[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Colombo Market Arch]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate Colombo Market Arch, situated within Sydney Walton Square, 600 Front Street, a portion of Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0172, Lot No. 010, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~*strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. CEQA and Land Use Findings.

(a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 *et seq.*). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 230922 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

(b) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of Colombo Market Arch, a surviving remnant of Colombo Market building, situated within Sydney Walton Square, 600 Front Street, a portion of

Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0172, Lot No. 010, will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1333, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

(c) On June 21, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission, in Resolution No. 1333, adopted findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are consistent, on balance, with the City's General Plan and with the eight priority policies of Planning Code Section 101.1. The Board adopts these findings as its own.

Section 2. General Findings.

(a) On March 7, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 099-23, initiating landmark designation of Colombo Market Arch as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. On March 17, 2023, the Mayor approved the resolution. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in Board File No. 230232.

(b) Pursuant to Charter Section 4.135, the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

(c) Planning Department Preservation staff prepared a Landmark Designation Fact Sheet for Colombo Market Arch. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for historic preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal Regulations Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A. The report was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

(d) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 21, 2023, reviewed Planning Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of Colombo

Market Arch set forth in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated June 14, 2023.

(e) On June 21, 2023, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation, and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department staff, and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended designation of Colombo Market Arch as a landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code by Resolution No. 1333. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in Board File No. 230922.

(f) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that Colombo Market Arch has a special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference the findings of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet.

Section 3. Designation.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, Colombo Market Arch, situated in Sydney Walton Square, 600 Front Street, a portion of Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0172, Lot No. 010, is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Appendix A to Article 10 of the Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

Section 4. Required Data.

(a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the portion of the City parcel located at 600 Front Street, in Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0172, Lot No. 010, occupied by the free-standing brick remnant of the former Colombo Market Building, in San Francisco's Financial District.

(b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet and other supporting materials contained in Planning Department Record Docket No. 2023-003440DES. In brief, Colombo Market Arch, the sole surviving remnant of the Colombo Market building—the rest of the building was demolished for construction of the Golden Gateway Center in the early 1960s by the Redevelopment Agency—is eligible for local designation under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A (Events) for its association with the Italian-American community and with the Colombo Market, the first purpose-built, enclosed, wholesale market for fruit, vegetables, and related agricultural products in San Francisco, and catalyst for the city's produce district and incubator for Italian-American agricultural businesses, including the Del Monte Corporation and agricultural businesses of A.P. Giannini, later of the Bank of Italy and Bank of America.

(c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary, are those shown in photographs and described in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, which can be found in Planning Department Record Docket No. 2023-003440DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set forth. Specifically, the following features are character-defining and shall be preserved or replaced in kind:

(1) All those physical features, including form, architectural ornament, and materials of Colombo Market Arch, identified as:

(A) One-story height;

(B) Red brick masonry construction;

(C) Brick piers flanking an elongated or depressed arch opening below a stepped pediment capped by "header" bricks;

(D) Stucco belt course extending from pier to pier just above peak of arch; and

(E) Below the belt course, stucco cladding (only vestiges of these materials are extant) at piers and arch.

Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

By: /s/ Peter R. Miljanich
PETER R. MILJANICH
Deputy City Attorney

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City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Ordinance

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 230922 **Date Passed:** October 03, 2023

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate Colombo Market Arch, situated within Sydney Walton Square, 600 Front Street, a portion of Assessor's Parcel Block No. 0172, Lot No. 010, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

September 18, 2023 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

September 26, 2023 Board of Supervisors - PASSED ON FIRST READING

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Dorsey, Engardio, Mandelman, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

October 03, 2023 Board of Supervisors - FINALLY PASSED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Dorsey, Engardio, Mandelman, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

File No. 230922

I hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was FINALLY PASSED on 10/3/2023 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

London N. Breed
Mayor

10/12/23
Date Approved

San Francisco Planning

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ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION
FACT SHEET

Colombo Market Arch, front (west) side, 2022
Source: Richard Brandi

Historic Name:	Colombo Market Arch, remnant of Colombo Market building
Address:	600 Front Street, Sydney Walton Square
Block/ Lot(s):	0172/010 (a portion of)
Parcel Area:	N/A
Zoning:	RC-4 (Residential-Commercial, High Density) OS (Open Space)

Year Built:	1894; 1906
Architect:	Clinton Day
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	*San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970*, prepared by Mary Brown, San Francisco Planning Department (2011). The report discusses design of Sydney Walton Square and The Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project.
Prior HPC Actions:	None
Significance Criteria:	*Events:* Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. (National Register Criterion A)
Period of Significance:	1906-1960 – The period of significance for Colombo Market Arch is 1906 to 1960, corresponding to the period when the produce district and Colombo Market building were reconstructed after the 1906 earthquake and fires, to when the surrounding building was demolished.
Statement of Significance:	Colombo Market Arch, the sole surviving remnant of the Colombo Market building, is eligible for local designation for its association with the Colombo Market building and the Italian-American community that founded the market, the first enclosed wholesale market for fruit, vegetables, and related agricultural products. Colombo Market also was a catalyst for development of the city's produce district and an incubator for Italian agricultural businesses, including the Del Monte Corporation and agricultural interests of A.P. Giannini, who worked as a produce broker, commission merchant, and produce dealer prior to expanding into real estate and banking.
Assessment of Integrity:	Colombo Market Arch maintains integrity. The seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.[1] Colombo Market Arch, designed by architect Clinton Day and constructed in 1894 (reconstructed 1906), is the sole surviving remnant of the former Colombo Market building, which was demolished in the early 1960s. A park, known as Sydney Walton Square, was constructed in place of the former Colombo Market building. Demolition of the rest of the original building and construction of a park in its place, affects integrity of setting, association, and feeling for the Colombo Market Arch. The retained segment of the building – Colombo Market Arch – was stabilized with brick and a concrete structural frame. Although altered, the Arch retains integrity of location, workmanship, design, and materials. Overall, the Department has determined that Colombo Market Arch, retains integrity to convey its historical and cultural significance.

[1] "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," National Register Bulletin, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, p. 44.

Character-Defining Features:	(1) All those physical features, including form, architectural ornament, and materials of Colombo Market Arch, identified as: (A) One-story height; (B) Red brick masonry construction; (C) Brick piers flanking an elongated or depressed arch opening below a stepped pediment capped by "header" bricks; (D) Stucco belt course extending from pier to pier just above peak of arch; (E) Below the belt course, stucco cladding (only vestiges of these materials are extant) at piers and arch.

Property Description and History

Colombo Market Arch (hereinafter "Arch") is located on the east side of Front Street, between Jackson Street and Pacific Avenue, in the Financial District (a portion of Assessor's Block 0172, Lot 010). The free-standing brick arch, which marks the former site of the Colombo Market building, frames the western entrance to Sydney Walton Square. The Arch faces onto Front Street, which is developed with early 20th-century, two- to three-story commercial buildings. The rear side of the Arch faces onto Sydney Walton Square, a privately-owned, publicly accessible open space, bounded by Davis, Jackson, and Front streets and vacated block of Pacific Avenue. Multi-story residential developments, including The Golden Gateway Apartments (1965) and Gateway Commons (circa 1980s), occupy the surrounding blocks.

Colombo Market Arch, consisting of one structural bay of the former Colombo Market building, is a free-standing, one-story, brick and concrete object. The front (street-facing) side of the Arch is red brick masonry while the rear (park-facing) is smooth concrete enclosing a rectilinear structural frame that is affixed to the brick. The street-facing elevation consists of brick-clad piers flanking an elongated or depressed arch below a stepped parapet. The brick masonry and the underside of the arch are partially clad with remnants of concrete stucco cladding. A simple stucco-clad cornice or belt course extends across the width of the street-facing façade, just above peak of the arch. The top edge of the stepped parapet is highlighted by rows of "header" bricks.

The rear side of the Arch contains a simple rectilinear frame clad in concrete that serves as structural support. Light fixtures, security cameras, and exposed metal conduit are affixed to the concrete.

The front edge/face of the Arch abuts the sidewalk (public right-of-way). A paved walkway extends from within Sydney Walton Square under and around the Arch to meet the public sidewalk. The low metal fence that extends around perimeter of Sydney Walton Square steps back at the Arch, providing pedestrian circulation around base of the Arch and into the adjacent park.

Sydney Walton Square, constructed in 1960 by Sasaki, Walker and Associates, is a privately-owned, public park constructed as part of The Golden Gateway Center project. The park is a casual, street-level open space with expansive lawns flowing over formed hills and valleys. Curvilinear concrete walkways lead from the four sides of the park to an off-center plaza. At north and south ends of the park are platforms and stairs that lead to raised pedestrian walkways over Pacific Avenue (vacated) and Jackson Street, respectively.

Building History

Colombo Market Arch is a remnant of the third building constructed on this site to house a wholesale produce market. In 1874, the San Francisco Gardeners and Ranchers Association and United Vegetable Dealers and Association spearheaded construction of a wood-frame building to house the city's first enclosed wholesale vegetable and produce market.[2] In place of former open-air markets, farmers from truck farms in outlying areas of San Francisco and the Peninsula south of San Francisco would sell their produce from the stalls in the new enclosed Colombo Market building. The building attracted more vendors than could be enclosed in its market stalls, so produce merchants also moved into commercial storefronts of existing buildings in the vicinity. With Colombo Market as its epicenter, the other commercial buildings, and the surrounding narrow streets, where produce continued to be sold out of the backs of trucks/wagons, became the city's produce district.

By the 1890s, the original wood-frame Colombo Market building was severely deteriorated, so several corporations or associations formed to raise money to fund construction of a replacement. These efforts convinced the owners of the subject property at the time – Eugene, John, and Henrietta Zeille – to hire architect Clinton Day to design and construct a new building. Day got his undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of California, Berkeley (the undergraduate degree was from the College of California (predecessor of the University)). One of the most prolific San Francisco architects at turn of the 20th-century, Day designed many commercial and residential buildings throughout the Bay Area, including City of Paris (not extant) and former Gump's Department Store (250 Post Street).

The Italian Renaissance style, one- and two-story building, cost $50,000 to construct and had one-story colonnades along its side elevations that served as vendor stalls.

> The symmetrical brick building was two stories along Davis and Front Street and trimmed in terra cotta. The first floor had stores. The second floor had apartment flats for workers and an assembly hall for the market association. In the middle of the façades on Front and Davis Streets was a large arch that led to an open-air driveway running the length of the building.[3]

Stores and restaurants occupied the market building's larger commercial spaces along Davis and Front streets.

Along with large swathes of northeastern San Francisco, buildings in the produce district were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fires. Most of the Colombo Market building was similarly destroyed, although it was quickly rebuilt using damaged elements from the ruins. In the reconstruction, the footprint of the former building was retained including the open drive-aisle accessed through arched openings at the Davis and Front façades. Most of the façade on Front Street, including the extant portion now referred to as Colombo Market Arch, was reconstructed in 1906. Historic photographs indicate that as late as 1959, shortly before demolition of the rest of the building, the Arch was operating, in appearance and function, much has it had since 1906.

By the time the Colombo Market building, and surrounding produce district, was demolished by the Redevelopment Agency in the 1960s, there had been many previous attempts to address the congestion and unsanitary conditions that were frequent critiques of the area. In 1915 and 1928, the produce district was proposed

[2] Richard Brandi, "Nomination of the Colombo Market Arch as a San Francisco Landmark," prepared for San Francisco Planning Department (February 27, 2023), 5.
[3] Brandi, 8.

for relocation to the Marina to occupy the empty site of the Panama Pacific International Exposition or wharves west of Fort Mason, respectively. In the 1940s, property owners and market association hired architect Timothy Pflueger to design a conceptual plan for a modern facility located between Front and Drumm streets, from Clay to Pacific, that would have replaced the Colombo Market building.

