

Chapter 4

St. Francis of Assisi Parish in a Larger World: Our New Church (c 1900-c 1910)

Part I

- 1910: St. Francis of Assisi Parish
- 1904-1910: The Campaign for Our New Church
- 1910: Diocese of Sacramento
- 1910: Sacramento City and County—The Largest Growth in the Twentieth Century
- Fruit Packing, Flour Mills and Breweries
- Transport: Blacksmiths, Carriage Makers, Drayage and Stables, and Auto Dealers
- Saloons, Hotels and Hospitals
- Meat Markets, Dairies and Stock Yards
- Sloughs, Lakes and Ponds
- Water, Sewers and Public Health
- Disease Theories: Miasma v. Microbes

Part II

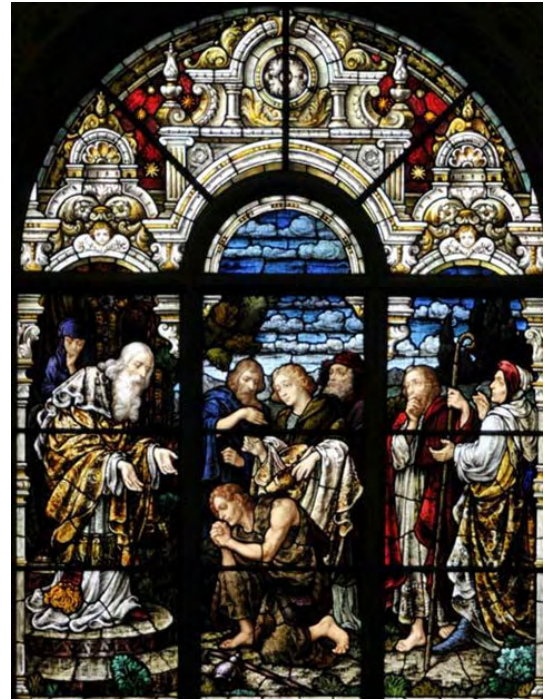
- Sacramento Public Health Reforms—Water and Sewer: 1890-1910
- Progressive Reform: Sacramento
- Progressive Reform: Sacramento and California
- Progressive Reform: Theodore Roosevelt
- Theodore Roosevelt, Columbia and the Panama Canal
- Sacramento Valley: Irrigation, Dredging and Reclamation
- Sacramento: Electricity—Planes, Trains and Automobiles
- The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake
- 1910: Sacramento Expanding
- 1910: The Larger World
- 1910: A New City Hall and Our New Church



1910: St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Our new St Francis of Assisi Church was dedicated on October 23, 1910. The church cost \$100,499, of which \$9,950 was spent for 46 stained glass windows, designed and manufactured in Innsbruck, Austria, and shipped from the Tyrolese Art Glass Studios in Munich, Germany.

The Prodigal Son window, on the north wall of the transept, was donated by Fr. John Quinn, rector of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament from 1899 to 1906. Fr. Quinn was an active Sacramento booster and real estate investor. The short Quinn Avenue, located between Riverside Boulevard and 13th Street and X Street and Broadway, is named for him. In an article written for the *San Francisco Monitor* immediately following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Father Quinn referred to Sacramento as “an earthly Eden.”¹



The **Power of the Keys** window, on the south wall of the transept, was donated by Rev. Fr. Van Schie, who remains somewhat of a mystery. He first appeared in the diocese in the early 1880s and came from the Diocese of Denver at the invitation of Bishop Manogue. He served in Jackson, California until 1895, which had a mission at Clinton—about eight miles east into the Sierra at what today is Mt. Zion State Park. From 1895 to 1905, he served at Auburn. Fr. Schie was assistant pastor at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament from 1905 to 1908, when he was appointed chaplain of the San Rafael Orphan Asylum. Sometime around 1908, he donated the **Power of the Keys** window. In 1910 he donated \$6,000 to The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. At his death in September 1921, Fr. Schie left a bequest of \$5,000 to Grace Day Home.

We could use more information on one of our parish's earliest benefactors, Rev. Fr. Van Schie. Some sleuthing on the part of you—the interested or informed reader—would be good here.



The ***Abraham and Isaac*** window, over the sacristy door on the north wall, was donated by the J. J. Inderkum family in memory of their oldest daughter Annie, who died in 1907 of cancer at the age of 18. The family donated a baptismal font in her name as well; it is still used as our Holy Water font in St. Clare Chapel. The Inderkum family also donated a gold chalice. The Inderkum family ran a dairy at 40th and J Streets; all of their milkers were Catholic. In the 1920s, their dairy became the site of Mercy Hospital.

The Charles Graham family donated the ***St. Clare*** window on the lower level of the north wall. He was the owner of the Sacramento Solons Pacific Coast League baseball team and the father of our Sr. Claire Graham.

