most direct social planning actions in Agency history” and hopes were high that these actions could reverse the fate of Bayview-Hunters Point.⁴²⁰

The involvement of the Joint Housing Committee created a different tenor than the urban renewal project that had destroyed

the Western Addition and damaged the trust between the Redevelopment Agency and the communities they served.

However, progress on redevelopment projects in Bayview-Hunters Point over the past 20 years has surged and stalled, primarily in relation to uneven dispersal of federal funding. In 1973, the federal government announced a moratorium on funding housing projects, which curtailed the full realization of the initial goal for 2,000 new dwellings. The India Basin Industrial Park has attracted industry and commercial tenants, but the slow pace of construction largely undercut the gains it was intended to bring to the neighborhood; indeed, the project is unfinished and was recently amended to extend its horizon. A smaller redevelopment project, the Bayview Industrial Triangle, was initiated in 1980 to increase industrial employment, and has since been amended to include more residential and commercial development.

More recently, the Redevelopment Agency has expanded its activity into the rest of the Bayview-Hunters Point District. In 1995, the San Francisco Planning Department initiated work on the South Bayshore Area Plan, a specific area plan of the General Plan. The South Bayshore Area Plan made redevelopment a major part of ongoing planning activity in the area. That same year, the Board of Supervisors formed the Bayview-Hunters Point Survey Area, and two years later, in 1997, the Project Area Committee (PAC) was formed through local elections.⁴²¹

In 2000, the PAC created the Community Revitalization Concept Plan for Bayview-Hunters Point, which outlined a range of programs and strategies intended to foster physical and economic improvements in the community. These are:

- Promote local employment and development first
- Improve education, training, and employment opportunities for residents
- Focus coordinated investments in high priority areas where they will have the greatest visibility and impact
- Encourage civic participation through interactive public processes and foster cultural development through the arts

⁴²⁰ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Annual Report, 1966-1967* (San Francisco: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1967), 20.

⁴²¹ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Redevelopment Plan for the Bayview Hunters Point Redevelopment Project* (San Francisco: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 2006), 2.

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- Conserve existing housing and provide new housing
 - Address environmental problems and identify opportunities that increase the quality of life
 - Improve the physical environment and transportation systems⁴²²

Although the Concept Plan contained many items outside the purview of the Redevelopment Agency, it serves as the foundation for the existing Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan.⁴²³ The areas formerly or currently under the jurisdiction include six major areas. Project Area A includes the housing on top of Hunters Point ridge, most of which was constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. Area B is much larger, encompassing approximately 1,361 acres – half of the Bayview-Hunters Point district – ranging from the industrial properties within the Islais Creek Estuary zone, to the “Town Center” node along 3rd Street, to the mixed-use industrial and residential zones of South Basin and Candlestick Point. Area C comprises 137 acres of land along the shoreline of India Basin. In addition to these three redevelopment project areas, there are two completed industrial zones managed by the Redevelopment Area: the India Basin Industrial Park and the adjoining Industrial Triangle. In addition, the 829-acre Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Redevelopment Project Area is currently being redeveloped into a mixed-use community on the eastern end of the Hunters Point peninsula.

⁴²² Bayview-Hunters Point Project Area Committee, *Bayview-Hunters Point Community Revitalization Concept Plan* (San Francisco: 2000), 3-5.

⁴²³ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Redevelopment Plan for the Bayview Hunters Point Redevelopment Project* (San Francisco: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 2006), 2.

V. DEFINITION OF PROPERTY TYPES

A. IDENTIFICATION OF PROPERTY TYPES ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORIC CONTEXTS

In the following section we have described the general characteristics and distribution of typical property types typically encountered within the Town Center Activity Node, itself part of Area B of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Area. Although Area B is largely industrial in make up, the Town Center Activity Node – the first part of Area B to be surveyed – is heavily residential and commercial, with some civic, religious, and fraternal uses. The Town Center Activity Node was also the first part of the redevelopment area to be settled and it therefore contains many of the oldest and most significant resources within the district. As a result, the following sections are weighted toward residential property types, with a secondary emphasis on mixed-use commercial and residential properties. In the sections below we discuss each of the major categories of property types encountered within Town Center Activity Node. In addition to describing the general characteristics of each property type we also include one or two examples from the Town Center Activity Node, each accompanied by a photograph. In determining the significance of an individual property, it is important to link it to one of the historic contexts identified at the outset of the survey. For each building type discussed below we have identified one of the historic contexts discussed in Chapter I, Subheading C above: "Identification of Historic Contexts and Periods of Significance."

Residential Buildings

In contrast to the overwhelming industrial and commercial character of much of Area B, the Town Center Activity Node contains a preponderance of residential building types ranging from very early Victorian-era farmhouses and multiple-family tenements, to 1920s-era Mediterranean Revival rowhouses, 1940s-era Moderne "Junior Fives," and more recent condominium projects along 3rd Street. Altogether, residential building types comprise a little over 90 percent of all properties within the Town Center Activity Node.

Earlier Victorian and Edwardian-era construction is heaviest along the first two blocks of the avenues that intersect 3rd Street, where transit provided access to the properties within walking distance. In contrast to much of the city which was subdivided into narrow 25-foot-wide house lots, most of the Town Center Activity Node was originally subdivided into larger 75 by 100 foot "garden lots." For several decades a quasi-rural development pattern characterized the area, accounting for the survival of several early Folk Victorian farm houses within the Town Center Activity Node. As the district's population began to increase, owners of some of these larger lots subdivided them into standard house lots, allowing for infill construction. This land use pattern is evident today in the resulting pattern of older Victorian dwellings interspersed among later housing types, particularly along McKinnon, Oakdale, Palou, Quesada, and Revere avenues. As one moves north along 3rd Street, closer to the former Butchers' Reservation (Butchertown), early Victorian construction is more likely to take the form of multi-family duplexes and tenements, most of which were built to house employees of the slaughterhouses at Butchertown. These are more likely to be found along the first blocks of Kirkwood, La Salle, McKinnon, Newcomb, and Oakdale avenues.

Construction of infill housing began to occur after the 1906 Earthquake as victims of the disaster began to move to outlying parts of San Francisco to rebuild their lives. Much of this development occurred as infill construction within the existing Victorian-era parts of the Bayview and Butchertown neighborhoods. After 1921, San Francisco's new Zoning Ordinance sought to separate residential from commercial and industrial uses. Although non-conforming uses were allowed to remain, zoning essentially reinforced existing dominant land use patterns while reserving much of the outlying parts of the district – particularly areas with bay front or Islais

Creek access – for industrial development. This had the effect of guiding new post-1920 residential development into existing residential districts. During the 1920s building boom residential builders started constructing rows of speculative stucco-finished rowhouses on large tracts of vacant land –often steeper hillside tracts or former truck farms. Elsewhere property owners subdivided larger parcels and built Mediterranean Revival rowhouses on the undeveloped portions of their property.

In contrast with much of San Francisco, residential construction continued to occur, more or less uninterrupted, through the Depression as the Hunters Point Shipyard began to expand its operations. By the late 1930s and early 1940s, mass speculative housing development resumed as builders like Fernando Nelson began purchasing large tracts of vacant land or property belonging to sprawling institutions like the Roman Catholic Orphanage on Mt. St. Joseph and constructing rows of nearly identical “Junior Fives” – five-bedroom stucco-finished rowhouses designed in the Moderne or various simplified period revival styles. Most of this later phase of residential building occurred beyond the boundaries of the Town Center Activity Node, which was largely built out by the end of the 1920s building boom. Nevertheless, there are examples of 1940s-era Junior Fives located within the survey area.

New Residential construction (aside from public housing) basically came to a standstill after World War II. Not only was buildable undeveloped land in short supply but the district was beginning to lose a substantial amount of its long-term white population, freeing up the demand for new housing construction. Nonetheless, some limited infill construction has taken place between the early 1950s and the present day, mostly on larger lots redeveloped from some other use or on site where an existing dwelling had either burned down or been demolished. Postwar housing in the Town Center Activity Node is quite varied, ranging from classic low-slung 1950s-era ranchers to utilitarian “dingbat” construction of the 1960s, and more recent box-like multi-family dwellings of the 1970s through the 1990s, commonly known by their nickname “Richmond Specials.” More recently, during the late 1990s and 2000s, several non-profit and for-profit developers have been demolishing older buildings along 3rd Street and replacing them with large contemporary condominium and apartment complexes.

Victorian-era residential construction: Folk Victorian: 1860-1875

As a district that remained quasi-rural for much of the nineteenth century, there are a handful of very early rural type dwellings that fall under the name of “Folk Victorian.” In the West, this name has come to signify a vernacular wood-frame dwelling oriented with its long side oriented parallel to the street (in contrast to most San Francisco dwellings), a steeply pitched side-facing gable roof, a porch running the length of the façade, wide gable eaves, and very little decorative trim aside from decorative brackets supporting the porch and eaves, and hoods above the doors and the windows. Found today primarily in rural parts of California that were settled in the 1860s, this type is rare in San Francisco, where most early houses like this were pulled down for later development or destroyed in 1906. The Town Center Activity Node has several good examples including the well-known Hittell House at 1547 Oakdale Avenue (ca. 1865) (**Figure 77**) and the dwelling at 1548 Palou Avenue (**Figure 78**). Both dwellings fit the definition of Folk Victorian closer than any other dwelling in the Town Center Activity Node. There are several other early vernacular dwellings that do not fit all the criteria of this type, particularly because they are oriented with their short sides parallel to the street, a given in areas where 25-foot-wide lots were always standard.