Although these earlier efforts were unsuccessful, City and business leaders continued to assert that the produce district, which "…occupied a couple of dozen square blocks of land adjacent to the northern waterfront, east and slightly north of the downtown financial district…"[4] – nearly 50 acres in all – was underutilized. In 1955, the Redevelopment Agency and Board of Supervisors designated the produce district a redevelopment area. By 1960, plans had been drawn by Sasaki, Walker and Associates for a park on the location of the Colombo Market building, and by 1963, this building and all of its neighbors on several surrounding city blocks had been demolished to make way for new infrastructure and buildings associated with The Golden Gateway Project. Amid this demolition and new construction, one structural bay of the former Colombo Market building was retained – Colombo Market Arch.

> Additional information about Colombo Market Arch and history of the Colombo Market building can be found in "Nomination of the Colombo Market Arch as a San Francisco Landmark," prepared by Richard Brandi (February 27, 2023).

Events: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (National Register Criterion A).

Colombo Market Arch, the sole surviving remnant of the Colombo Market building, is significant for its association with the Colombo Market, founded by Italian-Americans in 1874 as the first purpose-built, enclosed, wholesale market for fruit, vegetables, and related agricultural products in San Francisco. The Colombo Market building, which was re-built in 1894 and 1906, was the catalyst for and epicenter of the sprawling produce district that occupied the surrounding blocks from the late 1870s to early 1960s. The building also served as an incubator for Italian-American businesses, including the Del Monte Corporation and agricultural interests of A.P. Giannini, who worked as a produce broker, commission merchant, and produce dealer prior to expanding into real estate and banking.

Colombo Market Arch marks the location of what was one of the vendor entrances into the Colombo Market building. The Colombo Market building housed vendor stalls and was the headquarters for the largest associations of produce growers and wholesalers that managed operations of the larger *produce district*. The produce district, which occupied the buildings, streets, and sidewalks of roughly a dozen square blocks adjacent to the northern waterfront and the Embarcadero, was an epicenter of mercantile activity with constant deliveries and transactions of foodstuffs to markets and warehouses that supplied the city. Although decimated in the 1906 earthquake and fires, this area of the city was quickly rebuilt due to its importance to the mercantile economy and to support reconstruction efforts across the city.

[4] Chris Carlsson, "Produce Market Historical Essay," *FoundSF*, accessed at: https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market

The following contextual history of the produce market district (now subsumed by the Financial District) is excerpted from *Historic Resource Evaluation, Part 1 for 447 Battery Street* prepared by Page & Turnbull (October 6, 2017):

Produce Market District

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the rising towers in San Francisco's business core stood in stark contrast to the city's sprawling wholesale produce market that was located immediately to the northeast, alongside the Embarcadero and the city's active waterfront piers. The market district had its roots in Italian-American communities that settled in this part of San Francisco during the second half of the nineteenth century. Many Italian immigrants worked the farms that surrounded the city, and they brought wagons loaded with their produce to Sansome Street between Washington and Clay streets to sell to grocers and hotel owners, among others. In 1874, the San Francisco and San Mateo Ranchers' Association (a Genoese organization) constructed the Colombo Market, which supplanted the earlier open-air marketplace. This enclosed market contained over 70 stalls and filled an entire city block between Front and Davis north of Jackson Street. Independent sellers rented the stalls and hawked their produce to consumers. Within the course of the following decades, the Colombo Market became one of the city's commercial landmarks.[5]

The district's immediate access to the waterfront supported many additional one and two-story brick masonry market buildings and storage warehouses, which received perishable goods directly from ships that docked at the piers. When rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake, the produce district (also known as the commission district, for the organization that oversaw the market activities and certified merchants) retained its earlier function.[6] Moreover, it extended its boundaries, expanding from the waterfront to fill the area between the Embarcadero on the east, Jackson Street on the north, Clay Street on the south, and Battery Street on the west. Its many one- to three-story brick buildings … contained open stalls and awning-covered storefronts at street level.[7] Originally part of the Barbary Coast, the neighborhood was known to contain bustling markets during the early part of the day and a mix of bars, dance halls, prostitution houses, and crime at night, until the neighborhood was substantially rebuilt and cleaned up in 1911.[8]

During the 1910s through 1940s, the district's daily schedule and bustling character were described in the following manner:

> A district of narrow streets lined with roofed sidewalks and low brick buildings, it is the receiving depot for the fresh produce that finds its way into the kitchens, restaurants, and hotels of the city. Long before daybreak—in the summer, as early as one o'clock—trucks large and small begin to

[5] Gary Kamiya, "Odd Arch is Last Remnant of Bustling Produce Market Built in 1874," San Francisco Chronicle, February 27, 2015, accessed November 17, 2015, http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Odd-arch-islast-remnant-of-bustling-produce-6106142.php. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 13.
[6] "Produce Market." http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market. Accessed July 12, 2017. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 14.
[7] Michael R. Corbett, Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco, 1848-2010 (San Francisco: San Francisco Architectural Heritage, 2011), 196. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 14.
[8] "Thieves' Highway – Produce Market." Citysleuth@reelsf.com December 3, 2010, Accessed July 12, 2017. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 14.

> arrive from the country with fruits and vegetables. From poultry houses come the crowing and cackling of fowls aroused by the lights and commotion. The clatter of hand-trucking and a babel of dialects arise. About six o'clock the light delivery trucks of local markets begin to arrive. By this time a pedestrian can barely squeeze past the crates, hampers, boxes, and bags along the sidewalks. The stacks of produce dwindle so rapidly that by nine o'clock the busiest part of the district's day is over. […] By afternoon this district is almost deserted.[9]

Although the produce market district was economically active well into the twentieth century, many policy makers viewed the entire area as a longtime chaotic urban nuisance: cramped, unsanitary, crime-ridden, and full of unpleasant smells. Given this perspective, the market simply did not live up to the economic potential of its central location. The district's negative reputation was not helped by its proximity to manufacturing and distribution areas near the port, along with a large population of transient longshoremen and other laborers who sought lodging throughout the area. By the 1940s, the area was beginning to show signs of decay, especially as many wholesalers moved to less expensive areas south and east of the city. … Also during the late 1940s, the industrial waterfront began to experience a reduction of shipping, which also moved elsewhere in the Bay where storage space and land was cheaper. Though still dense and active in the mid-1950s, areas of the old produce market district appeared congested and blighted and became the focal point for urban redevelopment and Financial District expansion. The mayor and other municipal officials began to actively discuss how—and to where—the district could be moved in order to allow the Financial District to further expand its boundaries.[10] By 1963, the market was moved to Islais Creek to make way for the expansive Golden Gateway Redevelopment project, which modernized and transformed the whole neighborhood into an extension of the city's Financial District.[11]

The Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project, the first prominent undertaking of San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency, removed the wholesale produce industry, long at the heart of San Francisco's Italian community, from the northeastern waterfront.[12] When they moved out of the produce district, the vendors split into two groups with one relocating to South San Francisco as Golden Gate Produce Terminal and the other to the Bayview as San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market.[13] Both these wholesale produce markets remain in operation.

The old produce market, and the surrounding produce district "… was the heart of Italian San Francisco, dominated by families from Genoa and the Italian-speaking canton of Switzerland, Ticino."[14] The Colombo Market building (historic address at 626 Front Street), of which Colombo Market Arch is a remnant, contained the produce market's headquarters.

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[9] Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, San Francisco in the 1930s: The WPA Guide to the City by the Bay (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 262. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 14.
[10] "Christopher Announces His Program," San Francisco Chronicle, October 2, 1951, 9; "Relocation of S.F. Produce Market is Recommended," San Francisco Chronicle, September 9, 1953, 9. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 15.
[11] "Thieves' Highway – Produce Market." Citysleuth@reelsf.com December 3, 2010, Accessed July 12, 2017. Quoted in Page & Turnbull, Inc. (2017), 15.
[12] Chris Carlsson, "Produce Market Historical Essay," *FoundSF*, accessed at: https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market
[13] Brandi, 27.
[14] Chris Carlsson, "Produce Market Historical Essay," *FoundSF*, accessed at: https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market

As described in the North Beach, San Francisco Historic Context Statement, San Francisco had "…one of the largest and most important populations of immigrant Italians in the United States during the principal period of Italian immigration from the 1860s to the 1920s."[15] Many of these immigrants, former farmers or fishermen, settled in the North Beach neighborhood, then known as Little Italy, living near their major sources of employment, such as the North Beach Cannery or the produce district. Other immigrants, who had been tenant farmers in Italy, sought an opportunity to farm their own land.

> Truck farms, or growing vegetables on relatively small plots, became a big business in San Francisco. Some farmers bought the land they farmed, but more commonly they rented in the outlying areas. They could earn far more here than in Italy.[16]
>
> Most of the truck farms in San Francisco were operated by Italians, and those were almost exclusively Genoese. They were called *giardinieri* or gardeners, and their truck farms were called ranches instead of farms, even though they raised no cattle or sheep. The Italians used the Spanish word, *rancitos*, which means a small ranch or farm.
>
> By the 1860s, truck farms dotted the Bayview, Lake Merced, Noe Valley, Ocean Avenue, Outer Mission, Visitacion Valley, and down the Peninsula south of San Francisco. The sandy soil was fertile when fertilized with free manure left by horses on city streets and was worked with simple hand tools. Wells supplied water powered by windmills. Crops included spinach, radishes, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, artichokes, chicory, bell peppers, eggplants, artichokes, and pear-shaped tomatoes. The *giardinieri* brought their produce in two-, four-, and even six-horse wagons to the 400 block of Sansome Street where they held an open-air market in the streets.[17]

By the 1870s, the informality and unpleasant conditions of this open-air market led the San Francisco Gardeners and Ranchers Association and the United Vegetable Dealers Association to call for construction of a purpose-built, enclosed building. In 1874, the first Colombo Market building was constructed.

> Originally founded in 1874 as a wood building, the Colombo Market is also associated with immigrants from northern Italy who came to the West Coast during the 19th century and started farming. They banded together and created a wholesale market for vegetables and related agricultural products, the Colombo Market. Agriculture is one of the state's most important industries, and the Colombo Market was a catalyst for the development of the state's fruit, vegetable, and other agricultural products.[18]

The original wood-frame building for Colombo Market was replaced in 1894 by a more permanent brick masonry structure. This building was subsequently reconstructed following the 1906 earthquake and fires and served as in important part of the produce district the early 1960s.

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[15] *North Beach, San Francisco Historic Context Statement,* prepared by Michael R. Corbett, Katherine Petrin, and Shayne Watson for Northeast San Francisco Conservancy (January 31, 2018, with revisions as of October 8, 2020).
[16] Brandi, 3.
[17] Brandi, 4.
[18] Brandi, 2.

Additional information about Colombo Market Arch and history of the Colombo Market building and surrounding produce district can be found in "Nomination of the Colombo Market Arch as a San Francisco Landmark," prepared by Richard Brandi (February 27, 2023).

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Christine Miller. *San Francisco's Financial District* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005).

North Beach, San Francisco Historic Context Statement, prepared by Michael R. Corbett, Katherine Petrin, and Shayne Watson for Northeast San Francisco Conservancy (January 31, 2018, with revisions as of October 8, 2020).

Chris Carlsson, "Produce Market Historical Essay," *FoundSF*, accessed at: https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market

Page & Turnbull, Inc. *Historic Resource Evaluation, Part 1 for 447 Battery Street* (October 6, 2017).

