

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TECHNICAL REPORT
MERRIE WAY STANDS SITE
CA-SFR-174H, SUTRO DISTRICT
GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

Prepared for

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2012

FOCUSED ANALYTICAL AND INTERPRETIVE STUDIES

This section focuses on analytical studies and contextual research that add to public understanding of the Merrie Way Stands site for further use in public interpretive materials. It does not address all artifacts, features, structures, or stratigraphy recovered during the excavations.

FOOD/DINING

Meat Cuts

Chop (steak) houses did not appear in quantity until the mid-19th century, and then primarily in New York. The gastronomic trend quickly spread to the West in major cities like San Francisco and mining towns like Grass Valley and Bodie. These restaurants were frequently connected with bars and saloons and were run and staffed by Euro-Americans as well as the Chinese, who sometimes leased their facilities and combined their selection of hearty chop meals with noodle houses (Lister and Lister 1989).

The chophouses could be rowdy with few frills but they provided a place where a working man could get a filling meal for a reasonable price. Some establishments advertised meals that offered “every luxury the market affords,” “supplied the best the market affords,” or “the only place in town to get a No. 1 corn fed juicy beefsteak” (Conlin 1981:46). Pricing data for chophouses are sparse but an 1896–1907 menu from the up-scale Cliff House down the road from the Merrie Way stands lists a beef porterhouse for \$1, a beef sirloin or tenderloin steak for \$.60, a plain mutton chop or pork chop for \$.35, and ham and eggs for \$.50 (Louis Roesch Co, 1896). The four favorite Merrie Way stands steak choices came from a mutton blade cut (n=457), a pork round (n=232), a mutton round bone or “arm” (n=184), and a beef porterhouse steak (n=128).

Documentary and physical evidence for the stands’ menus clearly shows that items other than steaks were eaten here as elsewhere. The Occidental Saloon and Chop House in Grass Valley, California, for example, advertised “Fresh Oysters in Every Style” and Alexander Gault’s Antelope Restaurant in Nevada City, California touted “every LUXURY the market affords . . . Game of all kinds in season” (Conlin 1981:46). Oysters are the single largest artifact category by weight and count from the Stands excavation.

The small representation of possible game animals is intriguing but inconclusive. The inclusion of rabbits, various local marine fishes, and some wild birds brings up the question of sourcing. Were locals, regular customers, or even employees bringing their latest catch or game from a local foraging trip into the establishment to be served as a daily special? Were these species used by proprietor Manuel Varvares for his personal consumption? Of course, most of the wild game (rabbits, various local fishes, and birds) could also be readily acquired at San Francisco markets.

Oysters

Although they have long been present in the American diet, oysters have not always been the delicacy they are viewed today. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, oysters were a dietary mainstay of lower, middle, and upper classes alike. The mollusks were praised as a source of minerals and protein for the working class who often could not afford to eat meat. In the late 18th century, oyster saloons began appearing in coastal cities, becoming some of the first freestanding restaurants in America. These were regularly frequented by men, but many had special areas set aside for women and families (Stavely and Fitzgerald 2004:104–108).

By the mid-19th century, oysters were popular in a variety of social contexts, from “ladies’ restaurants” to ice cream parlors to chophouses. Banquets and fine meals usually began with a course of oysters (Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown, eds.1980:11).

In the mid-19th century, native Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) were plentiful on the Atlantic coast, and immigrants to California during the Gold Rush brought with them the memory of these large and delicately flavored treats. Their desire for this familiar food led to the development of the California oyster industry. San Francisco Bay has its own native oyster (*Ostrea lurida*), but its flavor and appearance were said to be relatively undesirable. To feed the need for a more marketable oyster, companies began importing oysters from Willapa Bay in Washington (also a variety of *O. lurida*). Since the mollusks are able to hermetically seal their valves and thereby adapt to limited amounts of oxygen, they kept reasonably well during shipping and could be stored in the bay after arrival, which kept them fresh until needed at market (Babalis 2009:8–10; Postel 1988:27–28).

The Washington oyster trade dominated the Bay Area market until the early 1870s. Though preferred to the native San Francisco oyster, Washington oysters did not usurp the demand for Eastern oysters. By the 1870s Eastern oysters were being shipped west on the newly completed transcontinental railroad. The Eastern oyster’s large size was one of its most desirable features, although this made the variety more costly to ship. To improve cost efficiency, oyster dealers engineered a method in which eastern oyster larvae or “seed” were frozen in barrels and shipped by rail. The seed were then bedded in the San Francisco Bay and nearby where they would grow in three or four years to maturity before being harvested. Eventually, the warmer and more protected tidal flats near San Mateo, Millbrae, and Belmont were determined to provide the optimal habitat for growing oysters and by 1875 had become the primary location of oyster cultivation. The market was dominated—essentially monopolized—by the Morgan Oyster Co. of San Mateo, which was in turn provided with seed by the Chicago-based A. Booth & Company, controllers of the national shipping industry. Importation of Washington oysters declined precipitously after 1890 as the species rapidly decreased in availability (Babalis 2009:7–11; Postel 1988:28–30; Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown, eds.1980:4-3 – 4-4).

By 1905 siltation and other forms of pollution in the waters of the San Francisco Bay led to a reduction in oyster production. A 1905 Cliff House menu gives diners the choice between “eastern, transplanted, or California, any style,” each variety offered at the same cost of \$0.50. This listing suggests that native *O. lurida* was still harvested at least in some quantity and was preferred by some diners, despite its reportedly unsatisfactory taste. The equal pricing of the oyster varieties may reflect a situation where the scarcity of *O. lurida* made the cost of its procurement equal to that of importing or seeding other varieties (Postel 1988:28; Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown, eds. 1980:4-4).

By 1910 it was no longer possible to raise oysters from seed in the Bay Area. Mature oysters were still shipped from the East Coast and bedded in the tidelands for later sale. The decreased availability began to drive up the cost of oysters, making them less of a dietary mainstay and more of a delicacy. However, after typhoid outbreaks in the Bay Area at the turn of the 20th century were linked to oyster consumption, local demand began to decrease (Postel 1988).

