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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ JUNE 2014

The Story OF THE Fillmore

Three Cataclysmic Events Transformed the Neighborhood

By Gary Kamiya

David Johnson's classic 1946 photograph captured the intersection of the Fillmore and Japantown at Fillmore and Post Streets.

A geologist would call the block of Fillmore Street between Post and Sutter a "triple junction." It's one of those three-way collisions where a swanky part of town crashes into a seedy one, while a completely different quarter sideswipes both of them. In 1974, my cousin Jonathan and I were house-sitting four blocks away at Pine and Buchanan, in a majestic, decaying Victorian with a big psychedelic mandala painted in an alcove.

We didn't know it at the time, but our building was a weird precursor to the Summer of Love. In 1965, that stretch of Pine Street had been a pre-Haight hippie scene, with half a dozen houses filled with longhairs and dealers. The downstairs unit had been home to the legendary hippie newspaper the *Oracle*. Across the street, at 2111 Pine, a rooming house once stood; some of the itinerant musicians there played in a vanished after-hours jazz club three blocks away called Bop City. The rooming house was managed by a guy named Bill Ham, who invented psychedelic light shows.

Our block was mostly black and pretty run-down. We used to walk down to Kim's Market at Pine and Fillmore (now a Kiehl's, which sells $50 bottles of shampoo) to buy our daily $2 ration of sausages, carrots and potatoes. If you turned right on Fillmore, in a block you would come to California Street, the city's great north-south dividing line. California was and is the unofficial border of Pacific Heights, the swankiest neighborhood in town. Turn left and you would quickly end up in the unswankiest neighborhood in town.

Past Kim's Market, as you walked toward Bush, the block was a grab bag, with a venerable Japanese restaurant rubbing shoulders with a jumping jazz and R&B joint called Minnie's Can-Do Club. In the block after Bush, things started to become disheveled, a no-man's-land traversed by Japanese, blacks and a few confused tourists looking for Japantown. Once you crossed the ugly, multi-lane Geary Expressway, you were in the heart of black San Francisco.

The Western Addition is 160 years old. A more suitable name, considering the way the city has treated the neighborhood and its residents, might be the Western Subtraction.

Some years after I moved out of the neighborhood, I happened to find myself on Fillmore between Post and Sutter. I remember being subliminally aware that there was something odd about the east side of the street. Its feng shui was wrong. In particular, there was something weird about a row of five stately Victorians. But I couldn't put my finger on it.

It took me a few decades, but I finally learned why that block felt off. Those five Victorians were not built there. They were saved from the wrecking ball, raised up from their original sites and plunked down on Fillmore. The block felt weird because the setbacks were too deep.

It is appropriate that this line of Victorians stands out. For one of its buildings has a history so rich and strange that an entire book could be written about it. The house at 1712 Fillmore is San Francisco's version of Joyce's 7 Eccles Street. It is a universe on a 27½-by-93-foot lot.

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LETTERS

Save Shell Auto Repair

TO THE EDITORS:

I am really, really upset to learn that Shell at California and Steiner is seeking to close my service station ["Shell Station May Add a New Convenience Store," May]. I have been taking my car for rep0air there for many years. This neighborhood needs the repair shop.

We need Doug and Chelsea, who are reputable, honest and skilled, and who serve the local community. The very idea that a repair service, vital to the neighborhood, will be bulldozed and replaced by a Loop store is ludicrous and infuriating. Groceries are available within 100 feet at Mollie Stone's, plus coffee can be had up and down Fillmore Street.

Living on Sutter Street just blocks from Fillmore Street for 30 years, I have seen so many small businesses and merchants leave or be forced from the district because of high rents and changing demographics. I always shop local and try to support small businesses, but that has become increasingly difficult as new upscale clothing and design stores take the place of hardware stores, pharmacies, coffee shops, stationery stores, bookstores, etc. — businesses that serve the people of the neighborhood.

Must we drive our cars on San Francisco's increasingly clogged streets to a service station in another part of town? Neighborhoods that have merchants who know and serve the residents are essential to maintain a strong community.

Please make sure this community has the opportunity to voice their opinions in meetings in the neighborhood. Thank you.

Sally Cancelmo

▪

Please do whatever you can to keep the Shell Auto Repair from being turned into yet another useless and sterile "mini-mart." I live within sight of this establishment.