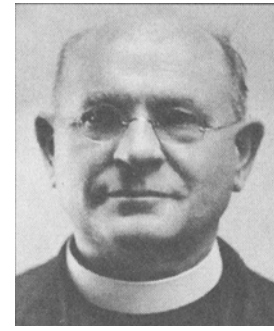
At the time of the new church's dedication, Fr. Godfrey Hoelters was serving his second term as pastor (1906-1912; he served his first



term from 1900-1904). Fr. Victor Aertker served as pastor from 1904-1906. Thus St. Francis of Assisi Parish enjoyed the stability of having only two pastors in the first decade of the twentieth century.



Fr. Godfrey Hoelters



Fr. Victor Aertker

1904-1910: The Campaign for Our New Church

Under the care of these two pastors, the parish grew. For the 1904-1905 school year, with Mother Bertha as Superior, the school enrolled 260 students in kindergarten through ninth grade. In 1905, a serious diphtheria epidemic swept the city and enrollment dropped by more than 60 percent. Yet none of the Franciscan teaching sisters became ill.

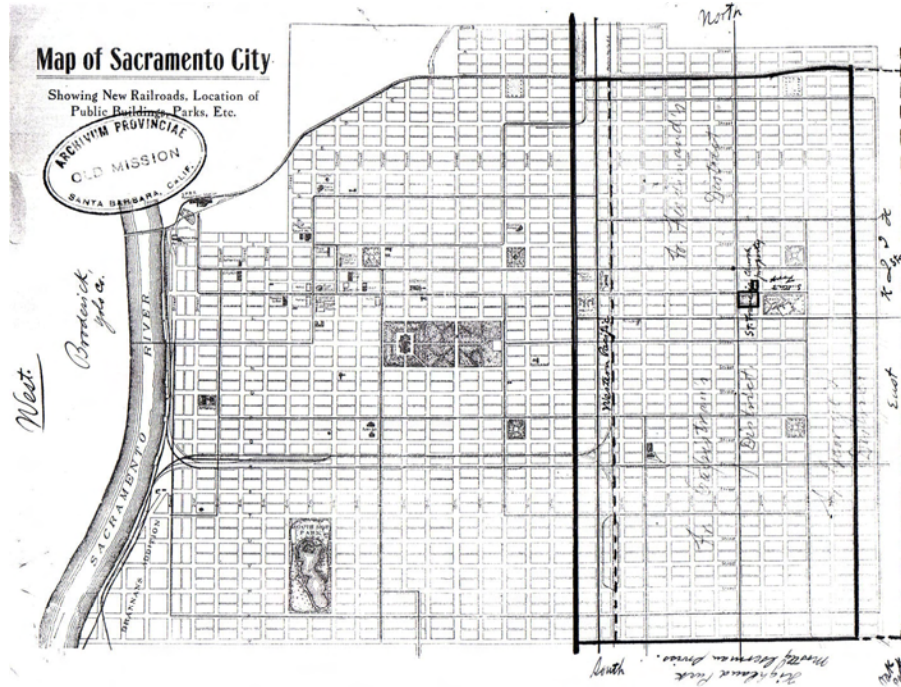
In 1904, Fr. Aertker began a building fund for the proposed new church. Fr. Hoelters continued raising money when he became pastor in 1906. In 1907, the Franciscan Provincial and Bishop Thomas Grace authorized the new church, and Brother Adrian Wewer drew preliminary plans. In his fund-raising efforts, Fr. Hoelters secured the cooperation of the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce when it was agreed that a mission-style façade advocated by the Chamber would be built.

While moving ahead with plans for their new church, parish members were saddened by the news that Fr. Augustine McClory, founder of St. Francis Parish, had died at St. Joseph Hospital in San Francisco on May 5, 1907.

In the summer of 1908, the old wooden church was moved to the rear of the lot. In June and July, the friary was also moved—at a cost of about \$4,000—some distance west to make room for the new church. On July 13, excavation began. On October 18, 1907, the cornerstone was laid “with [an] elaborate and impressive ceremony” that began with a well-attended parade from the cathedral, presided over by Bishop Grace. “Two thousand persons” witnessed the event.²

On February 10, 1909, Fr. Hoelters wrote Bishop Grace a five-page letter again asking permission to solicit building funds for the new church from the businessmen of Sacramento who “have repeatedly expressed their desire to contribute.”³

On October 23, 1909, Fr. Hoelters wrote to the Franciscan Provincial, Rev. Peter Wallischeck, informing him that Bishop Grace was creating a new parish in Oak Park—Immaculate Conception. Fr. Hoelters asked the provincial to meet with Bishop Grace to discuss the boundaries of the adjacent parish, and to ask the bishop to move the western boundary of St. Francis Parish from 18th to 20th Street, as the new Western Pacific Railroad line ran up 19th Street, cutting parishioners off from the church. He also asked that the eastern boundary be moved to 32nd Street. In this letter Fr. Hoelters enclosed a map of Sacramento City with hand-drawn parish boundaries and the Western Pacific Railroad route.