The difficulties in obtaining oysters in the San Francisco Bay Area in the second half of the 19th century gave the oyster a different position in the social and economic hierarchy of foodstuffs than that held on the American East Coast. From the 1850s onward, oysters were a commercially produced item with a significant cost mark-up due to the costs of shipping



Figure 14. Lab Manager Erica Gibson sorting oyster shells at the Stands Site.

and storage. Though some individuals may have been able to forage for small pockets of the native California species, oysters were generally a luxury food for Bay Area residents and not the everyman's food that they were known to be in England or on the East Coast (Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown, eds. 1980:4-4). Many upscale dinner menus of the time feature oysters. For the middle and working classes, the environments in which oysters were consumed publicly, such as oyster bars and saloons, might have had an atmosphere of indulgence and festivity.

City directories list Concession "S" as an oyster house in 1898, though its function may have spanned a broader period of time (Crocker-Langley 1898). A preliminary cataloging of shellfish remains from selected archaeological contexts indicates that both Washington and Eastern oysters were consumed in relatively equal proportions (Figure 14). This may suggest that though the importation of Washington oysters was generally declining at this time, there was still a strong demand for them in San Francisco.

"Welch's Junior" Grape Juice Bottles

Welch's Junior grape juice bottles were found in abundance at the Stands site (Figure 15). The Welch's Junior product, a 4-ounce serving of Welch's brand grape juice, was served in a colorless glass bottle embossed with the product name. Two styles of bottle were identified in the collection, and may represent different periods of manufacture. Introduced in 1907, the juice was marketed to children and adults alike (Welch's Company 2012). Grape juice had its start in the world of popular beverages as an alternative to wine. A pasteurization process to prevent the fermentation of grape juice was first developed in 1869 by the temperance supporter Thomas Bramwell Welch, who intended it for use as a substitute for communion wine. Thomas' son, Charles Welch, aggressively marketed his father's product to the general



Figure 15. Just a few of the “Welch’s Junior” grape juice bottles recovered from the Stands Site.

public, even handing out samples at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair (Trager 1995:283, 353). The beverage’s popularity grew with the Temperance movement, and throughout the first decades of the 20th century it was a widely accepted substitute for alcoholic drinks in social settings (Trager 1995:408, 411). By 1911 Welch’s advertises itself as “The National Drink” and offered hostesses suggestions for serving the juice to guests. A 1912 advertisement that ran in *Good Housekeeping* magazine calls Welch’s “the Man’s drink . . . a drink without a drug . . . a true tonic without an evil aftermath”. A 1915 ad featuring an adult woman enjoying Welch’s Junior states that it is “the perfect size to order at the fountain, or in the café, hotel, club, or diner” (Welch Grape Juice Company 1915).

Given the 1907 manufacturing start date of Welch’s Junior, the bottles found at the Stands site are likely associated with the restaurant at Concession “S” and fruit/candy stand at Concession “S” that continued to operate at the site until at least 1910 and 1917, respectively, after the closure of the Merrie Way amusements. After the amusements left, the stands restaurants may have continued to attract families who visited the beach or baths seeking wholesome entertainment. The beverage would have been ordered by adults seeking non-alcoholic refreshments and by children eating at the restaurant with their families.

The profusion of Welch’s Junior bottles at the site is a reflection of Americans’ growing reliance on national brand name goods throughout the 20th century. In the mid-19th century, few products were advertised nationally. Americans were still accustomed to using homemade products and unbranded, often local merchandise (Strasser 1989:6–7). This began to change by the start of the 20th century. Urged on by contemporary advertising, American consumers acquired the ability to request not just a type of product, but a specific manufacturer’s nationally distributed product. A common company advertising slogan through the early 1910s counsels, “Do more than ask for ‘grape juice’ – say Welch’s and get it!” (*Saturday Evening Post* 1912:39; *Women’s Home Companion* 1912). A brand name on a product was meant to suggest

to the consumer that the manufacturer had taken responsibility for the product's quality and would be held accountable through popular opinion and purchasing choices (Brand Names Foundation Incorporated 1947). Advertisements implied that the power wielded by large corporations gave them access to superior raw materials and manufacturing procedures. A 1915 advertisement reads "The Welch's Label is your guarantee of purity, quality, and satisfaction," while other ads assure customers that manufacturers of the Welch's brand "pay the necessary bonus" to procure top-quality grapes, and that "unusual care and cleanliness" was a hallmark of the production process for Welch's (Welch Grape Juice Company 1915; *Saturday Evening Post* 1911:44).

With these guarantees of quality came a promise of predictability, or more pleasingly, dependability (Spring 2003:30; Strasser 1989:51–52). A consumer could be confident of getting a consistent experience when using the product. This expectation also conferred upon the manufacturer the responsibility to ensure that their product was stored and shipped in a manner that would preserve its quality to the highest possible degree, resulting in the establishment of new sales and delivery forces outside of the traditional network of producers, wholesalers, and middlemen (Strasser 1989:19–20, 31–34).

Grape juice brands other than Welch's were available to consumers in the early 20th century. Armour's Grape Juice, for example, was explicitly marketed toward adherents of the Temperance movement and as a healthful drink for children, stating in a 1913 ad that Armour's causes no "gray dawn of the morning after", and will make children "plump and robust and high spirited". However, that no other grape juice brands were identified at the Stands site indicates the strength of Welch's advertising campaign and trade network.

Soda Water

Archaeologists found fragments of several soda water bottles at the Stands site. The production of artificially carbonated, or "soda", waters began in England in the latter half of the 18th century and was being carried out in America by 1807. The manufacture of soda water was intended to capitalize on the mineral water craze, inspired by claims of their health benefits. Soda water was initially marketed as a substitute for natural mineral water; it was thought that the beneficial elements of certain waters could be isolated and artificially concentrated. However, as the manufacture of soda water increased, their perceived therapeutic value decreased, especially as claims of their curative values were shown to be unsubstantiated. The beverage's popularity was sustained by its characteristics of unique taste and its superior effervescence in comparison to natural mineral waters. By the 1880s, the term "soda water" was used by the manufacturing industry to refer not just to carbonated water but to a variety of carbonated drinks flavored with lemon, sarsaparilla, ginger, etc. (Schulz et al. 1980:113–115).