We need this useful auto repair service in the neighborhood. We don't need another over-priced fast food place.

Steve Lerner

▪

We were upset to learn that the auto repair services at the Shell station at the corner of Steiner and California are threatened with closure. The plan to create an enlarged food emporium on that site would incorporate the entire building next to the gas station. The auto repair facility, run by two highly competent mechanics, serves countless car owners in our Fillmore neighborhood. They perform much-needed services that would be taken away from local residents, who are still adjusting to the loss of a hardware store, a stationers, a mail house and countless other useful businesses. An expanded food shop at the station is not needed, what with a major market and several restaurants less than a block away.

We urge Shell to reconsider and to allow highly efficient, highly regarded Shell Auto Repair to remain.

Peggy and Lee Zeigler

THE NEW FILLMORE
newfillmore.com

2184 Sutter Street #202 ▪ San Francisco, CA 94115 ▪ 415.441.6070
editors@newfillmore.com

Editors | Barbara Kate Repa & Thomas R. Reynolds
Production Editor | Ginny Lindsay
Copy Editor | Donna Gillespie

Advertising inquiries ads@newfillmore.com or 415.441.6070
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Connecting the neighborhood

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■ STREET TALK

New nightclub opens in the jazz district

A showy new nightclub featuring DJs, dancing and bottle service opened May 9 at 1538 Fillmore, the former home of Rasselas jazz club. **ORIGIN BOUTIQUE NIGHTCLUB**, owned by the founders of the Grand Nightclub south of Market, is offering weekend previews on Friday and Saturday nights from 9:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. To get on the guest list, visit originsf.com.

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MORE FASHION: Fillmore's newest fashion boutique is now open. **JARBO**, which specializes in European-influenced designs for women, has taken over the space at 2408 Fillmore that was formerly home to Erica Tanov. They've also recently opened in Palo Alto and Beverly Hills . . . Almost ready to open is a French fashion firm, **THE KOOPLES**, coming to 2241 Fillmore, formerly home of Clary Sage.

■

A FAN FAVORITE: The one-of-a-kind fashion shop **ASMBLY HALL** at 1850 Fillmore, owned by the husband-and-wife team Ron and Tricia Benitez, was the readers' choice for favorite small business in S.F. by readers of the weekly Bay Guardian.

Paolo Shoes Is Staying on Fillmore

By Chris Barnett

The rancorous lease dispute between Paolo Shoes and its landlord has been resolved out of court, and the custom Italian shoemaker won't be taking a hike from the corner of Fillmore and Pine for at least two more years.

The clash between the two San Francisco real estate dynasties was recently settled as Paolo Shoes and Webco Group LLC and their lawyers met in the halls of the courthouse awaiting a mandatory settlement conference of a lawsuit based on a disagreement that had dragged on for 10 months with neither side budging.

"We made amends and settled on a rent that is twice what I am paying now, but still below market," says Paolo Iantorno, the tenant and owner of the store. Under terms of the agreement, he will pay $10,000 a month rent for the first year and $10,500 a month in the second year. Previously, he was paying $5 a foot for the 1,000-square-foot storefront at 2000 Fillmore Street.

Patrick Szeto, a member of the family that owns Webco Group and American Realty and Construction Co., did not return calls or respond to an email seeking comment.

"We met for four hours in the halls and we each had our lawyer with us," Iantorno says. "The mood, to be honest, was fine. Very constructive. There was no anger or emotion and we talked everything out."

Still, both sides were at an impasse and ready to go to trial until Iantorno's father, Sergio Iantorno, showed up and acted as unofficial mediator. His son will not disclose what precisely brought the factions to an agreement. But he hints that his dad made certain amends and pointed out that Paolo had been in the storefront for 10 years and in the Fillmore neighborhood for 15 years and had been a good tenant during those years.

DANIEL BAHMANI

"We made amends and settled on a rent that is twice what I am paying now, but still below market," says Paolo Iantorno, owner of Paolo Shoes.

"For Patrick, I now understand that it was business and not personal," says Iantorno. "We settled our differences — despite the fact that he had a prospective tenant ready to move in and pay $15,500 to $16,500 a month."