Photos

Sydney Walton Square, aerial view, 2023. Location of Colombo Market Arch indicated with red circle.
Source: Google Streetview

Colombo Market building, Front Street elevation, circa 1920s.
Source: California Historical Society. Accessed at https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market

Colombo Market building, Front Street elevation, 1959.
Source: Western Neighborhoods Project, *OpenSFHistory.org wnp28.2474*
https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market

Colombo Market building, Front Street elevation, 1959.
Source: Accessed at https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market

Nomination of the Colombo Market Arch as a San Francisco Landmark

"Colombo Market could scarcely hope to be preserved for its picturesqueness. It has utility, undoubtedly, but even this can scarcely preserve it much longer, and it is scarcely likely that its existence as a landmark will be prolonged beyond the present year. The probability is that it will disappear much sooner."

San Francisco Call, May 21, 1891

Entrance to Sydney Walton Park through the Colombo Market Arch on Front Street. Photo by Richard Brandi 2022.

Richard Brandi
Brandi Preservation
125 Dorchester Way
San Francisco, CA 94127

February 27, 2023
Revised June 21, 2023

Nomination of the Colombo Market Arch as a San Francisco Landmark

This application is to landmark a free-standing brick arch on Front Street between Jackson and Pacific Streets in Sydney Walton Park. The arch is the sole surviving remnant of the Colombo Market building constructed in 1894 and designed by architect Clinton Day. The Colombo Market building was the catalyst and epicenter of San Francisco's produce district. It was demolished and relocated by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in the early 1960s to build the Golden Gateway Center. Only the building arch remains.

While the large area was called *the produce district*, the building at 626 Front Street, knows as the Colombo Market, contained the market's headquarters. This report uses the Columbo Market and the building interchangeably. Originally founded in 1874 as a wood building, the Colombo Market is also associated with immigrants from northern Italy who came to the West Coast during the 19th century and started farming. They banded together and created a wholesale market for vegetables and related agricultural products, the Colombo market. Agriculture is one of the state's most important industries, and the Colombo Market was a catalyst for the development of the state's fruit, vegetable, and other agricultural products. The market introduced Italian vegetables and herbs to California.[1]

The market was the incubator for many Italian businesses including banking (A. P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of Italy, later Bank of America, for many years the nation's largest bank) canning (the Del Monte Corporation); and many specialty-food and import-export firms.

The arch is associated with San Francisco's mid-20th-century federal urban renewal programs. When the produce district was cleared for building the Golden Gateway Center in the early 1960s, the arch was deliberately saved and incorporated in the design of a new park, Sydney Walton Plaza. As the entrance to Sydney Walton Park, the arch is a visual landmark, although there is no plaque or interpretive display to convey its meaning.

The period of significance is 1894–1963, corresponding to the period when the Colombo Market building was constructed, rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake and fire, and through its demise.

Historic Context

The site of Colombo Market was once a shallow cove in San Francisco Bay. During the Gold Rush of 1849, abandoned vessels were beached or anchored and used for housing and storage. The cove was later filled, and it became the site of a produce market called the Colombo Market in 1874. Established by Italian immigrants from Genoa, it originally consisted of one block bordered by Davis, Front, Clark, and Jackson Streets. The *San Francisco Call* said it was with some exaggeration "the greatest vegetable market in the world" and "an Italian Colony planted in the center of a California City." Yet it became the central exchange for producers and

[1] Richard Dillon, *North Beach: The Italian Heart of San Francisco* (Presidio Press, 1985); Deanna Paoli Gumina, "The Provincial Italian Cuisines," *The Argonaut*, San Francisco Museum and Historical Society, Spring 1990; Deanna Paoli Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco 1850–1930.* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978); Rose Doris Scherini, *The Italian American Community of San Francisco*. (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

wholesalers to sell and buy the vegetables, fruits, poultry, wine, and other agricultural products of northern California.[2]

Grossly inflated prices were possible during the Gold Rush because "almost no one wanted to farm or fish when there were fortunes to be made digging for gold." Fruits and vegetables were scarce and expensive. The only way one hotel manager could offer vegetables to his guests was because "an old man, named Herman, brought him fresh vegetables such as cabbages, lettuce, carrots, and turnips. These he brought daily; I had to pay him fifteen to twenty dollars per day."[3] Another early settler, Henry Gerkie, grew vegetables at Mason and Eddy in the 1850s and earned up to $150 day.[4] These were large sums at the time.

The early immigrants realized that they were not going to strike it rich in the gold fields. In 1865, the Italian consul wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressing the hardships and privations of the Italian gold seekers. His motivation was to impress upon the ministry the need for funds to support indigent Italians but still it has the ring of truth:

> The Italian colony here is not as wealthy as is commonly believed abroad. The vaunted riches of the California mines—for the most part, fabulous—attracted fortune seekers from all parts of the world; and many of our countrymen, enticed by the continued exaggerations of a paid press, left modest but secure positions in Australia, Peru, Chile and La Plata to rush to California and partake of the glorified treasures of these mountains. Once here, far from finding the promised land, they had to take on arduous, poorly paid, and unsteady work; but, being too late to back out, they of necessity resigned themselves to their fate. Many could not endure the ensuing privations, hardships and toil, and perished in the mountains; others fell victim to the daggers of bandits and the arrows of Indians. A few for whom fortune had been less grim prepared to return to Italy to enjoy the fruits of their labors, only to contract diseases which robbed them of their savings and their health, medical care being very poor in these inhospitable places.[5]

But many immigrants had been tenant farmers in Italy where they worked small plots intensively and they saw an opportunity to take up farming in the new land. Truck farms, or growing vegetables on relatively small plots, became a big business in San Francisco. Some farmers bought the land they farmed, but more commonly they rented in the outlying areas. They could earn far more here than in Italy.

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[2] Deanna Paoli Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco 1950–1930* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978), 102.
[3] Charles Lockwood, "Tourists in Gold Rush San Francisco," *California History*, 59:4, Winter 1980–81, 323.
[4] *San Francisco Call*, March 8, 1898.
[5] *The Italians of San Francisco in 1865*: G. B. Cerruti's Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Author(s): Alessandro Baccari, Andrew M. Canepa, Olga Richardson, GioBatta Cerruti and G. B. Cerruti Source: *California History*, Winter, 1981–82, 60:4), 350-69. Published by: University of California Press in association with the California Historical Society Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25158070

The *Giardinieri* and the Colombo Market

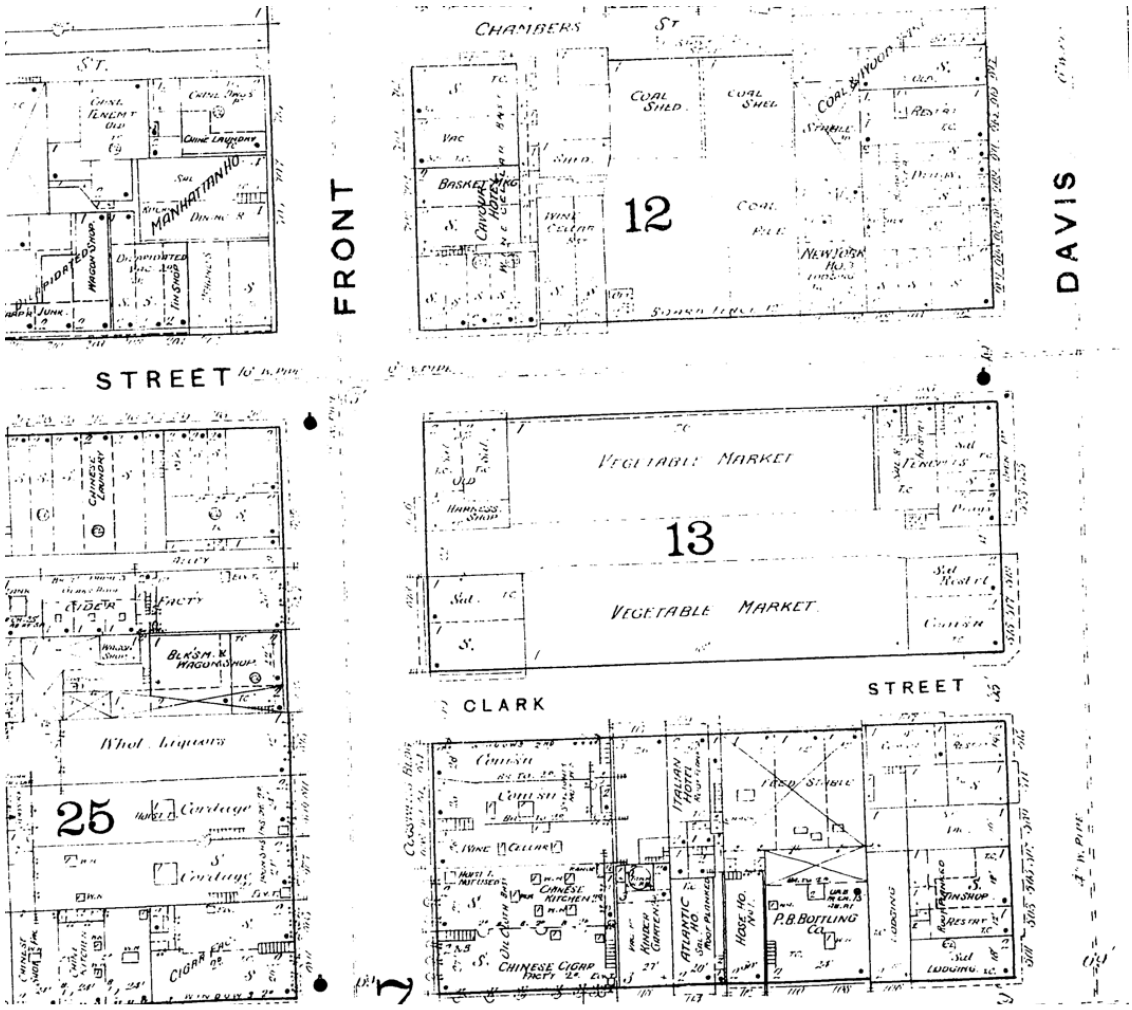
Most of the truck farms in San Francisco were operated by Italians, and those were almost exclusively Genoese. They were call called *giardinieri* or gardeners, and their truck farms were called ranches instead of farms, even though they raised no cattle or sheep. The Italians used the Spanish word, *rancitos*, which means a small ranch or farm.

By the 1860s, truck farms dotted the Bayview, Lake Merced, Noe Valley, Ocean Avenue, Outer Mission, Visitacion Valley, and down the Peninsula south of San Francisco. The sandy soil was fertile when fertilized with free manure left by horses on city streets and was worked with simple hand tools. Wells supplied water powered by windmills. Crops included spinach, radishes, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, artichokes, chicory, bell peppers, eggplants, artichokes, and pear-shaped tomatoes. The *giardinieri* brought their produce in two-, four-, and even six-horse wagons to the 400 block of Sansome Street where they held an open-air market in the streets. The scene was captured by William Hahn in 1872.

Market Scene, Sansome Street, San Francisco, 1872. William Hahn (American, born Germany, 1829–1887) Oil on canvas, 60 x 96.5 inches. Crocker Art Museum, E. B. Crocker Collection, *1872.411*. Source: https://museumca.org/story/william-hahns-market-scene.

First Colombo Market Building, 1874

Over the years, complaints about congestion from vendors' wagons blocking the street and the garbage and rodents left from discarded and rotting vegetables led the San Francisco Gardeners and Ranchers Association and the United Vegetable Dealers Association to construct a building, the Colombo Market. This freestanding wooden building was constructed about 1874 on the block bounded by Jackson, Front, Davis, and Clarke (not extant) Streets. It's not clear who owned the building or the land, but the association paid rent.