Maker's marks and embossed labels on the Stands site bottle fragments indicate that at least some were from San Francisco companies (Figure 16), including Bay City Soda Water, Belfast Soda Water & Ginger Ale, and Pioneer Soda Water. Bottles from these companies are commonly found at late 19th and early 20th century archaeological sites in the greater Bay Area. Fragments of bottles from San Francisco manufacturers Brieg & Schafer and the Majestic Bottling Company were also identified; vessels from these manufacturers are less common at Bay Area sites. One fragment of a bottle manufactured for the Oakland Pioneer Soda Water Co. was also recovered. The data indicate that the stands at Merrie Way were supplied predominately with soda waters from Bay Area producers.

Soda water was marketed as both an alternative to alcoholic beverages and for use in the preparation of mixed alcoholic drinks (Schulz et al. 1980:114), although it is difficult to



Figure 16. Soda water bottles recovered from the Stands Site.

determine in what capacity the soda water at Merrie Way was consumed. A large quantity of olive glass alcoholic beverage bottle fragments whose content was not identified are likely to include hard liquor containers. This suggests that some of the soda water was used in mixed drinks. However, like the Welch's Junior grape juice bottles, the soda water bottles also represent a significant demand for non-alcoholic beverages for children and temperate adults.

Beer

Though there appear to have been sufficient non-alcoholic beverage options for visitors to Merrie Way, the Stands site collection shows that visitors enjoyed a quantity of beer as well. San Francisco's well-earned reputation as a "wet" city started during the Gold Rush and continued through Prohibition. By the 1890s San Francisco had more saloons per capita than any other city in the nation. The temperance movement was not strongly embraced by San Franciscans, whose votes defeated state prohibition measures in 1855 and 1916 (Rose 1986:285–286). The large quantity of alcoholic beverages represented in the Stands Site collection reflects this stance.

A variety of beer-vessel related items were recovered, including stoneware and glass bottles, bottle stoppers, and foil seals (Figure 17). Many of the items are identified with San Francisco breweries, such as bottles from Fredericksburg Brewing Company and J. Rapp & Son, and a glass beer advertising sign promoting "Cascade High Grade Lager" from the city's Union Brewing and Malting Company.



Figure 17. Beer bottles found at the Stands Site with marks from San Francisco beer bottling works.

Through 1897, John Rapp distributed beer under the names “Rapp & DeDarry” and later simply “John Rapp.” In 1897 Rapp’s son joined the firm and it began operating as “Rapp & Son.” Originally, Rapp & Son were bottlers and distributors for several San Francisco breweries including United States Beer, Pabst Beer, and Milwaukee Beer. Up until 1899 their plant was located at the corner of 6th and King streets in San Francisco (Crocker-Langley 1894–1899).

In 1899 Rapp & Son Bottlers (or J Rapp & Son) also became local distributors of Rainier Beer, their address listed in the city directory as “Rainier Beer Agency.” In 1900 the company moved to Kansas Street, bottling for Pabst and operating as “agents” for Rainier. By 1901 their sole distribution role seems to have been as “Agents, Rainier Beer” or “Rainier Beer Agency,” and they moved again to 8th and Townsend streets where they would remain until 1908 (Crocker-Langley 1898–1908; Figure 18). In 1910 the firm moved again, this time to a custom built plant at 1500 Bryant Street (*San Francisco Call* 1910a). Five years later, the Rainier Brewing Company opened a plant next door at 1550 Bryant; 1919 was the last year that Rapp & Son Bottlers are listed in city directories. Tellingly, in 1920 the Rainier Brewery was listed as occupying the former Rapp offices at 1500 Bryant (Crocker-Langley 1909–1922).

The Fredericksburg Bottling Company operated from 1886 to 1906 on Ellis Street in San Francisco, bottling beer that had been made by the Fredericksburg Brewing Company in San Jose (Crocker-Langley 1886–1905; Van Wieren 1995:40). The bottling works was damaged in the 1906 earthquake and did not reopen.

In the Stands site archaeologists found a large quantity of lead foil seals and one glass bottle from E.J. Burke, Co., the Liverpool, England, and New York bottlers of Guinness Stout exported from Dublin, Ireland, between 1849 and 1936 (Figure 19). These represent the largest group of non-oyster food items in the collection imported from outside the Bay Area. Stout beer and oysters have a long-standing relationship in the social culture of food. "Stout and oysters" has been a popular pairing for hundreds of years, beginning in England and Ireland in the 18th century when stout beers began to be developed, and oysters were a mainstay of regional working class diet. Like oysters, stout beers were considered to be rich in healthful nutrients for those who could not afford meat or fresh vegetables. The large volume of oyster shell and stout beer artifacts found together suggests that the combination of stout and oysters was enjoyed by many customers at the Merrie Way stands, no doubt including British or Irish immigrants as a continuation of a ritual enjoyed "back home".

The social and cultural implications of beer drinking are manifold and widely varied. In many European cultures beer drinking has been part of everyday life for centuries, consumed with meals or between meals as a healthful, strength-imparting drink. Beer has also been a central element in festivals and ritual events for many of these same cultures. The Temperance movement in the United States often targeted specific cultural groups for whom beer or wine drinking was integral to sense of identity (Panunzio 1932). Many temperance crusaders focused their efforts on liberating working-class immigrant groups from "the bonds of addiction" as the regular consumption of beer, even in moderate amounts, was deemed (Reckner 1999:63; Rose 1986:286). Some historians have asserted that the criticism of immigrants by temperance crusaders may have either emerged from, or been designed to fuel, general feelings of hostility towards immigrants who were seen as threats to the well-being of native-born Americans (Wasserman 1990; West 1972).