The amiable resolution was a 180 degree turnaround from earlier this year when Paolo Shoes faced eviction on Valentine's Day when his lease expired. Webco would not extend the lease, claiming Iantorno's request in July 2013 for an extension did not meet a deadline in the existing lease. [See "Getting the Boot," February 2014.]

Both sides hired lawyers and spent the fall and winter haggling.

These days, Paolo Iantorno, who has two other retail stores in Hayes Valley — including one called Duke et Duchess that sells its own line of jeans and accessories, — is spending most of his time working for the family real estate business, Realty West. He is doing hands-on renovations of apartment complexes and mixed-use retail and residential properties.

Iantorno says he is grateful his Fillmore Street hassle is behind him.

"My dad and I were talking," he says. "Maybe there is some way our two families can work together on a deal. I would like that."

Stolen Vehicle
Washington Street and Van Ness Avenue
April 16, 4:40 a.m.

Officers on patrol ran a computer check on a motorcycle and learned it had been reported stolen. When they approached the two riders, the female put her helmet on and jumped onto the back of the bike. The male started the bike and drove off. Police broadcast the incident to assisting officers, who located the fleeing suspects a few blocks away. The woman jumped off the bike, threw aside her helmet and attempted to walk away; the bike fell onto its side.

As the police closed in, the driver tried to pick up the motorcycle and start it. When he failed, the officers put him in handcuffs. Police found a small bottle of liquid heroin in the driver's pocket. He stated his friend had given him the motorcycle and he was just having fun driving his girlfriend around the city. But when officers examined the motorcycle, they discovered its ignition had been punched to make it start. They contacted the bike's owner, who told them it had been stolen several days ago. The two suspects were booked at county jail.

Carrying a Concealed Weapon, Traffic Violation
Franklin and Greenwich Streets
April 20, 5:40 p.m.

A motorist flagged down officers and stated he had just been in an altercation with another driver who pointed a gun at him, then drove off. He gave the police a good description of the man. They found him several blocks away. When officers spoke with the suspect they spotted an open bottle of beer and a white pill on the passenger's seat, which they identified as Oxycodone. Beneath the driver's seat they found a fully loaded, cocked, 45-caliber handgun. The suspect was transported to Northern Station.

Vandalism to Vehicle, Theft from Locked Vehicle
California and Steiner Streets
April 23, 7 p.m.

A witness reported seeing three men peering into cars in the parking lot. They had already broken into one vehicle and taken items from it. As the police arrived, the suspects were loading their vehicle with stolen property. When the three saw the officers, they crouched down inside the car. The witness had taken video footage of the suspects breaking into cars, which he turned over to the police. The three men were booked at Northern Station. Officers located the cars' owners and returned their property.

Narcotics
Washington Street and Presidio Avenue
April 26, 6:30 p.m.

Officers stopped a bicyclist for a moving violation and discovered an outstanding warrant for his arrest from Alameda County. They then searched the suspect and found methamphetamine in his pocket. When shown the narcotic, the bicyclist responded, "What's that? These are not my pants." The man was charged with a narcotics violation.

Outstanding Warrant
Webster and Post Streets
April 27, 10:32 p.m.

Officers received a complaint about a man defacing a tree with a large knife. When they arrived, they found the suspect holding a laptop. A pat search for weapons revealed he was carrying a 15-inch-long knife. When officers asked him what he was doing with it he said that he was "just outside playing the flute."

He claimed the laptop belonged to him. Officers asked him where he bought it. First he said he found it, then said a school janitor had given it to him. The officers ran a computer check and found outstanding warrants. Police were unable to locate either the 911 caller or the owner of the laptop, nor did they find any damage to trees in the area. The man was booked at Northern Station.

Possession of Stolen Property, Burglary Tools
Buchanan Street and Pacific Avenue
May 3, 4:32 a.m.

Officers met with a security guard who saw a man break the window of a Toyota Prius. The security guard shouted at the suspect, who fled. The police saw a box on the back seat containing snow gear.

Near the scene of the break-in, officers found two women crouching behind bushes. They were carrying ski goggles along with a flashlight, a set of shaved keys and tools typically used to break auto glass.

The security guard said the women were not the suspects who broke the car's window. Because they were on probation for auto burglary and had attempted to hide from the officers, they were handcuffed and transported to Northern Station, then booked at county jail.

