Chapter 6

Everyday Attractions: Tourism and the Generation of Instant Heritage in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco

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Immediately before us lights were twinkling from ships' masts, and long straight lines of lamps climbed up a conical hill, and small steamers shot across our path like meteors, with their cabins brilliant with light. There was a sound of bells, the shrill whistle of the engine, the rattling of many carriages, the gleam of a red light, and we were gliding along the side of a pier covered with a sea of anxious faces. Hardly had we stopped than the owners of these faces were upon us. They boarded us like pirates, and then arose a Babel of cries, among which I could distinguish as follows: 'Who wants to go to the Cosmopolitan?' 'Who wants a carriage?' 'Grand Hotel, sir?' 'This way for the What Cheer Coach!' 'Carriage, sir?' 'Take you up for a dollar, sir!' 'Want a hand-cart for your luggage, sir?'[1]

London tourist John Player-Frowd hardly expected the scene at the San Francisco pier when he first arrived in 1872. Player-Frowd, like many residents of Great Britain, had been exposed to conflicting accounts regarding San Francisco since the Gold Rush of the late 1840s. These accounts portrayed the city either as a paradise on earth, where riches were plentiful and civility reigned, or as a den of iniquity, inhabited by the scum of the earth. What he found, as did many San Francisco tourists between 1870 and 1890, was that the city featured a little of both – but not an overabundance of either. The pier activity he described was somewhere in between: here was a noisy and seemingly chaotic environment where hotel runners scrambled to sell chauffeured transportation, often by means of luxurious carriage, to the city's more urbane lodgings.

But it was not simply the contrast between iniquity and gentility that tourists found compelling. Tourists were interested in the activity itself, and they often wrote about it in their memoirs. With hindsight, the existence of such a thriving tourist-related industry at the pier in the 1870s may seem unusual to contemporary scholars, who have generally not considered San Francisco's role as a tourist destination in the nineteenth century. That role may appear even more startling to those who have assumed that early tourist ventures to the American West were principally concerned with viewing the wide-open spaces of the natural landscape. But accounts of urban activity in San Francisco, usually laudatory, were the rule rather than the exception, as tourists came to familiarize themselves with this new metropolis on the edge of the American continent. And by the 1870s, San Francisco had established itself as the premier tourist city in the United States west of the Mississippi River, and – along with the Yellowstone and Yosemite areas – one of the West's principal attractions as well.

Along with the Gold Rush, the Vigilance Committee, and the Comstock Lode, tourism and tourists formed an important, yet often overlooked, part of San Francisco's nineteenth-century heritage. Beginning in the early 1870s, guidebooks and other official publications lured tourists to various sites, including the city's buildings, parks, and Chinese quarter, carefully manufacturing and packaging them and helping to generate a sense of instant heritage. The literature catered for wealthy tourists, most of whom hailed from the major American cities of the Eastern Seaboard (such as Philadelphia, Boston, and New York), but many of whom also came from major European cities (particularly London and Paris). All through the nineteenth century tourists from these cities had been heading to 'exotic', less-developed locales in non-Western countries – particularly British travellers to the colonies and territories of India, Egypt and Australia. But San Francisco's rapid development in a spectacular natural setting, its connections to the Pacific Rim, and its sheer distance from the rest of the heavily occupied world offered a potentially exotic experience all its own. In fact, tourists began to visit the city as early as 1865, increased in numbers after the completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, and were common to the city's landscape by the early 1890s. The presence of a large tourist population in San Francisco, along with a built environment which its boosters marketed as resembling the best of Europe and the East Coast, helped the city shed its more popular early reputation as a rowdy, dysfunctional frontier town. Acknowledging the importance of the tourist presence in San Francisco as early as the 1870s also contradicts the view that tourism did not emerge as an important activity in the city until the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 – or in the United States more generally until the 1890s, when tourist services became 'rationalized', the railroads reduced travel rates, and tourism was 'transformed' into an 'industry'.[2]

Acknowledging the existence of tourists in early San Francisco by examining guidebooks and other official publications, however, does not automatically indicate *how* tourists may have experienced the city. While some travellers may have experienced San Francisco just as the guidebooks intended (as a series of genteel, free-standing monuments), for many travellers it was the city's energy, crowds, and otherwise unregulated, non-manufactured and everyday reality that were most appealing (Figure 6.1). This interest in the everyday is occasionally revealed through less official publications such as traveller's books and the prints that illustrated them, articles and imagery in newspapers and national magazines, and unpublished diaries and letters. The more staid portrayals of the city presented in the official publications did not prepare tourists for the city's everyday life. Tourists, however, explored and consumed San Francisco in ways that both included *and* resisted the features of instant heritage promoted in the guidebooks. This combination of a sense of gentility (often experienced by visits to carefully promoted sites) and a feeling for the overall high level and density of urban activity meant 'San Francisco' to many tourists, helping them form a more complete picture and break down the assumption that the city represented a radically different kind of urban

Figure 6.1. Market Street, San Francisco, looking west toward the Ferry Building – photograph by I.W. Taber, about 1885. Cable railways, horses, carriages, pedestrians, power lines, and signage all jostle for position in this nineteenth-century Taber photograph of San Francisco's busiest street, one of several views contained within a Taber photographic souvenir album. The view shows a somewhat less-than-genteel city, but nevertheless one that would have been familiar to tourists. The Palace Hotel is the third prominent building from the right. (Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.)

experience than they had encountered elsewhere. It was ultimately this larger urban experience – not simply the associations tourists made with individual sites – that inspired tourists to consider San Francisco among America's and Europe's more 'civilized' destinations.

Such consideration of the significance of the tourist landscape to the early San Francisco experience suggests that there was more to the city's early years than the unevenness associated with its Gold Rush period and the alleged chaos and urban disorder that accompanied and followed it. While tourists were only a part of the transformation of the city from its Gold Rush beginnings, they nevertheless contributed to the cultural landscape, and should be considered in any serious study of nineteenth-century San Francisco. This chapter attempts to fill at least part of that gap.

Tourists in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco

The story of nineteenth-century San Francisco is popularly summarized by a few events that mark its rise from a provincial settlement to a bustling metropolis. Following the 1848 discovery of gold, the story goes, the once-tiny settlement on the shores of San Francisco Bay became an 'instant city' characterized by waves of immigration, overcrowding and crime. The 1850s were a time of high-stakes gambling and heavy drinking. Thugs wandered the streets, looting and harassing at will. Prostitution was rampant. To provide order, groups of citizens formed committees of 'vigilance', taking the law into their own hands and doling out justice as they saw fit.

By the 1860s and 1870s, the story continues, San Francisco shook its image as a rowdy city on the edge of the frontier by concentrating its efforts on shipping, manufacturing, real estate development, housing construction, and public works. Jobs provided by new industries, railroad construction, and the economic frenzy that accompanied the 1859 discovery of silver in Nevada's Virginia City stimulated further growth, as money flowed freely through the West Coast's major port of entry. From approximately 1,000 residents in 1848, San Francisco's population grew to 233,956 by 1880, and 300,000 by 1891. By the early 1890s San Francisco had become a place of extraordinary production: an active, almost frenetic city – the first metropolis on the western shores of the United States.

If one wholly subscribes to this sweeping narrative, it seems that there was little room during San Francisco's early years for the casual visitor or pleasure-seeking tourist. Indeed, the rapid growth of nineteenth-century San Francisco – and the chaos and urban disorder that occasionally accompanied it – has absorbed much of the scholarly attention that has been paid to this period of the city's history. To date, most writers have ignored the effect of tourists on this process of urbanization, and few have considered that tourists may have taken an active interest in this growth.[3]

San Francisco is not alone among American cities in this regard. Tourists have been overlooked in histories of the early urban American West, as they have been more generally in histories of early urban America.[4] This is puzzling, considering that by the 1890s New York City – not Niagara Falls, the White Mountains, Yellowstone, or Yosemite – was the most widely visited place in America, and that nearly every early 'Western' railroad trip included urban encounters along the line (or just off it). Furthermore, many cities were more than stopovers; they were sold as attractions in and of themselves, and tourists explored them.[5]

With the completion of the Union and Central Pacific Railroad lines – the first of the trans-continental railroads – most tourists who ventured west to explore the 'frontier' and to visit its natural wonders eventually completed their railroad journey in San Francisco (or, more specifically, across San Francisco Bay in Oakland). Even if their trip had been inspired by a desire to explore the natural landscape of the West (which many domestic travellers believed marked a distinct 'American' heritage unlike anything in Europe), few tourists hopped off the railroad in Oakland and took the first excursion train along the coast or into California's interior. Nearly all tourists boarded ferries for the short trip across the bay to the city of San Francisco, where they remained for at least a couple of days.

Despite these realities of travel, the historiography of tourist encounters with the nineteenth-century American West (and twentieth, for that matter) has had a decidedly anti-urban bias. Western tourism at that time has meant visits to 'natural wonders': The Rocky Mountains and Pike's Peak, Colorado's Garden of the Gods, Yellowstone, Yosemite, the Calaveras Big Trees, and the geysers near Calistoga. Generally, Western tourism has been considered a history of travelling to these natural sites – first by railroad, then by automobile, and finally by recreational vehicle and packaged bus tour. Tourists in early San Francisco appear in secondary sources (when they do appear) because some travellers stayed briefly in the city before transferring from an overnight Pullman car to an excursion train heading for Yosemite or the Hotel del Monte in Monterey. Thus, when Earl Pomeroy set out in the late 1950s to write the first history of early Western American tourism (and still one of the few), his focus was on the wide-open spaces of the West, not its urban centres.[6] Most scholars who have written about tourism in the American West since then have used Pomeroy as a foundation, providing more detailed analyses of how tourists visited the gems of natural scenery described in his book.

It is, of course, justified to understand the tourist in the American West as an explorer of nature, for these scenic natural wonders were tirelessly promoted by railroad companies, guidebooks, journalists, writers and photographers in the nineteenth century, and they were visited by numerous tourists in the nineteenth century. Thomas Cook and Sons, the British travel company, offered package tours to view the natural 'wonders' of the American West as early as 1870. Even the 'See America First' campaign, initiated in 1906, was designed to infuse American nationalism and generate domestic revenue by exploring the 'scenic wonders' of the country – particularly those in the West.[7] Furthermore, those few scholars who have bothered to explore urban tourism in nineteenth-century America have generally seen it as a pursuit of the natural, in part because many urban dwellers, on their days off, may have desired to 'escape' the density, poverty and corruption of the cities for tranquil suburbs or picturesque urban parks. All too often, scholars of American tourism have assumed that nineteenth-century travellers would have sought out similar places of refuge during their visits to cities elsewhere. This view of life in the nineteenth-century city stems in part from a range of accounts that dwell upon the urban 'ills' of rapidly industrializing cities and the attempts of reformers to make them more liveable and genteel.

