

SAN FRANCISCO RECORDS

by Carlton M. Smith

On 18 April 1906 the fire that ravaged San Francisco also destroyed 1,549 books of records kept in the County Recorder's office, more than 1,400 volumes of mortgages, over 225 volumes of releases of mortgages, more than 65 volumes of mortgages, more than 65 volumes of homestead declarations, 95 volumes of notices of liens and many volumes of marriages, maps, pending action notices, and other miscellaneous records. It was a loss rarely heard of in the accounts of the 1906 earthquake and resulting conflagration. It was a loss that had a devastating effect on the property owners of San Francisco. In some cases, a family's home may have survived the destruction, but proof of ownership of the property was destroyed instead.

To rectify this situation, the California Legislature approved on 16 June 1906 "An Act to Provide for the Establishment and Quieting of Title to Real Property in Case of the Loss or Destruction of Public Records." The result was that San Francisco property owners could once more prove they had title to the property they claimed to own.

Basically, the procedure was for the alleged property owner (Plaintiff) to file a complaint in which he identified the property by lot number, block number, and boundaries as well as how and when he acquired it. He next filed an affidavit identifying himself as the legal owner. The court then directed the publication of a summons which in effect called for any counter claims. If none were forthcoming and there were no other irregularities or complications, the court issued a final decree. The alleged property owner thus became the legal owner once more.

The procedure could be completed within days or perhaps months, but when complications arose it could be years. One case opened in 1908 was not concluded until the 1920s. Another opened in 1911 was finally closed by a dismissal in 1955. On the average, a case was settled in one or two years. The original records were not actually restored, but the new records and legal documents that were created often dealt with and described the same information contained in the originals. Creation of these court records was an obvious benefit to the property owners. It was also a lucrative source of information for genealogists and historians since the earthquake no longer need be considered as the proverbial stonewall which hindered pre-1906 records searching.

The collection consists of approximately 50,000 cases, known as judgement rolls, dealing with early California names, dates, and places. The locality is limited to the City and County of San Francisco, but names and dates are myriad. A quick scan of these cases revealed that the property owner's family was often listed, a spouse was identified even if deceased, and heirs had to be named if the property owner died before the proceedings were completed. As in the case of other court and land records, when irregularities arose it always resulted in more documents and sometimes more genealogical information.

The records are familiarly known as the McEnerney Papers, after Mr. Garret W. McEnerney, a well known San Francisco attorney and friend of the mayor, Eugene E. Schmitz.¹ The act of 1906 also became known as the McEnerney Act even though he was not a member of the legislature that passed it. Apparently he was a strong force behind the drafting of the act and a lobby for its passage.

Of major concern to a genealogist whenever he or she learns of a new records source is its specific location and whether or not it is indexed. The McEnerney papers are indexed. There are 16 volumes in the San Francisco City Clerk's Office labeled "Index of Actions." The plaintiffs (property owners) are listed in alphabetical order therein. The answer to the specific location of the records involves some good news and some bad news. At the

present time the judgement rolls are not available for inspection by the general public because they are being microfilmed, and this is much welcomed news. The Genealogical Society of Utah (Mormon Library) has also recognized the value of these McEnerney papers, and early in 1984 a crew started the tedious task of microfilming. To date approximately 800 reels of film have been completed. There are between 55 and 60 judgement rolls per reel. The indexes will be filmed next and the project is expected to be completed in October or November 1984. When the photo work is done the film will be carefully reviewed for clarity and to insure that the records have been thoroughly covered. Following this, the original records will be destroyed, but the information permanently preserved. Another obvious advantage is that the records will be available on interlibrary loan through the Mormon Library System and not restricted to only the San Francisco City Hall.

Many people are involved in this record filming and preservation project. It may be unfair to mention names because some may be mistakenly omitted, but this author has been directly in contact with the following: Noel C. Barton, Dennis Galbraith, Bill Perry, Barbara Perry, Shawn Le Seuer, and Elaine Le Seuer. These people and their efforts will be appreciated by genealogists and historians for many, many years to come.

Notes and References:

- ¹ N.n., *Men Who Made San Francisco* (San Francisco: Brown and Power Stationery Co., 191?), p. 203; G. Thomas and M.M. Witts, *The San Francisco Earthquake* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), p. 132.

SOME KEYS TO THE KEYSTONE STATE

Jean S. Morris is a name well-known to many of our readers. Those who have met her know that her area of competence is Pennsylvania research. There recently came to light on my desk some sheets that she sent to me months past. These four-page leaflets (8½ x 11) are filled with basic and essential information. They are each \$2.50 postpaid—a real value.

The Maryland Pennsylvania Border Controversy—The Mason Dixon Line. There are few areas that confound researchers more than Maryland problems whose solutions are in Pennsylvania—and conversely. She cites upwards of three hundred sources that may help you solve a problem. For example, in the *Chester County Collections*, an obscure periodical published during the 1930s, is an article by Francis D. Brinton. The article, "No Man's Land in Chester County 200 Years Ago," deals with a strip of land lying between East Caln and the Bradfords townships not belonging to anyone. Names from the various petitions and court proceedings read like Quaker rosters.

I did not find that Jean had a reference to the Nottingham Lots which were originally in Chester County, but after Mason/Dixon, were in Cecil County, Maryland.

Pennsylvania—Connecticut Controversy Bibliography. Anyone who has found an ancestor in the Wyoming Valley may have sensed that helpless feeling. There may be a title in these lists that could lead you to some enlightenment.

Western Pennsylvania—River Bibliography. Those who have ancestors that came westerly on the Ohio River will find this a pearl without price. I am unaware of such an extensive list of titles dealing with this segment of the migration trail.