Robbery
Washington and Divisadero Streets
May 9, 7:50 a.m.

A woman was walking down the street wearing headphones when a man grabbed her from behind and wrapped his arms around her. The assailant ripped the headphones from her ears and demanded her property. Then he forced her to the ground and took her bag, which contained an iPad, phone and wallet. The woman saw the suspect was wearing a mask as he fled south on Divisadero. Passersby recovered the bag and a notebook, and returned them to the woman. The suspect was described as a black male, 19 to 23 years old, wearing a black windbreaker.

Aggravated Assault, Stalking
Sacramento and Steiner Streets
May 18, 3:55 p.m.

A woman who was returning home found a man wielding a knife standing in front of her house. She waited around the corner for a time, then tried again to enter her home, believing the man had left. But she ran into him as she walked around the corner and he prevented her from getting inside. She asked a passerby for help, but the suspect brandished the knife and chased the person away. She eventually managed to get inside, but the suspect forced his way into the building. Police searched the building and found the man hiding in a closet. He was charged with aggravated assault, burglary, false imprisonment and stalking.

Robbery with a Gun
Post and Broderick Streets
May 20, 12:10 a.m.

A man walking down the street was approached by two other men, one of whom was armed with a shotgun. The men told the pedestrian to give up his bag; he complied. Then they told the man to run for his life, which he did. Inside the bag were his iPhone and wallet. The suspects were described as two black males; one wore a ski mask and a black hooded sweatshirt, and the other wore white tennis shoes and a hooded sweatshirt. The matter is still under investigation.

NEW NEIGHBORS

Small on Space, Big on Style

Velvety Nails and Beauty Spa now open on Sutter

Don't expect to stop by Velvety Nails & Beauty Spa for a quick fix. Lu Lu, the owner of the neighborhood's newest spa at 2183 Sutter — which offers manicures, pedicures, hair removal and eyelash treatments — believes that quality cannot be hurried.

"We take a whole hour to do a pedicure," she says. "After cutting and shaping each toenail, we put the two feet together to make sure the nails are the same size and shape," a step skipped in most nail salons.

She also asks Velvety's five employees to speak quietly in English with clients and to refrain from talking on the phone or eating while on the job, preemptively warding off a few common peeves of spa customers.

And she puts each employee through a tryout before hiring and then gives them more individual training, even those who have many years of experience in other spas. "I want a different skill," she says. "I want people who are gentle, especially when doing things like pushing back cuticles — and who know to ask clients what they want and to listen to them."

At Velvety, nail clients can chose from a wide array of high-end polishes not found in many spas, including Chanel and Lippmann. "We don't charge extra, so they can feel special," she says.

When searching for a spot to land her new business, Lu was taken by the location on Sutter near Pierce, near a number of new businesses beginning to thrive.

In transforming the space, she got help from a friend, Kevin Lau, a longtime contractor.

"I want people to feel glamorous when they walk in," he says. "This place is small, but it has the feeling of bigness. It's really a good size and shape for this business."

In addition to a menu of nail and eye treatments, Velvety offers sugaring — a method of hair removal that's touted as more natural than waxing, and available in only a handful of salons around the city. Sugaring practitioners must be specially trained and certified.

"Sugaring takes off the hair from the follicle and doesn't burn the skin," Lu says. "And afterward, new hair grows out softer and thinner."

Lu will still perform waxing on lips and brows for clients who prefer it.

Additional specialized treatments Velvety offers include eyelash perms for those who want their eyelashes to appear more pronounced, plus eyelash extensions to augment short or skimpy lashes.

Tinting is also offered to make brows and lashes more prominent — although Lu steadfastly refuses to do black brows, insisting on a softer and more natural brown. "I want to make sure everyone comes out of here beautiful," she says.

The new Velvety Nails and Beauty Spa, located at 2183 Sutter Street, offers a wide array of high-end nail polishes and other unique treatments in a small but elegant setting.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN NG

COURTESY OF KAISER

Rendering of the orchard of apple, pear and fig trees growing at Divisadero and Geary.

Empty Lot Becomes an Orchard

"Let a thousand flowers blossom," Chairman Mao supposedly said.

Kaiser Permanente has taken a similar approach with the block-long empty lot at Divisadero and Geary it fought — and paid dearly — to clear for a new medical building, now delayed.