Understanding tourists as distinct from cities also ignores the efforts of business and civic leaders to promote their downtowns as visitor attractions during a time that, in San Francisco, was frequently associated with lawlessness and unchecked growth. The view also fails to recognize that many people were fascinated with industrial and big-business America, and that city skylines, with their office buildings, factories and smoke, may have come to mark the notion of 'city' and 'opportunity' to many travellers, just as it had to many immigrants coming to America's Eastern Seaboard during the nineteenth century.[8] And while tourists certainly did enjoy visiting the suburbs, understanding tourism solely as an escape from cities disregards the possibility that many travellers enjoyed participating in the urban energy of the places they visited.

While the 'opening up' of the vast spaces of the 'frontier' to Anglo-American control and, later, tourist exploration represents part of the history of the American West, much of the region's nineteenth-century history was one of urbanization. At the time the ratio of urban to rural residents in the American West was far greater than in the East (and even the Midwest), as people clustered together in cities from Denver to Portland. San Francisco, of course, was the most urban of these western cities, and this was part of its visitor appeal. The city provided the added attraction of being the principal nineteenth-century port of entry to the Far East, giving many travellers their first chance to glimpse Asian cultures, particularly the Chinese. With the Chinese routinely vilified in the contemporary literature for their 'uncivilized' and 'heathen' ways, a visit to San Francisco also provided some tourists with an opportunity to see what they perceived as a piece of the 'undeveloped' world on native soil.

That all this was framed by a scenic natural landscape marked by rolling hills and sparkling water could only have heightened the overall experience: here was a city that combined the 'natural' and the 'artificial' in ways that tourists could not have experienced elsewhere. Europeans and Americans

heading across the land for the first time must have imagined San Francisco entirely as a spectacle of difference – an urban 'other'. And yet what travellers experienced once they arrived – and what they seemed to be most interested in – were not only the differences or the exoticness of it all, but the fact that a fully American city, with grand monuments within a vibrant urban landscape, could thrive at such a distance from the rest of the urbanized world.

But who were the nineteenth-century San Francisco tourists? This question is not so easily answered, for tourists belonged to no single class, race, gender or geography. One early traveller from England, for example, complained about the 'admixture' of strangers and sexes on one of Thomas Cook's 'package tour' trains.[9] Class differences were fairly acute in the 1870s and 1880s, when the high costs of rail travel made it prohibitive for any but members of the wealthy, leisured classes to visit San Francisco.[10] But by the 1890s, with more railroads, more tour companies, and a national economic depression, increasing competition and lowered rates made it possible for members of the more middling classes to tour California as well. Furthermore, many non-wealthy travellers came to San Francisco before 1890 hoping to find work or seek a fortune in the gold country, and passed their interim time in the city. These travellers often expressed fascination with many of the same things – from packed streetcars to leisurely drives in the park – encountered and enjoyed by wealthy vacationers staying at first-class hotels. Upon arrival they, too, may have found the guidebooks and other official literature promoting the city and its sites useful.

Surviving traveller's accounts were also written by women as often as they were by men, even though women were excluded from participating in many aspects of the alleged 'public' sphere in the nineteenth-century city (and, in certain cases, even from aspects of the tourist landscape – particularly those associated with night-time activities). But enough of the tourist landscape was enjoyed by both sexes, and tourism – while hardly shifting commonly held conceptions about women's roles in public space – nevertheless transcended some of the gender barriers that separated men from women in civic life. Both men and women expressed fascination with the city's urbanity and its 'civility' and were impressed with its weather, its setting, and its overall appearance.[11]

The problem of defining the nineteenth-century San Francisco tourist is compounded by the fact that while most visitors came from the East Coast or from Europe, some also came for the day or the evening by ferry, stagecoach or railroad from San Francisco's outlying suburbs such as Oakland, San Rafael, or San Mateo. Still others emerged from within San Francisco itself, taking the afternoon or evening to engage in activities that could also be associated with those of tourists such as trips *to* the suburbs or night-time visits to restaurants and the theatre. Many travellers were

also lured to San Francisco by railroad companies and other corporations among whose principal motives were to sell lots to potential settlers or investors along the route; and these travellers 'toured' the areas while they considered resettling or investing. Others may have ventured to San Francisco as pleasure-seekers initially, and later decided to settle there permanently. It is possible that tourists in the nineteenth-century urban West more generally have been ignored because of these very difficulties of definition.

Some of the difficulty about discussing tourism at all – anywhere – is that there is rarely a consensus as to who exactly *are* tourists, and whether those tourists should be defined by their motives or their experiences. Much of the scholarly work concerning tourism thus far has placed a greater weight on the former in defining tourists; what happens once tourists finally arrive at the intended destination seems of little consequence compared with what they expect to find, from what conditions or situations they are trying to 'escape', how 'leisured' one must be in order to be considered a tourist, and how a tourist 'industry' – with its guidebooks, package tours, and other amenities – is set up to manipulate and manufacture the tourist experiences in particular ways.[12] Furthermore, most analyses of tourism have assumed that tourists are motivated to 'see' things in the places they visit, whether other people or physical objects. Thus, there has been an emphasis in the literature regarding the tourist 'gaze' and a privileging of the visual over the other senses.[13]

While tourist motivation and the 'gaze' are important and play a role in the tourist experience, they rarely paint a convincing, all-inclusive picture of tourists, and they rarely account for the *range* of tourist experiences. Instead, they create a rigid methodological framework that fails to consider the possibility that tourists – as consumers – have choices in what they consume, or that tourists may actually travel to discover, or engage with, the everyday practices of others, and not always because these practices *differ* from the tourists' understanding of the 'everyday'. It also assumes that tourists are not only funnelled toward certain sites, as manufactured and directed by official literature, but that they blindly follow that literature, and therefore that this official perspective is key to understanding the process of tourism. Studies of tourism have traditionally adopted this tactic, ignoring the view from the ground – that is, of the tourists themselves. Did tourists not have a say in their travel experiences? Tourism, like everyday life, is a complex process that defies simple categorization.

Rather than creating boundaries (which are forever penetrable), this chapter therefore attempts to offer a broader view of tourists. In San Francisco such people included pleasure-seekers, potential settlers, and other explorers whose stay (or visit) was sufficiently memorable for them to put it into words in the form of books, diaries or letters, and whose

presence was significant enough that a whole range of literature and imagery – from guidebooks to lithography – catered for them. By examining some of their own words in addition to that of the official literature, this chapter suggests that experiences are as important as motivation and promotion in understanding tourists and tourism.

Generating Instant Heritage

Different types of official media intended to attract visitors to the city played a key role in the generation of instant heritage in early San Francisco. The official perspective was best represented in guidebooks, but on occasion, it was also evident in newspaper and magazine articles and their accompanying illustrations. Such publications commonly directed tourists in particular ways, encouraging them to partake in those aspects of San Francisco that – with the exception of the Chinese quarter – lent the city an air of gentility. The publications were usually produced by private companies, whose interest in distributing guidebooks and pictorial imagery lay in attracting wealthy travellers to invest in company-owned commercial properties.[14] View-photographer Isaiah West Taber, for example, published guidebooks and 'souvenir' booklets in the 1880s and 1890s asking San Francisco guests to visit his establishment while they toured the city – whether or not they intended to purchase any of the items for sale there.[15] Other locally published guidebooks (often called 'strangers' guides') resembled broadsheet newspapers and provided visitors or newly arrived residents with the 'essentials' for orienting themselves to the city. These sources usually included transportation routes, streetcar fares, and the locations of city and county offices, along with the city's 'attractions'. Together, these official documents worked to promote the city as a refined and cultured place to visit.

Other common forms of official documentation were photographic panoramas and colour lithographs portraying bird's-eye views of the city. While the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century photographic panoramas remained luxury souvenirs even after the rise of tourism in San Francisco, the bird's-eye views were commonly used to promote American cities, particularly in the West, and could be reproduced quickly without incurring a great cost either to producer or consumer. Despite the differences in cost, the overall goal of representation in these two different types of images was similar: while both often depicted the city as a dense landscape of commerce and activity, they also cleaned up this otherwise messy process. Carleton Watkins and Eadweard Muybridge's photographic panoramas of San Francisco from Nob Hill in the 1860s and 1870s, for example, depicted a city that was somehow too perfectly organized. Similarly, bird's-eye views of San Francisco commonly set its landscape of commerce against a sparkling blue bay, or portrayed it at sunset, usually –

perhaps intentionally – from too high up to reveal any of the particulars of everyday life (with the exception of numerous ships crowding the wharves). To be sure, whether they originated from the photographer's eye, the artist's brush, or the lithographer's stone, these were largely romantic, *constructed* views as seen from particular vantage points.[16] Only tourists who scaled the city's hills could glimpse it in any fashion remotely resembling them. Even when tourists did obtain such a view firsthand, it only comprised a sliver of their overall urban experience.

While the bird's-eye views and the photographic panoramas offered potential tourists the view from above, guidebooks transported the space of 'constructed visibility' to the ground, where the city became an organized document of individual sites.[17] To help attract visitors, the guidebooks promoted the city's physical appearance, recommending that tourists visit discrete sites both in and out of it. Among other sites (or 'sights'), these publications invariably promoted the Chinese quarter (Chinatown), hotels and theatres inside the city boundaries, and Golden Gate Park and the Cliff House in what were San Francisco's nineteenth-century suburbs. The proliferation of official documentation in the nineteenth century could be seen as a widespread civic effort to establish a 'permanent' sense of the city – at least in the imagination – in the face of constant change. To some extent, this marking of a permanent site was a way of generating a heritage for a city that, in the 1870s and 1880s, still lacked a lasting tradition.[18]

In an effort to stem the rapid tide of change, official publications boasted that new – and presumably permanent – private and public buildings rivalled or, at times, surpassed the 'best examples' in London, Paris, or New York. On the one hand, this represented an effort to infuse the new metropolis with a sense of civility that would seem familiar to visitors from elsewhere. On the other, it claimed for San Francisco a distinct architectural heritage that was uniquely 'San Francisco'. The process of civic beautification through new architecture and the promotion of San Francisco as a 'Paris of the West' by civic leaders and entrepreneurs not only attempted to represent the city's advance into the world of high culture, but also pointed up significant differences between 'civilized' San Francisco and the 'humble' dwellings, 'exotic' practices, and 'peculiar' people of the Chinese quarter.