As Sutro's amusements at Lands End were marketed heavily to the working class, many of whom were immigrants, it is likely that customers of the Merrie Way Stands also sought out beer drinking for cultural reasons. For men especially, drinking beer with others in public places was an accepted and widely practiced form of social interaction. Though temperance movements had been growing in the British Isles and Nordic countries for several decades, countries such as Germany with high immigration rates had no such movement. In the countries that had strong temperance movements, the focus was generally on hard

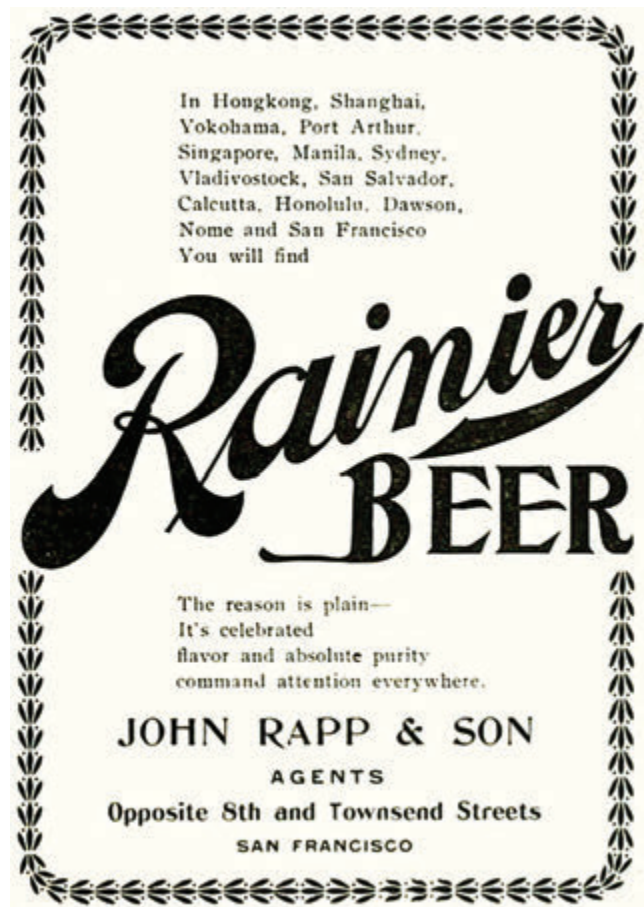


Figure 18. Advertisement for Rainier Beer showing J. Rapp and Son as San Francisco agents at 8th and Townsend Streets. *Illustration courtesy of Brewery Gems.*

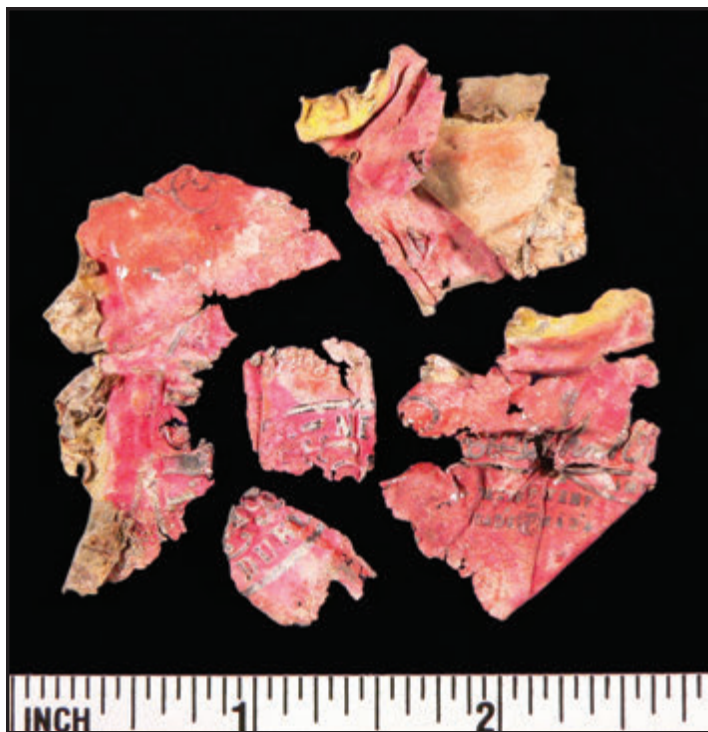


Figure 19. Foil seals from Guinness beer bottles, excavated at the Stands Site.

that operated from 1894 to 1936. The Association consisted of a group of wine merchants with a vision for winemaking in California as a profitable venture and for making the state's wine products competitive in value and quality with those from established foreign regions (Pinney 1989:356). The small quantity of these artifacts suggests that the wine was consumed by stand operator Varvares himself and was not regularly offered for sale.

Bohemian Oyster and Shrimp Cocktail

A colorless glass bottle was found embossed with the name of "Bohemian Cocktail and Supply Co.," which operated at 435 Minna Street, San Francisco, from 1915-1916 to 1922 (Crocker-Langley 1915/16-1922). Their advertisements listed their wares as "Bottlers of the Famous Bohemian Oyster and Shrimp Cocktails" and "BOHEMIAN APPLE CIDER Is Real Cider . . . \$1.00 Per Gallon" (*San Francisco Chronicle* 1920; Figures 20 and 21). The name Bohemian also included the following in its listings in the city directories for 1915-1916 and 1917: "Oyster, Crab, Shrimp, Lobster, Abalone & Clam Cocktails".

Condiments

Bottles from several different types of condiments were identified in the collection. These include Worcestershire sauce, olive oil, Tabasco sauce, and mustard, all of which were popular throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and any of which would be suitable for seasoning chophouse fare. Condiments were both imported from Midwestern or East Coast manufactures and obtained from Bay Area producers. These included two vessels from Dodson & Braun Manufacturing Co., of St. Louis, Missouri, dated 1892-1898 (Zumwalt 1980:121); a bottle from H.J. Heinz of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with a manufacturing start date of 1888 (Zumwalt 1980:145) and a Tabasco bottle from E. McIlhenny's Son of New Iberia, Louisiana, start date 1870. A 1902 advertisement promotes Tabasco as an accompaniment

liquor rather than beer and wine, which were not thought to have the same capacity for moral degradation (Levine 1993). For many recent expatriates the cry for total abstinence was a ludicrous suggestion, and one that would undermine both group identity and personal comfort. In "wet" San Francisco, however, these criticisms were not as pervasive as in other areas of the country (Rose 1986:285-286). Judging from the quantity of alcoholic beverage bottles at the Stands site, it appears that temperance ideals were not a strong force at the Merrie Way establishments.