Just beginning to bear first fruit in the summer sun is a new orchard with four kinds of apple trees, three varieties of plum trees, plus a few figs, all chosen for this microclimate. They're planted in four huge stone planters and surrounded by hundreds of other plants and vines growing along an estate-quality fence.

"We needed a solution that everyone, including the city, was going to be happy with," says Randy Wittorp, a spokesman for Kaiser.

The orchard grew out of a collaboration between Kaiser and Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF), urged on by a community task force. Kaiser bought the property years ago with an eye to future expansion. It paid more than six figures each to get longtime tenants out of a deteriorating 21-unit pink apartment building and, with a group of local ministers, built 21 replacement apartments across O'Farrell Street.

"Kaiser came up with a lot of money — a lot of money," says Bush Street resident Jan Bolaffi, a member of the task force. "By the time all that was done, the demographics of the city had changed."

Kaiser decided its new medical building should be in Mission Bay and put off plans to expand at Geary and Divisadero.

But what to do with the empty lot?

"We'd heard that FUF was going to be planting these urban orchards," says Jay Murphy, manager of capital projects for Kaiser, who served on FUF's board of directors for three years. "We thought, what if instead of traditional landscaping we gave the community an orchard?"

The trees will likely be moved at some point when construction proceeds.

A New Film About Coffee, Birthed at Jane

The filmmaker is a local, too

By Brandon Loper

While I've been a coffee drinker for some time, it wasn't until I moved from northern Alabama to San Francisco about 13 years ago that I really became a "coffee person." In Alabama, I drank Folgers from a Mr. Coffee coffeemaker and doused it with plenty of hazelnut-flavored creamer. In my view, coffee came in a can from Wal-Mart.

But one of the first things that intrigued me after moving here was a little coffee shop with a roll-up door located in an alley. It wasn't a secret coffee shop, but it wasn't trying too hard — and that seemed fascinating and cool. It helped that the drinks were delicious. The place was Blue Bottle Coffee, which then featured "Misty Valley." There was something different about that coffee: It tasted like blueberry cobbler and I couldn't get enough. That coffee from Ethiopia sank its teeth into me, and I had to know more.

I began trying different coffees all over the city. I didn't care about atmosphere or attitudes; I was in search of delicious coffee, something special. My passion for coffee conveniently coincided with the opening of Jane on Fillmore Street a few blocks from our apartment. If you consider yourself a coffee person, you get really intrigued when you walk into a coffee shop and notice, "Oh, they're doing a pour-over." Or, "Hmmm, brewing Four Barrel today." Details are king in specialty coffee, and places live and, sadly, die by them.

For his new film about coffee, Fillmore filmmaker Brandon Loper (left) trekked up a mountain in Honduras, where he met coffee producer David Mancia (above, holding a cup of his own coffee).

I asked the baristas at Jane a lot of questions. They were knowledgeable and friendly and would answer happily. I had my own personal *Cheers*, which plays a major role in a new film I directed, *A Film About Coffee*, which has its San Francisco premiere this month.

The project started taking shape with a few interviews in San Francisco, a trip to Honduras with the green buyer from Ritual Coffee and an extremely eye-opening trip to Tokyo to explore the Japanese relationship with coffee.

During the production of the film, I would hang out at Jane and try coffees quite a bit, noting as they switched from Four Barrel to De La Paz to Stumptown. When they made the switch, they were the only wholesale account in San Francisco for Stumptown, which also has coffee bars and roasteries in Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles and New York.

Jane began having weekly "cuppings" — basically, tastings of different seasonal coffees — including Guatemala Finca El Injerto-La Calaca, a high-end coffee that sold for $125 for 12 ounces. I stood by the crowded bar as others slurped and commented on how good — and how expensive — it was. I bought a single cup for $14. That's when I met Travis Hale, who had organized the cupping, and told him about my film, which was then well underway. Travis introduced me to the green coffee buyer — and the next thing you know I was on a plane to Kigali, Rwanda, with my production team. This was the missing link in my film and provided by far the largest chunk of the story.

You never really know what can come out of connecting with someone over coffee in the neighborhood.