The official literature frequently illuminated this distinction, treating the Chinese quarter as an oddity and a tourist attraction by the 1850s, thus allowing publishers to highlight what might have been the most significant cultural difference between urban San Francisco and other major American cities at the time. Despite the alleged 'risks' involved in exploring the Chinese quarter, these publications often reserved the lengthiest amount of text for its description and encouraged intrepid travellers to experience it. At the same time, the description of the quarter as a 'mysterious' and 'strange' place served to exacerbate the separation in thought and mind of

the Chinese from 'Americans' (White, and generally male, San Franciscans), just as the Chinese were legally separated by land, forced as they were into a nine-square-block area near the downtown business district. While laws physically separated Chinese from Whites, the denigrating written portrayals kept them psychologically at bay, allowing travellers to peer voyeuristically into what was depicted as a den of moral contagion before returning safely back to the hotel by horse-drawn carriage.

While secondary literature on nineteenth-century tourism in America has generally argued that tourists desired to escape from the city, with its impersonal office buildings, soot and crowds, into the 'picturesque' refuge of parks, cemeteries, and leisurely drives, the guidebooks and other publications often promoted the typically urban aspects along with the picturesque.[19] Visitors also made little distinction, revelling equally in the urban 'danger' of the Chinese quarter and the city's busy pulse, and meandering by horse-drawn carriage through the supposed tranquillity of Golden Gate Park.

But not all travellers experienced San Francisco as a series of separate sites, nor did they necessarily view the Chinese quarter as a peculiar environment to be feared as well as admired. In many cases, tourists were not content to remain within the frame of constructed visibility spelled out by the guidebooks and depicted in the idealized pictorial imagery. Instead, tourists bled off the edges, encountering the city's interstitial spaces, ordinary built environments, and everyday life, just as they toured the pristine monuments, ate at fine restaurants, and relished the city's more genteel aspects. A more comprehensive picture of tourist San Francisco begins to emerge if one examines national magazines and the many books written by travellers from the East Coast and Western Europe, and often published and marketed in those parts of the country and world. Such publications were a type of official literature, but their intents and loyalties were less explicit; it is often difficult, for example, to determine whether they intended to promote travel for the purposes of boosting civic pride, to generate business for local commercial establishments, or simply to recount adventures for a general reading public.[20]

The widespread dissemination and consumption of magazines like *Harper's Weekly*, *Scribner's Monthly*, and the *Overland Monthly* often introduced the public to San Francisco and played an important role in promoting the city to potential tourists. Rather than a singular view of San Francisco, showing stand-alone monuments in tranquil settings, such magazines combined these views – in written and pictorial form – with scenes of everyday activity in the Chinese quarter, in the streets, or at the waterfront. Unlike much of the official literature, not all of these views, or the articles that accompanied them, portrayed the city in a positive light. Together, they provided an arguably more representative picture of city life than that spelled out in the guidebooks or shown in the bird's-eye views.

Like the official literature, the travel books often included descriptions of San Francisco along with other locations in California and the West, and the authors usually detailed particular sites while suggesting that San Francisco should be included in any trip to the Pacific coast. Unlike the guidebooks, however, the writers of these accounts commonly described the city from their own particular points of view, thus providing portraits of the city based on experiences already experienced, rather than experiences imposed from elsewhere. Often, this meant *discussing* the very rapid change and growth of the city, even when it was not exactly picturesque. London visitor Harry Jones, for example, wrote that San Francisco was 'thriving' and spreading 'like fire'; and to convey this growth he mentioned the 'moving of whole houses down the streets from one part of the city to another' (an image of this process accompanied his text).[21] Those illustrations which accompanied George A. Sala's massive tome on his travels across America similarly depicted a San Francisco of motion and activity, where people, horses, carriages and ships put the stately monuments into action.[22]

This phenomenological view of the city is supported by the unedited letters and diaries written by travellers during this period, which provide perhaps the closest approximation of raw, uncut responses to San Francisco. Like the travel literature, these documents both supported and subverted the official view disseminated by the guidebooks, suggesting that travellers not only experienced the city as a series of separate monuments privileging the eye, but on different sensual levels, including those of sound – and, on occasion, even smell.[23] This multi-layered sensory experience further activated the otherwise staid monuments within the crowds that, for tourists, constituted San Francisco as a living, breathing place, full of life, energy and diversity.

Picturesque San Francisco

So where did tourists go? If one believes much of the literature about tourism in nineteenth-century America, one might assume that tourists had little interest in the city and only desired to flee San Francisco for the picturesque attractions in its adjacent suburbs. To be sure, the suburban attractions were heavily advertised in the promotional literature, and they were also visited by tourists. But while the suburban experience was also included, it was the urban experience which mattered to most nineteenth-century travellers in San Francisco. Carriages (functioning as taxis) were stationed outside most of the luxury hotels, with attendants ready to drive visitors along winding roads to Golden Gate Park, the Presidio, the Cliff House, Woodward's Gardens, Twin Peaks, or Mission Dolores – places commonly listed among the city's 'getaways', 'excursions', and 'suburban points of interest'.[24] The tourist could experience these placid roads and 'escape' the city on foot, by carriage, or by streetcar. Newspapers at this

time also wrote about local San Franciscans making trips to the suburbs, suggesting that the 'suburban points of interest', at least initially, were geared more toward locals than visitors.[25] Even in the 1850s advertisements and accounts of boat or ferry excursions to more remote areas such as Contra Costa, Mare Island, the Farallon Islands, Alameda, or the Napa Valley were frequently published in local newspapers.[26]

While some tourists certainly did head into the suburbs, the assumption that nineteenth-century tourists should be *defined* by those who sought pleasure by escaping the city for the tranquillity of the suburbs is misleading. Such a view is largely rooted in a generalized understanding of nineteenth-century urban centres as places of crime, overcrowding, and moral decay – places that needed to be 'repaired' and infused with space, greenery, and 'lungs'.[27] While San Francisco boosters were not immune to the appeal of the rapidly disappearing natural landscape, and pushed, among other things, for the creation of Golden Gate Park in the early 1870s, their efforts did not turn San Francisco into a suburban retreat. While Golden Gate Park was intended to provide scenery, moral uplift, and to 'keep the poor and the young from the temptations scattered around them', it was actually located a considerable distance from the city's most urbanized areas – at least originally.[28] While citizens engaged in the occasional 'greening' of downtown with little urban parks, neither these, the exotic plantings around the entrance court of the Palace Hotel, the creeping vines and array of flowers decorating many of the city's private residences, the placid serenity of the Laurel Hill and Lone Mountain cemeteries, nor the landscape paintings by Albert Bierstadt gracing the Lick House dining room walls were enough to constitute a ruralized city.[29]

If anything, the variety of literature concerning tourism and travel indicated that there were two nineteenth-century San Franciscos: a sparsely-populated suburban one with Golden Gate Park, leisurely drives, Mission Dolores, beaches, and the Cliff House; and an urban one consisting of a financial district, a Chinese quarter, shops, grand hotels, tightly packed houses, office buildings, and industries along the waterfront. Tourists visited both of these San Franciscos, but guidebooks rarely separated the city into 'suburban' and 'urban' areas. John S. Hittell, compiler of the massive *Bancroft's Pacific Guide Book* and other guidebooks, for example, considered San Francisco among California's 'Pleasure Resort Districts' – the city was a resort that combined urban and suburban attractions into an overall landscape of leisure:

> Among [pleasure resort districts], the first place belongs to San Francisco, with her leading business streets; her cable railroads; her ocean beach; her Seal Rocks; her spacious bay, studded with islands; her active stock market; her cemeteries; her park; her Chinatown; and her hundred hills, some of them crowned with palaces.[30]

Exotic San Francisco

Among the writers promoting San Francisco in the nineteenth century, New York-based journalist Charles Nordhoff was one of the most prolific. From the 1860s through the 1880s, Nordhoff wrote numerous articles in *Harper's Magazine* and *Scribner's Monthly*, the collection of which resulted in a number of books about tourism and travel.[31] The city of San Francisco was one of Nordhoff's favourite topics – a city, he wrote, that was 'one of the pleasantest and most novel of all the sights of California.'[32]

For Nordhoff, what was most 'novel' about San Francisco were the 'strange sights' of the Chinese quarter. He said the quarter could occupy a tourist's 'leisure' for several days, depending upon visitor curiosity.[33] Like most writers and guidebooks discussing the quarter in the nineteenth century, Nordhoff combined an interest in the area with a nativist condescension and religious fervour that portrayed the Chinese people and their non-Christian ways in an alien, almost barbarous light.

Nordhoff essentially divided the Chinese quarter into two principal sectors for tourists: one 'safe' environment that included the main streets by day and the 'extraordinary' Chinese theatre by night; the other a dangerous night-time environment of alleyways, gambling, and opium dens advisable only for men accompanied by a police officer.[34] Unlike the rest of San Francisco, Nordhoff's promotion of the Chinese quarter by day or night was predicated on a broad cultural fascination with the unusual, the strange, and the extraordinary – a fascination generated in part by the 'non-fictional urban sensationalism' common to a genre of reform literature that emerged in England and America in the mid-nineteenth century. Much of this literature highlighted the cultural landscape of the working and non-working poor; and in America, it sensationalized these conditions for the intended purpose of delivering the people – usually by means of religious conversion – from poverty, intemperance, crime and ignorance.[35]

Some of this reform work carried over into tourism as well; thus, by the late nineteenth century, slum tours had become popular in certain areas of New York City. Furthermore, disparaging portrayals of the Chinese – along with laws that refused them citizenship and basic rights afforded Western and Northern European immigrants – helped solidify American national identity as particularly White and of European descent.

With the exception of the Chinese theatre, Nordhoff emphasized that the Chinese quarter was not a place of amusement. Rather, it was a 'blot' on the city, a place where 'vile' and 'heathen' practices took place (such as the smoking of opium and the worship of pagan gods), and a slum that he compared on more than one occasion to New York's Five Points. Nordhoff described the quarter as so aesthetically distasteful that he recommended its wholesale demolition and replacement with new accommodations. If this

could be accomplished, 'civilization and Christianity and free government on the Pacific coast would make a great gain.'[36]

Nordhoff's book also included a chapter entitled 'John', which detailed the 'heathen' ways of a man Nordhoff saw as typical of Chinese male residents of the quarter.[37] This section had a manifold purpose: at the same time that it was rooted in Christian notions of moral propriety and the belief that a better society could be forged if everyone became a good Christian, its portrait of the allegedly 'heathen' ways of the Chinese also secured 'civilization' for White San Francisco (and, by association, White America), and simultaneously enticed tourists to visit the quarter by accentuating its differences and overall peculiarities.