On October 23, 1910, Bishop Grace dedicated the new church with “impressive religious ceremonies.”⁴ Beginning at the cathedral the parade included the St. Francis choir augmented by “many prominent musicians of the city.” Participants in the parade included the Knights of Columbus, the Young Men’s Institute, the Young Women’s Institute, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, as well as members of the church parish

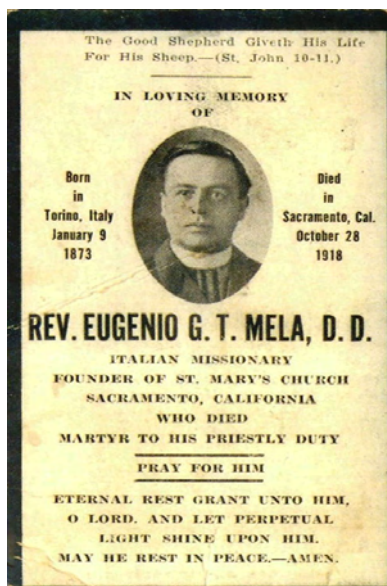


societies. The new St. Francis Church was, as the *Catholic Herald* reported, “a tribute to the German-speaking Catholic people of the city.”⁵

1910: Diocese of Sacramento

In 1910, the Sacramento diocese encompassed the same area as it had in 1900—84,449 square miles in California plus 38,162 in Nevada – totaling 92,611 square miles. The Right Reverend Thomas Grace was serving as bishop, having been installed on June 16, 1896. The total number of priests in the diocese was 62, up from 42 in 1900. There were 1,910 young people under Catholic care, up from 1,700 in 1900, and the Catholic population of the diocese stood at 46,500, an increase of 15,500 souls, or more than 30 percent, since 1900.

The newcomers to the diocese were more ethnically diverse than in the past, numbering many Italians, Portuguese, Croatians, Japanese, Chinese and Filipinos. Bishop Grace initiated a number of responses to serve these newcomers. In 1905, he traveled to Italy securing the services of Fr. Temistocle Eugenio Mela. In 1906, Fr. Mela founded St. Mary’s, a small wooden church at 818 N Street next to the Stanford-Lathrop orphanage, to serve Italians and Portuguese; it also served Spanish-speaking families.



St. Mary Church



St. Stephen Church and School

Grace signed a contract with the Franciscan Sisters to staff the new St. Stephen School at 3rd and O streets. Fortuitously at this time about a half a dozen Sisters were in the process of withdrawing from the short-lived St. Aloysius Convent at Colusa, more than 70 miles up the Sacramento Valley, and were available for St. Stephen's. Teaching at St. Stephen's was challenging—at

least ten nationalities of children attended, with only a few English-speaking students. The largest percentage of the students was of Azorean Portuguese ethnicity.

There was no place in the building large enough for the annual graduation ceremonies. Thus, on June 25, 1909, the Sisters erected a large tent in the playground for the ceremonies; inside the school, the Sisters set up displays of the children's projects, which included drawings and needlework.



To serve the growing diocese, the *Catholic Herald* began publication on March 14, 1908. Its editor, Thomas Augustus Connelly was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on March 10, 1858. After attending Notre Dame in Indiana, Connelly worked on newspapers in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Cleveland. While in Baltimore, Connelly married Miss Mary Fink, with the celebrated Cardinal James Gibbons in attendance. Together the couple had nine children.

Catholic Herald, 1st edition (1908)



The Thomas Connelly Family

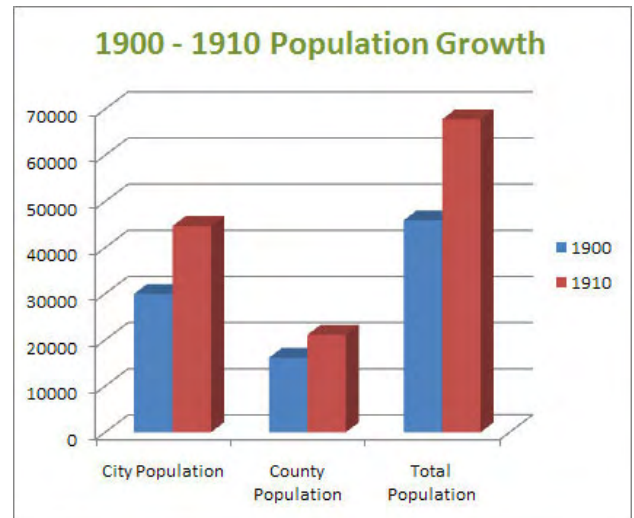
In 1899, San Francisco Archbishop Patrick Reardon had invited Connelly to serve as editor of the *San Francisco Monitor*. Reardon led it through the troubled times of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. In 1907, Connelly moved to Sacramento, where he purchased a small print shop at 416 J Street, supporting his family with government printing work. When Connelly proposed to edit and publish a Catholic newspaper at his own expense, Bishop Grace accepted his offer. Being the sole proprietor of the *Catholic Herald*, Connelly focused the paper on his interests—Sacramento area news, and especially news of Ireland and Irish struggles for independence.