Figure 77. Hittell House at 1547 Oakdale Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 78. Folk Victorian at 1548 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

Victorian-era residential construction: Italianate: 1875-1885

Victorian-era construction is quite common in Town Center Activity Node. Despite being located some distance from what was then the built-up portions of San Francisco, the Butchers' Reservation and shipyards at Hunters Point formed the nucleus of what was in reality a de facto informal company town known as South San Francisco. Of the 717 properties in the Town Center Activity Node, 114 are dwellings known to have been constructed prior to the 1906 Earthquake. Because most official city records were destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, most have a recorded de facto construction date of 1900, although many appear to be much older. Pre-1906 single-family dwellings in the Town Center Activity Node are typically either single-family cottages or two-and sometimes three-family duplexes.

Most of the earliest examples are smaller one or two-story, flat-fronted Italianate cottages with bracketed cornices and false "Western" parapets concealing a gable roof behind. There are several dozen examples of this type, particularly on the west side of 3rd Street along McKinnon and La Salle avenues where speculators built several single-family and two-family "Pelton cottages," named for the San Francisco architect who published free plans of "cheap dwellings" in the San Francisco Bulletin between 1881 and 1883. Although some have been raised or otherwise altered, the most intact examples display a relatively uniform appearance, consisting of a slightly recessed pedestrian entrance at one corner (sometimes in the center) flanked by two vertically proportioned double-hung windows. All three openings are crowned by bracketed hoods. Most are clad in rustic redwood siding and slightly raised above street level in case of flooding, which was common in the area. Their facades typically terminate with a paneled frieze and a bracketed cornice capped by either a pent roof or a stepped or flat parapet. Multi-family examples typically consist of two mirror-plan modules linked at the center with the main entrances to both units located at the center of the façade. Good examples include the single-family cottage at 1708 La Salle Avenue (**Figure 79**). Built circa 1885, this dwelling is a well-preserved example of a Pelton Cottage. The only significant alterations include the insertion of a partially below-grade garage and the replacement of the wood double-hung windows with aluminum sliders. A good example of a multi-family Pelton cottage is located at 1715 McKinnon Avenue. Essentially a pair of Pelton cottages joined at the center, the two units share a common interior wall (**Figure 80**).



Figure 79. 1708 La Salle Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 80. 1715 McKinnon Street
Source: KVP Consulting

Victorian-era residential construction: Eastlake: 1885-1895

The Town Center Activity Node also has several dozen Eastlake-style cottages and larger single-family dwellings. Mostly constructed during the late 1880s and early 1890s, the Eastlake style – which takes its name from a Victorian-era English designer and architect named Charles Eastlake – is characterized by rectangular bay windows, narrow strip-like wood pilasters and trim, and abundant scroll-sawn ornament. Eastlake-style rowhouses were popularized by some of San Francisco's earliest merchant builders, such as The Real Estate Associates and Fernando Nelson, who welcomed the opportunity to dress up what was essentially a fairly uncomplicated redwood box with a profusion of scroll-sawn and die-cut redwood ornament around the windows and doors and at the cornice line. Some of the Eastlake cottages in the Town Center Activity Node appear to have been built on speculation because they often appear in rows of two or three, suggesting that a merchant builder purchased a 50 or 75-foot wide lot, subdivided it and built multiple identical houses. Good examples of the smaller one-story Eastlake cottage include 1711 and 1713 McKinnon Avenue (**Figure 81**). In much of the city, the Eastlake style was popular for larger two-story dwellings or flats. This type is comparatively rare in Bayview-Hunters Point, although there are a few, most notably 1663 Oakdale Avenue (**Figure 82**).



Figure 81. 1713 McKinnon Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 82. 1663 Oakdale Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

Victorian-era residential construction: Queen Anne: 1895-1906

The Queen Anne style gained in popularity during the early 1890s and remained popular in San Francisco until roughly the 1906 Earthquake. In San Francisco, the style was applied both to the typical 25-foot-wide redwood rowhouse and the freestanding workingman's cottages built in the outlying districts of the city. In the Town Center Activity Node, the style is most often seen applied to small, one-and-a-half-story cottages. Popular among merchant builders and individual homeowners alike, the typical Queen Anne cottage in the area features a bay window and a recessed porch on the first floor and a gable-roofed pediment on the second floor containing a double-hung wood window. Clad in either rustic channel or flush wood siding, decorative shingle patterns, or a combination of the both, Queen Anne style cottages were also frequently embellished with decorative millwork, including turned balusters and columns, spindle friezes and fretwork, large scroll-sawn brackets, and carved redwood or molded friezes and paneling, especially sunburst motifs. In other cases, the Queen Anne cottage could be quite simple, with little applied ornament. The Town Center Activity Node has several dozen Queen Anne cottages, most of which are very simple workingman's dwellings. Several were built as part of rows of speculative houses, whereas most appear to have been built for (or by) individual homeowners. A row of three originally identical Queen Anne cottages stand at 1766, 1770, and 1774 McKinnon Avenue. Although they have all been altered, 1766 and 1770 are relatively intact (Figure 83). A much more intact and elaborate example is a cottage at 1782 Palou Avenue (Figure 84).



Figure 83. 1770 McKinnon Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 84. 1782 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

Post-quake residential construction: 1907-1914

Between 1907 and 1929, roughly 240 single and multiple-family residential buildings were constructed in the Town Center Activity Node.⁴²⁴ Of these, approximately 90 were constructed during the post-1906 reconstruction period from 1907 until 1914. Although most of Bayview-Hunters Point was not heavily damaged by the temblor (with the notable exception of the slaughterhouses at Butchertown) and the district entirely escaped the post-quake fires, there was a great deal of post-quake construction activity as refugees from other parts of the city moved there to build anew. In most cases this development occurred as infill construction. With notable exceptions, most immediate post-quake residential development barely differed from buildings that were going up before the disaster. Queen Anne cottages similar to those in **Figure**

⁴²⁴ This figure does not include mixed-use commercial and residential buildings on 3rd Street. Construction dates are culled from the Department of the Assessor-Recorder. Note, these construction dates are not always reliable.

83 remained popular. By and large, the typical plan remained intact, usually consisting of a gable-roofed structure, one-and-a-half-story tall, sitting atop a podium containing a garage or basement, and a first story articulated by a recessed porch on one side and a chamfered bay window on the other side. The gabled second story is frequently shingled and punctuated by a window of some type. In many cases, the basic form of the Queen Anne cottage was retained but the scroll-sawn “gingerbread” replaced by simple angular brackets and trim. Also popular during this time were gable-roofed cottages displaying Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, or Bay Region Tradition detailing. Good examples of this type include a pair of Colonial Revival cottages at 1733 and 1735 Mckinnon Avenue (**Figure 85**). After 1910 Craftsman-influenced detailing became popular for single-family construction, particularly large angled brackets with chamfered ends, clinker brick foundations, and distinctive window configurations. An example includes a two-story Craftsman dwelling at 1669 Palou Avenue (**Figure 86**).



Figure 85. 1735 Mckinnon Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 86. 1669 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

The post-quake era witnessed the construction of many idiosyncratic residential building types that did not fit into the gable-roofed cottage prototype described above. In addition to single-family dwellings, some speculators constructed larger multiple-family dwellings closer to 3rd Street near Butchertown. In regard to design and materials, these multiple-family dwellings took many forms, with some flats and some duplexes, including this distinctive row of three originally identical duplexes at 1773-75, 1779-81, and 1785 Mckinnon Avenue (**Figure 87**).

Perhaps surprising for an area that had received such an influx of earthquake refugees, there do not appear to be many earthquake refugee cottages. Of course, to make them inhabitable, residents would have to retrofit them to make them weather-proof. They would also often enlarge them and punch new openings, leaving their footprint and gable-roof profile the only solid clues on the surface. Possible earthquake shacks in the Town Center Activity Node include 1524 Newcomb Avenue and 1631 Palou Avenue (**Figure 88**). Additional physical investigation would be necessary to confirm that either building was an earthquake shack.



Figure 87. 1779-1781 McKinnon Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 88. 1631 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

World War I-era residential construction: 1915-1919

The World War I era witnessed a slow-down in the pace of residential building in San Francisco, despite the growth in defense-related jobs at area shipyards. In Bayview-Hunters Point, residential construction did decline in comparison with the post-quake reconstruction period, but it did not stop. During this four year period, 20 extant houses were built within the Town Center Activity Node. A transitional period in the history of Bay Area architectural history, houses built during this period in the Town Center Activity are extremely varied in regard to size, massing, construction materials and styling, although the Craftsman style remained dominant. The best example of the Craftsman style in the Town Center Activity Node is a freestanding bungalow at 1716 McKinnon Avenue, built in 1915 (**Figure 89**). Vernacular workingman's cottages were also quite common, as were rowhouses in the Mediterranean style, the latter style providing hints of the impending 1920s building boom such as 1675 Palou Avenue, built in 1915 (**Figure 90**). The only other notable trend during this period is that houses were increasingly being built further away from the core Victorian-era settlement at Bayview, with new houses ascending the steep hillsides of Silver Terrace and filling in the former truck farms in the flats east of 3rd Street.