1887 Sanborn map.

The Colombo Market building was roofed, with lunchrooms and bars at the corners. Two sides of the market block were covered with 76 covered and floored sheds. A 25-foot roadway for wagons passed in front of them. Farm families picked, washed, and packed the vegetables and loaded the wagon by midnight for the two-to-four-hour trip to the Colombo building. Upon arriving, each farmer transferred his produce to one of the market stalls rented to association members for a $9 a month. He sold the produce from his stall directly to retail merchants or to shippers for out-of-town buyers.

Pacific Street entrance, *San Francisco Call,* May 21, 1891.

***San Francisco Chronicle,* July 10, 1892.**

Unloading wagons in the Colombo Maket circa 1910.[6]

The operation of the Colombo Market, instead of an open-air market in the street, facilitated buying and selling and stimulated local truck gardening. The Colombo Market attracted vendors of vegetable, fruit, and other agricultural products to locate nearby, generally between Clay and Jackson, Battery to Drum Streets.[7] The Colombo building was the only purpose-built building for handling produce, the other vendors used one-to-three-story commercial storefront structures built on zero lot lines and without loading docks. Situated along narrow streets, the *produce market district*, as it became known, was always congested with produce sold from trucks parked in the streets and carted off in hand trucks.[8]

By the early 1890s the 20-year-old Colombo building was described as tottering, sinking and leaning into the soil, having been built on bay fill.[9] The *San Francisco Chronicle* called for a well-

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[6] Deanna Paoli Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco 1850–1930,*78

[7] W. T. Calhoun, H. E. Erdman, and G. L. Mehren, "Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market," United States Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the University of California, February 1943, 4.

[8] For a history of public markets, see Helen Tangires, *Public Markets and Civic Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003). The San Francisco Produce Market is not included in this study.

[9] *Daily Alta California,* January 11, 1891.

roofed and well-ventilated produce market to replace the rickety structure.[10] The newspaper wrote "The entire surroundings are in a state of decay, including the heaps of refuse vegetables piled up here, there and everywhere. On the sides of these brick pillars hang old fashioned oil lamps, from which are dimly reflected yellow gleams of light struggling to shine out through the dusty and dirty panes."[11]

Architect Clinton Day Designs a Brick Building, 1894

In 1894, several members of the Colombo Market formed a corporation, the Italian Ranch and Garden Association with $200,000 and Peter Isola as its president, The corporation's purpose was to construct a new building for the Colombo Market, soliciting offers for a 150-x-275-foot lot.[12]

A short time later, some of the same officers formed another company, the San Francisco Vegetable Company with $300,000, and announced plans to build a brick and iron building at Front, Vallejo, and Broadway just north of the Colombo Market. [13] This might have been a ruse to force the owners of the Colombo Market to build a new building on the same site. If so, it worked for the owners, Eugene, John, and Henrietta Zeille announced they construct a new building on the site of the old market and lease it to the gardeners for $950 a month, a monthly increase of $200 a month.

The Zielles were a prominent and wealthy family, and that probably explains why they engaged a notable architect, Clinton Day, to design the $50,000 building.[14] There is no original building permit, but from written descriptions and a sketch it is clear that Day designed a one- and two-story building in what was called the Italian Renaissance style. He replicated the arched openings from the original wood building.

The symmetrical brick building was two stories along Davis and Front Street and trimmed in terra cotta. The first floor had stores. The second floor had flats for workers to live and an assembly hall for the market association. In the middle of the façades on Front and Davis Streets was a large arch that led to an open-air driveway running the length of the building. (The extant arch on Front is this arch.) Along Clarke and Pacific Streets were one-story colonnades with 22 arches.[15] These arches contained the stall for farmers to unload and sell their produce. The floor of the building was made of basalt rock and the roof was iron.[16]

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[10] *San Francisco Call*, May 21, 1891.
[11] *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 5, 1892.
[12] *San Francisco Call*, May 2, 1894.
[13] *San Francisco Examiner*, May 22, 1894.
[14] *California Architect and Building News,* September 20, 1894**.**
[15] *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 30, 1894.
[16] *San Francisco Examiner,* November 11, 1894.

Second Colombo Market Building, 1894. *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 30,1894.

Architect Clinton Day

Clinton Day (1847–1916) graduated from the College of California (predecessor of the University of California, Berkeley) in 1868 and received his master's degree from the university in 1874. Day was a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects and received an honorary LL.D. from Berkeley in 1910. *Splendid Survivors* calls him, "one of the best and most prolific local architects of the decade prior to 1906."[17]

Clinton Day was best known for designing the City of Paris building in San Francisco, but several of his other building designs feature arched bays or windows, perhaps giving an idea what the Colombo Market Building may have resembled. Examples include the building shown below.

[17] The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, *Splendid Survivors: San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage*. (San Francisco: California Living Books, 1979), 114.

Ainsworth Building, Portland, Oregon 1881.
Source: pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/15374/

250 Post Street Designed by Clinton Day: Site of Gump's from 1908 to 1995. Source: https://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/one_picture.asp?strImage=/downtown/gumps_release_1.jpg

Golden Sheaf Bakery in Berkeley built 1905 Source: https://noehill.com/alameda/nat1978000644.asp

Landmark or Eyesore

The Colombo Market building by Clinton Day evoked both praise and condemnation. Some observers were charmed by the hustle and bustle of the haggling vendors and loading and unloading of vegetables. Others were appalled by the garbage left at the end of the day.

In 1898, the *Chautauquan* magazine said, "Down muddy, narrow streets, ankle deep in the winter, where great teams stand huddled in bunches … the streets are like clotted spider webs, where commerce is far too congested to make private carriage possible … the region is slippery and slimy, full of stale orders and unspeakable smells, with sidewalks thick with fish scales, blood, scraps of meat, and vegetable refuse,"[18]

In 1904, produce district businesses petitioned the Board of Works to repave the cobblestone pavement in front of the Colombo Market with smooth bituminous paving. The uneven cobblestones were too difficult to keep clean.[19] The uncleanliness was a recurring theme and was used several times as a reason to relocate the produce district.[20]

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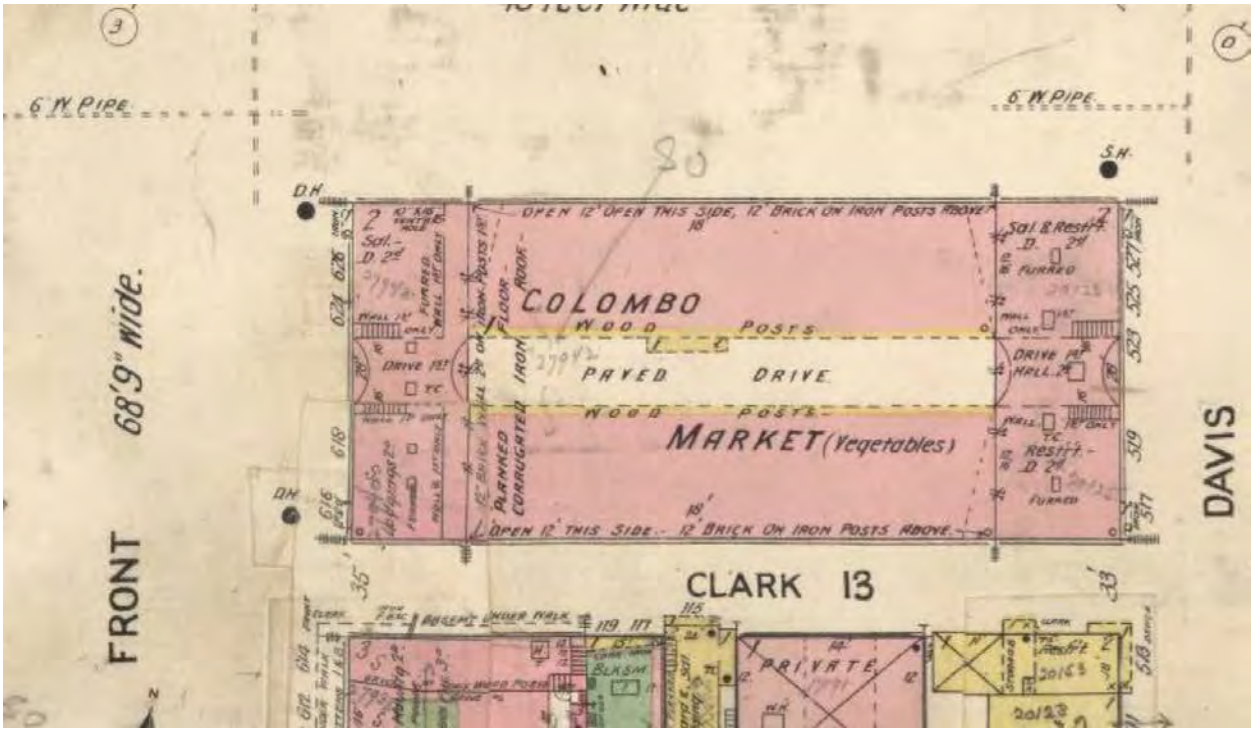
[18] Mabel C. Craft, "A Symposium –The Markets of Some Great Cities," *Chautauquan*, 24 (1898), 335.
[19] *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 28, 1904.
[20] The produce market was the location of the film, *Thieves' Highway*, starring Lee J. Cobb and Richard Conte, 1949.



1905 Sanborn map.

1906 Earthquake and Fire

The 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed the produce district, including the Colombo Market. Rebuilding commenced almost immediately. Rebuilding was rapid everywhere in the city but no more so than the produce district. "Throughout the Latin Quarter the spirit of the people is to rebuild and rebuild quickly," said A. P. Giannini future head of the Bank of America, then vice president of the J Cuneo Company and president of the San Francisco Associated Property Owners.[21] The *San Francisco Chronicle* agreed, saying, "there is no busier scene that in the old commission district."[22]

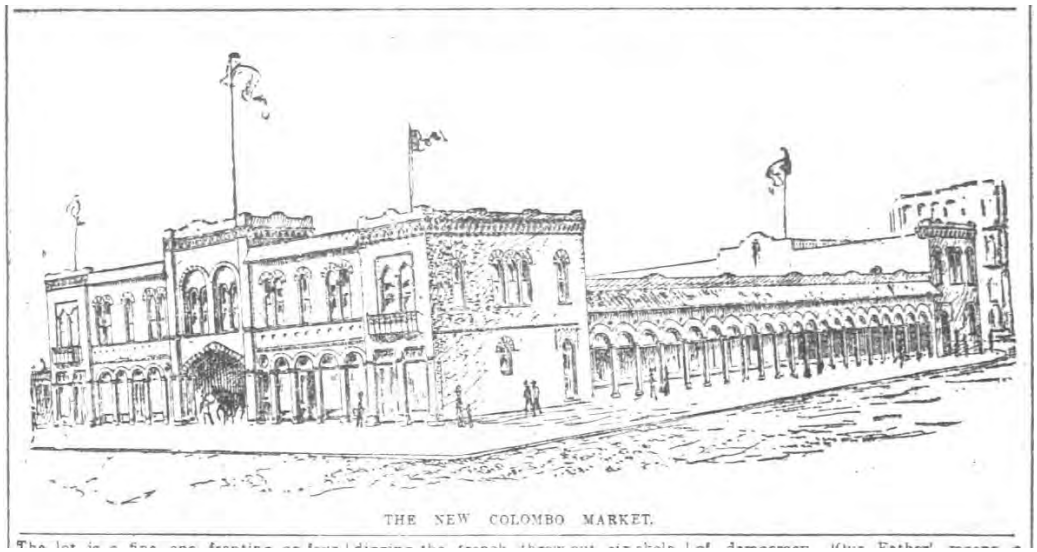
[21] *San Francisco Examiner,* May 20, 1906.
[22] *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 28, 1906.