A Film About Coffee *has its San Francisco premiere at the Castro Theatre on June 3. Doors open at 6:30 for free coffee from Blue Bottle, Ritual and Four Barrel Coffee; the film begins at 7:30. For tickets and more information, go to afilmaboutcoffee.com.*

Three Cataclysmic Events Transformed the Neighborhood

▶ FROM PAGE ONE

In or around 1895, a three-story Victorian, built in the exuberant Queen Anne style that was the last hurrah of Victorian architectural excess, was erected at 1690 Post Street, just east of Buchanan, in the Western Addition. The name Western Addition is a link with the Gold Rush days, when the city did not even include all of Nob Hill. In 1851, San Francisco's western limit was Larkin Street, a few yards west of my house on Jackson. A year later, the booming city extended its boundary 13 blocks west to Divisadero. The area north of Market Street between Larkin and Divisadero became known as the "Western Addition." Despite the fact that the "addition" is now 160 years old, the name has stuck. A more suitable name, considering the way the city has treated the neighborhood and its residents, might be the "Western Subtraction."

The Western Addition was a solidly middle-class and upper-middle-class neighborhood. Streetcar lines carried its merchants and professionals to their offices in downtown San Francisco. By 1900 its residents were mostly native born, three-quarters of them to immigrant parents from countries like Germany, Austria, Ireland and France. A significant number of them were Jews, mostly from Germany, attracted by San Francisco's lack of overt anti-Semitism and business opportunities. By the 1870s, Jews made up 7 to 8 percent of the city's population, the highest percentage in any city west of New York.

I. Earthquake & Fire

The first of the neighborhood's three great transformations was a result of the 1906 fire. Displaced working-class people from the burned-out downtown and South of Market areas poured in. The stately single-family Victorians were divided into rooms and flats. The neighborhood became more densely populated, poorer and much more ethnically diverse. Large numbers of working-class Filipinos, Mexican Americans and Jews moved in. So did the two ethnic groups whose fates would become entwined in the neighborhood, and in that wooden building on Post Street: African Americans and Japanese.

Blacks began arriving in San Francisco before the Gold Rush, but never in great numbers until World War II. As Albert Broussard notes in *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954*, the lack of factory jobs and the distance from the South discouraged black immigration, but so did the "politely racist" attitudes held by many white San Franciscans. The early city had no racial covenants for blacks and no ghettos, but it was only the fact that there were so few blacks that created the illusion of unusual tolerance: The white citizens of San Francisco shared many of the racial prejudices of their fellow white Americans. After 1906, increasing numbers of blacks moved into the Western Addition. By 1930, almost half of all the 5,000 blacks in the city lived in the neighborhood.

So did most of the Japanese. The first Japanese immigrants arrived in San Francisco in 1869, establishing the first and oldest Japantown in the United States. (One of the most influential early immigrants, a devout Christian and future newspaper editor named Kyutaro Abiko, established an agricultural colony of fellow Japanese in Livingston in the Central Valley, soon followed by a colony in Cortez, near Turlock. My Japanese grandparents emigrated to the Cortez colony in the early 1920s; my Nisei father was born in nearby Turlock in 1925.)

The first Japanese in San Francisco lived in South Park and on Dupont (Grant) in Chinatown. Like many other ethnic groups, they moved to the Western Addition after 1906. The willingness of the neighborhood's landlords, many of them Jewish, to rent to Japanese did not sit well with many whites: In 1907, the *Chronicle* ran a scare piece about the Japanese "invasion" of the Western Addition titled "A Greater San Francisco or a Lesser Nagasaki — Which?"

The Western Addition was one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the country; writer Jerry Flamm calls it San Francisco's "Little United Nations." The Japanese population was a mixture of older, first-generation (Issei) immigrants, most of whom were not U.S. citizens, and their second-generation (Nisei) children, almost all of whom were citizens. For convenience, I will refer to them all as Japanese Americans.

At some point after the quake, the majestic Queen Anne Victorian at 1690 Post Street was divided into apartments. Sometime before 1920, the Nippon Drug Company opened on its ground floor. In 1930 the co-owner of Nippon Drugs was a man named J. Hatsuto Yamada, who lived eight blocks away at Bush and Divisadero.

By 1940, more than 5,000 Japanese Americans were living in Japantown. There were more than 200 Japanese-owned businesses. Some owned property; the exact percentage is unclear. Many worked as domestic servants, the famous "Japanese houseboys."