Nordhoff's description of the Chinese quarter and of the Chinese more generally was not particularly unusual in comparison with those of other writers, or to those in guidebooks discussing the area in the late nineteenth century; it was simply among the more glaring. Accounts of the quarter in the official literature routinely castigated the Chinese, while travel writers described their built environment in language typical of the Orientalist discourse of the day. One representative article in *Scribner's Monthly* described the geography of the Chinese quarter as a 'system of alleys and passages, labyrinthian in their sinuousities, into which the sunlight never enters; where it is dark and dismal, even at noonday.'[38]

James Mason Hutchings, whose California accounts Nordhoff had read prior to his own initial visit, and who was one of the first writers to help forge the California mystique as a land of pleasure and natural beauty, published insolent descriptions of the Chinese and their quarter in his *California Magazine*. Like Nordhoff, one Hutchings writer noted the slum-like conditions of the quarter and the 'humble', 'filthy', and 'unpleasant' dwellings occupied by the Chinese. He described their manners as 'singular, and in some respects, amusing.'[39] Willard Glazier, an American soldier-turned-urban-traveller and popular writer in the nineteenth century, described the Chinese quarter's tenement houses as 'crowded and filthy beyond description, and the breeding places of disease and crime.'[40] Frank Green, a British traveller who visited the quarter in the 1870s, wrote of the 'abominable stenches' emanating from it, 'to which hog slaughtering at Chicago', by comparison, was but 'a trifle'.[41] One guidebook to San Francisco published by the Central Pacific Railroad (much of which was built using Chinese labour) included a fictionalized account of a tourist's night-time stroll through the quarter:

> Strange faces and odd figures throng the street. Men with half-shaven heads and outlandish dress and manners, and women with painted faces and queer eyebrows, and semi-barbarian attire, flit by us. The walls of the buildings have curious hieroglyphics – and hark back to the voices – what jargon is that? We are foreigners at home! This is Asia. This is Canton.[42]

References to the Chinese quarter as a transplanted version of mainland China were also common, even if the geography was incorrect. Thus, it was equally likely to find the area compared to Canton as to Peking, although very few Chinese who came to San Francisco in the nineteenth century came from northern China, and most had never experienced the rigors of city life. Guidebooks, strangers' guides, and travellers' accounts also referred to the Chinese interchangeably as 'Celestials' or 'Mongolians'.[43]

Geographical accuracy was considerably less important to this literature than was an apparent desire to highlight the dangerous and exciting 'mysteries' of the area in order to appeal to travellers and to manufacture the Chinese experience as an attraction for visitor consumption. The promotion of this community as an exotic yet lurid tourist attraction served to accentuate differences between Whites and Chinese, helping Whites to see the Chinese as fundamentally different from themselves – an attitude that legitimized White superiority and, among other things, prevented efforts by the Chinese to obtain citizenship or assimilate into American culture. That this densely-packed community within an already congested city was one of the most heavily promoted and widely visited sites in all of the American West also helps debunk the notion that early Western tourism was marked by the desire of a leisure-bound populace to escape their own densely-packed urban cores and head for the open spaces of the natural landscape. Yet, at the same time, the existence of the Chinese quarter threatened to topple the notions of gentility the city's leaders desired to promote. It may have been partly for this reason that the differences between the Chinese quarter and the rest of San Francisco were accentuated in the official literature: so that the quarter could appear as foreign, undeveloped and 'uncivilized' within a larger, cultured and refined American city.

But not all travellers experienced the Chinese quarter as if they were visiting a separate city within San Francisco. Diaries and travellers' accounts, in fact, suggest that the tourist experience of the quarter may have been different from the guidebook version. However condescending and xenophobic their writing may have been, many tourists pointed out the efficiency and organization of the quarter, describing its well-dressed, well-behaved, and rarely – if ever – intoxicated residents. They were also interested in the everyday life of the community as a space of work, often noting the industriousness of the Chinese – characteristics to which they hoped American workers could aspire (figure 6.2). One diarist, writing in 1872, saw the Chinese quarter as a place of everyday work and efficiency, and took an interest in this everydayness:

> The Chinese Quarter there is a great sight. There are in California at least 100,000 Chinese, and more are coming daily – The Chinaman is an admiral [sic] man, the best cooks, washmen, nurses, domestic servants, gardeners,

workmen, labourers & artisans in California are Chinamen. In their persons they are marvelously clean & they have a patience which is wonderful.[44]

Others were astute enough to realize that even the Chinese quarter was not a cohesive entity that could be summed up with a totalizing view. Miriam Florence Leslie (who referred to herself as 'Mrs. Frank Leslie') noted apparent class differences among the Chinese, pointing out both the 'fashionable shops' along Kearney Street and their prosperous merchants with 'silken caps and fine cloth clothes', and the poor residents of the smaller streets with their 'dingy' houses.[45] Harry Jones, too, noted the mercantile 'progress' of the Chinese, explaining that a visitor could not only see the 'humble laundry' of Ho Ki, but also the more impressive offices of 'Ho Sing, Wo Ching & Co'.[46]

Many others recognized that denigrating portrayals of Chinese were not only inaccurate, but helped support the 'lowest class' of citizens who were

Figure 6.2. Provision market in alley in Chinatown, San Francisco – photograph by I.W. Taber, about 1880. Taber owned and operated one of San Francisco's most prolific nineteenth-century photographic studios, marketing many of his views to tourists in the form of souvenir books and individual photos. Traveler Herbert C. Leeds included this view, depicting a scene of everyday life in the Chinese quarter, in a book of photographs documenting his trip across the country. (Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.)

helping drive state and national legislation keeping the Chinese separate from White society. While some authors wrote positively of the Chinese and their quarters because they saw the Chinese population as necessary to keep wages low (and thus production and profits high for White America), others were more genuinely sympathetic to the plight of San Francisco's Chinese population, which included constant harassment from local 'hoodlums'. Charles Loring Brace, writing a travel book from New York about his journeys to the 'new' West, for example, noted that the laws against the Chinese were 'oppressive', and that the 'truth' regarding the Chinese and their situation 'is the best tribute a traveler can pay to the sense of justice of the more civilized Californians who detest these abuses equally with ourselves'.[47]

Some travellers noted, too, that the 'heathen' Chinese posed less of a 'problem' to San Francisco's 'civility' than the inhabitants of the Barbary Coast, which occupied a few blocks along Pacific Street just east of the Chinese quarter. Here were the 'vilest class of poor whites' living in an area notorious for brawling, drinking, gambling and prostitution. While the Barbary Coast provided the image of the 'Wild West' in its early days, guidebooks – if they mentioned it at all – rarely recommended visiting it. Tourists, however, occasionally did, and some pointed out that its existence revealed problems considerably more pertinent than those associated with the so-called Chinese 'problem'.[48] In noting the work habits and impeccable hygiene of the Chinese, London traveller Henry Hussian Vivian explained that the Chinese quarter was a 'garden of roses compared to many Continental towns, Berlin among the number, not to mention Cologne, Italian towns par excellence, and some French.'[49]

Finally, Leslie also seems to have understood that the Chinese may have considered Whites to be odd and outlandish in their own cultural practices, including tourism. She noted that while Whites 'arrogantly try and civilize and Christianize [the Chinese] by our own standard, [the Chinese] complacently seat themselves upon the heights of their own civilization, their own religion, and consider us as outside barbarians whom it is not worth their while to convince of error or ignorance.'[50] Some of these accounts, to be sure, were bound up in an effort to point out how very different the Chinese were from White Americans. But they also show that there was more to the Chinese quarter than groups of 'uncivilized heathens' living in squalor and engaging regularly in prostitution, drug addiction, or gang activity.

The Palatial City

While the Chinese quarter was the most heavily advertised urban 'attraction' in early San Francisco, it was not the only part of the city promoted in the guidebooks or visited by tourists. Among the city's other

instantly generated attractions were its hotels, of which San Francisco had sprouted seventy-seven by 1882 – a number that the guidebooks contended exceeded that of any other American city at the time.[51] Many guidebooks, in fact, discussed San Francisco's hotels before any other 'points of interest' – and not just because tourists would need to find accommodation upon arrival. Some of these hotels were constructed with a type of built-in heritage, fashioned as they were after established hotels in Europe and the Eastern United States to make them appear more familiar to the visitors they wanted to attract. Many travellers expressed both surprise and delight at the city's grand hotels, perhaps because they expected the city to be filled with little more than unadorned wooden shacks crowding muddy lanes – a popular impression of the city that lingered from its Gold Rush days.

Hotel construction was frequent in San Francisco's early years. Mostly, these hotels catered for the large number of citizens who needed accommodation on a temporary basis, but they also serviced a growing nineteenth-century visitor population. San Francisco's first hotel of major significance was the Union Hotel. Located on Portsmouth Square, it was completed in September of 1850 and outfitted with a saloon with 'six splendid chandeliers' diffusing light onto 'magnificent Paris mirrors with ornamental gilt frames.'[52] The most luxurious hotels, however, were begun in the 1860s and catered primarily for travellers – only the wealthiest of whom could afford to stay in them for more than a few days. Among the more notable of these were the Lick House (1861), the Russ House (1862), the Occidental Hotel (1860s), the Cosmopolitan Hotel (1860s), the Grand Hotel (1870), the Palace Hotel (1875), and the Baldwin Hotel (1877). The Lick House was noted for its comfort, palatial dining room modelled after that of Versailles, and marble floors; the Occidental Hotel for its gigantic dining room, theatre, and 'modern' conveniences; the Cosmopolitan Hotel for its 'aristocratic feel' and elevators (the first in the city); the Grand Hotel for its mansard roof and central court; and the Baldwin Hotel for its architectural splendour, elegant interior, and theatre. A writer discussing San Francisco hotels in the 1870s noted that Americans thought San Francisco's hotels were 'second to none in the country'. William Doxey's *California Tourists Guide*, published in 1881, argued that the collection of hotels in San Francisco was unsurpassed worldwide.[53]

And yet this collection may have been merely adequate if not for William Ralston and William Sharon's Palace Hotel. While only the guidebooks, strangers' guides, and some travellers' literature discussed the full range of grand hotels in San Francisco, everybody seemed to write about the Palace Hotel – at the time considered 'the most remarkable building of its kind in the world'. Upon completion, the Palace Hotel was by far the city's biggest (seven storeys), largest (755 rooms), and most expensive hotel ($3,250,000), and it dominated its surroundings. It was commonly praised for its structural prowess ('massive' and 'solid') and its ability to withstand

fire as much as for its Classical architectural detail. It was an urban landmark, and local businesses frequently promoted themselves by noting their proximity to it. By the early 1890s the Palace Hotel had become famous enough nationwide for Hutchings to use it as a benchmark upon which to indicate the height of Yosemite's El Capitan. 'Within and without,' Doxey's guidebook boasted, 'the kingly structure . . . far surpasses not only in size but in grandeur all the hotels of Europe and America.'[54]

A frequently discussed aspect of the hotel was its circular carriage court with its glass roof, marble-tiled and colonnaded promenade, and tropical garden with exotic plants, statuary and fountains. This court not only added dignity to the hotel's massiveness and solidity, but it enabled hotel guests to step out into the realm of the carefully manicured urban picturesque before they ventured into the sublimity of the urban jungle. But the fantasy world of the Palace Hotel (and all of the luxury hotels) was hardly a permanent escape, and those travellers staying there did not remain sheltered inside for their entire visit – nor was this their desire. There was a whole city outside the door, and they explored it.