Rebuilding the Commission District. Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 28, 1906

The Colombo building was rebuilt using the ruins. Stephen Tobriner says this was common "if remains of foundations, walls, or interior support systems were serviceable and appropriate for the rebuilding project."[23] Based on a photo, it appears that much of the ground story brick arches along Davis Street survived and were salvaged or repaired. The second story was not rebuilt. Instead, a wood frame structure was placed on top of the Davis Street arch (but not the Front Street arch).

[23] Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838–1933* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2006), 9:189.

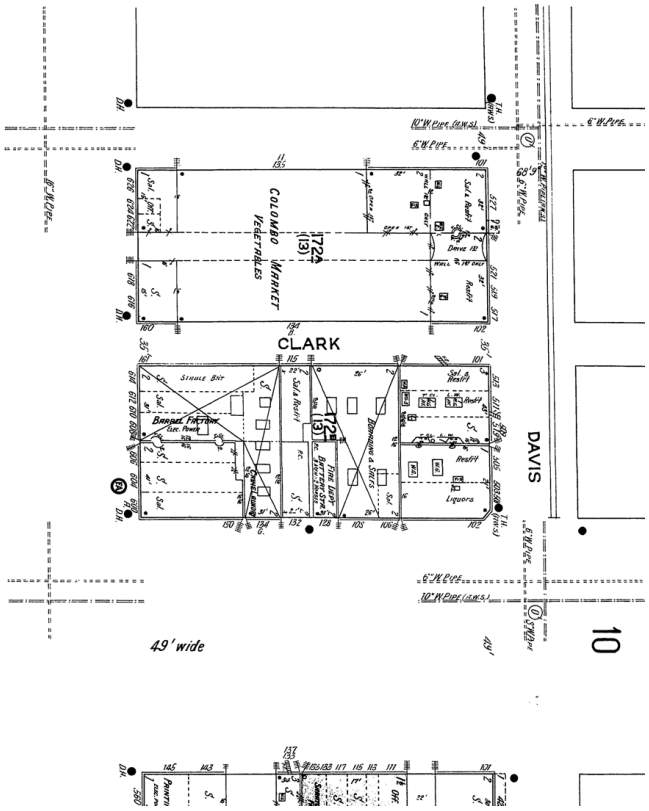
Davis Street façade circa 1910s. The six bays on the left of the central arch (2 rectangular and 4 arched) as well as the center arch appear to be original. The openings to the right of the center arch are post-1906 construction. The second story was destroyed in the fire and not replaced. Author's collection.



Compare the original Colombo Market building with a full width second story, 1894.

Front Street apparently suffered greater damage, as a photo taken in 1915 shows only the arch (extant) with newer storefront windows with transoms instead of arches. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp36.01003.

Close up of photo above.



1915 Sanborn map.

The issue of cleanliness of the Colombo Market came up again two years after the earthquake, but this time the produce commission merchants were lauded for having done a good job of cleaning the cobblestone streets. A banquet was held on tables in the middle of Front Street to showcase the achievement with many notables, including the mayor, board of supervisors, city boards and commissions, and 37 foreign consuls.[24]

Pricing Disputes

The good feelings didn't last long, and in 1910 a scandal rocked the Colombo Market. The San Francisco District Attorney and the Grand Jury were investigating whether the Protective Society of Gardeners and Ranchers, headquartered in the Colombo Market, were unlawfully fixing the prices of vegetables. The society fined or expunged many of its 83 members who sold below the wholesale prices set weekly for vegetables.

At the same time, the Grand Jury was investigating whether the society was violating the 1907 Cartwright Act, which was California's version of the federal Sherman Antitrust Act and contained a sweeping prohibition of actions that restrained trade or fixed prices or limited production in order to lessen competition. However, a 1909 amendment said that marketing associations were lawful,

[24] *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 21, 27, 1908.

and that "no agreement .... is unlawful . . . the object and purpose of which are to conduct operations at a reasonable profit." Furthermore, agreements designed to secure a "reasonable profit" were exempt as long as they did not result in vertical price fixing: that is, fixing of both wholesale and retail prices.[25]

The society didn't deny that it fixed wholesale prices and punished members for selling below the set prices but claimed they were innocent because the law allowed marketing association to fix prices in order to earn a reasonable profit. Furthermore, they fixed only the wholesale prices (not retail prices), which is specifically allowed for in the act. "We have nothing to hide and nothing to fear from any investigation of the Grand Jury and we welcome the fullest inquiry," said G. Scalamnini secretary of the society. [26] Nonetheless, on June 17, 1910, the Grand Jury indicted the following seven directors of the society on misdemeanor charges of conspiracy against trade:[27]

E. Maggi
G. Ferroggiaro
F. Armneto (misprinted, Armanino)
L. Secchini (misprinted, Sechini)
G. Garibaldi
D. Garassino
S. Bottini

After leaving the directors hanging in suspense for nearly three years, the San Francisco District Attorney dismissed the indictment on April 3, 1913.[28]

In 1922, a pricing dispute arose between the Colombo Market and the 1,400-strong San Francisco Retail Fruit Dealers Association. The Colombo Market raised the wholesale price of a dozen bunches of vegetables from 40 to 50, thereby benefitting their members. This was a period of high inflation. The retailers were retailing at 60 cents a dozen; the move cut the retailers' margins in half, from 20 cents to 10. The dealers' association rebelled, and a heated argument ensued resulting in the Colombo Market retaliating by raising the wholesale price to 60 cents, eliminating the dealers' margin. The dealers resolved to buy from the Sacramento Valley instead and some consignments starting arriving. It's not known how the dispute was settled.[29]

Unsuccessful Attempts at Removing an Eyesore

On and off for nearly its entire existence, the produce district was criticized for congestion and unsanitary conditions. The produce market area generally between Clay and Jackson, Battery to

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[25] "The Cartwright Act. California's Sleeping Beauty," *Stanford Law Review*, 2:1 (Dec. 1949), 200–10. Stanford Law Review Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1226436
[26] *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 4, 5, 1910; *San Francisco Call*, June 4, 5, 1910.
[27] *San Francisco Examiner,* June 17, 1910.
[28] *The Recorder*, April 4, 1913.
[29] *San Francisco Call*, November 23, 1922.

Drumm Streets consisted of many small, one- to three-story buildings.[30] These buildings, except for the Colombo building, had not been designed for unloading, storing, and loading vegetables. As a result, the narrow streets and sidewalks were always congested as trucks double or triple parked whenever they found space, and hand trucks running to and fro along the streets backed up traffic for hours.[31] The congestion not only interfered with normal traffic, but also hindered efficient operation of the market. Although rents were high, the facilities primitive, and operating conditions difficult, a single location was crucial. No one could move to better facilities unless everyone did.

The city made several unsuccessful efforts to improve the area or move the market.[32] One idea was to use the empty site of the Panama Pacific International Exposition. However, the Exposition Preservation League was organized in November 1915 by residents and property owners in Pacific Heights who wanted the buildings from the Exposition to be preserved. They also wanted the Marina waterfront area to be developed as a yacht harbor in opposition to corporate interests in the downtown Financial District, who were proposing that the wholesale produce market be moved to the Marina waterfront.[33] The Exposition Preservation League succeeded in blocking the move.

Also in 1915, several merchants hatched a plan to build a three-story produce warehouse on Broadway between Battery and Front Streets and to build extensions to the Colombo building.[34] Nothing came of these plans.

In 1927, realtors Norton & Papale suggested building a $1 million produce terminal in Colma on School Street between Mission and Junipero Serra to relieve the congestion of the Washington Street produce market. This would be a branch terminal and not a replacement, but the need was clearly recognized.[35] In 1928, the produce district was almost relocated to the Marina again when the Board of Public Works granted a permit to construct wharves and buildings on submerged lands just west of Fort Mason. The residents of the newly built Marina District protested and the board of supervisors passed an ordinance banning food terminals, warehouses and freight yards bounded by Bay, Van Ness, Jackson and Lyon Streets.[36]

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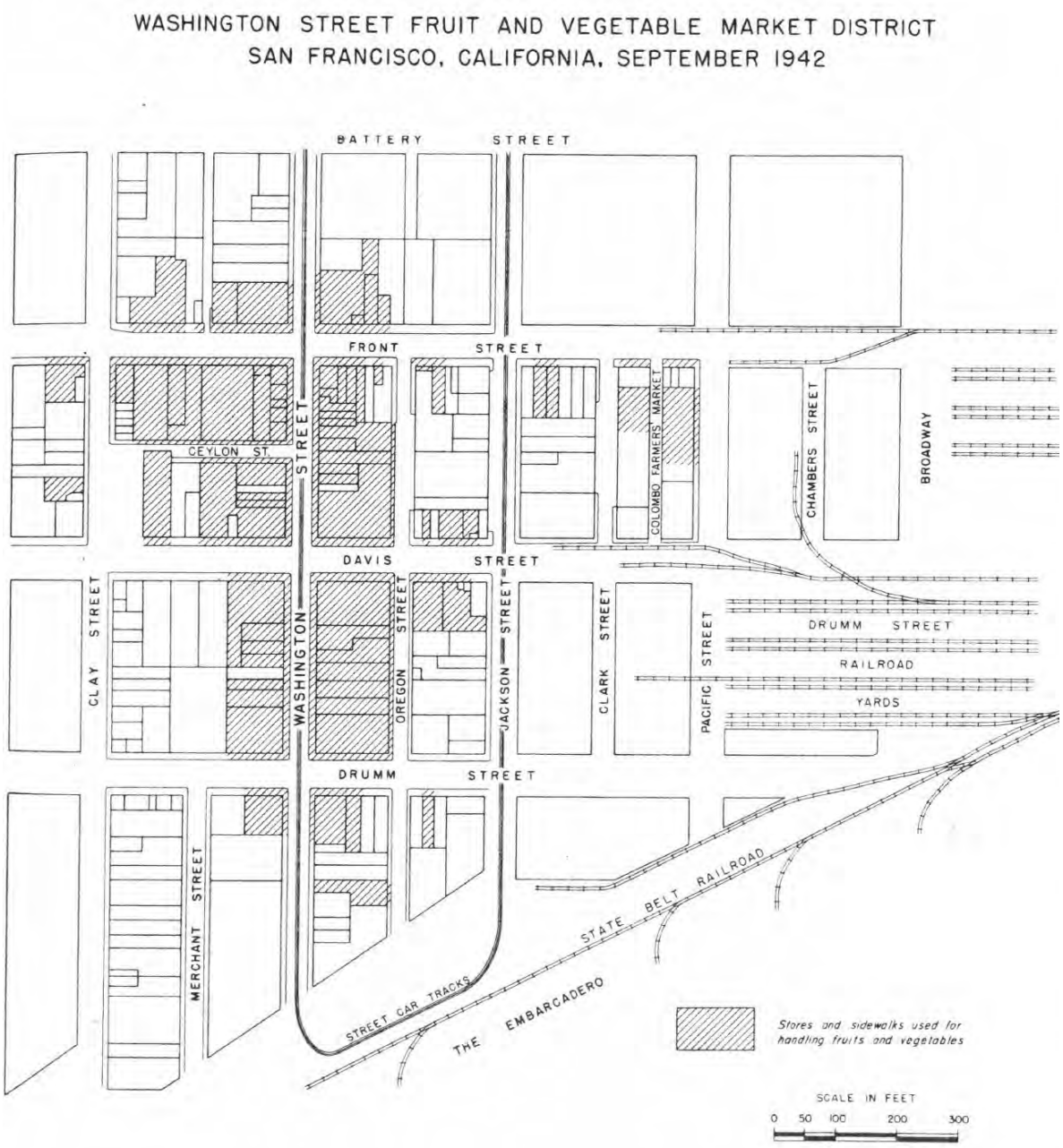
[30] W. T. Calhoun, H. E. Erdman and G. L. Mehren, "Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market," United States Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the University of California, February 1943, 4.
[31] For a history of public markets, see Helen Tangires, *Public Markets and Civic Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003). The San Francisco Produce Market is not included in this study.
[32] "Planning in the Cities and Counties of the Bay Area, A Report to the National Planning Conference, March 17–21, 1957," San Francisco Department of City Planning, Sept., 1957, 38.
[33] Marc Weiss, "Real estate industry and politics zoning in San Francisco, 1914–1928." *Planning Perspectives* 3 (September 1988).
[34] *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 11, 1915.
[35] *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 31 and February 1927.
[36] *San Francisco Chronicle,* July 24, 1928.