Figure 89. 1716 McKinnon Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 90. 1675 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

1920s-era residential building boom: 1920-1929

San Francisco –indeed most of urban America – experienced a sizable and sustained building boom during the “Roaring Twenties” as the Stock Market soared and Americans prospered. Easy credit allowed many people who were traditionally shut out of the housing market to purchase new homes. Merchant builders in San Francisco responded to the increased demand for housing by purchasing large tracts of undeveloped land on the fringes of the city and developing rows of largely identical five-room rowhouses designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, and Mediterranean style. Outlying quasi-rural districts such as the Sunset, Parkside, and Richmond districts on the west side and Bayview-Hunters Point, Portola, Visitacion Valley, and Outer Mission districts on the east side were rapidly urbanized during this period. Widespread automobile ownership made the development of these previously out-of-the-way areas possible. Most of the houses built during this period in San Francisco were two-story, five-room rowhouses with a garage, shop, and laundry room on the first floor and a living room, kitchen, dining room, and two bedrooms on the upper floor (hence the use of the term “full five” to describe the type).

Within Bayview-Hunters Point speculative rowhouse development largely occurred on the level sites of former truck farms in the Bayview, South Basin, and Bret Harte neighborhoods east of 3rd Street. Although most of the Town Center Activity Node was already built out, there was significant new development on either side of 3rd Street south of Quesada Avenue. Several formerly hilly sites within the corer area bounded by Kirkwood Avenue, Lane Street, Quesada Avenue, and Phelps Street were also developed during the 1920s. In total, around 95 extant dwellings in the Town Center Activity Node were built during the 1920s. Finished in stucco and designed in various Hispanic and Mediterranean-influenced styles, housing built in the Town Center Activity Node did not significantly depart from other mass speculative housing being built in other parts of the city during this era, typically consisting either of Mediterranean-style rowhouses with a typical “barrel-front” bay window, one garage opening, and an exterior or interior stair leading to the primary entrance on the second floor such as 1628 Oakdale Avenue – built in 1926 – (**Figure 91**), or a two-story, two-bay rowhouse with a garage and a recessed entrance on the first floor and two banks of windows on the second floor, such as 1783 Newcomb Avenue – built in 1925 (**Figure 92**).



Figure 91. 1628 Oakdale Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

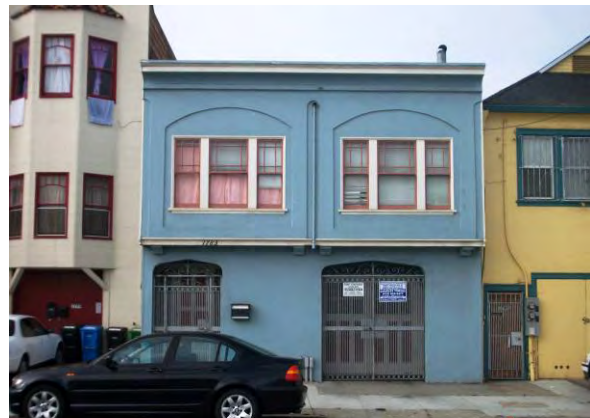


Figure 92. 1783 Newcomb Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

1930s-era building boom: 1930-1939

Although residential building throughout the United States took a substantial hit after the Stock Market Crash of 1929, the effects were unequal – depending in large part on local micro-conditions. In general, San Francisco was not nearly as hard hit as other urban areas and housing construction continued throughout the 1930s, largely in response to the growing importance of defense contractors and shipyards during the pre-World War II build up. During the 1930s, the Hunters Point Dry Docks began to hire more people as business grew. It took off during the late 1930s when the Navy began negotiating to buy the facility with plans to drastically enlarge it. Residential builders responded to the anticipated need for more housing in the area by continuing to build much the same type of housing that they had built during the 1920s.

Between 1930 and 1939, 57 extant houses were completed within the Town Center Activity Node. Similar to the 1920s, most of this development occurred either on previously inaccessible lots within the core area or on outlying former truck farms south of Quesada Avenue. In regard to their design and styling, 1930s-era construction scarcely differed from housing built in the 1920s, with the possible exception that builders were more theatrical in their application of Hispanic-influenced styles, as embodied by the design of a house built in 1939 at 1555 Underwood Avenue (**Figure 93**). By the late 1930s builders had also begun to experiment with various modernistic styles, including the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne style, such as 1744 Palou Avenue (**Figure 94**). Another feature that became quite common during this era, regardless of style, was the “tunnel entrance,” a semi-enclosed (and sometimes gated) entrance to an internal patio and stair that was either open air or protected from the elements by a large roof-mounted skylight. Occasionally this feature consisted only of a small, buttress-like element that served as a portal to the stairs leading up the primary entrance on the second floor level.



Figure 93. 1555 Underwood Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 94. 1744 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

Wartime residential development: 1940-1945

The expansion of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard during the early 1940s – intensifying drastically after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 – continued to attract legions of war workers to the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Residential builders like Fernando Nelson and others continued building compact, five-room, stucco-finished houses on large tracts within outlying parts of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, especially in the Silver Terrace and Bret Harte neighborhoods. Within the Town Center Activity Node most 1940s-era residential construction occurred on infill lots, on steeper inland parcels, or within the still as yet not fully built-out avenues south of Quesada Avenue.

Within the Town Center Activity Node there are 30 extant houses constructed during the 1940s, the vast majority of which were constructed either in 1940 or 1941, before wartime restrictions on the use of building materials brought non-essential construction to a standstill. In terms of their design and styling, little on the surface distinguishes housing from the 1940s from housing of the previous decade. The most notable variation between the two decades is that houses built during the 1940s are nearly all “Junior Fives,” compact stucco-finished rowhouses that are somewhat smaller than the earlier “Full Fives” popular during the 1920s and 1930s. Some retain the earlier exposed side stair leading to a recessed main entrance on the second floor level and others feature the more modern, gated “tunnel entrance” at the first floor level. All have garages, shops, and laundry room on the first floor and typically a combined kitchen/dining room, living room, two bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. In regard to their styling, World War II-era housing in the Town Center Activity Node tends to be simpler and less ornate than either 1920s or 1930s speculative rowhouses. Popular styles include the Streamline Moderne such as 1730 Palou Avenue – built in 1941 – (**Figure 95**) and a variation of the French Provincial style that was very popular for speculative rowhouses built in San Francisco during the 1940s, such as 1655 and 1659 Kirkwood Avenue – built in 1940 – (**Figure 96**).



Figure 95. 1730 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 96. 1655 Kirkwood Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

Postwar residential development: 1946-1960

As described above, World War II brought thousands of war workers to San Francisco, especially Bayview-Hunters Point, where many came to work in the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Many newcomers were initially housed in hastily constructed barracks and dormitories on Navy and SFHA property. After the war many war workers – especially white war workers who were not prevented from buying or renting in any neighborhood that they could afford – began moving out of the war workers housing and building or purchasing houses in San Francisco and nearby suburbs. After racial covenants were struck down in the early 1950s, many African Americans also began to move out of the public housing/former war workers' housing on Hunters Point Ridge into single-family housing in the “flats” of the Bayview and Bret Harte neighborhoods.

The steady demand for new housing kept residential homebuilders in business throughout the district, including the Town Center Activity Node, where builders sought out the few remaining vacant parcels to develop. Many of the available lots were located on steep hillsides where streets had only just been graded and paved or on the site of older houses. Altogether, 47 of the existing residential properties within the Town Center Activity Node were constructed between 1946 and 1960. Of these, the majority (27) were built before 1955. In terms of their design and styling, most are single-family, stucco-finished “Junior Fives” indistinguishable from dwellings constructed immediately before the war, although they tend to be even more stripped down and utilitarian than houses built immediately before the war. Only a handful were multiple-family dwellings; the majority of these were designed as two-family flats. Aside from their extra story, these too are virtually indistinguishable from their single-family counterparts. An example of a postwar multi-family dwelling – built in 1946 – is located at 1675 Newcomb Avenue (**Figure 97**). The only new housing type invented during this period is a variation of the pre-war tunnel entrance Full Five but without any exterior ornament aside from a distinctive bezel molding – sometimes flat and sometimes canted – that typically surrounds the entire second story and sometimes each of the ribbon windows. A local vernacular take on the International Style, this type is well-represented in Bayview-Hunters Point and other outlying districts. An example located within the Town Center Activity Node is located at 1750 Palou Avenue (**Figure 98**). This type does not have an official name, although the author has taken to calling them “Shadowbox Modern.”



Figure 97. 1675 Newcomb Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 98. 1750 Palou Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

Postwar residential development: 1961-1972

Residential construction in Bayview-Hunters Point drastically slowed down during the early 1960s. Reasons for this decline are varied, and include the increased scarcity of buildable land, discriminatory lending practices used by banks in predominantly African American neighborhoods, and a declining population as many long-term white residents departed from the district. With hundreds of homes formerly occupied by whites coming on the market, there were plenty of houses for sale to residents who stayed behind, most of whom were black. Within the Town Center Activity Node, only 15 extant houses were built between 1961 and 1972. Nearly all of these were built between 1961 and 1963 and most fall within the definition provided above of the “Shadowbox Modern.”

Commercial

Throughout the modern history of the Bayview-Hunters Point district commercial uses have primarily been concentrated along 3rd Street, originally Railroad Avenue. As its historic name indicates, 3rd Street was the location of the only transit line into the district for most of its modern history. Because of this, the district developed as a linear “village” consisting of mixed-use commercial buildings – often with residential apartments above the first floor level – with single and multiple-family housing located along the east-west avenues within a block or two of 3rd Street. As in most “streetcar suburbs,” corner lots were the most valuable because they were more visible to passers-by, display windows and entrances could be placed on two street frontages, and they were generally closer to transit stops than mid-block locations.