A 'World-Class' City

The official travel literature served to whet the tourists' appetite. Guidebooks frequently promoted new public buildings (especially the new City Hall and the US Mint), office buildings, theatres, and public transportation which, by the 1880s, included the cable cars – the 'wonderful wire-rope railroads.'[55] Because of San Francisco's unusual topography and the spectacular ocean and bay views one could obtain from atop its various hills, these guides also publicized viewpoints, such as the observatory atop Telegraph Hill. Less frequently, guidebooks advertised cemeteries, asylums, the Sea Wall, Meiggs' Old Wharf, and Lotta's Fountain on Market Street as visitor attractions in addition to libraries, city and county offices, banks, principal newspapers, places of amusement, and theatres.[56] Despite the myriad urban aspects that were of interest to most travellers, the official literature favoured a portrayal of San Francisco as a civilized retreat on the edge of the continent, dotted with pleasant drives, first-class hotels, fine restaurants, and prominent civic buildings. Thus, guidebooks attempted to transform even the urban into the picturesque.

Other than the hotels, the buildings most heavily promoted as tourist attractions for their architectural grandeur usually were built of 'solid and substantial' materials and featured some derivation of the Classical architectural vocabulary. The guidebooks, and occasionally the travel books, were at pains to point out the details. One of Hittel's guidebooks, for example, promoted the United States Mint branch by describing its 'Doric style' and 'massive fluted columns', and the Merchants' Exchange by

noting its 'pillars of polished granite.'[57] In the late 1860s Charles Loring Brace argued that the 'new' public buildings in San Francisco, such as the Bank of California and the Merchant's Exchange, were 'unusually good in effect' and 'better than our new buildings in New York.'[58]

Writers of promotional literature in nineteenth-century San Francisco seemed to base their opinions about whether San Francisco was 'world class' on how closely it resembled the grand cities of Western Europe or the Eastern United States – particularly Paris, London, and New York, but occasionally Boston, Philadelphia, and Vienna. Hittell, for example, commonly referred to San Francisco as the 'Paris of America', while guidebooks and strangers' guides of the 1870s and 1880s supported this claim and consistently pitted San Francisco against its alleged Eastern and European rivals.[59] San Francisco's hotels, for example, were most heavily promoted by the guidebooks if they offered meals on the 'European plan'. A brochure advertising the Palace Hotel prior to its grand opening boasted that its architect had visited hotels of the 'principal cities' of America and Europe before executing the design.[60] However, it was not only the built environment that generated tourists' comparisons to other cities. A.H. Wylie, a London traveller, explained that women in San Francisco dressed almost perfectly, and that 'London and Paris might well take an example from them.'[61]

San Francisco was only one of many areas of the West Coast that journalists, politicians, and other boosters compared to Europe and the East Coast in the late nineteenth century.[62] Whether or not San Francisco did replicate Paris, London or New York in its architecture, planning, or general attitude was not important, however. What seemed to be important was that those staking a claim to this heritage considered these older cities to be repositories of culture and refinement, and by associating San Francisco with them, they could help mark the city's entrance upon the world stage and assure visitors that there was more to San Francisco than its image as a riotous frontier town.

To some extent this promotional tactic worked. Many travellers' accounts included this official view, citing a few examples of monumental architecture, institutions and parks, and noting how far along San Francisco was toward 'civilization'. To one guidebook publisher, the overall combination of architectural attractions meant that San Francisco had emerged as a world-class city:

> The place has many other features besides its hotels, which may well surprise strangers who come to the rapidly-built town expecting to see the roughest evidences of its recent birth, and find, on the contrary, that it is one of the foremost cities in the world in civilization . . .[63]

But tourists' opinions of San Francisco vis-à-vis those more 'established' cities in the East or in Europe was not based on 'civilization' or gentility

alone. Like its East Coast and European counterparts, nineteenth-century San Francisco was a distinctively urban place, filled with the often non-genteel aspects of everyday life, work and activity. In their letters and diaries (and, on occasion, in the travel books), tourists consistently remarked on the overall activity of the city – something they did not expect at such a vast distance from Europe or the Eastern Seaboard. According to these travellers, no city west of Chicago offered as much as San Francisco.

The Urban Experience

Tourists rarely experienced San Francisco as a series of discrete sites – the way it was seemingly intended to be experienced if they heeded the guidebooks. Books and diaries written by travellers to San Francisco in the nineteenth century indicate that those who came to San Francisco saw the city not just as a series of sites or a temporary way-station before the next train left for more 'natural' locales inland or along the coast. Thus, while many traveller's books include descriptions of individual sites, the San Francisco tourist experience also included the ordinary spaces of everyday life – the dense residential landscape with innumerable houses featuring 'bow' or 'bay' windows, the shops, the markets, the people in the streets, the restaurants, and the hills – in short, the whole of the cultural landscape.

For many tourists the experience also included that of arrival and the transportation system traversing the city's landscape. Tourists also noted the extraordinary diversity of the city's population and its very 'public' – albeit sometimes rambunctious – nature. They were often surprised and fascinated by the noise and activity generated by a city that in 1849 had consisted of a few loosely scattered shacks on sand dunes. Such urban activity muddied the pristine picture of luxury hotels and grand civic edifices advertised in the guidebooks and depicted in much of the imagery that accompanied them.

Instead of deterring tourists, however, this activity was a source of interest; and it was the very combination of the individual sites – both public and private – and the electricity of human drama in the urban environment that suggested to them that San Francisco had come of age. Leslie explained that the city's frequent afternoon promenades reminded her of fashionable 'openings' elsewhere, when 'the lay figures have suddenly received the life and power of locomotion.'[64] What might have at first seemed an 'uncivilized' colonial outpost far from conventional centres of 'culture' in Europe or on the East Coast (California, after all, had only been admitted to statehood in 1850) seemed to many tourists to feature an urban flavour that was more similar to what they experienced at home.

This is not to contend that early San Francisco was just like Paris, London, or New York, but that it featured – to many travellers, anyway – some of the urban characteristics that they had grown to expect in older

and more established cities. San Francisco actually seemed to offer even more, because this urban flavour was packed into a dense and architecturally distinctive residential landscape within a scenic topography surrounded on three sides by water. It also featured a Pacific Rim connection that was not a characteristic of Eastern or European cities. And trans-continental travellers got a taste of this intensified urban landscape immediately upon arrival.

Arriving in this city on the 'other' edge of the continent was apparently an unforgettable experience, and nearly all traveller's accounts and diaries included some discussion of it. By the 1850s most travellers came by rail to Oakland and then boarded a 'large and commodious' ferry that took them across the bay to San Francisco.[65] Others transferred from the railroad to a steamer in Sacramento, and then plied the river system through the Sacramento delta and out into San Francisco Bay.[66]

While the official documentation often described the comfort and efficiency of the Oakland ferries, none of it described the commercial activity of transportation hawking that greeted tourists on the other side (figure 6.3). In his diary – in which he pasted newspaper reproductions of lithographic prints and maps of the sites and the cities he visited – New Yorker Banyer Clarkson made a point of noting the 'continuously ringing'

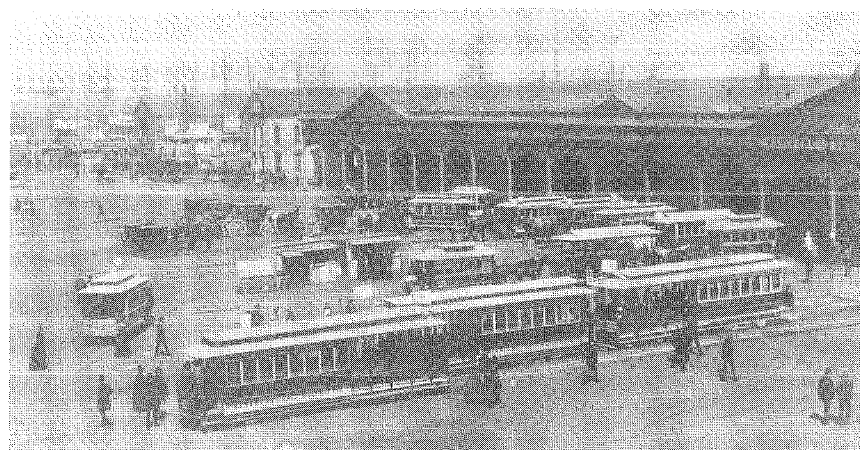

Figure 6.3. Scene outside the Ferry Building, photographer unknown, 1889. Nearly all tourists experienced a scene somewhat like this one when they arrived in nineteenth-century San Francisco following a transcontinental journey. Cable railways and horses outside the Ferry Building await and distribute passengers to and from the Oakland ferry and points beyond. Cities are listed along the building's frieze, suggesting (from right to left) that Sacramento and San Jose are as easily accessible as St. Louis and Portland. Other cities here include Yuma, Calistoga, Napa, Red Bluff and Santa Rosa. (Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Hills-Hecht Collection.)

bell of the 'huge floating palace' that transported him across the bay and the 'crowd of hotel runners' at the ferry terminal in San Francisco. Fascinated with the ethnic diversity of the area – particularly the immigrants from Asia – he also noted that the wharf at the foot of Brannan Street was 'always the scene of confusion and also a Babel of languages on the arrival of a steamer from Yokohama or Australia.' Likewise, Leslie, for whom San Francisco represented the 'Mecca' of a long journey, wrote of an 'army' of hotel runners at the wharf.[67]