Immaculate Conception Parish, formed in 1909, was our parish's first new neighbor to the southeast. Fr. William Francis "Will" Ellis, a native of Ireland and an ardent Irish nationalist, was its first pastor. In this same year, Portuguese parishioners of what would become St. Elizabeth's, began to split off from St. Mary's, and Portuguese in the Freeport-Pocket area built a small chapel of their own, which they

named St. Mary's. The increased number and diversity of newcomers in the diocese reflected the growth in the city and county of Sacramento during this first decade of the twentieth century.

1910: Sacramento City and County—The Largest Growth in the Twentieth Century

The growth in both city and county populations between 1900 and 1910 was truly phenomenal. The 1910 census revealed the city had grown by 53 percent since 1900 to 44,696—this would be the largest percentage of growth in the twentieth century. County population stood at 21,110, an increase of 39 percent. Combined city and county populations stood at 65,806, with 66 percent of the residents living in the city and 34 percent in the county.



This influx of people to the city, which in 1910 encompassed fewer than five square miles, bespeaks a flourishing economy. Central to the growth was Sacramento's role as a transshipment hub—from the up-valley watersheds of the Pit, Yuba and Feather rivers to

the eastward watershed of the American River, extending into the Nevada mining districts via mule teams and wagon roads, to the southwest downstream reaches of the Sacramento River out into the East Bay and beyond to San Francisco.

From all of these directions and sources, goods flowed downstream and down slope – often being repacked, milled and reshipped at Sacramento. Thus, transportation



companies, principally railroads, were the largest employers of Sacramento workers—the Southern Pacific, the Western Pacific, the steamboat companies, largely controlled by the Southern Pacific and the electric interurbans, the Sacramento Northern Electric

and the Central California Traction Company. The Sacramento Northern Electric Railway, with a depot at 7th and J streets, ran five trains daily between Sacramento, Chico and Marysville; and seven trains daily between Chico and Oroville. The Southern Pacific employed one-third of the workers in the city; so we can estimate that transportation employed more than 50 percent of Sacramento’s labor force.

Fruit Packing, Flour Mills and Breweries

According to the 1910 *Sacramento City Directory*, there were more than 20 fruit packing operations in the city and environs; among the largest was the Central California Cannery at Front Street, stretching along the river from P to Q streets.



Three flour mills were listed in the 1910 *Sacramento City Directory*: the Perkins Grain and Milling Company, the old Phoenix Mill at the southeast corner of 13th and J streets, and the Globe Flour Mills (owned by Sperry Flour Company) at the northwest corner of 12th and C streets. The Globe Flour Mills complex, much of it built

beginning in 1908, contains what was for a time the tallest structure in Sacramento—a six-story poured concrete grain elevator complex.

There were at least three significant breweries in the city—the Sacramento Brewing Company at 28th and M streets, founded by Frank Ruhstaller in 1892, the City Brewery on the northeast corner of 12th and H streets, founded about 1865, but taken over by Frank Ruhstaller in 1881, and the Buffalo/Ruhstaller Brewing Company in the 21st to 22nd Streets and Q to R Streets block. Hermann Grau founded the Buffalo Brewery in 1888. In 1897, the Buffalo Brewery and the Ruhstaller brewing interests merged. At its peak production, the Buffalo/Ruhstaller Brewing Company produced about 60,000 barrels of beer a year;



at 31 gallons per barrel, this equals more than 1,800,000 gallons of beer annually. The cereal waste—hops, malt and barley—was sold to farmers and ranchers for animal feed; it seems to have been especially favored by hog farmers.

The California Winery at 22nd and R streets, operated by Manuel S. Neves, occupied the block just south of the Buffalo/Ruhstaller brewery.



California Winery



St. Francis Church and Fort Sutter (note Globe Flour Mills at left in distance)

Sacramento Planing Mill and Furniture Co., Inc.
Mill Work, Sash, Doors, Frames, Screens,
Mouldings, Etc.
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1910 SACRAMENTO CITY DIRECTORY

Bailey Jos r 516½ K
Bailey Joshua J b 43 Sacto av
Bailey Mamie clk Nonpareil b 1825 10th
Bailey May (wid Henry) b 617 N
Bailey Sara nurse Wentworth Hosp
Bailey Wm porter Jas O'Beirne
Bailey Wm F hlpr Cap C & C Co r 1006½ 2d
Baile Nellie (wid Chas E) folder State Printer b 1617 14th
Bain Wm H violimmkr 520 Oak av h same
Bainbridge Chas E phys 513½ K r same
Bainbridge Jas saln W P Fuller & Co h 2017 K
Bair Chas A rofman S P Co r 723 L
Baird Geo H lab S P Co h Broderick
Bajink Barelusz h 514 8th
Baker see also Becker
Baker Agnes nurse b 1211 25th
Baker Albert F h 1418½ 23d
Baker Albert W painter h Stockton av opp Cypress av
Baker Alfred J painter b 1126 6th
Baker Alfred S painter h 1126 6th

STUDEBAKER BROS. CO.
Buggies, Wagons, Electric and Gasoline
Automobiles
221-25 J St. SACRAMENTO