Within the Town Center Activity Node, approximately 90 properties (out of the total 717) are in some sort of commercial usage. Commercial buildings in Bayview-Hunters Point typically fall into one of two categories: one-story buildings exclusively in use for commercial purposes (usually retail or restaurant/bar/entertainment use), and two, three, and four-story buildings with the ground floor in commercial use and the upper floors used for residential purposes. As the densest and most intensively developed portion of the Bayview-Hunters Point district, almost half of the commercial buildings (44 out of 91) in the Town Center Activity Node primarily are the latter type: multi-story, mixed-use buildings. Regardless of their era of construction, the majority of the commercial buildings adhere to one of these two types.

Regardless of their date of construction, well-preserved single-story commercial buildings typically feature a commercial space at the front with storage or a kitchen in the back. Sometimes an alley or pass-through is located separate from the store, providing access to the rear of the property. Their facades are typically very simple, comprising a large sheet-glass storefront with a tiled or wood bulkhead beneath. Flanking the storefront to one side is a pedestrian entrance accessing the retail/restaurant space inside. Sometimes a band of transom windows is located above the storefront, providing natural light and ventilation. Signage is typically mounted to the parapet as a blade sign or canopy. Typically the only ornament is located on the corner piers or the parapet level. Multi-story, mixed-use commercial buildings typically feature the same configuration as a one-story commercial building at street level. Above this, the upper stories are typically expressed in a residential idiom reflecting the date of construction, ranging from Italianate to Streamline Moderne.

Victorian-era commercial construction: 1866-1906

Within the Town Center Activity Node there are 17 properties with construction dates that precede the 1906 Earthquake. Most have default construction dates of 1900, indicating that they were constructed before the earthquake and their actual construction dates are not known because the City's building records were destroyed in the disaster. Most commercial buildings from this era in the Town Center Activity Node have been extensively altered, sometimes to such an extent that their underlying original design is no longer recognizable. Others have had their original façade materials replaced but their original massing survives. Some retain their original cornices and window trim. The most intact examples retain the majority of their upper story's architectural features, including their original chamfered bay windows and bracketed cornices. Some of the better-preserved Victorian-era commercial buildings include the large commercial block at 4702-04 3rd Street (**Figure 99**) and 4500 3rd Street (**Figure 100**). Both are examples of the Italianate style and were built ca. 1885.



Figure 99. 4702-04 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 100. 4500 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting

Post-quake commercial construction: 1907-1914

The influx of refugees into the Bayview-Hunters Point district after the 1906 Earthquake was responsible for a local population boom. The additional residents required goods and services, due in large part to the isolation of the district from the rest of the city. In response, local businessmen and real estate developers built several business blocks along 3rd Street, 12 of which still exist. In regard to their outward form, several resembled their pre-quake counterparts; most were two-stories, wood-frame, with storefronts on the first floor and chamfered bay windows and turrets on the second floor level such as 2018 Lane Street – built 1908 (**Figure 101**). Others were simple, one-story buildings consisting of little more than a single storefront. At least one extant mixed-use commercial building from this period appears to have been an apartment building that was jacked up and a commercial level inserted beneath: 5158-62 3rd Street – built in 1914 (**Figure 102**). Nearly all commercial buildings from this era are of wood frame construction with stucco, although there is one idiosyncratic brick building at 5012 3rd Street – built in 1912.



Figure 101. 2018 Lane Street
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 102. 5158-62 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting

World War I-era commercial construction: 1915-1919

Very little commercial construction was completed during the World War I era despite the growing activity at the Hunters Point Dry Docks. Of the 91 commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node, only five were built between 1915 and 1919. Most resemble their counterparts constructed after the 1906, although with most of the larger corner lots already occupied, all of those built during the World War I era occupy mid-block locations. All but one are designed in the Craftsman style with a commercial storefront on the first floor and two or three residential units above.

1920s-era commercial building boom: 1920-1929

The nationwide 1920s-era building boom brought construction activity to even the furthest outlying districts of San Francisco, including Bayview-Hunters Point. Of the 91 commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node, nearly one-third – or 28- were built during the 1920s building boom, including several of the most ambitious masonry mixed-use buildings such as 5024-30 3rd Street – built 1923 – and 5172-74 3rd Street (**Figure 103**). These two buildings are three stories, clad in yellow brick, and feature extruded sheet metal-clad bay windows and bracketed cornices. Both also have two store fronts at the first floor level and two levels of apartments above. Both were also built on the southern edge of the district's commercial district, where land was presumably available to build buildings with such comparatively large footprints. Otherwise, most of the rest of the 1920s-era commercial buildings occupy mid-block locations in the heart of the 3rd Street commercial district. Many are modest, one or two-story, wood-frame structures with stuccoed facades and little ornament. Many of the two-story buildings have what appear to be apartments or flats above. Well-preserved examples of the one-story variety include 4820 3rd Street (**Figure 104**) – built in 1924.



Figure 103. 5172-74 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 104. 4820 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting

1930s-era commercial construction: 1930-1939

The Depression essentially brought commercial construction to an end in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. During this decade, only five extant commercial buildings were completed in the Town Center Activity Node during this decade. None are particularly distinctive and do not stand out markedly from buildings constructed during the 1920s building boom, with the possible exception of 1429 Mendell Street, which is the earliest example of an Art Deco-style commercial building in the Town Center Activity Node (Figure 105).

World War II-era commercial construction: 1940-1945

Due to wartime restrictions on the use of most building materials, there are very few commercial buildings from this era in the Town Center Activity Node. The notable example is a small concrete Art Deco commercial building at 1449 Mendell Street, arguably one of the best small-scale Art Deco-style commercial buildings in San Francisco (Figure 106).



Figure 105. 1429 Mendell Street
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 106. 1449 Mendell Street
Source: KVP Consulting

Postwar commercial development: 1946-1960

The immediate postwar period was one of growth and prosperity in the Bayview-Hunters Point district. Although there was a temporary slow down in business at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, work picked up again with hostilities breaking out on the Korean Peninsula. The immediate postwar era was characterized by a residential building boom as war workers moved out of the temporary barracks and dormitories on Hunters Point Ridge and moved into the predominantly single-family neighborhoods of the Bayview and Butchertown flats. However, 3rd Street was largely built out, with few opportunities to build without first demolishing an existing building. Between 1946 and 1960, 13 extant commercial buildings were constructed in the Town Center Activity Node, roughly half of which were constructed between 1946 and 1950. Most commercial buildings constructed during this era are one-story, utilitarian structures with little or no ornament, although several completed during the late 1940s have simple Streamline Moderne motifs, such as 4408 3rd Street – built in 1946 (**Figure 107**). By the late 1950s, nearly all new commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node were one-story concrete strip centers constructed with large surface parking lots (**Figure 108**) such as the Super Save at 4517 3rd Street. After 1960, very little new commercial construction occurred in the Town Center Activity Node.



Figure 107. 4408 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 108. 4517 3rd Street
Source: KVP Consulting

Industrial

Although overall the Bayview-Hunters Point district is overwhelmingly industrial, there are virtually no industrial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node. Within the survey area KVP identified only one industrial building, a concrete structure with a bowstring truss roof located at 1780 Oakdale Avenue. Built in 1954, this utilitarian structure is very similar to the postwar industrial architecture of the Islais Creek Estuary (Oakinba) and South Basin.

Civic/Religious/Fraternal

As the core of the most densely populated residential neighborhoods in Bayview-Hunters Point, the Town Center Activity Node contains a number of significant civic, religious, and fraternal buildings, a category that includes all purpose-built government buildings like schools, libraries, police and fire stations; churches and other religious assembly buildings; and other secular assembly buildings such as union halls, ethnic associations, and community centers – both private and public. As a broad catch-all, this category embraces a wide variety of building types, materials, dates of construction, and styles. Several of the best-known buildings in this category are well-known and date back to the earliest years of Anglo-American settlement in Bayview-Hunters Point, such as the South San Francisco Opera House (1888) at 1601 Newcomb

Avenue (San Francisco Landmark No. 8) and All Hallows Church (1886) at 1715 Oakdale Avenue. Others are not as well known, including such significant examples as varied as the Bayview Presbyterian Church (1888 – now Pearlgate Tabernacle Church) at 15 Latona Street, St. Paul of the Shipwreck (now Bayview Baptist Church) at 1515 Oakdale Avenue, an 1874 social hall expanded and remodeled into a church in 1923 (**Figure 109**), and the Bayview Police Station (ca. 1900) at 1676 Newcomb Avenue (**Figure 110**).



Figure 109. St. Paul of the Shipwreck, 1515 Oakdale Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting



Figure 110. Former Bayview Police Station, 1676 Newcomb Avenue
Source: KVP Consulting

B. DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE BUILDING TYPES

Thanks to early land use patterns codified in later zoning ordinances, land use patterns are readily understandable within the Town Center Activity Node. With the notable exceptions of the 3rd Street commercial corridor, the City College campus on the block bounded by Newcomb Avenue, Phelps Street, Oakdale Avenue, and Quint Street; and the SFUSD property on the block bounded by 3rd Street, Newcomb Avenue, Lane Street, and Oakdale Avenue, the Town Center Activity Node is almost entirely residential. Therefore, residential building types (including commercial buildings with residential above) comprise around 80 percent of the survey area's building stock.