FIGURE 66.—Washington Street looking west from Davis Street, Washington Street Market, San Francisco.

FIGURE 67.—A typical view on Washington Street, Washington Street Market, San Francisco.

The Produce District in 1938. Source: United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 463 *Wholesale Markets for Fruits and Vegetables*. In 40 Cities Feb. 1938. William C. Crow, 122.

Further efforts were made in the 1940s to move or improve the produce district. In 1943 a report by the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of California analyzed the workings of the produce district, outlined the deficiencies, identified what was needed, and identified potential new sites for its relocation.



Map of the Produce District. Source: "Improving the San Francisco Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market," United States Department of Agriculture Bureau of Agricultural Economics in cooperation with University of California College of Agriculture, Experiment Station February 1943.

About the same time, the newspapers ran stories and unflattering photos about the produce district's congestion and uncleanliness.

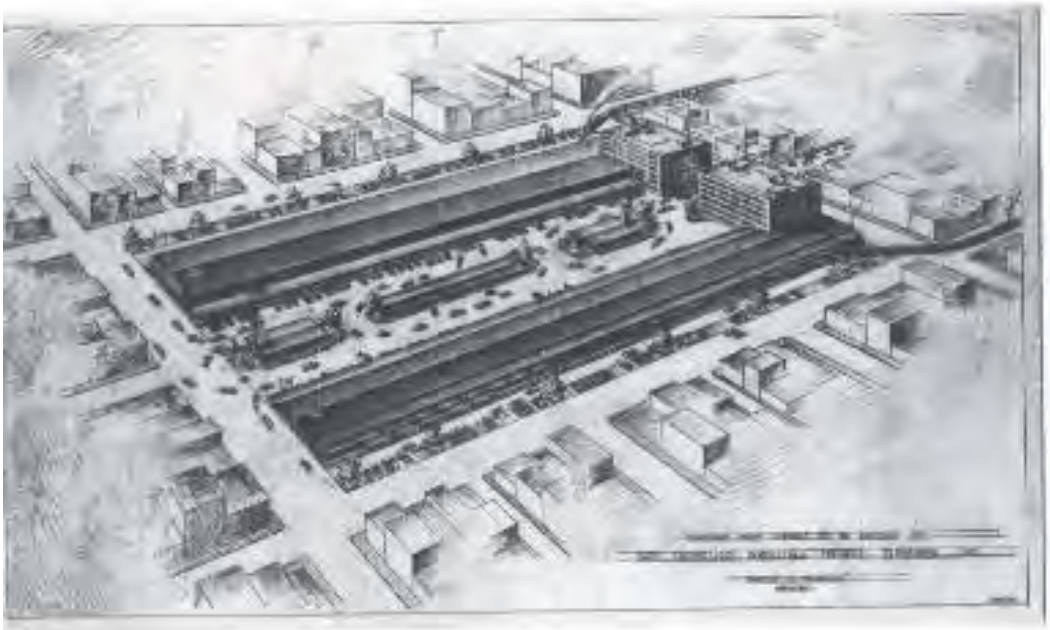
"Due to lack of truck-level loading platforms in the Washington street produce area, vegetables must be carried over bumpy streets in hand trucks. Congestion delays movement of produce to such an extent that vegetables must be stacked on the street and sidewalks to await loading." Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, Feb. 15, 1944. AAC-0532.

"INSUFFICIENT PARKING 'FREEZES' TRAFFIC—Small street frontage is available for each of seventy-five produce concerns in the district. The first hundred trucks in the area absorb limited space and others double and triple park, tying up street cars, to handle produce. As many as 600 trucks in the area have been counted at one time by government farm agencies." Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, Nov. 13, 1945. AAC-0526.

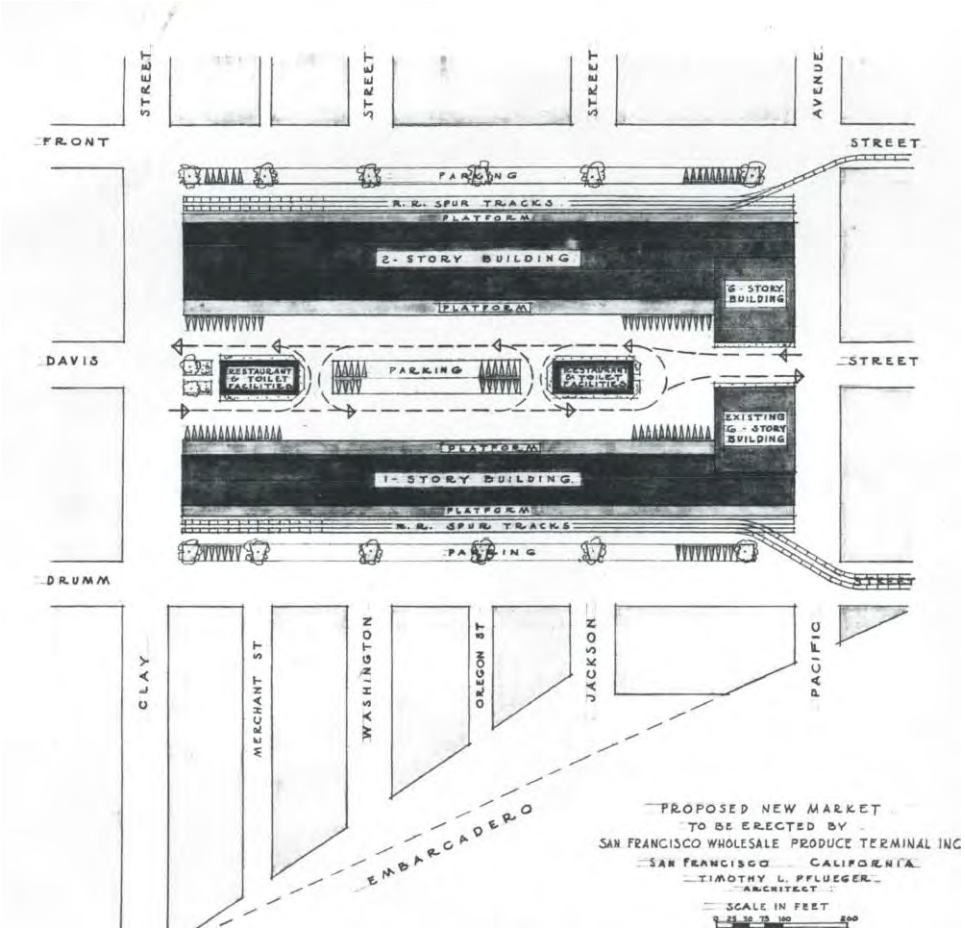
The 1943 report, newspaper coverage, and a report from the City's Health Department saying the produce market is 70% below minimum sanitary requirements, might have stimulated the property owners of the produce district (who were not necessarily the produce merchants) to

modernize the area.[37] On April 11, 1944, the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Terminal was formed by property owners in the Produce Market area who hoped after the war to be able to remodel the produce district rather than relocate.[38]

The property owners hired noted local architect Timothy Pflueger to design a conceptual plan of a modern facility, with new structures and loading docks designed for easy truck loading and handling. This would have been located between Front and Drumm Streets, running from Clay to Pacific, wiping out the Colombo Market building. But this effort did not come to fruition. This would be the last time the produce district merchants voluntarily sought to relocate. Throughout the 1950s, property owners and the merchants at times agreed to move and then opposed relocating.



[37] *San Francisco Examiner,* November 9, 1944.
[38] Letter from C. Maggini, president of the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Terminal, to Mr. A. R. Campbell of 549 Front Street dated February 15, 1945.

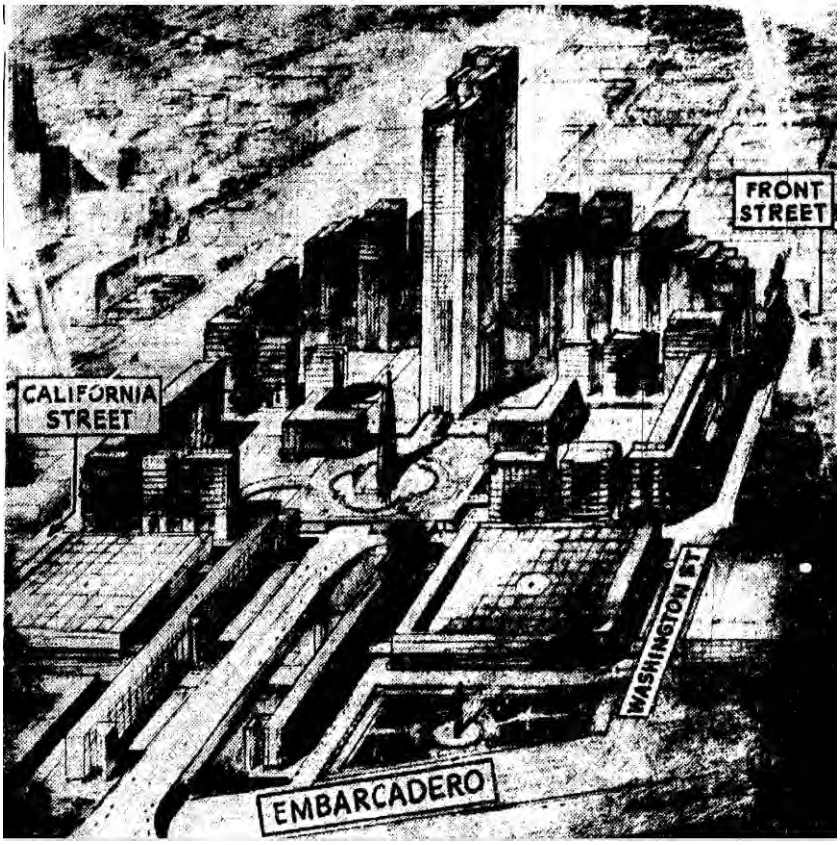


Plans by Timothy Pflueger of a new produce terminal on the site of Colombo Market designed for the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Terminal a corporation formed in 1944 by some of the property owners in the produce district.

The market's location adjacent to the Financial District made it attractive for higher value uses. In 1945 a group of businessmen formed the World Trade Center, Inc., with hopes of building a $40 million (later $55 million) complex on the site of the produce district. Anchored by a thirty-story tower, the complex would consist of office buildings housing all the activities connected with international trade. Exhibition halls would display products, and a new civic auditorium would attract conventions and tourists to San Francisco. A garage would connect to a freeway along the Embarcadero (the Embarcadero Freeway state route 480 built 1959 and torn down in 1991), and helicopter pads would grace the rooftops. The promoters envisioned a public authority similar to the New York Port Authority.[39] The Colombo building appears to have been spared but the rest of the produce district hoped to relocate to Third and Sixth Street, then an

[39] "World Trade Center is Proposed for S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 15, 1947; Robert C. Elliott, "S.F. World Trade Center Wins Harbor Board OK," *San Francisco News*, [n.d.]; "San Francisco World Trade Center," *Shipping Register and Pacific World*, June 14, 1946, reprint.