Everyday activity in urban San Francisco – its sounds as well as its sights – were also an important part of nearly every traveller narrative. While the guidebooks occasionally advertised the city's markets because they gave the out-of-town visitor a chance to see a variety of produce they were not likely to find at home, the tourists often combined this visual feast with an interest in the human activity that surrounded it. Clarkson, for example, was impressed with the 'profusion, size, and perfection' of the fruit sold in the markets. But he was also startled to discover how busy the market activity was – particularly on Sundays. Remembering the prominent sound of church bells from St. Mary's Cathedral tolling on a Sunday, he wrote:

> The melody as the sound comes floating through the air is constantly broken by the noise and rumble of hotel coaches and street cars, for Sunday is unknown in this Western Metropolis. Kearney Street is all alive with buyers, and salesmen do a lively business behind the corner.[68]

Indeed, shoppers found San Francisco a fascinating place, not merely for the markets or 'odd' trinkets available for purchase in the Chinese quarter, but also for the general commercial activity that took place out of doors as well as in. Leslie, for example, mentioned that many of the city's smaller shops were 'open to the street like booths, especially the cigar and liquor establishments, in one of which we saw a man throwing dice for a drink.'[69]

Buildings, too, became part of the busy landscape of commerce experienced by travellers. Travellers frequently described the Merchants' Exchange on California Street, which some thought offered a magnified interior version of San Francisco street life. London visitor Arthur Guillemard filled his travel log with hyperbole to set the scene in the Exchange:

> The crowding, pushing, and heat are almost unbearable, but the scene is sufficiently lively to induce one to become a spectator for a few minutes. The gestures and shouting of the members are quite frantic. A man on my right is proclaiming in stentorian tones his desire to dispose of a certain number of shares in some extraordinarily-named mine. To him through the crush comes a buyer, elbowing and fighting his way, regardless of limb and apparel. He reaches his man after a fierce and prolonged struggle; he seizes him by the

shoulders with both hands, shakes him vigorously, roars in his face, shouts in his ear, and after a short tussle of words, which causes both combatants to turn purple in feature and foam at the mouth with frantic excitement, the conflict ceases, the bargain is concluded, a few notes are pencilled down, and buyer and seller retire amicably to 'cool out' with a brandy smash. Can the London Stock Exchange furnish a scene as exciting as this?[70]

Guillemard's account may not have been a tremendous exaggeration. Leslie noted that the scene 'was one of the wildest excitement,' where 'combat is but a mild term to apply to the jostling, yelling, frenzied, purple-faced struggle, roused into new vigour at each call of a new stock; the bidders crowding to the centre, gesticulating, pushing, ready to tear each other to pieces, or themselves fall down in a fit of apoplexy.'[71]

The moving landscape, too, was of interest to many travellers. For example, the sheer number of streetcars (which travellers often confused for cable cars, although both were in operation in San Francisco in the 1870s), represented an uplifting experience for John Reynolds, who wrote his mother periodically of his personal troubles during a visit to San Francisco in the summer of 1875:

I feel decidedly lonesome though in the midst of the sights and sounds of the busy city, street cars pass the house every 10 minutes. It is 1½ miles to the principal streets of business . . . I never saw as many street cars almost every main street seems to have them and always full too – this is surely a very busy city.[72]

Cable cars, of course, were of major interest to most travellers, along with the city's topography. New Yorker L.D. Luke, among others, was awed by these technological wonders and found it necessary to write about what he knew about their operations:

The word up when applied to many of the streets of this city is very appropriate. The grades of some of the street walks are so rapid that they are ascended all the way by flights of wooden steps. The first object that attracted my attention in the city was some [*sic*] beautiful little palace street cars, passing up and down steep grades without horse or steam or any visible propelling power. Under the paving is an endless cable in motion, and over that is a cleft in the road-bed, two inches wide, and extending over the entire length of the line. A grappling iron extends down through the car and also through the cleft below, where it grasps the cable, and its gentle motion moves the car forward.[73]

Novelist Helen Hunt Jackson, who also wrote widely of her nineteenth-century travels both in America and abroad, stepped out of San Francisco's

Occidental Hotel, boarded a carriage, turned a corner, and found herself moving up 'extraordinarily' steep streets and described the 'small, wooden, light-coloured, and picturesque' houses that lined them. Jackson was surprised at the density and the juxtapositions, noting that a small Chinese laundry building could abut a luxurious house.[74]

Many travellers were simply amazed at the city's energy. One British diarist, after arriving at the Occidental Hotel, wrote of an evening walk where 'we noticed a great number of saloons for drinking & dancing I should think as there was music playing in most of them, some of them were in the cellars & I fancy very fast places; there was such a great noise in the streets.'[75] Albert Richardson, an American traveller who ventured West in the 1860s, was one of several visitors astonished with the speed at which the city had grown in such a short time. Richardson reserved his most glowing praise not for any one attraction in particular, but for the 'teeming life of the great metropolis', the busy harbour with its 'miles of steamers and sailing vessels', and its cosmopolitanism – a more diverse city than any other except New York.[76] Other writers saw San Francisco as *more* diverse than New York – at least relative to their overall populations. This urban energy caused still others to note that San Francisco never slept: to them, it was a vibrant, lively place that was as full of activity by night as by day.[77] Indeed, the liveliness tourists encountered was a cultural creation, it was not merely a visual spectacle constructed by the guidebooks.

Harry Jones was one visitor whose sense of San Francisco's vibrancy was illuminated by its cultural and ethnic diversity. To Jones, Montgomery Street, for example, was a street 'thronged by crowds' that was at once 'the Wall Street and Broadway of the city':

Every nation and tongue has representatives here. Californians, merchants and miners, Mexicans – I have seen them, with high-peaked saddle and lasso, riding by – negroes, the broadest Irish, Germans, and Chinese make up the multitude. Sudden fortunes bring the miner into the best hotels. The man sitting near you at dinner may be well dressed, but he may have hands horny and brown as a navigator's, and a navigator's appetite. In the same room, perhaps at the same table, are elegant Californian belles. The way in which society, as seen in the streets and inns, is jumbled up here, is very striking.[78]

Boston resident Susie Clark, on an excursion trip in the 1880s, also marvelled at the city's constant activity. For Clark, the city was a 'tumultuous, wide-awake' place – a place to be celebrated for the noise and activity that arguably drove large numbers of residents away from cities in the nineteenth century. If one was to look out of a hotel window in the middle of the night, Clark wrote, one would see 'stores open, houses brilliantly lighted, cable cars with clanging alarm-bells whizzing by, merry

strollers whistling under our window, strains of distant music in the air, and the same features of activity that belong to daylight.'[79]

The Vibrant City

The city described by Clark and others suggests that San Francisco not only provided a source of visitor fascination because of its many 'sights', but that the visitor experience was multi-layered and multi-sensory. Neither a generalized understanding of nineteenth-century American history (with an emphasis on the 'huddled masses' in teeming cities and the supposed desire to escape them), nor an understanding of the tourist as simply desiring to escape the everyday, can be loosely applied to tourists in this far-western metropolis. Tourists in nineteenth-century San Francisco were as interested in the monumental, visually-oriented city promoted and manufactured by the guidebooks as they were with the everyday life that made their experience of it into a larger whole – a whole considerably larger than its constituent parts. There was no *single* 'tourist experience'.

Those who ascended the steep slopes of Telegraph Hill for the bird's-eye view of the landscape of commerce with its throngs of people, tightly-packed houses, active industries, and great numbers of water craft entering and exiting the Golden Gate had only risen above the city temporarily; they would soon return to the urban landscape which provided them with so much interest. And it was down in this urban landscape that tourists consumed the city in ways that both followed and ignored the instant heritage manufactured by the guidebooks.

Indeed, tourists to nineteenth-century San Francisco did *experience* the city. They did not wait around for grand City Beautiful planning schemes to reorganize it into broad avenues, stately buildings, and gleaming monuments; nor did they 'see' it as an organized document requiring a single vantage point from which they could remove all that did not fit with the pristine image provided by the official documentation. It would have been too difficult to maintain such an image anyway: while the city displayed flashes of civility to tourists, any sense of it as a completely genteel place was erased the moment they set foot on shore.

The process of heritage manufacturing by the official publications and the consumption of this heritage by tourists was a process of selection and exploration, not of direction and slavish obedience. Guidebooks did not prepare tourists for the possibility – or the likelihood – that their view of the Palace Hotel would include the sights and sounds of busy Market and Montgomery Streets, or that their trip to the Cliff House would require a lengthy ride in a loud streetcar overflowing with a polyglot of passengers. Instead of seeking places of refuge away from the allegedly chaotic and morally decaying nineteenth-century city, tourists revelled in San

Francisco's energy, and considered the energy itself a true mark of the city's 'advancement'. Consequently, tourists helped this alleged urban 'other' – in an extraordinarily early stage of its development – assimilate among the ranks of America's and the world's 'foremost' cities. In turn, tourists established that there was more to tourism in the nineteenth-century American West than extended visits to the region's natural wonders. Although most tourist journeys to the West at this time were not motivated by the lure of cities, San Francisco nevertheless became an integral part of the nineteenth-century tourist landscape.

Notes

1. J.G. Player-Frowd, *Six Months in California*, London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1872, pp. 1, 16-17. According to a popular guidebook of the 1870s, the Grand Hotel and the Cosmopolitan were considered among San Francisco's 'first-class' hotels. See G.A. Crofutt, *Crofutt's Trans-continental Tourist*, New York, Geo. A. Crofutt, 1874, p. 150. The 'What Cheer House' was described in S. Bowles, *Our New West: Records of Travel Between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean*, Hartford, CN, Hartford Publishing Company, 1869, p. 333, as a second- or third-class hotel, but one with 'excellent meals,' a library, a cabinet of minerals, and a collection of stuffed birds.

2. One account that located the beginning of San Francisco tourism with the Panama-Pacific Exposition is K. Starr, *Americans and the California Dream 1850-1915*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973. Regarding the 'rationalization' of tourism in the 1890s, where business leaders realized how tourism could assist cities economically and called for the redesign of cities and cost-cutting to appeal to tourists, see N. Harris, 'Urban Tourism and the Commercial City,' in W.R. Taylor (ed.), *Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991; or C. Cocks, 'A City Excellent to Behold': Urban Tourism and the Commodification of Public Life in the United States, 1850-1915,' Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1997, pp. 1-12.

3. John Towner and Geoffrey Wall have argued that the scholarly disregard of tourism in America more generally has had to do with the fact that scholars, given the relative newness of North America (compared to European settlement), have been preoccupied with documenting the 'history of exploration, settlement, resource exploitation, and other aspects of the permanent occupation of North American space.' See Towner and Wall, 'History and Tourism,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1991, p. 77.