A small number of wine bottle fragments and a lead foil seal were recovered from the site. The seal is printed with the emblem of the San Francisco-based California Wine Association

<p style="text-align: center;">BOHEMIAN APPLE CIDER</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Is Real Cider</i></p> <p>Its fruity flavor, sparkling zest and clarity make it a delicious drink.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—It's the Apples</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$1.00 Per Gallon Delivered to your home (in 1 or 5 gal. containers)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BOHEMIAN Cocktail and Supply Co.</p> <p>Bottlers of the Famous Bohemian Oyster and Shrimp Cocktails</p> <p style="text-align: center;">435 MINNA STREET Telephone Kenney 3812</p>	 <p>Bohemian Apple Cider is a full flavored, full bodied, gratifying, rich tasting beverage that the careful hostess will be glad to SERVE ANYBODY.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It's the Apples</i> \$1. Per Gallon at Your Dealers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BOHEMIAN Cocktail and Supply Co. 435 MINNA STREET</p>
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Figure 20. 1920 advertisements for products of the Bohemian Cocktail and Supply Co.



Figure 21. Bohemian Cocktail and Supply Co. bottles from the Stands Site.

to oysters, of which plenty were apparently served at the Concession “S” restaurant. Local condiment manufacturers represented include Fisher Packing Co. of San Francisco, with a start date of 1883 and the San Jose Fruit Packing Company, with a start date of 1893 (Zumwalt 1980:363–364).

TRANSPORTATION/TRADE NETWORKS

Ceramics

A wide variety of ceramic food preparation, consumption and storage vessels were found at the Stands site. Most of these are basic tableware and serving items—plates, bowls, dishes, cups, and saucers—in either utilitarian white improved earthenware or more upscale porcelain. “White improved earthenware” is a highly refined white earthenware ceramic body that was commonly used for tablewares and ceramic personal items during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is by far the most common ceramic material found at mid- and late-19th-century urban sites on the West Coast. The material was created by potters in Staffordshire, England, to compete with the porcelain wares popular in the 18th century and that would be durable and inexpensive to produce (Praetzellis 1981:4).

White improved earthenware quickly became a popular choice for tableware and serving vessels. Items made of this material feature a durable body able to tolerate frequent handling and a glaze that is almost impervious to scratching by flatware. They also retain heat longer than other ceramic types, a desirable trait for serving dishes (Hughes 1961:156–158). Hotels, restaurants, and other public establishments often used white improved earthenware vessels in serving their customers because of its durability and low cost.

Though the use of white improved earthenware vessels made good economic sense for many establishments, many customers still sought the luxury of eating off of porcelain vessels. A restaurant that wanted to present itself as higher-class might choose to serve its customers on porcelain. The presence of a full array of tableware pieces of both white improved earthenware and more refined porcelain suggests that eateries of differing calibers had operated at the Stands. This may represent changes in the types of foods served at Varvare’s restaurant over time, or may be associated with the Antipa’s takeover of the restaurant after Varvare’s death.

Most of the white improved earthenware ceramics at the Stands site that have identifiable makers were manufactured in Staffordshire, England. Having first developed the formula for the white improved earthenware ceramic body, the Staffordshire potteries held a virtual monopoly on its manufacture. A small number of pieces displayed American marks from Greenwood Pottery in Trenton, New Jersey.

American companies began to make white improved earthenware products in the 1850s and 1860s. Until the mid-1870s, however, British ceramics were considered to be superior in quality. The 1876 Centennial Exhibition sparked a sense of national pride and an appreciation for American craftsmanship and an accompanying “Buy American” campaign. To capitalize on this newfound dignity, American potteries created marks featuring eagles, flags, and other patriotic themes to emphasize the American origin of their products, and more consumers began to search out American-made goods (DeBolt 1994:6, 14–166; Wetherbee 1996:165–168).

Ceramic goods from England were shipped across the Atlantic to storehouses on the East Coast and from there along with American-made ceramics to the west coast. By the late 19th century, trade networks between the American East Coast and West Coast were well established. Transportation of goods by train was standard and made the shipping of large lots of matching goods feasible both physically and economically. This is contrast to conditions in

the mid-19th century, where ceramic goods often made a long and arduous journey by wagon from East Coast supply houses to consumers in the west.

Several fragments of yellowware bowls were recovered from the site. These would have been used in the kitchens of the Concession “S” restaurant. Two bowls had maker’s marks, identifying the manufacturer as Philadelphia City Pottery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, dating between 1868 and 1915.

A small number of the ceramic tableware fragments at the site were decorated. Decorations include hand painting, brown and black transfer-printing, molded accents, and decals. Some of the decorated items suggest domestic use rather than commercial, and may be from Varvare’s quarters at his Concession “S” restaurant.

Food and Beverage Containers

The foods and drinks represented at the Stands site show San Francisco’s vigorous trade network with merchants and suppliers on the East Coast as well as a healthy community of local manufacturers, in spite of its relative isolation in the Far West. According to Allan Pred’s Commodity Flow Model (1964, 1970), consumers who live in “high access” localities tend to obtain most of their goods from producers in other high access areas. The model’s definition of “accessibility” uses New York City as a baseline, and ranks all other localities relative to their degree of connectedness to New York in terms of combined land and sea transportation. It postulates that market oriented industries in high access areas would have high inflow of goods from, and outflow to other high access areas, but that the reliance on locally produced goods increases inversely with a locality’s degree of access: that is, a low accessibility location would exhibit a high reliance on locally made goods (Pred 1970:280). By the measure of this model, the San Francisco area had low access.

Archaeological studies have applied this model to 1890s–1930s sites in various areas of the country, and have shown the model to be successful in predicting a locality’s degree of nationwide access to goods through examination of the manufacturing origin of its artifacts (Adams, Bowers, and Mills 2001; Riordan and Adams 1985). The percentages of goods produced in high access areas present at sites that are themselves high access was extremely high, as much 99.4 percent of the assemblage. The percentage of goods made in low access areas was higher at sites that were themselves in low access area, from 10 percent to as much as 50 percent of the assemblage with a median of about 30 percent.