C. CONDITION OF RESOURCE TYPES

General Observations on Condition and Integrity of Property Types

Although there are definitely exceptions, in general, the condition and integrity of all property types is lower in the Town Center Activity Node and Bayview-Hunters Point in comparison with comparable districts in San Francisco. The causes are multiple, beginning with enduring rates of poverty in the district, coupled with discriminatory bank loan practices, and lack of regular maintenance by absentee property owners. In general, the condition of civic, religious, and fraternal buildings is relatively high, given the publicly funded investment in the neighborhood and the importance of churches in the local life of the community. The condition of residential property types is extremely varied, ranging from vacant lots and burned-out and abandoned dwellings to perfectly kept up properties. In general, residential property in the Town Center Activity Node falls within the fair-to-good range. Commercial property tends to be in the worst condition, with dozens of minimally maintained and even some abandoned commercial buildings along 3rd Street.

Regarding integrity, the longstanding lack of available bank loans to local property owners has forced many to repair their property without much assistance. Unfortunately, much of the repair

work has been executed with inexpensive materials without consideration for the physical integrity of the property. Common alterations observed within the Town Center Activity Node include the replacement of wood double-hung windows with aluminum or vinyl sliders, the alteration of window and door openings, the enclosure of window and door openings within steel burglar bars, the removal of historic wood door and window casings and decorative trim, and the replacement of original wood siding with stucco. In some cases, dwellings have been drastically enlarged by jacking them up and inserting new floors beneath them or building vertical additions on the roof. In general, Victorian-era residential and commercial properties have fared the worst. Integrity levels are especially low along 3rd Street, where absentee ownership and incremental remodeling results in an overall very low degree of architectural integrity.

Identification of Typical Character-defining Features of Property Types

As a district primarily containing residential building types, variations among types largely correlate to date of construction, ranging from the earliest wood-frame and wood-clad Folk Victorian dwellings to the stucco-finished speculative rowhouses of the 1940s and 1950s. Many of the earliest dwellings in the Town Center Activity Node were constructed when the district was largely rural; indeed some were built on the large 75 by 100-foot “garden lots” of the South San Francisco Homestead and Railroad Association tract. These conditions resulted in early house builders siting dwelling at the center of the lot, with ample space for gardens, landscaping, and outbuildings around the perimeter. Although most remnants of this development pattern are long gone, a handful of extant properties embody this condition, an extreme rarity in most of San Francisco due to redevelopment and subdivision of large lots.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most houses in the Town Center Activity Node were constructed on standard 25-foot wide house lots. These conditions allowed for few variations in siting or plan, with most houses constructed at the front of the lot with their facades extending the width of the lot, which is the case in most San Francisco neighborhoods. Within these parameters there was little room for experimentation, meaning that interior planning resulted in a fairly consistent floor plan of roughly five rooms per floor, with each house roughly two-rooms wide. These conditions logically resulted in façades that were two bays wide; one bay corresponding to the primary living room inside and the opposite bay comprising the primary entrance.

Bay windows have long been used to increase interior square footage and allow more light into the interiors. As the dominant physical element of most Victorian and Edwardian-era house facades, bay windows were embellished with extensive amounts of scroll-sawn and stamped redwood trim. This mass-produced millwork transformed simple redwood boxes into local variations of the nationally popular Italianate, Eastlake, and Queen Anne styles. Window and door openings were also embellished with lots of decorative millwork. The primary pedestrian entrance contained a wood-panel door (two doors if flats), with sometimes a secondary pedestrian entrance at the basement level. The primary entrance (as well as the main living floor) was typically slightly elevated above street level, providing storage and or ancillary living space within a raised basement level below. Windows were either organized as a simple grid of individual double-hung wood windows or grouped into pairs, clusters, or bands. Most Victorian-era facades terminated with an elaborate bracketed cornice – either raking if a gable-roofed building, or flat if the building had either a flat roof or a false Western parapet. The rest of the façade was typically clad in redwood tongue-and-groove siding, either flush or rustic channel. If the building was more than one story in height, the decorative motifs were repeated on the second story.

After the 1906 Earthquake, the same basic exterior and interior layout typical of Victorian-era construction persisted, although the stylistic trends gradually shifted from Eastlake and Queen Anne to Classical Revival, Craftsman, and Mission Revival. Vernacular housing devoid of popular stylistic features also continued to be erected throughout this period, mostly by individual homeowners who could not or would not pay for the services of either an architect or an experienced builder. Typically built by individuals using day labor, vernacular dwellings were typically compact, simply constructed, and devoid of applied ornament.

Although single-family dwellings comprised the majority of the dwellings constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, multi-family buildings were also relatively common, including flats, tenements, duplexes, and occasional apartments. Multi-family properties, although larger than the typical single-family dwelling, were not significantly different in regard to materials, style, or ornament. Indeed, with many flats, the only way to distinguish between it and a two-story single-family property is by the number of primary entrances in the main entry porch. Flats typically have an individual entrance for each unit. In addition to flats, the Town Center Activity Node also has several one and two-story duplexes, where the units are in tandem as opposed to being stacked. In addition, there are several multi-family dwellings containing four or more units; these are typically stacked and in tandem. Many older commercial blocks along 3rd Street also contain residential units above the commercial units on the first floor level.

The widespread adoption of the automobile in the early twentieth century resulted in significant physical changes to the conventional one or two-story, 25-foot-wide redwood box that had characterized most residential construction in the Town Center Activity Node through most of its history. Beginning around World War I, one begins to see new housing raised atop a one-story-high podium in order to accommodate an automobile garage, shop, and possibly additional living space. Access to the garage was provided by a pair of hinged garage doors in one bay. The opposite bay typically contained either an integral porch housing the primary pedestrian entrance, or a terrazzo or wood stair leading up the primary entrance within a recessed void on one side of the primary volume. The primary living floor sat above the garage and most often contained five rooms: two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen/dining area, and bathroom. In contrast to earlier Victorian-era housing which was typically more varied in regard to siting and floor plan, most houses built from the First World War on often took the form of rowhouses of consistent height, massing, and façade articulation. Often built in pairs, clusters, or entire block faces by speculative builders, twentieth-century housing displays a greater degree of uniformity than earlier housing types.

Although built of wood like Victorian-era housing, in terms of style, twentieth-century rowhouses were often finished in stucco. This factor – combined with a growing trend toward automation of the construction process – led to a simplification of façade articulation and ornament. Seeking to economize on costs and speed up construction, builders largely did away with the full-size bay window, substituting in its place a shallow rectangular projection in the primary living space. Wood trim was confined primarily to door and window surrounds and ornament expressed in molded or hand-troweled stucco. Styles evolved away from the ornate and picturesque Eastlake and Queen Anne to the simpler Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, and later the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles. By the post-World War II period, houses being built in the Town Center Activity Node were virtually devoid of ornament, resembling nothing so much as rectangular, stucco-clad boxes.

On the surface, the commercial buildings along 3rd Street shared something in common with the area's residential construction, particularly mixed-use buildings with commercial on the first floor and residential on the upper floor(s). In general, commercial buildings in the Town Center

Activity Node have always been flush with the sidewalk and do not have either side or rear-yard setbacks, in order to take advantage of available space.

Third Street cuts across the Bayview-Hunters Point street grid at an oblique angle, creating many triangular shaped “flatiron” lots along the primary commercial corridor of the district. As a result, many commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node have irregularly shaped plans and many corner buildings have acute “prows” facing important intersections. During the Victorian and Edwardian eras, this condition was frequently resolved with a turret or conical bay. Because the corner lots have the best visibility and transit access, they were developed first and consequently, many of the oldest commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node occupy these corner gore lots.

Siting concerns aside, most commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node are fairly typical for this building type across San Francisco. The main floor typically consisted of one or more storefronts corresponding to commercial space within the first floor. Commercial units typically consisted of two major spaces: a large room in the front for displaying goods or containing tables and chairs, and a room or rooms at the rear for holding stock or a kitchen and toilet rooms. Each storefront typically originally consisted of one a recessed pedestrian entry located to one side of a single sheet glass display window or sandwiched between two display windows. Historically, the display windows would have had either tiled or wood bulkheads and thick wood or metal mullions. Due to extensive incremental remodeling over the years, there are very few storefronts in the survey area that remain intact.

If the commercial building is one story, its facade typically terminates with a shaped parapet embellished with simplified ornament. If it two stories, its facade often terminates similarly to a residential property constructed during the same era, with Victorian-era commercial properties featuring bracketed cornices and 1920s-era commercial buildings terminating with a shaped parapet or classically inspired sheet metal cornice. Extensive remodeling has resulted in the removal of many historic decorative features from the facades of most commercial buildings in the Town Center Activity Node.

External Factors that May Impact Preservation of Property Types:

As a district that has suffered much disinvestment, poverty, and official neglect throughout most of its modern history, Bayview-Hunters Point has suffered disproportionately from physical decay and abandonment than comparable working-class districts in San Francisco. Although there are many examples of well-preserved properties in top shape, there are many others – particularly along the commercial corridor of 3rd Street – where absentee ownership, neglect, arson, and abandonment have taken a steady toll. In addition, with few resources at hand, and bank loans difficult to obtain during the era of bank redlining, many residential properties in the Town Center Activity Node have been roughly treated, both in regard to lack of maintenance and unsympathetic remodeling.

Arson and abandonment have taken their toll, resulting in a large number (47) of vacant lots in the survey area. Although less than 1 percent of the total number of property in the district, vacant lots are much more evident in Bayview-Hunters Point than in other comparable districts in San Francisco. Vacant lots and abandoned homes are eyesores and often attract illegal dumping and criminal activity, taking a further toll on surrounding properties and perhaps leading to additional abandoned properties, which themselves become at risk of being burned down or demolished. Once demolished, rebuilding has proven slow if it occurs at all, lending a pock-marked character to some blocks within the survey area. Although the continued influx of

new immigrants and urban homesteaders is likely to contain the trend toward abandonment over the long term, its effects are certainly deleterious in the short term.