4. There are only a few exceptions. In 'A City Excellent to Behold,' Cocks has made one of the strongest cases for the importance of urban tourism through an analysis of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York City, Washington DC, Chicago, and San Francisco. In 'Urban Tourism and the Commercial City,' Harris argued that middle-class tourism grew in New York City from 1890 to 1920. More problematic is J. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989. Sears included a chapter about prisons, asylums, cemeteries, and parks as nineteenth-century tourist attractions in East Coast cities (pp. 87-121), but he argued that each of these

'urban' attractions were appealing because they provided antidotes to the disorder of city life.

5. The first Western cities to catch tourists' attention were those along or near the main line of the first intercontinental railroad: Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake City, Sacremento, Oakland and San Francisco. Other trans-continental lines opened in the 1870s and 1880s made the cities (or large towns) of Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Santa Fe, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Portland, among others, part of a larger western urban tourist circuit.

6. In *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1957, p. 23, E. Pomeroy acknowledged that San Francisco was a tourist destination; but, overall, cities played a very small role in his analysis. The influence of this text in promoting an understanding that tourism in the West was based on the attraction of 'natural-wonders' has been immeasurable. One book that follows in this vein is A.F. Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920*, New York, New York University Press, 1990.

7. The exception was Salt Lake City, the home city for those business leaders who proposed the initiative. See M.S. Shaffer, 'See America First: Re-Envisioning Nation and Region through Western Tourism,' *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 65, no. 4, 1996, pp. 559-582.

8. Whether in urban or rural areas, the processes of industrialization were sources of fascination for many travellers. Nineteenth-century traveller's literature, for example, was filled with descriptions and images of the latest 'technological' wonders, including new railroad bridges, tunnels, and mining machinery. In *Sacred Places*, Sears included a chapter about tourists visiting an early coal mine in Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania. Charles Nordhoff, in *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1874, pp. 20-22, 73, suggested that trans-continental railroad travellers take a detour in Chicago to examine the stockyards, and further detours in California to view gold mining and the 'celebrated Yuba Dam' near Marysville. Regarding factory tours in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America, see W. Littman, 'The Production of Goodwill: Factory Tours in America,' paper presented at the Vernacular Architecture Forum Conference, May 9, 1998, Annapolis, Maryland.

9. As cited in Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 7-13.

10. One guidebook, published by local proprietors in conjunction with the Central Pacific Railroad, explained that the guidebook was to be distributed 'among the Overland passengers at Corlin, en route to San Francisco,' but that 'those *less fortunate* can find them at the principal news depots, or at our office, 207 Kearny Street' (italics mine). In other words, those who could not afford to arrive in San Francisco via railroad would have to purchase a guidebook in the city. See O.F. Tiffany and A.C. Macdonald, *Pocket Exchange Guide of San Francisco*, San Francisco, Tiffany and Macdonald and Central Pacific, 1875.

11. It should be noted that women experienced the Chinese quarter differently from men, that women were only permitted to watch the activity in the Merchants' Exchange from a separate viewing gallery, and that women's writings tended to describe shopping more so than men's. Discussions of shopping in early San Francisco were not, however, exclusive to literature written by women. Men often

described the opportunity to buy the 'bric-a-brac' in the Chinese quarter, and they frequently noted the city's bustling markets.

12. Many scholars have gone to painstaking lengths to define tourism, often breaking it up into different 'types' based largely on the experiences *expected*, rather than experienced. Much of this literature has come from the field of anthropology (and particularly anthropologists studying non-Western, small-scale societies), where tourists are widely rebuked for alleged attempts to find 'timeless' existence, 'authenticity,' and a 'better way of life' in villages remote from the ravages of modern capitalism. See, for example, D. MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York, Schocken Books, 1975; and V. Smith (ed.), *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977, pp. 2-3.

13. See, for example, J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, London, Sage Publications, 1985. One notable exception is the work of Erik Cohen, who since the late 1970s has been attempting to examine tourism according to an experiential rather than a motivational model. See E. Cohen, 'A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences,' *Sociology*, vol. 13, no. 2, May 1979, pp. 179-201.

14. Regarding the role of photography for this purpose, see P. B. Hales, *Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1984, pp. 48-57.

15. I.W. Taber, *Hints to Strangers*, San Francisco, I.W. Taber, 1890. For another example of a company promoting itself along with the city, see *Lick House Tourists' Guide: Giving Principal Routes from Chicago and Saint Louis to San Francisco*, San Francisco, Lick House, 1871. Also, in 'Urban Tourism,' p. 66, Harris argued that tourism was a largely commercial activity, where the 'urban tourist was increasingly attracted to and stimulated by business, by merchandisers, both as a consumer and a visitor.'

16. For examples of how nineteenth-century San Francisco photographers idealized the city, see Hales, *Silver Cities*; or D. Harris, *Eadweard Muybridge and the Photographic Panorama of San Francisco, 1850-1880*, Montreal, Canadian Center for Architecture, 1993. For an account of how lithographic bird's-eye views contributed to this idealization process in the nineteenth-century urban American West, see J. Reps, *Cities on Stone: Nineteenth-Century Lithographic Images of the Urban West*, Fort Worth, Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1976.

17. The term 'constructed visibility' is borrowed from D. Gregory, 'Colonial Nostalgia and Cultures of Travel: Spaces of Constructed Visibility in Egypt, 1840-2000,' paper presented at Sixth International Conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments, Cairo, Egypt, December 15-19, 1998.

18. D. Harris, in *Eadweard Muybridge*, p. 41, argued that the numerous photographic panoramas produced in San Francisco's early years were meant to invoke nostalgic responses to a city in the throes of constant change. In 'Urban Tourism,' pp. 70-74, N. Harris made the same argument regarding guidebooks to and photographs of New York City in the late nineteenth century.

19. My use of the term 'picturesque' is borrowed from Sears, *Sacred Places*, pp. 186-188. Following mid-nineteenth-century theories offered by Frederick Law

Olmsted, Sears claimed that the 'picturesque' meant 'quiet and pensive contemplation' intended to promote 'gentility'.

20. It should be noted that many of the published travel books featured carefully edited and rewritten diaries, and that they straddled the line between official and unofficial documentation. Furthermore, since most diaries were kept by wealthy travellers, even the alleged unofficial documentation cannot be considered fully representative of tourists' experiences. Nevertheless, an analysis of many types of source material at least provides a broader picture than a guidebook-focused study. For the methodology of historical tourism research and its limitations, see J. Towner, 'Approaches to Tourism History,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1988, pp. 47-62.

21. H. Jones, *To San Francisco and Back*, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1878, p. 80.

22. G.A. Sala, *America Revisited: From the Bay of New York to the Gulf of Mexico and From Lake Michigan to the Pacific*, London, Vizetelly & Co., 1886, pp. 441-455.

23. A good analysis of how sight and observation became the focus of touring by the nineteenth (or at least how travelling was promoted) is J. Adler, 'Origins of Sightseeing,' *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 16, 1989, pp. 7-29. For an analysis of how the supposed rational order of nineteenth-century American cities was consistently subverted by noises, smells, and certain commercial activities, see D. Upton, 'The City as Material Culture,' in A.E. Yentsch and M.C. Beaudry (eds.), *The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz*, Boca Raton, FL, CRC Press, 1992, pp. 53-60.

24. See, for example, *The Strangers' Guide to San Francisco*, San Francisco, Jas. B. Bradford, 1875, p. 47.

25. See, for example, 'Excursion to the Environs of San Francisco,' *San Francisco Evening Picayune*, as reprinted in K.M. Johnson (ed.), *San Francisco As It Is: Gleanings from the Picayune*, Georgetown, CA, Talisman Press, 1964, pp. 82-83. For a fictional account of locals who made frequent walking trips away from their downtown apartment buildings to the city's suburbs in the nineteenth century, see F. Norris, *McTeague: A Story of San Francisco*, 1899, reprint, New York, Penguin Books, 1994.

26. R.W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1974, p. 284; and D.H. Huggins (comp.), *Continuation of the Annals of San Francisco: Part 1, From June 1, 1854, to December 31, 1855*, San Francisco, California Historical Society, 1939, p. 42.

27. According to this history, industrial expansion contributed to massive urban immigration (from overseas and the countryside) and subsequent overcrowding, pollution, and moral decay. Industrialization of the cities then drove many people to the suburban fringe or away from the cities altogether. As a result, there was nothing in the cities themselves that pleasure-seeking tourists would desire to explore. To restore peace and moral order to the urban centres, reformers and 'landscape gardeners' such as Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted wanted to insert urban parks and greenery into the city. New York's Central Park, for example, was often referred to as helping provide the city with 'lungs.' Many scholars point to efforts at urban reform to justify their claims about a 'rural

sensibility' that seemed to dominate nineteenth-century American life – at times searching for its roots among the picturesque gardens of British gentry in the eighteenth century, the canvases of seventeenth-century French painters Claude Lorrain and Nicholas Poussin, or the poetry of the American transcendentalists. The literature on this 'rural sensibility' is far too voluminous to detail here. For some good examples, see M. Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University Press, 1989; or L. Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

28. Lotchin, *San Francisco 1846-1856*, p. 285.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

30. J.S. Hittell, *Bancroft's Pacific Guide Book*, San Francisco, A.L. Bancroft & Co., 1882, p. 66.

31. Nordhoff first wrote about vacation spots along the eastern seaboard, but devoted later books to accounts of the Pacific slope, promoting it as a place with a fabulous year-round climate where invalids could live out their remaining years with renewed health and vigour (a common theme among writers of the nineteenth-century West). Other travel books by Nordhoff include *Peninsular California*, New York, Harper, 1888; *A Guide to California, the Golden State*, Southern Pacific Railroad, 1888; and *Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1877.

32. Nordhoff, *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence*, p. 61.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 87.

35. The classification of this literature as 'non-fictional urban sensationalism' comes from G. Foster, *New York by Gas-Light and Other Urban Sketches*, S. Blumin (ed.), Berkeley, University of California Press, reprint ed., 1990, p. 1. This literature arguably dated to 1851 with the publication of H. Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1861, reprint, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985. It was followed by A. Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, 1883, reprint, New York, Humanities Press, 1970. In America this writing had its parallel on the East Coast in such works as J. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*, 1890, reprint, New York, Hill and Wang, 1968; and H. Campbell, T.W. Knox, and T. Byrnes, *Darkness and Daylight, or Lights and Shadows of New York Life*, Hartford, CN, Hartford Publishing Company, 1897. In the West, such books as B.E. Lloyd, *Lights and Shades in San Francisco*, San Francisco, A.L. Bancroft Co., 1876; and W. Boyd, *Lights and Shadows of Chinatown*, San Francisco, H.S. Crocker, 1896, featured similar themes.