Baker Alice A tchr b 810 22d
Baker Alice K tchr Jefferson Sch b 1105 O
Baker Allan appr S P Co b 1004 G
Baker Antone saln r 820 K
Baker Carl clk r 806½ J
Baker Chas gardener b 2021½ I
Baker Chas D saln Baker & H h 1714 H
Baker Chas W lawyer 601½ K b 1105 O
Baker Clinton M bksmth b 2028 10th
Baker Duff K firemn S P Co h 2225 H
Baker Edna C b 909 10th
Baker Edwd carp r 421½ J
Baker Edwd C lab Oak Park Lbr Yds h 3415 Park av
Baker Eli tmstr h 3201 W
Baker Emma clk Nathan's b 1119 10th
Baker Mrs Emma P clk L A Paine h 3201 Magnolia av
Baker Ernest C watchmkr Wm Dupen r 216 P
Baker Ethel E student b 1105 O
Baker Ethel K artist b 3201 Magnolia av
Baker Mrs Etta furn rms 612 7th 718 8th and 909 10th
Baker Rev Frank K pastor First M E Ch h 1011 P
Baker Fred h 1730 G

Why Don't You Try A Card in the City Directory?
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in business and invite them to call!

Paul H. Steude City and Country Property
Real Estate and Insurance
174 Main 3136
174 J St.

Carlaw Bros. GRANITE AND MARBLE
Contractors for All Kinds of Building Stone Work
TENTH AND B STREETS SACRAMENTO

Transport: Blacksmiths, Carriage Makers, Drayage and Stables, and Auto Dealers

Changes in transportation were well underway in this the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1910, there were 40 blacksmiths in the city, ten carriage makers and eight agricultural implement manufacturing and sales enterprises. One of these was the Studebaker Brothers Company located between 221 and 225 J Street. The Studebaker Brothers built exceptionally light, strong and graceful wagons—at the same time, they offered an electric automobile for sale.

There were six garages, and five automobile sales agencies listed in the 1910 *City Directory*,

selling internal-combustion-powered cars and trucks, as well as one agency advertising a steam-powered vehicle. Albert R. Meister manufactured an electric car as well as a boat car.

In 1910, there were 37 Express and Drayage enterprises in the city and environs, among them McLaughlin's at 115 K Street. There were 22 stables listed in the 1910 *City Directory*, among them the Telegraph Feed and Livery with two locations, at 1222 J Street and 1014 13th Street.



Saloons, Hotels and Hospitals

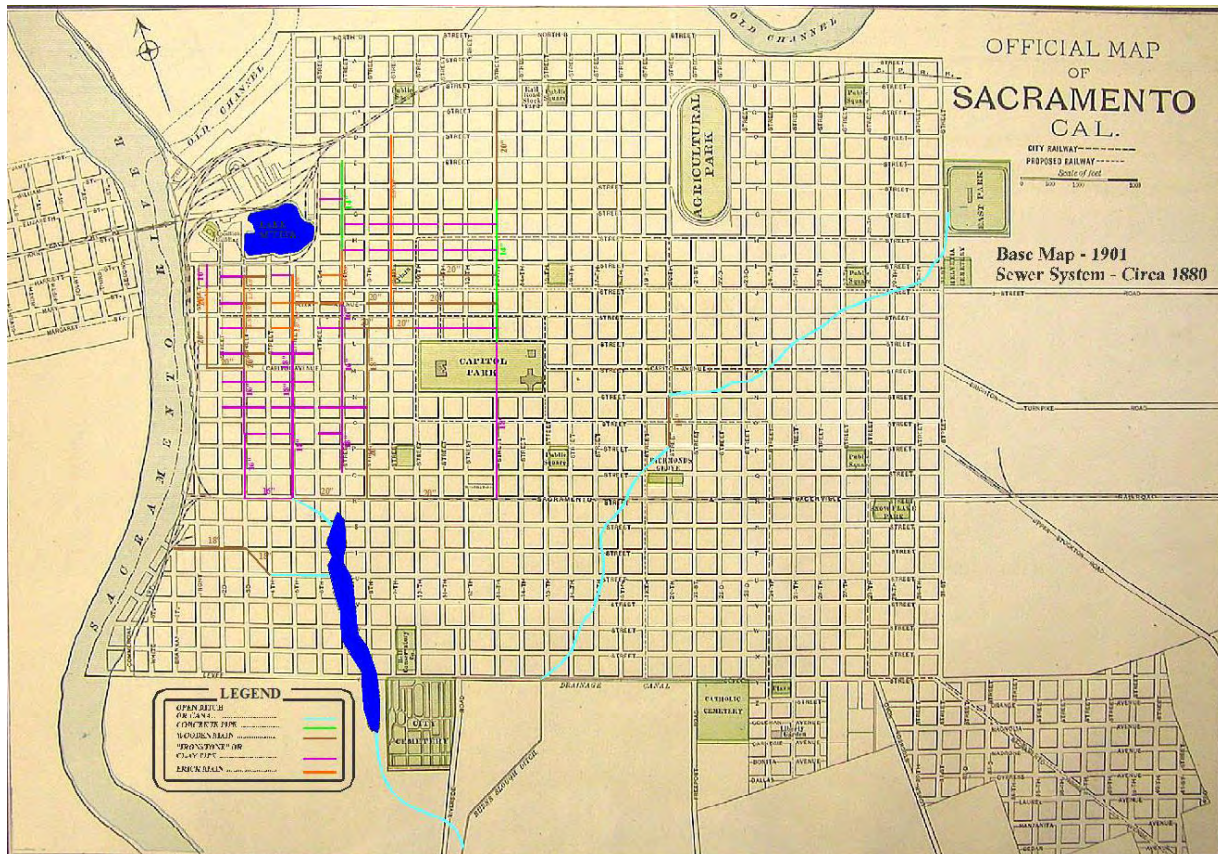
There were more than 130 saloons operating in the city in 1910, and 24 hotels, among them the Golden Eagle at K and 7th streets, the Hotel Sacramento at the southeast corner of K and 10th streets, and the Western Hotel