Although an influx of newcomers can help turn around the economic declining neighborhood, rapid property turnover can be bad for preservation of historic neighborhoods as younger families – often immigrants from other countries where historic preservation is not yet a widespread value – purchase houses from long-term owners and tear them down or drastically alter them to accommodate growing families. In this way, entire blocks of older dwellings in San Francisco's Richmond District have been remade as older and sometimes smaller dwellings make way for large utilitarian multi-family dwellings. Conversely, the influx of what used to be called “urban pioneers” – younger (mostly white) professionals with an interest in historic buildings – can result in the restoration of decaying older buildings. However, this latter phenomenon goes by its own name of gentrification. Gentrification has been blamed in recent years for many of the ills present in Bayview-Hunters Point, particularly rising property values and the exodus to the suburbs of thousands of its African American residents.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SIGNIFICANCE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

A historic context statement typically includes the identification of attributes, historical associations, and levels of integrity requisite to list members of property types in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). Presently there are no properties located within the entire Bayview-Hunters Point district area listed in the National Register and only four that are listed in the California Register (**Appendix A: Table 1**). As an outlying, predominantly working-class district of the city, the district has largely escaped the attention of traditional architectural historians who have mostly focused on high-style mansions of the elite and commercial and civic buildings with obvious architectural significance. Although most properties in the Town Center Activity Node probably do not rise to the level of individual significance, KVP has identified several that do qualify for individual listing in one or both registers. The official criteria for both registers are laid out in Chapter III, Sections F and G above. In addition, it is important to point out that local city landmark designation requires a resource to meet National Register criteria. Also, properties that are listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register are officially listed in the California Register.

Potential National Register and/or Individual City Landmarks

The Town Center Activity Node has a large stock of older residential and commercial buildings, some of which appear to be very early and a few of which are very intact. In general, most of these buildings probably do not fall within the realm of individual National Register or City Landmark-eligible properties. However, several do. Most of these properties have been identified in earlier surveys of the area, in particular the 1976 Architectural Quality Survey and Carey & Company's South Bayshore Survey. They include the following properties:

- 1501 Kirkwood Avenue, a large hipped-roof, Eastlake-style dwelling on the southwest corner of Kirkwood Avenue and Mendell Street;
- 1696-98 McKinnon Avenue, an unusual brick Georgian Revival dwelling on northeast corner of McKinnon Avenue and Newhall Street;
- 1676 Newcomb Avenue, a two-story brick civic building now used as a residence (formerly the Bayview Police Station);
- St. Paul of the Shipwreck/Bayview Baptist Church at 1515 Oakdale Avenue, one of the oldest surviving structures in the Town Center Activity Node and a resource associated with both the area's former Maltese and existing African American populations;
- Hittell House at 1547 Oakdale Avenue, a very early and unusual Folk Victorian dwelling associated with the prominent Hittell family;
- 1510 Palou Avenue, an early Folk Victorian farmhouse;
- 1548 Palou Avenue, another Folk Victorian farmhouse;
- 1552 Palou Avenue, an elaborate if dilapidated Queen Anne dwelling;
- 1218 Newhall Street, a perfectly preserved mixed-use Eastlake-style mixed-use building on the northwest corner of Newcomb Avenue and Mendell streets;
- All Hallows Church at 1440 Newhall Street, the district's oldest catholic church;
- 1540 Newhall Street, an unusual "castle" located at the southwest corner of Quesada Avenue and Newhall Street;

-
- 1449 Mendell Street, an unusual and well-preserved Art Deco-style commercial building;
 - 1595 Thomas Avenue, an unusual First Bay Region Tradition house; and
 - Bayview-Hunters Point Foundation Building at 1015 3rd Street, a well-preserved brick commercial block on 3rd Street.

In addition to the 14 potential National Register/City Landmark-eligible properties, KVP has identified 84 properties that may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. These preliminary evaluations are based solely on potential eligibility under California Register Criterion 3 (Design/Construction) and do not take into consideration any of the other three criteria. As such, these proposed status codes should be understood as being advisory only pending further research. All potential California Register and National Register-eligible properties are identified in **Appendix A, Table 1**.

Potential National Register and/or City Landmark Historic Districts

There appear to be no potential National Register or local landmark districts within the Town Center Activity Node. Although there are notable concentrations of older Victorian-era residential buildings throughout the district, most contain considerable intrusions of non-historic construction or individual members whose integrity has been diminished through inappropriate remodeling.

B. OTHER PRESERVATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

If properly applied, preservation can be harnessed to stem the tide of urban blight and suburban flight by encouraging residents – both longtime and newcomers – to take pride in their community. Awareness of an area's historic significance can also stabilize stagnating or declining property values. More tangible benefits include the provision of preservation incentives to owners of historic properties, including the 10 and 20 percent Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit programs, the IRS-sponsored façade easement donation program, the California Mills Act property tax abatement program, and the California State Historical Building Code. Owners of historic properties should be made aware of these potentially lucrative programs. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency may wish to team up with the San Francisco Planning Department to distribute literature on these programs to property owners in the district.

In addition to existing preservation programs, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency may wish to explore the feasibility of assisting property owners to rehabilitate historic properties through low interest loans, grants, and revolving funds. The rehabilitation of the 3rd Street corridor has long been a priority for the SFRA and local residents and business people alike. As a means to stimulate rehabilitation of tired buildings with poor aesthetics, it may make sense to encourage building owners and tenants to fix up their storefronts and entire building facades. Low or no interest loans and pro bono architectural assistance could make this possible. KVP encourages the use of historic photographs to guide the restoration of facades. Revolving funds have also been helpful in encouraging rehabilitation work in lower-income areas. In addition to cleaning up the appearance of these buildings by removing disfiguring non-historic alterations, building and business owners should be encouraged to restore any historic signage that remains, or create new historic signs that are in character with what formerly existed along 3rd Street prior to the closure of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and the resulting decline of the 3rd Street corridor.

C. AREAS REQUIRING FUTURE WORK

Purpose

As discussed above, Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Area B is an irregularly shaped area of approximately 1,376 acres containing a broad mix of building types including residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional. Building ages range from the 1870s to current construction. The area is divided into seven nodes, which contain varying numbers, types, and ages of buildings. Survey activity has been mandated for all of Area B, and that survey is currently in progress for the Town Center Activity Node. The purpose of this section is to establish a phased plan for extension of the Survey to the remaining nodes.

Survey Definition

A Historical Resources Survey consists of two major elements: the Context Statement and the Field Survey. The Context Statement is a narrative historical account organized around (1) a specific historical theme as it is represented by the built environment in (2) a specific geographic area during (3) a specific time period. Its purpose is to inform the conduct of the field survey by identifying patterns expected to be found in the survey area. This Draft Context Statement has been prepared to cover all of Area B, beginning with the ongoing field survey of the Town Center Activity Node. The Field Survey involves photographing each building in its area and recording a full architectural description of each – as well as ownership and date of construction – on State of California DPR 523A forms.

In addition to these standard elements, the Bayview-Hunters Point survey includes a significant public outreach component which has been implemented by a series of public meetings, personal contacts, media announcements, and internet outreach during the initial phase in the Town Center node.

Findings

Context Statement

The draft Context Statement already prepared, which will be finalized during the Town Center survey phase, covers all seven nodes. Field survey in the remaining nodes may disclose further information particular to those nodes that should be added to the existing Context Statement. However, those amendments can be assumed to be slight. Thus, the Context Statement element for additional survey activity will involve only minor additional costs.

Public Outreach

It is assumed that the Public Outreach element should continue during the survey of additional nodes. Although outreach efforts so far have attempted to encompass all of Area B, fieldwork itself generates questions from members of the public who see surveyors photographing their home or neighborhood. While many of these questions can be answered on the spot, some additional formal outreach is recommended for each subsequent phase of the survey. This need not be as extensive as the program undertaken for Town Center Activity Node, since many key community members will already have been briefed.

Field Work

Field work will comprise the bulk of the work and costs for continuation of the survey. To quantify measurements for this element, Assessor's Office data on all nodes was fed into a FileMaker database and a Geographical Information System program and processed to yield the following information for each node:

- Numbers of residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings
- Median age of buildings

- Total area
- Area of vacant land
- Median FAR of buildings

The amount of field work entailed for a historic survey is primarily correlated with the first two measurements above, while the other three relate to the suitability of the area for development or redevelopment. Results of the analysis are tabulated in **Table 1**.

Table 1

Node	Number Residential Buildings	Number Commercial Buildings	Number Industrial Buildings	Number Public Buildings	Median Age of Buildings	Total Area (Acres)	Vacant (Acres)	Median FAR
Oakinba	59	4	35	3	56	315	67	.60
Northern Gateway	12	0	50	12	69.5	164	22	.55
Town Center	580	39	13	2	86	89	1	.58
Health Center	59	4	35	3	65	60	7	.72
South Basin	958	18	262	14	65	424	81	.52
Hunters Point	34	1	2	14	29	94	n/a	n/a
Candlestick Point	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	219	97	n/a

The Oakinba, Northern Gateway, Health Center, and South Basin nodes are densely developed urban streetscapes containing mixtures of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Industrial and public buildings are generally more complex and therefore more time consuming to photograph and record than residential buildings—and older buildings can be expected to have undergone more changes, thus also requiring more time for recordation. Nonetheless, for these four nodes, the amount of work involved in conducting a survey, and its associated cost, is directly related to the first three items above, primarily to the number of buildings.