36. Nordhoff, *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence*, p. 91. Nordhoff's analysis of the Chinese turned from vilifying to complimentary but patronizing in his later *Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands*, pp. 141-143.

37. Nordhoff's account of 'John Chinaman' had its East Coast counterpart in a chapter about 'John Chinaman' in Campbell, Knox and Byrnes, *Darkness and Daylight*, pp. 549-573. The name 'John' to describe the 'average' Chinese resident in America was not initiated by Nordhoff. I. Saxon, in *Five Years Within the Golden Gate*, Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1868, p. 39, explained that the

name was bestowed by 'Californians' upon the 'labouring Chinese'. J.H. Beadle, in *The Undeveloped West, or Five Years in the Territories*, Philadelphia, National Publishing Company, 1893, pp. 313-325, also included a chapter entitled 'John'.

38. 'The City by the Golden Gate,' *Scribner's Monthly*, vol. 10, no. 3, July 1875, pp. 266-285.

39. Rev. J.C. Holbrook, 'Chinadom in California,' in J.M. Hutchings, *Hutchings' Illustrated California Magazine*, vol. 4, no. 3, September 1859, p. 129.

40. W. Glazier, *Peculiarities of American Cities*, Philadelphia, Hubbard Brothers, 1886, p. 466.

41. F.W. Green, *Notes on New York, San Francisco, and Old Mexico*, Wakefield, E. Carr, 1886, p. 65.

42. Tiffany and Macdonald, 'An Evening Promenade,' *Pocket Exchange Guide of San Francisco*, p. 188.

43. References to a transplanted 'Canton' in San Francisco came with the earliest Chinese settlement during the Gold Rush. See, for example, 'Young China,' *San Francisco Evening Picayune*, June 27, 1851, as reprinted in Johnson (ed.), *San Francisco As It Is*, p. 170. For similar examples, see *The City and Port of San Francisco*, San Francisco, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, 1896; and Taber, *Hints to Strangers*, p. 3. For references to San Francisco's Chinese quarter as Peking, see Beadle, *The Undeveloped West*, p. 302; W. Doxey, *Doxey's Guide to San Francisco and Vicinity: The Big Trees, Yo Semite Valley, the Geysers, China, Japan, and Sandwich Islands*, San Francisco, Doxey and Co., 1881, p. 58; or H.H. Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1893, p. 63. As Mongolia, see Boyd, *Lights and Shadows of Chinatown*, p. 1, and 'The City by the Golden Gate,' *Scribner's Monthly*, July, 1875, p. 282; F.M. DeWitt, *An Illustrated and Descriptive Souvenir Guide to San Francisco: A New Handbook for Strangers and Tourists*, San Francisco, Frederic M. DeWitt, 1898, p. 29; or *California As It Is*, San Francisco, San Francisco Call Company, 1882, p. 138. For the Chinese as 'Celestials,' see Holbrook, 'Chinadom in California,' p. 129.

44. R. Cumbrian, *Roving Cumbrian Journal*, October 31, 1871-December 20, 1872, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

45. Mrs. F. Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate*, New York, G.W. Carleton & Co., 1877, p. 144.

46. Jones, *To San Francisco and Back*, p. 73.

47. C.L. Brace, *The New West: Or, California in 1867-1868*, New York, G.P. Putnam & Son, 1869, preface. For other sympathetic accounts, see J. Codman, *The Round Trip: By Way of Panama Through California, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, and Colorado*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979, pp. 126-134; Mrs. J.G. Smith, *Notes of Travel in Mexico and California*, St. Albans, VT, Messenger and Advertiser Office, 1886, p. 100; or H.H. Vivian, *Notes of a Tour in America*, London, Edward Stanford, 1878, pp. 135-136.

48. See, for example, Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip*, pp. 139-140.

49. Vivian, *Notes of a Tour in North America*, p. 137.

50. Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip*, p. 217.

51. Many of these hotels were probably boarding hotels, which were a vital part of

early San Francisco life. For descriptions of life in early hotels, see W.L. Macgregor, *Hotels and Hotel Life in San Francisco*, San Francisco, S.F. News Company, 1877.

52. Prior to its opening, the *San Francisco Evening Picayune* noted that the Union Hotel, as a whole, was 'the most superb establishment of this kind in California.' Once it opened, the *Picayune* described it as 'an ornament to our city' that was 'scarcely to be surpassed by any House of the kind in the United States.' One article recounted how a group of travellers from the East Coast, who had recently stayed in New York City's luxurious Irving House, pointed out that San Francisco's Union Hotel 'offers every convenience and luxury to be found in [New York's] elegant resort of wealth and fashion.' 'Union Hotel,' *San Francisco Evening Picayune*, September 12, 1850, and November 26, 1850, as reprinted in Johnson (ed.), *San Francisco As It Is*, p. 87.

53. Doxey, *California Tourists Guide*, pp. 15, 16-17; P. Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994, pp. 28, 32; A. Johnson, letter to A. Bush, 1879, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Lick House, *Tourists' Guide*, p. 18; Macgregor, *Hotels and Hotel Life*, p. 9; San Francisco Call, *California As It Is*, p. 139; Saxon, *Five Years Within the Golden Gate*, pp. 13-14.

54. *California Illustrated: A Guide for Tourists and Settlers*, San Francisco, Carnall-Hopkins Co., 1891; Doxey, *California Tourists Guide*, pp. 15-16; J.M. Hutchings, *Yo Semite and the Big Trees: What to See and How to See It*, San Francisco, J.M. Hutchings, 1894, as noted in Sears, *Sacred Places*, p. 137; San Francisco Call, *California As It Is*, p. 139; Green, *Notes on New York*, p. 57; Taber, *Hints to Strangers*; and B.F. Taylor, *Between the Gates*, Chicago, S.C. Griggs and Company, 1882, pp. 71-73.

55. San Francisco Call, *California As It Is*, p. 140; and Tiffany and Macdonald, *Pocket Exchange Guide*, p. 17.

56. See, for example, *Hotel Visitor and Stranger's Guide*, no. 6, February 7, 1880; *Strangers' Guide to San Francisco*, 1875; or *Disturnell's Strangers' Guide to San Francisco and Vicinity*, San Francisco, W.C. Disturnell, 1883. The only theatres that were promoted with some regularity were those in the Chinese quarter and the one in the Baldwin Hotel.

57. Hittell, *Guide Book to San Francisco*, pp. 28, 30.

58. Brace, *The New West*, p. 38.

59. For nineteenth-century comparisons of San Francisco to Paris as a whole or in specific examples, see Bowles, *Our New West*, p. 314; J.S. Hittell, *The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast*, San Francisco, 1882; Lloyd, *Lights and Shades in San Francisco*, p. 29; or Saxon, *Five Years Within the Golden Gate*, pp. 12-13. For a more recent study making these comparisons, see G. Brechin, 'The City Beautiful,' in P. Polledri (ed.), *Visionary San Francisco*, San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1990, pp. 46-48.

60. *The Palace Hotel*, San Francisco, the Palace Hotel, 1885.

61. A.H. Wylie, *Chatty Letters from the East and the West*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1879, p. 193.

62. Southern California, for example, was consistently compared to Italy, while Alaska and Colorado became known as 'American Switzerlands'. In turn,

Switzerland became known as the 'European Alaska' or the 'European Colorado' to American travellers in Europe. See Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. 33-34, 57.

63. San Francisco Call, *California As It Is*, pp. 139-140.

64. Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip*, p. 121.

65. For descriptions of the large ferry, see Hittell, *Bancroft's Pacific Guide Book*, pp. 43-44; or Taylor, *Between the Gates*, p. 70.

66. Fewer tourists made the entire trip by boat by this time, and even fewer made the treacherous overland wagon journey.

67. Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip*, p. 113.

68. B. Clarkson, 'Overland Journey to California and the Western Territories,' diary, 1874, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

69. Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip*, p. 118.

70. A.C. Guillemard, *Over Land and Sea: A Log of Travel Round the World in 1873-74*, London, Tinsley Brothers, 1875, pp. 199-200.

71. Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip*, pp. 138-139.

72. J.W. Reynolds, letter, September 21, 1875, John W. Reynolds Letters to His Family, 1875-76, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

73. L.D. Luke, *A Journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast by Way of Salt Lake City Returning by Way of the Southern Route Describing the Natural and Artificial Scenes of Both Lines*, Utica, NY, Ellis H. Roberts & Co., 1884, p. 35.

74. Jackson, *Bits of Travel at Home*, p. 77.

75. Anonymous, 'Notes of a journey from England to San Francisco and Back,' diary, September 19 to November 17, 1877, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

76. A.D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean*, Hartford, CN, American Publishing Company, 1867, pp. 448-449. For other accounts noting this growth and cosmopolitanism, see 'The City by the Golden Gate,' p. 272; or S.M. Eardley-West (ed.), *Our Journal in the Pacific*, London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1873, pp. 29-30.

77. S.C. Clark, *The Round Trip from the Hub to the Golden Gate*, Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1890, p. 73.

78. Jones, *To San Francisco and Back*, p. 69.

79. Clark, *From the Hub to the Golden Gate*, p. 73.

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Chapter 7

Re-Presenting and Representing the Vernacular: The Open-Air Museum

PAUL OLIVER

'History,' the car manufacturer Henry Ford is reputed to have said, 'History is bunk.' Bunk, or bunkum, means verbal rubbish, tinged with deception. Actually, what Ford said was 'History is bunk, as it is taught in schools.'

Ford's concern was so genuine that he founded the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village near Dearborn, Michigan, to introduce Americans to the material facts of their history.[1] However, Ford could be cavalier in his methods. Wishing to demonstrate that many American families came from rural England, in the mid-1920s he tried to purchase a row of Cotswold cottages to transport and rebuild in his open-air museum of Greenfield. But, alarmed at the impending demolition of Arlington Row, Bibury, the local community alerted the Gloucestershire Archaeological Trust, who succeeded in preventing Ford from going through with his plan. In 1929 Arlington Row was bought by the Royal Society of Arts, and twenty years later it was given to the National Trust for safe keeping.

Even though he failed to transport Arlington Row, Ford later bought a Cotswold house and blacksmith's forge from another village, and had all 500 tons of stone and timber shipped to Michigan. Whether Americans learned much more of their history as a result is open to question, even if, by default, Bibury was the richer for the preservation effort set in motion by Ford's plan.[2]

The Skansen Movement

Henry Ford's Greenfield collection demonstrates how a single influential, affluent and motivated person, with a certain perception of history, can arrange for the location, demolition, transfer and re-erection of a collection