An initial look at the Stands site artifact collection suggests that the model may hold true here. A large portion of the goods represented at the site were manufactured locally in the San Francisco Bay Area—more than 20 percent of the items with identified makers. The products obtained from Bay Area producers consist mainly of soda waters, beer and wine. Guinness beer was imported from Dublin by way of New York. A small number of condiments were brought in from American East Coast and Midwest manufacturers while ceramic wares were obtained from England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York.

RECREATION AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE

Changes in American society that accompanied the intensification of industrialization in the last quarter of the 19th century led to changes in leisure-time activities. Among these was the commercialization of leisure and the development of the amusement park. Increasing real wages and leisure time for the working and middle classes brought about by socioeconomic reform and modernization drove the creation of amusement parks and other forms of commercialized leisure. Aspects of commercial leisure identified by historians include a “top-down” organization of leisure pursuits, reflecting the concept of mass culture that was a central theme in the modernization of the American economy (Fischer 1994). At the Pleasure Grounds, this may be manifest in Sutro’s orchestration of the visitor experience, which he appears to have planned with an eye for the theatrical, giving visitors the impression that they had participated in or witnessed something exotic, unique, and larger-than-life.

Another aspect of commercial leisure is its commodification: paying money to participate in activities or even the purchase of goods as a recreational activity in itself. At the Pleasure



Figure 22. Souvenir postcard picturing front gate entrance to Sutro Heights. *Image courtesy of GGNRA*

Grounds, this was evident in the purchase of souvenirs and paying to ride the thrill attractions and novelties such as the Haunted Swing or Firth Wheel. A fragment of a mug bearing the motto “A is for ARCH which you see when you start/That people pass under before they depart” may refer to the entry arch at Sutro Heights, a prominent landmark across the street from Merrie Way (Figure 22). Other excavations conducted at the site by NPS recovered souvenir items that were likely sold, and possibly crafted, at the Merrie Way concessions.

The thrill rides and exotic displays offered by commercial leisure establishments were of a sort not available elsewhere. These experiences allowed visitors to take a break from the monotony of life—for the working class, a break from factory work or other labor-intensive and repetitive tasks, and for the middle class a break from the constraints of decorous behavior. The encounters “provided psychological release for people who daily endured the rigors of scarcity, tedium, and the humiliation of authority” (Cross 2006:632). Visitors were also “freed from normative demands . . . passing into a special realm of exciting possibility, a distinctive milieu that encouraged types of behavior and social interaction that in other contexts would have been regarded askance.” Rides also gave visitors a chance to test themselves, in a controlled and playful setting, against the machines that were coming to dominate modern life. Apparatuses such as the Scenic Railway, a simple rollercoaster, mimicked in an exaggerated fashion the twists and turns of streetcars. The Firth Wheel simulated flight and speed (Cross 2006:632–634; Schlereth 1991:239–241).

Part of the success of amusement parks and other centers of commercialized leisure was owed to the streetcar and other forms of public transportation. These allowed large groups

of people, especially families with children, to travel relatively long distances quickly and inexpensively. In San Francisco, Adolph Sutro's steam train served this function. When Sutro constructed his "Sutro Heights" estate in 1881 at the extreme western edge of the city and opened its paths and sheltered overlooks to visitors, getting to the Heights was a challenge for working-class people without personal carriages or the means to rent one. The closest public transportation stop was several blocks away from the Heights, at the corner of Balboa Street and La Playa Avenue. Passengers departing the train still faced an uphill walk of several blocks. The cost, requiring two fares of 5 cents each, was also prohibitive for many working-class people. Since Sutro specifically intended for his estate grounds to be enjoyed by working-class people, he undertook the construction of his own steam railroad to conduct people safely and affordably from downtown to his estate. (Holmes 1895; Martini 2005:15–16). Once the rail line was established, Sutro brought in more attractions, creating his Pleasure Grounds which would be accessible to a large portion of San Francisco's population.

The atmosphere at amusement parks in other areas of the country tended to be bawdy and raucous—Coney Island in New York, for instance, or the Midway Plaisance at the Chicago World's Fair (Cross 2006). According to historical accounts, Sutro conceptualized his Pleasure Grounds as a place for wholesome family entertainment, and the attractions at Merrie Way appear to have been, on the whole, suitable for adults and children alike (Martini personal communication 2012). However, the potential for more rowdy adult entertainments certainly existed in the area. At least one of the concessions along Merrie Way served alcohol, though it appears to have been in a restaurant or food stand setting rather than a dedicated bar.

Two saloons were located north of Merrie Way at Ocean Terrace, where Sutro's steam train unloaded its passengers. It is uncertain when these were first established, but they were certainly in business by the time that the Merrie Way attractions closed. Another string of roadhouse taverns were located along the Great Highway, approximately 1/2 mile from the Pleasure Grounds. A drink token from one of these roadhouses, the "Golden Gate Villa," was found at the Stands site, suggesting that a stop or two at a drinking establishment along the way may have been, for some, part of a day's excursion out at the Pleasure Grounds (Figure 23). The Golden Gate Villa was located at the northeast corner of today's Great Highway and Fulton streets. It was founded in 1892 by partners Messrs. Charles Leonhardt and Robert D. Hagerty, both of San Francisco. The saloon was also sometimes referred to



Figure 23. Golden Gate Villa drink token, front and back.

simply as “Hagerty’s” (*San Francisco Call* 1898c). Newspaper accounts of the day described it as “furnished rather above the average of its class.” The saloon burned in a spectacular fire on the night of April 14, 1898 (*San Francisco Chronicle* 1898).

CHILDREN AND WOMEN AT MERRIE WAY

Sutro is said to have conceptualized his Pleasure Grounds as a place for wholesome entertainment, as advertised in an article published one month after its opening (*San Francisco Call* 1896b). News articles from the days just prior to its opening describe a petting zoo and donkey rides for children that were to operate at the midway (*San Francisco Call* 1896c). These plans may not have been actualized, as later accounts do not mention the features. Still, most of the attractions at the Pleasure Grounds proper appear to have been suitable for adults and children alike. The nearby Sutro Baths and Ocean Beach attracted families with children, but photos of attendees show very few children. Two marbles were the only toys found at the Stands site. Perhaps Lands End’s reputation for criminal activity discouraged parents from bringing their children.