at 209-215 K Street. There were 14 hospitals and care facilities listed in the 1910 *City Directory*, among them the Railroad Hospital at 7th Street, between F and G streets, the Sisters' Hospital at 23rd Street, between Q and R streets, and the County Hospital, some two miles southeast on Upper Stockton Road.

Meat Markets, Dairies and Stock Yards

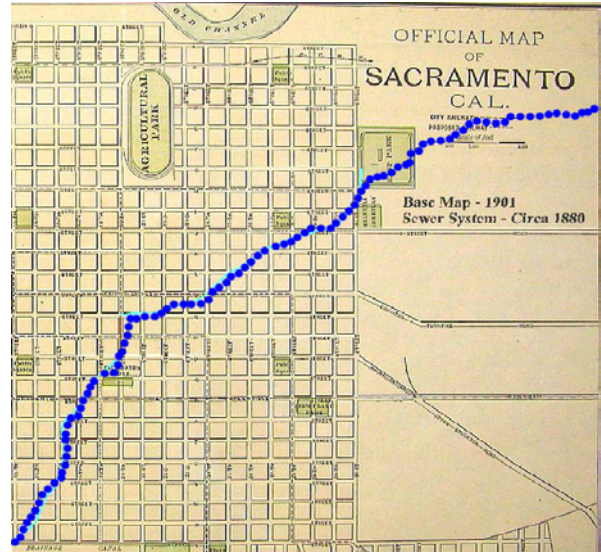
Slaughter houses were not allowed in the city; thus, Swanston's Slaughter House was located north of the American River near the site of the present day Swanston Light Rail Station. In all, there were 38 meat markets listed within the city limits. Among the most prominent were the Schmid and Parker Packing Company at 1410 J Street and the Mohr and Yoerk Packing Company at 1026 J Street.

In addition, there were seven dairies and a number of hog lots within the city limits. There was also a glue factory at 31st and Q streets, and the Southern Pacific maintained a stock yard in the B to C, 14th to 15th street block.



Sloughs, Lakes and Ponds

In addition to alleys, low-lying lots and other refuse dumps, there were a number of large, standing, and stagnant pools of water in the city; the major ones were China Slough, Duck Pond, and Burns Slough. The remnants of **Burns Slough** ran closest to St. Francis of Assisi Church. Before the Central Pacific/Southern Pacific levee was built along the north side of Elvas Avenue, Burns Slough branched off



Burns Slough

from the American River in the vicinity of today's Sacramento State campus, made its way north past today's Masonic Temple, turning westward south of the intersection of Moddison and Minerva streets to meander into East Park (today McKinley Park). From East Park it continued to flow southwestward crossing near 29th and J streets to run behind Sutter's Fort, crossing the intersection of 26th and L streets, and thence southwestward toward 16th Street and the Sacramento Valley Railroad/R Street levee.

Duck Pond stretched from S Street to south of Y Street, roughly along 7th Street and was another body of standing or stagnant water in the southwest or "Arizona" district of the city. This pond would eventually be partially drained to form the nucleus of Southside Park; but in the late nineteenth century, it was a source of noxious odors.

China Slough (also known as Sutter Lake), located on Southern Pacific property north of I Street, was the largest body of standing water in the city. Before 1900, it measured 50 acres and was as deep as 40 feet. City leaders fretted for years over the state of China Slough – Chinese residents living on the north side of I Street regularly dumped animal, vegetable and human waste into the slough, creating the city's largest and most noxious public nuisance.