Army depot. [40] This did not come to pass. The proposal illustrates a widely held view after World War II that San Francisco should build modern office buildings and convention and tourist facilities downtown.



Plan by William G. Merchant for the State Board of Harbor Commissioners of a $55 million World Trade Center located in the produce district between the Embarcadero and Front, California and Washington. *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 15, 1947.

The End of the Colombo Market and the Relocation of the Produce District

The World Trade center project was not realized but the days of downtown produce markets were numbered. Many cities were relocating their produce markets to outlying areas with land for more spacious facilities and better highway access.[41] The Colombo Market and the produce district covered 50 acres of prime real estate. City leaders had for decades thought the land was too valuable to be used for receiving, buying, and shipping of commodities such as fruits and vegetables.

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[40] *San Francisco Examiner*, July 20, 1946.

[41] The cities included St. Louis, Dallas, San Antonio, Hartford, Columbia, Cleveland, Boston, Houston, Richmond, and New Haven. *Relocating San Francisco's Wholesale Produce Market*, San Francisco City Planning, August 1953, 35–36.

Beginning in 1951, the Chamber of Commerce argued for the relocation of the produce district. In 1953 the planning Commission approved a report that recommended several alternative locations for the produce market. While 80 percent of the wholesale market favored the plan, the property owners opposed it unless their investments would be protected.[42] In 1955 a larger effort involving the city planning department, Redevelopment Agency, Chamber of Commerce, produce merchants, and other organizations came up with a plan to relocate the market to the South Basin area between Carrol, Hawes, Thomas and Jennings.[43] This effort also failed, largely due to financial reasons. The Redevelopment Agency did not have the financial means at the time to purchase a replacement site, and the produce market property owners refused to move without guarantees of receiving fair value.[44]

While efforts continued to relocate the produce merchants, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors designated the produce district a redevelopment area in January 1955. Starting around the same time, the city cracked down on double parking and other violations in the district. The Health Department was dispatched to inspect conditions. During a three-month investigation showing the congestion local newspapers again ran a series of articles with unflattering photographs.

”Two of thirty-five photos which accompanied a report on crowded conditions in produce district submitted today by Police Chief Frank Ahern to Mayor Christopher. Above, Washington blocked from curb to curb as a truck is unloaded onto handcarts. Commented Ahern:'It's impossible to enforce the laws there - the market has to operate and the city has to eat.” Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, May 31,1956, AAC-0546.

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[42] *San Francisco Examiner,* September 11, 1953.
[43] *A New Wholesale Produce Market for San Francisco, a modern food terminal at south basin.* San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco City Planning, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, November 1955.
[44] Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area, A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 290.

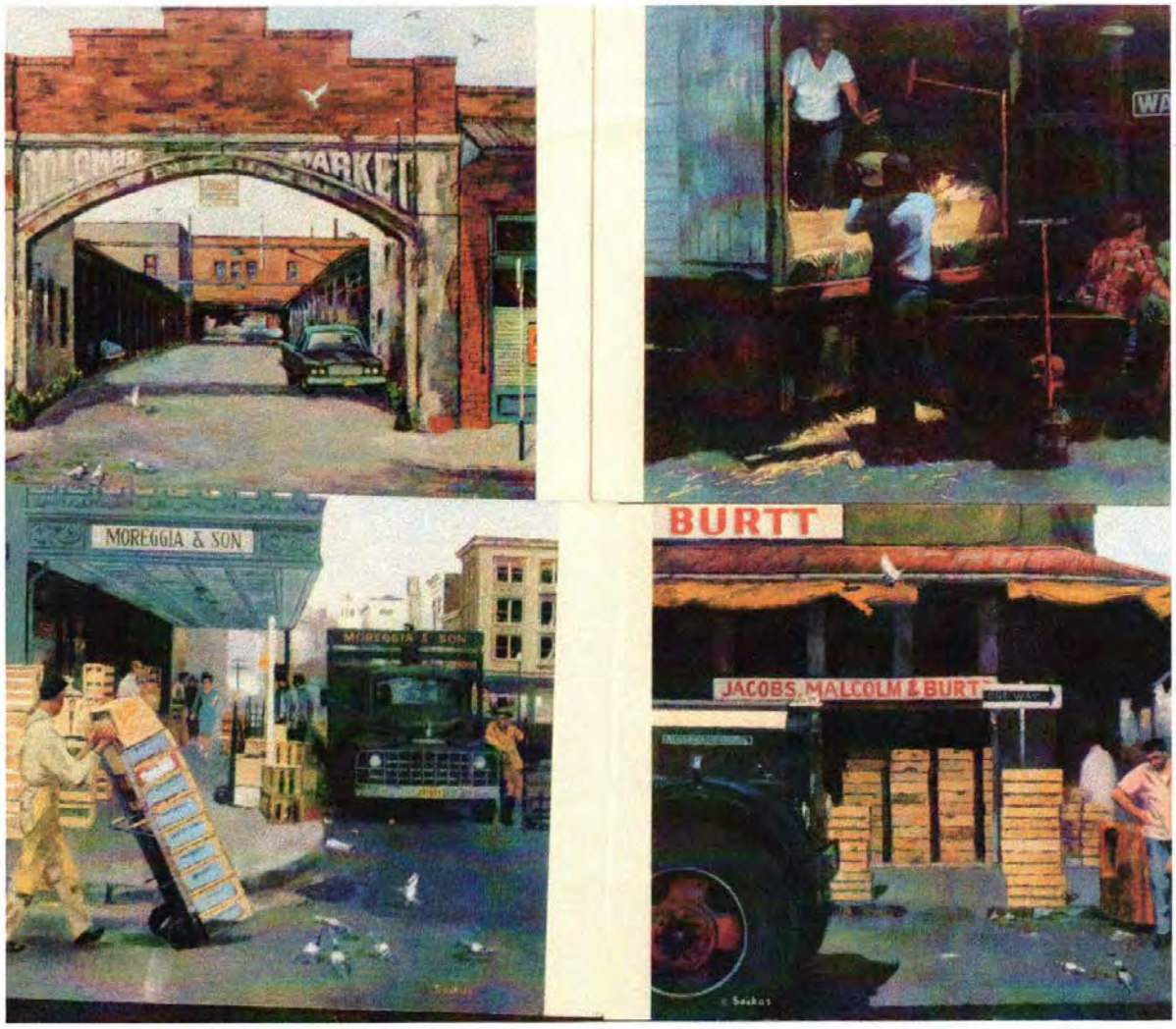
"Patrolman Joseph Broggi and Sgt Dave Novembri prowl produce market streets warning double parkers and issuing citations. This is the beginning of the city's drive to force produce merchants to move so the area can be redeveloped." Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, August 15, 1956, AAC-0538.

City Planning Director Paul Oppermann explained that the idea was trying to provide the downtown with the amenities found in new regional shopping centers, such as pedestrian malls, special streets for transit, off-street loading, attractive street furniture, plazas, and off-street parking. He said, "Our produce market area project should result in a coordinated plan for new office and apartment buildings of a scope similar to the Penn Center in Philadelphia and the Golden Triangle in Pittsburgh."[45]

Front Street 1959. This is the arch that was saved and is the entrance to Sydney Walton Park. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp28.2474.jpg.

[45] "Planning in the Cities and Counties of the Bay Area: A Report to the National Planning Conference, March 17–21, 1957," San Francisco Department of City Planning, Sept. 1957, 39.

After some intense political wrangling, the last of the produce merchants moved out in 1963.[46] San Francisco artist John Sachas painted 32 paintings of the produce district over a three-year period before it was demolished.



Paintings by John Sachas, printed postcards. Source: Author's collection.

The produce market split into two groups, one moved to South San Francisco as Golden Gate Produce Terminal and the other to the Bayview as the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market at 2095 Jerrold Avenue. The San Francisco market opened on September 25, 1963, and within a few months witnessed a twenty-five to thirty-five percent increase in business, according to a *San Francisco Examiner* article, dated December 23, 1963. Both markets have operated continuously, and the 23-acre San Francisco market currently has 1,000 workers and is a city-designated historic legacy business.[47]

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[46] *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 23, 1966.
[47] www.thesfmarket.org/about-us

While the produce merchants adapted well to the relocation, the same could not be said of the other businesses located in the redevelopment area. On the eve of redevelopment in 1957, 94 firms and 1,007 employees engaged in the produce market or food industries with a total of 500 firms employing 3,270 people in the project area.[48] However, at least 96 buildings were demolished, and more than 221 business were displaced, including ship chandlers, hotels, grocers, printers, and coffee shops.[49]

While only seven families lived in the area, about 600 men lived in inexpensive hotels or boarding houses where it was believed demolition was necessary because "rats and vermin infest the hotels and rooming houses where its tiny population of six hundred, mostly old men, live in squalor."[50] The fate of these people and other businesses is unknown. This was before relocation assistance was required as part of urban renewal. A newspaper described the plight of a 79-year-old Portuguese-American barber, John L. Rodriques, who apparently was forced to retire:

> The old building he has occupied at 60 Jackson Street since 1912 … is a living museum. … Until a dozen years ago the shop was lit by gas lights.
> "They warmed the place up well," he says, "even on a cold winter morning I could warm up the place in half an hour by just lighting the lights"… He doesn't know what he'll do when he closes his shop at the end of the year. "I got my home to take care of. I'll keep my tools, but I don't think I'll open another shop. Too expensive nowadays. Too hard to move. Still, I don't like to just lay around. I've never had a vacation."[51]

Barber John Rodrique. Source: *San Francisco News-Call Bulletin,* November 4, 1961.

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[48] "Embarcadero-Lower Market Redevelopment Project Area E-1: A Report on the Tentative Redevelopment Plan," San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in cooperation with the City of San Francisco Planning Department, August 1958, 4.

[49] *San Francisco Examiner,* May 18, 1962.
[50] Allan Temko, *Harper's Magazine*, April 1960, quoted in "The Decade Past and the Decade to Come," San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1969, 4.
[51] George Dusheck, "Museum Barber Shop of Old S.F. to Vanish with Golden Gateway," *San Francisco News-Call Bulletin*, Nov. 4, 1961, 4.

The produce district being demolished to make way for the Golden Gateway Project, March 4,1963. The arrow points to the location of the Colombo Market.
Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library AAB-8762.

As the old buildings were acquired through voluntary sales or condemnation suits and then demolished, the Redevelopment Agency invited proposals to redevelop the area.

In 1959 the Redevelopment Agency decided to hold a design competition at the urging of Justin Herman, the newly appointed redevelopment director, who felt this process would produce better designs with more amenities than would the auction method then in use.[52] The Redevelopment Agency selected the proposal by developer Perini-San Francisco Associates and the design by WBE and De Mars & Reay.

The original design called for five 22-story towers and three slab high-rises of nearly equal height situated atop two-story podiums covering six of the seven city blocks. A total of 2,174 two-story "Masionettes" (townhouses) would be placed on podiums (i.e., the roofs of the

[52] George Thomas Kinglsey, "The Design Process in Urban Renewal: An Analysis of the San Francisco Experience" (Master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1963), 53.

garages). The remaining city block would become a ground-level park with landscaping by Sasaki, Walker & Associates (including the Colombo arch). Although primarily a residential project, an office building (Alcoa Building, now called One Maritime Plaza) and public garage were constructed between Clay and Washington Streets.

Model of Golden Gateway by WBE, 1960. (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Architectural Advisory Panel Evaluation Report).