The remaining two nodes are qualitatively different, so do not lend themselves to this method of analysis. Hunters Point Shoreline node contains primarily large public housing developments and associated open space. Here, the repetitive building forms simplify recordation, resulting in costs not directly related to the number of buildings. Candlestick Point node is mainly open space surrounding a large sports stadium. However, the area has a complex history of shaping and reshaping the landform itself, and thus is appropriate for documentation as a designed landscape. The node also contains a small number of buildings, each of which would require a separate DPR 523 form. Here too, the work entailed is not directly related to either the number of buildings or the size of the area.

As can be seen in Table 1, Town Center node, currently being surveyed, has the oldest median building age, followed by Northern Gateway, Health Center, and South Basin. The greatest total number of buildings by far is contained in South Basin node, which is also the most heavily residential node, but in addition contains a large industrial area. Thus, of the first group of remaining nodes, South Basin would require the greatest effort and expenditures to survey; followed in approximate order by Oakinba, Northern Gateway, and Health Center. Of the last two nodes, Candlestick Point and Hunters Point would require roughly equal effort, both less than

the other nodes. Table 2 arranges the nodes in descending order of the magnitude of effort and expenditures predicted.

Table 2

	Node	Total Number of Buildings
1	South Basin	1252
2	Oakinba	277
3	Northern Gateway	183
4	Health Center	101
5	Candlestick Point	n/a
6	Hunters Point	n/a

Summary

Although it is difficult to quantify precisely, the work involved in South Basin appears to be roughly equal to that involved in the other five nodes combined. This suggests a division into two future implementation phases—South Basin—and all other nodes.

Recommendation

At this point, it should be noted that the current fieldwork and outreach in Town Center Activity Node appears to be meeting with acceptance and support from the community involved. Town Center is primarily a residential zone with many owner-occupied homes, consequently the fieldwork has resulted in multiple public contacts, almost all of which appear to be creating a positive image of the project. In turn, the Redevelopment Agency gains a degree of public support for its activities, though the prevailing attitude prior to contact is less positive, based on a negative community understanding of redevelopment of the Western Addition in the 1960s. South Basin node, like Town Center, contains a dense residential zone with over 900 resident owners. Accordingly, this report recommends the survey be further implemented in two phases:

1. South Basin
2. Oakinba, Northern Gateway, Health Center, Candlestick Point, & Hunters Point.

KVP also recommends the possibility of preparing California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 B (Building, Structure, & Object) forms for the 160 properties that appear to have some sort of historic status. These are identified in **Appendix A, Table 1**.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this Historic Context Statement, KVP has tried to shed some light on one of San Francisco's most historic but misunderstood districts. As the San Francisco district with the best climate and ample supplies of fresh water, Bayview-Hunters Point supported generations of Ohlone people from time immemorial. The Spanish, Mexicans, and early American settlers understood the value of the area for agriculture and animal husbandry, and consequently, the district remained in use for these pursuits far longer than most of San Francisco. Industry arrived in the 1860s with the meat packers at Butchertown and the shipyards at Hunters Point. Due to its remoteness and lack of adequate transit, most workers congregated along a linear commercial and residential district that evolved along Railroad Avenue (now 3rd Street). Until the First World War, little changed in the future Bayview-Hunters Point district. The Hunters Point Dry Docks, the largest industry in the area, grew slowly for several decades. Other industries grew slowly as well, mostly because ample industrial land remained available in closer-in districts. By the 1920s, suburban residential development began to engulf the formerly semi-rural district. Meanwhile, industrial plants began to pop up on former truck farms and on extensive tracts belonging to the Southern Pacific Railroad. Ironically enough, it was the Depression that brought the Bayview-Hunters Point district to the forefront, as the expansion of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard lured thousands of new war workers to the area. After the war, Bayview-Hunters Point evolved into a solidly industrial district with a mixed population of European and American-born whites, Latinos, Asians, and a growing African American population descended from World War II-era war workers. The conflicts of the 1960s, coupled with deindustrialization, took their toll on the economic life and social well-being of the community, although local organizations and city agencies worked to stem the tide by building new housing and industry in the area. Today, Bayview-Hunters Point is one of San Francisco's most ethnically diverse districts. Development has increased as property values increased during the dotcom and real estate booms but today many wonder if the district will retain its longtime African American majority as older residents sell their homes and move to the suburbs.

In regard to its built fabric, the Bayview-Hunters Point district is also diverse, containing a core area of older Victorian and Edwardian-era housing along 3rd Street and its intersecting avenues, commercial development facing 3rd Street, and significant reserves of industrial land in the northwest and southeast corners of the district. Civic, religious, and institutional properties of various eras are interspersed throughout the district as well, attesting to the self-contained nature of the community. For many years Bayview-Hunters Point remained off the radar of most architectural historians and planners, who knew little about its resources. Although redevelopment, decay, and inappropriate remodeling have taken their toll, the district still retains several dozen properties that appear to be historical resources. This Historic Context Statement is but the first step in a long term survey of Area B of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's Bayview-Hunters Point Redevelopment Plan Amendment. Although it accompanies the completed Town Center Activity Node survey, this document is intended to be used for the other activity nodes within Area B.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1: List of Properties in the Town Center Activity Node with Historic Status

Table 1. List of Properties in the Town Center Activity Node with Historic Status

No.	APN	Address	Name/notes	Listed in Here Today	76 Survey Rating	Heritage Rating	Article 10 Rating	UMB Survey Rating	Listed in NR	Carey & Co. Rating	KVP CR Status Code
1	5290002	1702 La Salle Avenue	Queen Anne cottage		1					5	6L
2	5290003	1704 La Salle Avenue	Queen Anne cottage		1						6Z
3	5290004	1706 La Salle Avenue	Pelton cottage		1					5	3CS
4	5290005	1708 La Salle Avenue	Pelton cottage		1					5	3CS
5	5290009	1730-32 La Salle Avenue	Italianate dwelling		1					5	3CS
6	5290011	1738 La Salle Avenue	Star of Bethlehem/Italianate dwelling		1					5	3CS
7	5290014	1750-52 La Salle Avenue	Italianate cottage (demolished)		1						6Z
8	5290016	1758 La Salle Avenue	Earthquake cottage?		1					5/6	3CS
9	5290017	1762 La Salle Avenue	Pelton cottage		1					5	3CS
10	5290019	1768-70 La Salle Avenue	Queen Anne cottage		1						6L
11	5290020	1772-74 La Salle Avenue	Italianate cottage		1					5	3CS
12	5290033	1667 Kirkwood Avenue	Italianate cottage								3CS
13	5290044	1619 Kirkwood Avenue	Pelton cottage								6L
14	5290047	1782 La Salle Avenue	Italianate cottage (demolished)		1						6Z
15	5290053	1028 Newhall Street	Vernacular dwelling							5	3CS
16	5291001B	1501 Kirkwood Avenue	Large Stick/Eastlake dwelling		3					5	3S
17	5291017 & 017A	4417-23 3 rd Street	Row of Italianate rowhouses (demolished)		1					5	6Z
18	5291021	1541 Kirkwood Avenue	Eclectic cottage		2					5	6L
19	5291023	1531 Kirkwood Avenue	Italianate dwelling		1					4/5	3CS
20	5291027	4408-42 3 rd Street	Italianate commercial block							5	6L
21	5291028	4400-04 3 rd Street	Moderne commercial building							5	6L
22	5296015	1649 La Salle Avenue	Italianate cottage								3CS
23	5296016	4500 3 rd Street	Italianate commercial block							5	6L
24	5296018	4512 3 rd Street	Remodeled commercial building							5	6Z
25	5296020	4524 3 rd Street	Edwardian commercial building							5	6Z
26	5296032	1698 Mckinnon Avenue	Brick Georgian Revival dwelling					2		4	3S
27	5297029	1775 La Salle Avenue	Queen Anne cottage								3CS
28	5297032	1763 La Salle Avenue	Greek Revival dwelling								6L
29	5297047	1716 Mckinnon Avenue	Craftsman dwelling								3CS
30	5305001	1701 Mckinnon Avenue	Eastlake dwelling								3CS
31	5305002	1210-14 Newhall Street	Italianate rowhouses								3CS
32	5305004	1218 Newhall Street	Eastlake mixed-use commercial building								3S
33	5305008	1726 Newcomb Avenue	Italianate dwelling								3CS
34	5305010	1734 Newcomb Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
35	5305013	1748 Newcomb Avenue	Pelton cottage								3CS

Table 1. List of Properties in the Town Center Activity Node with Historic Status