Water, Sewers and Public Health

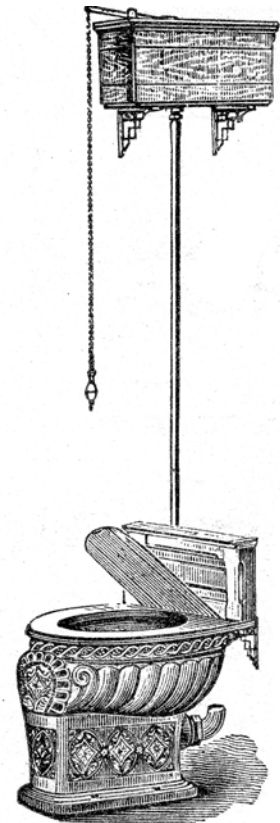
Historians estimate that eight to ten tons of animal waste were dropped on city streets daily. There were more than 20 stables in the city, with private stables in the alleys behind many homes. In 1910, there were seven dairies within the city limits, numerous hog yards and almost 40 meat markets, plus the Southern Pacific stockyard and the glue factory.

Historians have approximated that each of the city's blocks might have contained as many as 64 privies. In 1894 public health advocates estimated there were 2,500 "filth pits" in the city; in 1902, the number had grown to 5,500. Indoor water closets were introduced in the 1870s, most of which drained into inadequate septic systems on the owner's property. Some were illegally connected to the city sewer system, which was designed to carry only storm water run-off. Other water closets emptied into the basements of homes where noxious fumes rose into the living quarters above.

With the exception of the West End, hotels and hospitals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were better ventilated and contained more sanitary water closets and bathing facilities. But the growth of the city outpaced private efforts to modernize sanitation services.

With 45,000 people living within five square miles, much of it poorly drained, with increasing economic activity and less than adequate sewer and water systems or garbage collection, Sacramento in the late nineteenth century was an unhealthy, unpleasant, uncomfortable place to live.

Deadly diseases had been present in Sacramento since at least in the 1830s when Hudson's Bay Company trappers brought malaria and other maladies into the valley. In the Gold Rush era, Sacramento was a disease incubator, with the Cholera Epidemic of 1850 being one of its most disastrous outbreaks. Observers had commented graphically on the garbage, trash, human and animal waste, dead animals, stagnant water and Sacramento's overall grossly unsanitary conditions in 1850. There was also an abundance of flies and mosquitoes.



Joseph Budde's Ocean Spray Embossed Front Washout Closet with Tank and Mahogany Seat attached.

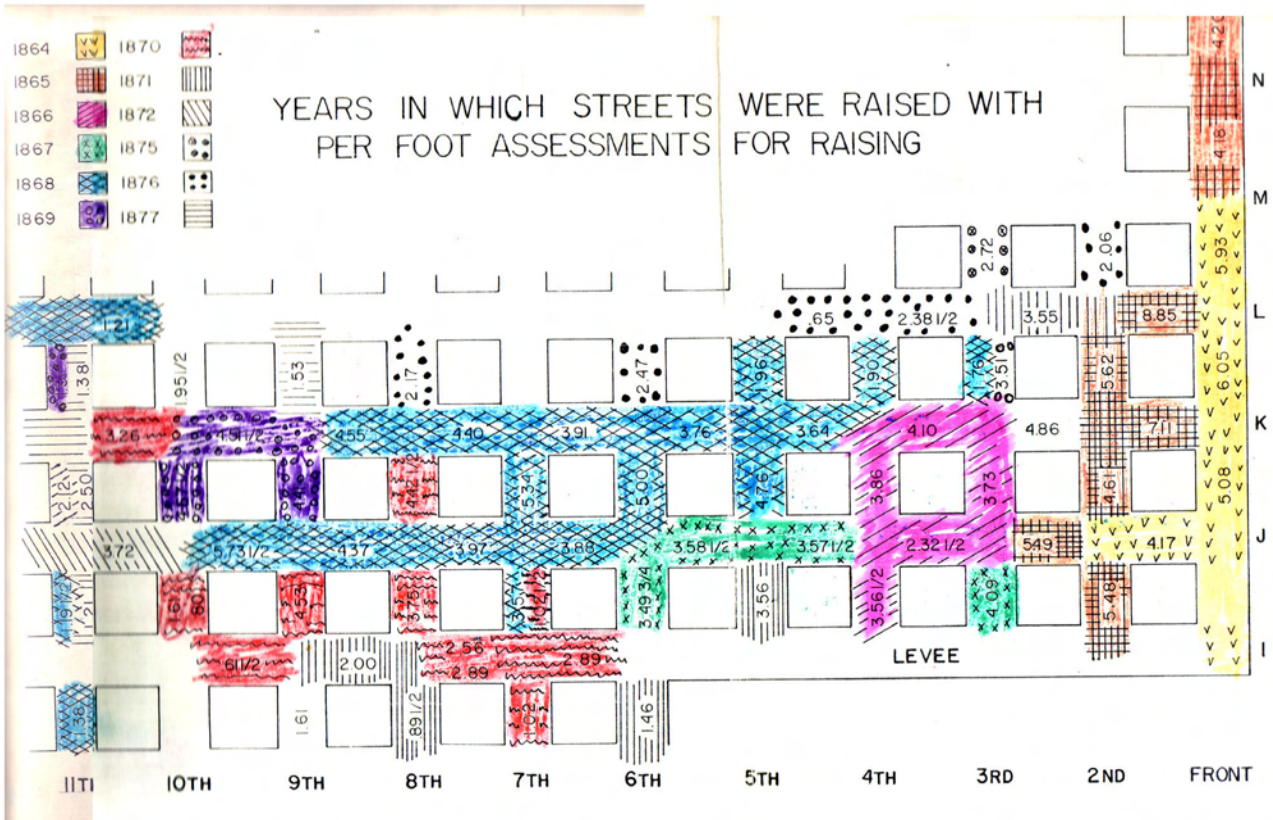
The 1850 cholera epidemic took the lives of more than 300 people—among them 17 physicians, ranging in age from 23 to 60, and Mayor Harden Bigelow and Catholic priest Fr. Augustine Anderson.