What the Pleasure Grounds surely did provide was a place for men and women to mix, unchaperoned. For women, the amusements may have offered a sort of freedom unavailable in most social contexts of the time. While browsing the exhibits, stalls, and other attractions in the amusement park setting, they were free to interact with members of the opposite sex. On the thrill rides, the pressures of correct deportment were also loosened, as the attractions were designed to throw clothing into disarray and jostle men and women against one another. “Release, rather than restraint, characterized the mood” at amusement parks (Schlereth 1991:240).

SANITATION AND REFUSE DISPOSAL

The Stands archaeological site appears to have been a large private dump—the site of refuse disposal for the restaurant operating at Concession “S”, and possibly for other nearby concessions. Hygiene was an evolving concept in 19th century America, gradually becoming an important element of middle-class ideology. People began to adopt new standards of behavior in the disposal of rubbish, especially in urban settings. Rather than scattering garbage across yards, streets, or alleys, it was often buried, advancing both cleanliness and privacy. The development of germ theory in the late 19th century had a rapid effect on the measures that cities took in attempting to control the spread of diseases (Crane 2000:20). Rather than allowing individual households to bury waste and trash, municipalities began to institute nightsoil and garbage collection, and passed nuisance laws limiting behaviors that were perceived as threats to public health.

San Francisco in the late 19th century had no organized municipal refuse collection, but many neighborhoods were afforded the services of private scavengers who would remove waste for payment. Given the scale of the refuse deposit near Concession “S” and the date range of its artifacts, it is clear that the Merrie Way area did not enjoy the regular services of scavengers.

The Stands site refuse was located down slope and beside the oyster shacks and chophouses. One photograph taken circa 1910 facing south shows what may be a fenced yard or outdoor patio for dining on the leeward or east side of the building (Figure 24). Frequent burial of refuse may have been necessary to prevent prevailing winds from delivering noisome odors to guests while dining. The 23 pit features within the Stands site indicate small, discreet episodes of disposal, with burial of the materials likely occurring shortly afterward.



Figure 24. 1910 view of Concession “S” looking south. Arrows indicate possible patio area and general area of Stands site.

There is surprisingly little evidence of rodent activity at the Stands site, probably a result of rapid burial of waste. Following the city’s bubonic plague outbreak of 1900–1903, rats were identified as plague vectors. Shortly after the 1906 earthquake, bubonic plague broke out in refugee camps across the city, and a bounty was placed on the rats of San Francisco (Chase 2004; Worth 2005:60). A 1907 poster offers a reward of 5 cents per rat, delivered dead or alive to city Health Department stations (Figure 25). This war on rats may have contributed to the absence of rodents in the later years of the dump’s use.

A filled cesspit feature was uncovered during excavations at the Stands site (Feature 11). It was likely the toilet facility for the restaurant. Though San Francisco’s first municipal sewer was constructed in 1858, its construction was haphazard and the quality of its performance deplorable. It was not until the turn of the 20th century that sufficient public support and the necessary funding were secured for the development of a comprehensive sewer service (Blackford 1993:33–34; Stout 1869:11). Stratigraphy within the archaeological feature did not indicate any major cleanouts of primary fill, as often found in

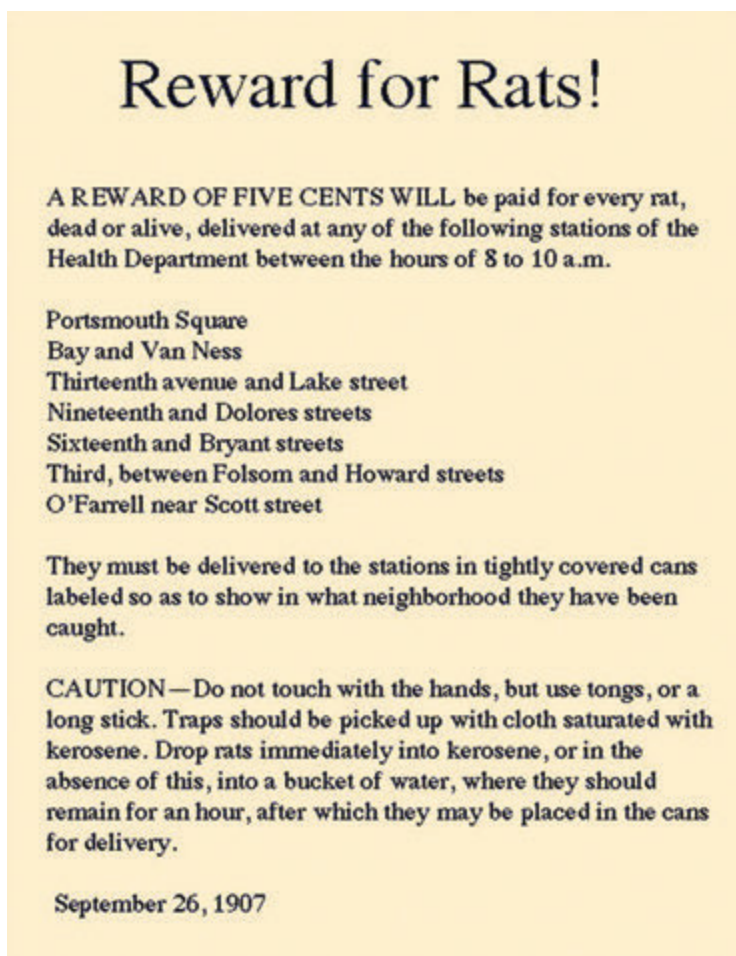


Figure 25. 1907 poster publicizing City Health Department’s bounty on rats. *Image courtesy of The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco.*