No.	APN	Address	Name/notes	Listed in Here Today	76 Survey Rating	Heritage Rating	Article 10 Rating	UMB Survey Rating	Listed in NR	Carey & Co. Rating	KVP CR Status Code
36	5305032	1773-75 Newcomb Avenue	Queen Anne duplex								3CS
37	5305034	1737 Mckinnon Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
38	5305035	1735 Mckinnon Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
39	5305036	1733 Mckinnon Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
40	5305037	1729 Mckinnon Avenue	Pelton duplex								3CS
41	5305037A	1727 Mckinnon Avenue	Pelton duplex								3CS
42	5305040	1715 Mckinnon Avenue	Pelton duplex								3CS
43	5305041	1713 Mckinnon Avenue	Eastlake rowhouse								3CS
44	5305042	1711 Mckinnon Avenue	Eastlake rowhouse								3CS
45	5306002B	1606 Newcomb Avenue	St. Peters Missionary Baptist Church	Yes						6	6Z
46	5306010	1676 Newcomb Avenue	Bayview Police Station					2		4	3S
47	5306023	4606 3 rd Street	Moderne commercial building							5	6Z
48	5306024	4612-14 3 rd Street	Mediterranean commercial building							4	6L
49	5306025	4616-18 3 rd Street	1-story remodeled commercial building							4/5	6L
50	5306026	4620-22 3 rd Street	Remodeled 1920s-era commercial building							5	6Z
51	5306028	4636-40 3 rd Street	Early 1-story commercial building							5	6L
52	5307002	1500 Newcomb Avenue	Craftsman dwelling (abandoned)		1					5	6L
53	5307007	1526 Newcomb Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
54	5307013	1570 Newcomb Avenue	Craftsman dwelling								3CS
55	5307014	1574 Newcomb Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
56	5308013A	1494 Newcomb Avenue	Mediterranean dwelling		0					5	3CS
57	5311003	4742-44 3 rd Street	Italianate commercial building							5	6L
58	5311026	4702-04 3 rd Street	Italianate commercial block		2					5	6L
59	5311030	4726 3 rd Street	Remodeled commercial building							5	6Z
60	5311036	1601 Newcomb Avenue	South SF Opera House	Yes	4		Yes			3	3S
61	5312002	1700-02 Oakdale Avenue	Edwardian two-family dwelling							5	3CS
62	5312012	1744 Oakdale Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling							5	6L
63	5312013	1748 Oakdale Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling							5	3CS
64	5312017	1762 Oakdale Avenue	Eastlake dwelling		0					5	3CS
65	5312018	1766 Oakdale Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling							5	6Z
66	5312020	1774-76 Oakdale Avenue	Mediterranean style flats							5	6Z
67	5312024	1790 Oakdale Avenue	Remodeled late Queen Anne dwelling							5	6Z

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No.	APN	Address	Name/notes	Listed in Here Today	76 Survey Rating	Heritage Rating	Article 10 Rating	UMB Survey Rating	Listed in NR	Carey & Co. Rating	KVP CR Status Code
68	5312025	1798 Oakdale Avenue	Craftsman multi-family dwelling							5	6Z
69	5312035	1759 Newcomb Avenue	Gothic cottage								3CS
70	5312039	1743 Newcomb Avenue	Italianate cottage								3CS
71	5320034	1420 Phelps Street	Eastlake cottage								3CS
72	5321016	1758 Palou Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling							5	3CS
73	5321024	1776 Palou Avenue	Classical Revival dwelling							5	3CS
74	5321025	1782 Palou Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling		0					5	3CS
75	5321038	1737 Oakdale Avenue	Remodeled Eastlake dwelling							5	6Z
76	5321039	1735 Oakdale Avenue	Italianate two-family dwelling							5	3CS
77	5321041	1729 Oakdale Avenue	Vernacular dwelling							5	6L
78	5321052	1440 Newhall Street	All Hallows Church	Yes	3					3	3S
79	5321052	1715 Oakdale Avenue	All Hallows Rectory (remodeled)							5	6L
80	5322002	4850 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6L
81	5322005	1626 Palou Avenue	Italianate cottage								3CS
82	5322008	1642 Palou Avenue	Eclectic cottage								3CS
83	5322021	1699 Oakdale Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling		0					5	3CS
84	5322024	1679-81 Oakdale Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling5							5	6L
85	5322025	1675 Oakdale Avenue	Italianate dwelling		0					5	6Z
86	5322027	1663-65 Oakdale Avenue	Eastlake flats		0					5	3CS
87	5322028	1657 Oakdale Avenue	Remodeled Italianate dwelling							5	6Z
88	5322029	1653 Oakdale Avenue	Mediterranean Revival dwelling							5	3CS
89	5322030	1635-37 Oakdale Avenue	Italianate dwelling		0					4	3CS
90	5322031	1633 Oakdale Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling							5	3CS
91	5322033	1629 Oakdale Avenue	Mt. Gilead Church/Italianate dwelling							5	6Z
92	5322040	4820 3 rd Street	1-story 1920s-era commercial building							5	6L
93	5322041	4824-30 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6Z
94	5322043	4836 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							5	6Z
95	5323002	1412 Lane Street	Eastlake dwelling								3CS
96	5323002B	1510 Palou Avenue	Vernacular farmhouse		0					5	3S
97	5323009	1548 Palou Avenue	Folk Victorian farmhouse		3					5	3S
98	5323010	1552 Palou Avenue	Eastlake farmhouse	Yes	3					5	3S
99	5323013	1449 Mendell Street	Osborn Funeral Parlor		2					4	3S
100	5323019	1551-53 Oakdale Avenue	Remodeled Italianate duplex							5	6Z
101	5323020	1547 Oakdale Avenue	Hittell Dwelling		5					3	3S
102	5323022 & 023	1515 Oakdale Avenue	Bayview Baptist Church/St. Paul of the Shipwreck Maltese Church							5	3S

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No.	APN	Address	Name/notes	Listed in Here Today	76 Survey Rating	Heritage Rating	Article 10 Rating	UMB Survey Rating	Listed in NR	Carey & Co. Rating	KVP CR Status Code
103	5323024	1505 Oakdale Avenue	Folk Victorian dwelling							5	3CS
104	5326011	4917 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							4	3CS
105	5326011	4921-23 3 rd Street	Early intact commercial building							5	3CS
106	5326012	4909-11 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6L
107	5327001	4900 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6Z
108	5327002	4908-10 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6Z
109	5327003	4912-14 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6L
110	5327004	4918-20 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	3CS
111	5327006	4928 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							4	3CS
112	5327008	4942 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							4	3CS
113	5327019	1752 Quesada Avenue	Four square cottage								3CS
114	5327023	1762-64 Quesada Avenue	Four-square cottage							5	3CS
115	5327024	1770-72 Quesada Avenue	Remodeled Italianate?							5	6Z
116	5327032	1691 Palou Avenue	Italianate dwelling							5	3CS
117	5327033	1687 Palou Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
118	5327037	1669 Palou Avenue	Craftsman dwelling								3CS
119	5327039	1661 Palou Avenue	Queen Anne dwelling							5/6	3CS
120	5327046	1631 Palou Avenue	Vernacular dwelling (earthquake shack?)							5	3CS
121	5327048	1621-23 Palou Avenue	Italianate cottage							5	3CS
123	5327049	1617 Palou Avenue	Italianate cottage								3CS
124	5327052	1730 Quesada Avenue	Eastlake dwelling							5	3CS
125	5328002	1540 Newhall Street	Gothic Revival "castle" dwelling							5	3S
126	5338001	5000 3 rd Street	1-story Classical Revival bank building							4	3CS
127	5338005	5024-30 3 rd Street	Classical Revival mixed-use commercial and residential building							4	3CS
128	5339006A, 006B, & 007	5051 3 rd Street	Bayview Public Library John Bolles & Assoc. with Robert Herman		4						6Z
129	5339007A	5025-29 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							5	6Z
130	5339008	5019-21 3 rd Street	Intact mixed-use commercial building							4	3CS

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No.	APN	Address	Name/notes	Listed in Here Today	76 Survey Rating	Heritage Rating	Article 10 Rating	UMB Survey Rating	Listed in NR	Carey & Co. Rating	KVP CR Status Code
131	5339009	5015 3 rd Street	Bayview Hunters Point Foundation		0			2		4	3S
132	5339011	5001 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							5	6Z
133	5342008	5135-39 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	3CS
134	5342009A	5129 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building								3CS
135	5358003	5110-12 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							5	3CS
136	5358004	5114-16 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6L
137	5358005A	5118-22 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							5	6L
138	5358008	5130-32 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building							5	6L
139	5358015	5158-62 3 rd Street	1-story commercial building with apartment building above							5/6	6L
140	5358016	5164-70 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							4	3CS
141	5358025	5172-74 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building with apartments above							5	3CS
142	5358027	5126-28 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							4	3CS
143	5358029	5100-02 3 rd Street	Moderne commercial building							5	6Z
144	5359004	5191 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6L
145	5359004B	5175-77 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	3CS
146	5359006	1631 Shafter Avenue	Queen Anne cottage								3CS
147	5361017	1595 Thomas Avenue	"Coxhead"-style dwelling		2						3S
148	5361018	1593 Thomas Avenue	Queen Anne cottage								3CS
149	5385001A	2018-26 Lane Street/5273-81 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial block							5	6L
150	5385002	5263 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building								6L
151	5386014	1595 Underwood Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling							5	3CS
152	5386015	1593 Underwood Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling								3CS
153	5386017	1571 Underwood Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling							5	3CS
154	5386020A	1555 Underwood Avenue	Spanish Colonial Revival rowhouse								3CS
155	53860208	1589 Underwood Avenue	Late Queen Anne dwelling							5	3CS
156	5411010	5250 3 rd Street	Abandoned Craftsman bungalow							4	3CS
157	5411011	5256-60 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building with flats above							5	3CS
158	5411014	5268-72 3 rd Street	Mixed-use commercial building							5	6L
159	5411017	5288 3 rd Street	Mediterranean-style flats							5	6Z
160	5411034	43 Thornton Avenue	Late Queen Anne cottage								6L

¹ Note, the KVP CR status codes in the right column are based solely on architectural criteria and should be taken as provisional until further research can be completed.