Malaria was responsible for far more deaths in Northern California than cholera, however; most fatalities occurred among Native Americans in the 1830s. In the 1880s, malaria was “by far the most common ailment among employees coming to the Central Pacific Hospital.”⁶ It remained pernicious well into the twentieth century—recall that the founding parish pastor, Fr. Augustine McClory, was forced to leave Sacramento in 1896 due to the effects of malaria. Malaria was not brought under control until after World War II when DDT became available, and the Mosquito Abatement District was established.

As Sacramento’s population increased, efforts were undertaken to improve public health by creating adequate sewer and water systems. Of these, more has been written about the water system—understandably, as the goal was clear, clean water. The sewage system has been less discussed.

While paved streets, concrete sidewalks, curbs and gutters were valid measures of urban growth, the health and well being of Sacramento’s citizens ultimately rested on an adequate and well-maintained sewer system. Built on the Sacramento/American River floodplain, subject to periodic, devastating floods, and months of stagnant standing water, Sacramento provided unique challenges.

As one historian has written, “The leaders of early Sacramento had to deal with the city’s seasonal abundance of water before they were required to address any lack of it.”⁷ The first contract for sewer construction was granted in July 1853. Designed to carry off storm and refuse water, not human waste, the first sewers were open channels approximately 20 inches wide of three-inch redwood boards. These sewers eventually drained to the south side of the R Street levee into the low-lying lands beyond.



Following the disastrous floods of 1861 and 1862, the City of Sacramento began filling and raising streets in the business district 12 to 15 feet. The grade adopted by the Board of Supervisors in February 1863 was 28 feet above the low-water mark on Front Street from Q Street to I Street. Similarly, the grade set on I Street from Front eastward was 28 feet above the low-water mark. On 7th Street the high grade fell from 28 feet at I Street to 22 feet at Q Street.

A note on the low-water mark. The best information the author has been able to gather is that the low-water mark was set on October 23, 1856, at 0.12 feet above sea level. The 1863 Board of Supervisors high grade of 28 feet on Front Street and I Streets might actually be 28.012—for our purposes 28 feet above sea level would be sufficiently accurate.⁸

The work of raising the streets to high grade extended from 1863 to the late 1870s. Beginning on Front Street from M to I streets, the work extended eastward principally between K and J streets with spurs extending out to I Street between 6th and 10th streets. Alleys were left at original grade, which is perhaps most evident in Old Sacramento in the alley between Front and 2nd streets.

Epic as was Sacramento's street raising project, it shared the same trait as the city's solution to its other refuse problems. Drainage from the high grade blocks flowed northward from I Street into lower areas. Likewise drainage from M, N, O, P and Q streets flowed southward into lower-lying areas, where it mixed with raw sewage from the city's street sewers and was eventually pumped into the Sacramento River.

Whether drainage water, sewage or solid waste, Sacramento's characteristic solution was to deposit or pump its unwanted refuse into low-lying lands beyond immediate settlement. In 1892 the position of "City Scavenger" was created to focus primarily on the disposal of large animal carcasses, but also on garbage and other solid refuse. Prior to 1892 city ordinances had only referred to places where garbage could not be dumped, such as China Slough or Sutter Lake. Later ordinances were extended to include "any slough or pond" in the city. Sacramentans, however, continued to dispose of garbage on streets, in alleys, and on vacant lots. In 1895, the block from U to W and 15th to 16th streets was designated as the "official public dump."

Incineration was the next step in garbage disposal. The first incinerator was installed at Front and S streets in 1905. One enthusiastic report stated, "We have successfully incinerated the carcass of a dead horse within a period of considerably less than six hours." But costs were too high, and the incinerator was rejected by the city. In 1907 the city accepted another crematorium—a 40-ton unit on the block running from Front to 2nd and V to W streets. Here also large animal disposal was the criteria of performance—"Almost dally...either a horse or a cow has been destroyed, the length of time varying from one to six hours.... It has been impossible to detect any odor while this was being done." In 1909 a second 40-ton incinerator was added.⁹

Another consequence of the 1861-1862 floods, was the creation of a Board of Health by the City of Sacramento in 1863. For decades, the Board of Health urged city leaders to clean up low-lying lots and develop adequate sewer and functioning clean water systems. Through either Board of Trustees' inaction or taxpayer refusal to vote necessary funds, neither goal was easily achieved.