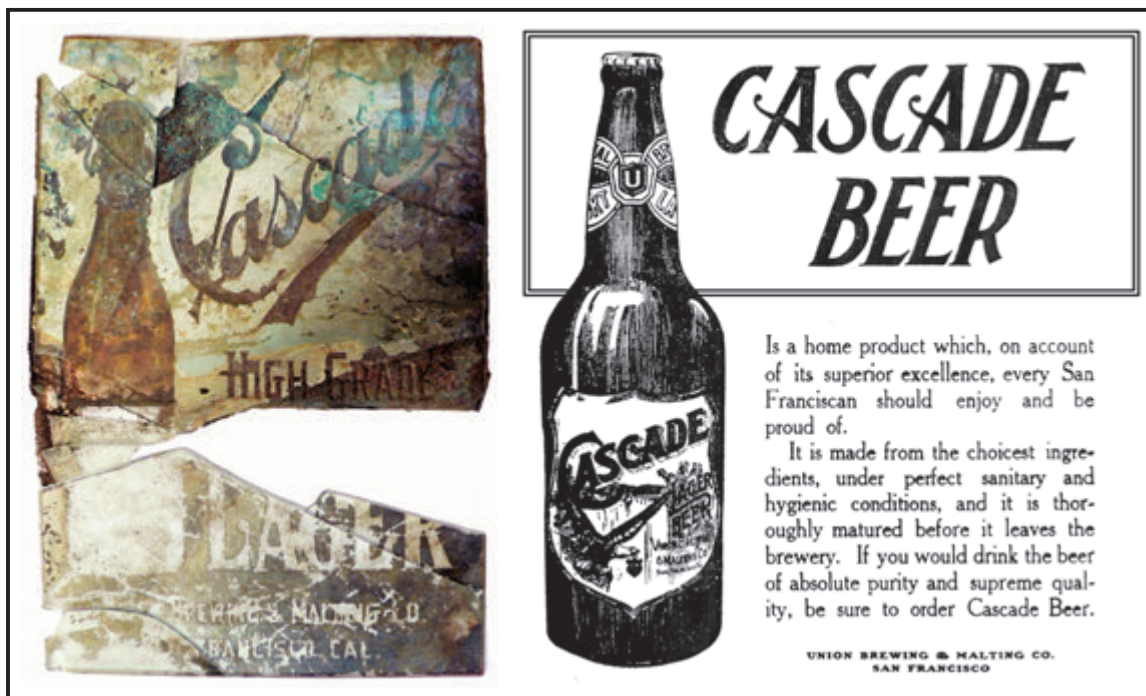


Figure 26. Cascade Beer advertising sign found in Feature 11 (left); Cascade Beer newspaper ad from *San Francisco Call*, 14 September 1907 (right).

domestic privies when they are filled and a dwelling connected to sewers. The business was likely closed for a short time to fill the cesspit and install both the new water and sewer services. A glass beer advertising sign dating to 1902–1916 was found near the bottom of the feature, indicating that the fill-in of the cesspit took place after 1902 (Figure 26).

GENTILITY

A central element of 19th century Victorian ideology was the value of behavioral refinement as a means of class differentiation (Williams 1996:xvi). The ideals of Victorian culture as practiced among the American middle class brought about a transformation marked by radical changes in standards of personal hygiene, eating behaviors, and notions of private space. The new cultural norms of gentility were strongly expressed in material culture, leading to the invention of countless products for grooming and cleaning, new tableware forms for eating, novel floor plans for houses, and a fascination with “whimseys.” By the 1890s, Victorian values, behaviors, and their accompanying material culture had become firmly ingrained in middle-class society and were commonplace among the working class as well. The ritual of dining was one of the main venues of display for those who practiced Victorian behavior. An array of specialized serving and eating utensils developed and the proper use of each was crucial to the demonstration of good manners. The exhibition of good manners, in turn, indicated adherence to Victorian ideals (Williams 1996:3–10; 17–24).

The lack of flatware and other utensils make it impossible to determine the degree to which diners at the Acropolis participated in an approximation of formal Victorian dining practices. The consumption of oysters and chops in accordance with genteel etiquette would have required, at the very least, forks and knives, but also oyster forks and perhaps other special serving utensils. An all-white ceramic tableware setting was also preferred in the Victorian



Figure 27. Glass serving vessels found at the Stands Site.

esthetic as well as indicating hygiene; this was apparently displayed at the Concession “S” restaurant along with pressed-glass goblets.

Archaeologists often use the degree of porcelain use by individual households as an index of gentility, as porcelain was among the most fashionable tableware materials of the 19th century (Brighton 2001; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1990; Seifert and Balicki 2005). Varvare the restaurateur may have used porcelain tableware to draw in a higher-class clientele or at least to influence patrons to accept higher prices.

Victorian patterns of behavior also included a shift from consuming alcohol in public to drinking at home, the latter option seen as more respectable as it removed the imbiber from the morally degrading atmosphere of the saloon (Murdoch 1998:42–64). The sizeable amounts of alcohol apparently consumed in at least one venue at the stands suggest that public drinking was frequently indulged in at Merrie Way. This represents a lack of concern for appearances of gentility by at least some visitors.

Visitors to Merrie Way and other recreational venues at Lands End appear to have been a cross-section of San Francisco’s population in terms of ethnicity and cultural identity. American-born citizens of different ethnicities mingled with recent immigrants from the British Isles, Asia, Germany, the Nordic countries, the Mediterranean, and many other regions of the world. Varvares, operator of the Acropolis restaurant, was an immigrant of Greek heritage apparently born in Samoa. His presence, and that of his Greek-born neighbors in enterprise, the Antipas, attest to the patterns of immigration and cross-cultural interactions involving San Francisco during the mid-late 19th century. Many visitors to Sutro’s amusements would have had values systems and behavioral ideals that diverged strongly from the declining American middle-class Victorian model.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

The structure and content of the Stands site provides a glimpse into cultural trends, foodways, commerce, and sanitation in the Lands End area at the turn of the 20th century. The items recovered from the site represent consumer choices, dining habits, recreational opportunities, and ideologies of those who visited and worked at the stands. The interpretations presented here focus on a small number of selected items; a more thorough analysis of the site's constituents will provide greater insights to the circumstances and motivations of those who frequented the stands. As Sutro's amusements drew a cross-section of San Francisco's population, the Stands site can be seen as reflecting the city at large and the changes it underwent at the dawn of the modern era.