A more extensive bibliography lists titles related to the *Chronology of Western Pennsylvania and District of West Augusta, Virginia*. This is a six-page leaflet for \$3.00. These may be ordered from Jean Morris, PO Box 8530, Pittsburgh PA 15220.



THE ITALIANS OF SAN FRANCISCO IN 1865
by Rod Bush

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In an article of this title in California History Magazine, Winter 1981-82, Authors Alessandro Baccari and Andrew Canepa and translator, Olga Richardson present the diplomatic report of Giovanni Battista Cerruti, the first regular Italian consul in San Francisco, dated March 3, 1865. The following data of genealogical value was included:

Surname, First Name, etc.	Date of Birth town, Region, etc.	Year to CA.	From, Occupation/misc.
Cerruti, Giovanni Battista	1823-Genoa, Liguria	1864	Paraguay Diplomat-1874
Barrilis, Count Diego		1874	Diplomat
Cochi, Davide	1837		waiter
Larco, Nicola (Nicholas)	1818-1878 Genoa, Liguria	1845	Lima, Peru Import/Export
Mangini, Angelo			
Dondero, Carlo			
Biesta Federico			Sardinia
Splivalo, Augusto B.			Newspaper owner
Ancarani, Raffaele			"
Mahé, Gustave			Savings & loan
Ghirardelli, Domenico	Genoa		Peru Mining Co. V.F.
Caire, Justinien			Mining Co. Pres
D'Oliveira, Emanuel			Doctor
Lastreto, Luigi	Liguria		Import/Export
Peri, Lorenzo		1843	
Raspi, Carlo		1844	
Monteverde, Mr.		1844	
Devoto, Mr.		1844	
Descalzo, Luca			
Berri, Emanuele			
Basso, Francesco			
Castruccio, Pietro			lived-Marysville
Zanola, Giuseppe			lived-Victoria
Giorgiani, Francesco			d. 1864
Giorgiani, Antonio			Fruit merchant
Bonfanti, Carlo			
Raffetto, Mr. G.B.			
De Martini, Mr. A.			
Ancarani, Mr. Raffaele?			
Pezzi, Mr.			
Bianchi, Luigi			Grocer
Alciatore, Alessandro			
Rossi, Nicolo			Tuolumne Co.
Rossi, Giovanni Battista			
Rossi, Paola Pizzarello			
Rossi, Vincenzo			returned to Genoa
Delsoldato, Tommaso	1816 Florence, polverosa		
Delsoldato, Antonio			of Italy
Delsoldato, Teresa Pampaloni			d. Italy 1843
Delsoldato, Anna Giuntini			of Italy
Ragazzoni, Innocenzo	Turin		lived-Victoria
Pascal, Maria Laget			
Tinivella, Angelo	Turin		
Lanfranco, Damiano			
Cochi, Lorenzo			
Cochi, Marianna			
Maltesi, Vittoria	Sardinia		
Pollastri, Dr. Vincenzo			Doctor
Bidoni, Luigi	1834 Venice		
Bidoni, Giuseppe			of Italy
Bidoni, Anna Marossi			"
Selmini, Isacco	Milan	1864	Mexico
Caprile, Carlo	Fontanabuona		lived Eldorado ca.
Zerga, Stefano			"
Mauri, Ferdinando	Meta, Naples	1864	New York
Mauri, Pasquale			of Italy
Mauri, Maria Caffiero			of Meta, Naples
Mauri, Luigia Forzia			" " "





San Francisco's Greek Colony (1890-1945)
by Rod Bush

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The following data is from California History Magazine, Summer 1981. In an article by George P. Daskarolis, the author describes the slow build up of Greeks in the California population. In 1850 there were only nine people who listed Greece as their country of birth. By 1860 this number had only grown to 96. From 1890 to 1910 the Greek pioneers increased from 269 to nearly 8,000, with about one-third settling in San Francisco. This Greek colony became the earliest and largest west of Chicago. Many of the Greeks who arrived in San Francisco during the 1890's and early 1900's came from these areas: the village of Kyparissi on the east coast of the Peloponnesus; the village of Ysternia on the island of Tinos of the Cyclades chain; and the port town of Galaxidi in central Greece. There were also several from the island of Cephalonia and from Laconia in southern Peloponnesus.

The following Greek individuals are named in the article:

Nicholas and Helen Athanasiadou Damianakis; the Molaikides brothers; A.K. Thanos; the Fotenos brothers; Nick Christopher; the Kockos brothers; Father Kovrigin; Alexander Kosta; Reverend Makaronis; Father Archmandrite Kallistos Papageorgopoulos; Father Basil Lokis; Demetrios Velliseratos; Costa Velliseratos; Angelo and Athanasia Pouloupoulos; Nick Doukas; Nicholas Antipa George Pappageorge-Palladius; Alexander K. Pavellas; Angelo T. Mountanos; Father Constantine Tsapralis; Michael Antonakopoulos; Lucille Harpending (Mrs. Alex K.) Pavellas; Genevieve Harpending (Mrs. Michael) Antonakopoulos; Constantinos Antonakopoulos; Anastasios T. Mountanos; Costa and Vivian Stratis Vellis; John Velliseratos; Anna Milonas Loutas; Peter Tamaras; William and Melba Tamaras; Peter Preovolos; Kalliopi (Mrs. Peter) Preovolos; John Preovolos; Helen Athanasia des Damianakes (1869-1939); Alexandra Apostolides Sonenfeld; Dr. Emmanuel Apostolides; George Peterson-Cherakis; Spyro Skouras;