Between 1962 and 1968, developer Perini-San Francisco executed the design on six of the nine blocks, in two phases along Jackson, Washington, and Clay Streets between Battery and Davis Streets. Construction costs were higher than anticipated, and only two of five apartment towers were completed.[53]

Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons (WBE) was a partnership formed in 1945 by William Wurster, Theodore Bernardi, and Donn Emmons. Wurster, recipient of the AIA Gold Medal Award is best known for designs in the 1930s and 40s that took inspiration from the indigenous California ranch house beginning with the Gregory house (1926–27). The firm did residential, office and institutional work, notably Cowell College, University of California, Santa Cruz (1965); Ghirardelli Square (1965); and the Bank of America World Headquarters (1969–71) with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Pietro Belluschi as consultant.

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[53] Vernon Armand De Mars, "A Life in Architecture: Indian Dancing, Migrant Housing, Telesis, Design for Urban Living, Theater, Teaching" (Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University California, Berkeley, 1992), 404.

The remaining three blocks (from Jackson to Broadway and from Front to Drumm Streets) were used as parking lots for about ten years. Between 1978 and 1985, architects Fisher, Friedman Associates designed a three- and four-story, condominium complex over ground floor commercial and office space.

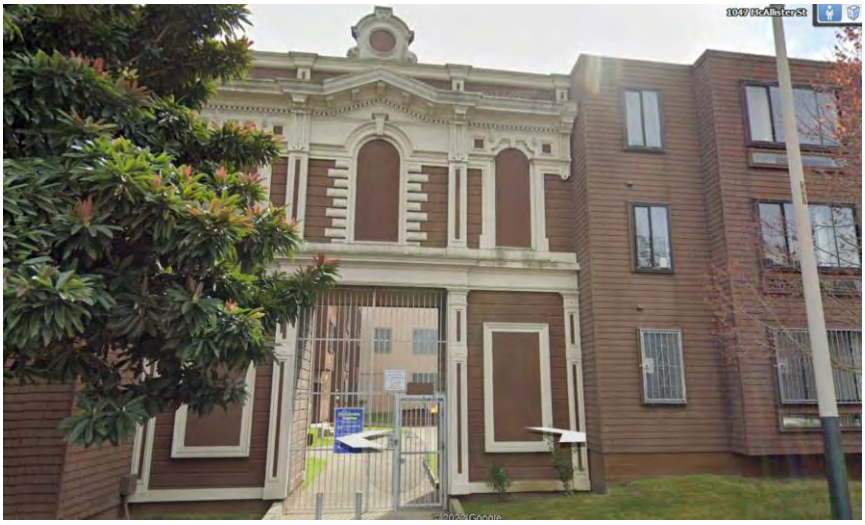
The arch was deliberately kept and incorporated into the square well before there was any requirement to preserve historic resources. Perhaps Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons (WBE) or the landscape architects are responsible for saving the arch, as WBE was at the time designing the reuse of Ghirardelli Square. The company's sensitivity to historic resources might have inspired them to preserve the arch.

The *San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle* noted that the arch was saved as a memento:

Text read: "The old brick Colombo arch salvaged as a memento of the produce district which once occupied this site." Source: *San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle* June 11, 1967.

Or the Redevelopment Agency may have requested the arch be saved. The agency saved a façade on a firehouse in the Western Addition project.

This firehouse was in service from 1884 until 1961. After demolition, the façade was preserved (see below) and the street address renumbered from 1051 McAllister to 1047. The former equipment door became a portal into a park similar to the Colombo arch. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp30.0260.



Source: Google Earth.

Walton Square looking northeast on March 31, 1965. Newscopy: "The Sight of Progress—The $80 million Golden Gateway project near the waterfront is rapidly taking shape. Built on the site of the former Produce Market, the development will contain 2,300 apartments, a 1,300-car garage and 25-story office building. Picture shows Gateway's Walton Square, flanked by 25-story Buckelew House (1), posh townhouses (2), future construction site (4). In center (3), is $50,000 'Four Seasons fountain." Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, AAB-8784.

Sydney Walton Square, Front Street Façade, March 1967.
Outdoor lights have been installed. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp25.1151.

At one time, the arch was covered in ivy.
Source: Richard Brandi, 2008.

The ivy has been removed leaving faint traces of paint.
Source: Richard Brandi, 2022

Italian Farming in San Francisco and the Colombo Market

The market was the incubator for many Italian businesses, including banking A. P. Giannini (founder of the Bank of Italy, later Bank of America, the nation's largest bank); the canning industry (Del Monte Corporation); as well as many specialty food and import-export firms.

A. P. Giannini

Amadeo Peter Giannini was born in San Jose on May 6, 1870, and lived on an orchard near Alviso. After the murder of his father, his mother remarried Lorenzo Scatena, a teamster who hauled produce to the San Jose Railroad station. The family moved to San Francisco about 1882, and Scatena learned the produce business by working for A. Galli before opening his own produce business, L. Scatena and Company. His stepson Amadeo was not a great student. "[He] was much more interested in life in the Colombo Market and on the Embarcadero's riverboat docks."[54] Amadeo took an intense interest in bookkeeping and worked for his father before and after school, eventually quitting to work full time as a commission merchant. At age 21 he became a partner and began lending money to farmers, as banks would not. In 1901, after ten years in the produce business, he retired having earned enough to support his family for life. But the following year, as administrator of his father-in-law's estate, he joined the board of the Columbus Savings and Loan Society. His experience with bookkeeping and lending money as a

[54] Richard Dillon, *North Beach.* (San Francisco: Presidio Press, 1985); 142.

commission merchant helped prepare Giannini for a banking career founding the Bank of Italy, later the Bank of America, and the rest is history.

Del Monte Corporation

The California canning industry traces its roots to the Colombo Market. Marco J. Fontana also worked for A. Galli where Fontana experimented with canning bruised fruits and vegetables. He formed the canning company Fontana and Company and then in 1899 the California Fruit Canners Association, which operated in the Cannery Building and for years was the state's largest fruit and vegetable processing company. The California Fruit Canners Association later became Del Monte Corporation.

Famers and the Colombo Market

Michael Perata was less famous but more typical of many Italians who worked out of the Colombo Market as farmers and commission merchants. Perata arrived from Italy in 1848 or 1853 (according to family tradition). His daughter Rose was born in North Beach in 1853, married Antonio Sechini in 1873 in St. Francis of Assisi Church (extant, burned in 1906 and rebuilt). From 1875 to 1891 Michael Perata was an owner of a vegetable business with the address 23-24 Colombo Market, according to city directories.

Produce wagon marked "Perata Brothers & Co" unidentified men. Undated, location unknown. Source: Author's collection.

Sechini Ranch 1883-1929

In 1883, Michael Perata and his son-in-law Antonio Sechini paid Joseph Morizio $5,541.25 in gold coin for a 17-acre farm in Visitation Valley. The rectangular plot straddled the county line running from Bayshore to Schwerin Street and between MacDonald and Sunnydale. It's possible they rented the land before purchasing.Michael Perata and Antonio Sechini are listed in city directories as living in Visitation Valley as farmers as early as 1876.

Antonio Sechini's lived and worked on the farm with his family from 1883 until it was sold in 1929. One son, Louis Sechini was a director of an association that was indicted in 1910 for price fixing. Living on the ranch was like living in the country; they hunted small game, especially rabbit, and dug for oysters along the bay (located where the Schlage Lock factory was later located). Farm hands sometimes helped, either relatives, in-laws, or men who came from the same village in Italy. The wagon was loaded with produce each day and driven the 4–5 miles to Colombo Market, where Louis Sechini had stalls #29-30. On the return trip, the horses knew where to stop so the driver could refresh himself at a bar (location unknown.)

The Sechini sons served with the U.S. Army in France where one son, Joe Sechini would die years later from exposure to poison gas. After the war, the remaining sons no longer wanted to work on the farm. The work paid little cash, and the living quarters had no plumbing or electricity. The Sechini farm was sold in 1929 for $69,000.[55]

Portrait of an Italian truck farm in Visitacion Valley circa 1901. First row left to right: Rose Sechini, her son Paul Sechini, Frank Piasoni, Rico Piasoni, Mrs. Piasoni, unidentified baby, Albert (Bill) Armanino, John Armanino, Joseph Sechini, unidentified, Mr. Cossalla-Coulterni, Henricata no last name, unidentified. Second row: unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, Joseph DeMartini, unidentified, unidentified, Richard Sechini, unidentified. Third row: unidentified, unidentified, Anthony Sechini, unidentified. The unidentified are believed to be hired hands or neighbors. Source: Author's collection.

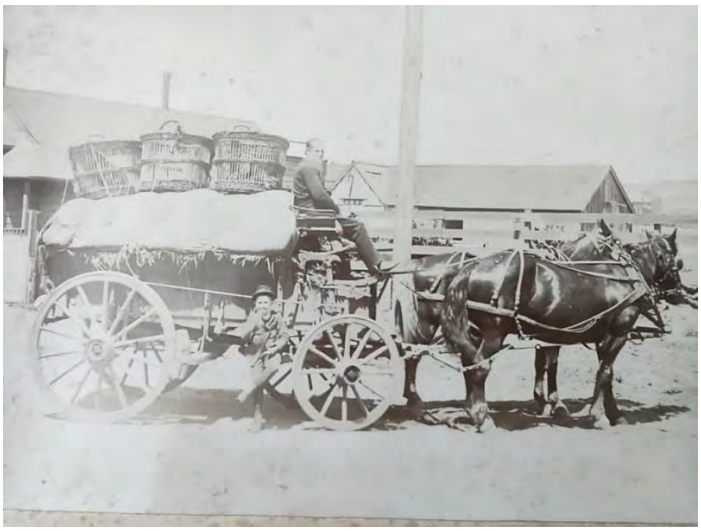
[55] Interview with Ed Armanino in 1998. Ed Armanino lived on the Sechini ranch. His mother's maiden name was Sechini; she married an Armanino.

One of Antonio Sechini's sons, far right, with unidentified farm hands on the Sechini ranch circa 1910. Note windmill for pumping water for irrigation. Source: Author's collection.

On the Sechini Ranch circa 1919. Ed Armanino on buggy.
Source: Author's collection.

Outer Mission Ranches

The outer Mission District between San Jose Avenue and Mission Street near the county line was home to seven Italian nurseries and large parcels labeled as "vegetable gardens" on the 1915 Sanborn map. Frank, Dominic, and Nicholas Garassino lived in a one-story house at 194 Farragut Avenue. A two-story 80-foot-long barn was located behind the house. Their house was less than 100 feet from the Ocean Shore Railroad line that later became Alemany Boulevard.



Undated photo circa 1915 of a loaded wagon thought by Ed Armanino to be on the Garassino ranch (his aunt's family). Photo taken by Vitalini Bianchi Co., 233 Montgomery Avenue, San Francisco. Source: Author's collection.

The Armaninos lived at 157 Ellington Avenue (three blocks away from the Garassinos) where they had a nursery. Other nearby nurseries were:

- C.I. Vani at 596 Huron Ave
- D. Dhtello at 532 Huron (that how written on Sanborn map)
- Guisso & Gardello at 233 Nagee Ave.
- John Bertoli at 120 Ellington Ave.
- L.Franzoni at 114 Ellington Ave.
- G. C. Coppari at 48 Foote Ave.

Based on Sanborn maps, each farmer had greenhouses behind a one- or two-story rectangular shaped house sited up to the sidewalk like a city house.

As San Francisco's population grew, so did the demand for home sites, and the number of farms took a precipitous decline. In 1900 San Francisco had 304 farms on 8,219 acres. By 1920 the number of farms had shrunk to 74 on 1,295 acres, and then to only 17 farms on 138 acres in 1925.[56]

[56] *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 21, 1925, www.infoplease.com/san-francisco-earthquake-1906-census-facts