Japantown on the eve of the war was a bustling enclave. It had 40 churches, 17 schools and kindergartens, a department store and dozens of small businesses. Culturally, it was a scramble: There were four traditional baths but also American-style diners serving hot dogs, ham and egg sandwiches — and fried noodles.

II. Japanese Internment

Then came Pearl Harbor. After word got out, hostile whites drove through the neighborhood, staring creepily at its inhabitants. The authorities immediately began arresting "suspicious" Japanese. An incident reported in the December 9 *Call-Bulletin* reveals the round-up-the-usual-suspects nature of this early venture into Homeland Security. Under the headline "Enemy Aliens Arrested Here," the paper gravely reported that three Japanese men had been arrested on suspicion of taking a photo of an army transport, "although no camera was found."

"No camera was found" could have been the motto for the entire hysterical, fear-and-race-driven episode that followed. Californians in general and San Franciscans in particular had long viewed the Japanese as even worse — more ambitious, more evil, more underhanded — than the despised Chinese. Journalist and historian Carey McWilliams described the hostility as the "California-Japanese War." In 1900 the San Francisco journal *Organized Labor* opined, "Chinatown with its reeking filth and dirt, its gambling dens and obscene slave pens, its coolie labor and bloodthirsty tongs, is a menace to the community; but the sniveling Japanese, who swarms along the streets and cringingly offers his paltry services for a suit of clothes and a front seat in our public schools, is a far greater danger to the laboring portion of society than all the opium-soaked pigtails who have ever blotted the fair name of this beautiful city."

In February 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, expelling "all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens," from West Coast military zones. Every Japanese person in San Francisco was ordered to register and report at various sites for processing. Stripped of their belongings except for what they could carry, they mustered at 2020 Van Ness and then were sent to "assembly centers," mainly the Tanforan Racetrack in San Bruno. Most of San Francisco's Japanese residents, including Nippon Drugs co-owner Hatsuto Yamada, were sent to the Topaz internment camp in Utah, one of 10 hastily built "relocation" camps scattered across the barren stretches of the country. (My father and his family, from the Central Valley, were mustered at the Merced Fairgrounds, where my dad had once shown his 4-H Club chickens, and imprisoned at desolate Camp Amache, official name Granada, in Colorado.) By April, Japantown was empty.

Sometimes the silences left by cataclysmic events are the loudest reminders. While researching the city directories, I compared the 1942 listings (compiled before the internment order) from "Yamada" to "Yamazaki" with the 1943 listings. In 1942 there are 32 listings — Yamada, Yamagata, Yamaguchi, Yamamoto, Yamasake, Yamazaki. In 1943, there are none. The names, and the people, are simply gone.

The forced removal and imprisonment of 110,000 people, most of them American citizens, for no reason other than their race, was one of the great injustices in U.S. history. But the sudden departure of 5,000 Japanese from the Western Addition proved a boon to another victimized group of Americans: blacks.

World War II was responsible for the great influx of blacks into San Francisco. Before the war, the city had fewer than 5,000 black residents. By the end of the war, 32,000 blacks, drawn by good-paying shipyard jobs and the opportunity to get out of Texas or Louisiana, were living in the city.

The jobs were there, but there was literally nowhere for the newcomers to live. Some found housing in the apartments that were quickly constructed in Hunters Point, but thousands more units were needed. San Francisco was not an egregiously bigoted city, but many white landlords refused to rent to blacks, and overly racist actions were not unheard of.

In this charged situation, the empty apartment buildings and houses in Japantown were a godsend. Because the neighborhood was already racially mixed, its landlords were happy to rent to blacks. Between 1940 and 1950, the black population of the Western Addition went from 2,144 to 14,888. Citywide, the demographic change was even more startling: San Francisco went from having 4,846 black residents in 1940 to 43,502 in 1950.

In one of the stranger urban transformations in American history, the area around Post and Buchanan went

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The forced removal and imprisonment of 110,000 people, most of them American citizens, for no reason other than their race, was one of the great injustices in U.S. history. But the sudden departure of 5,000 Japanese from the Western Addition proved a boon to another victimized group of Americans: blacks.

from being a Japanese neighborhood to a black one virtually overnight. Maya Angelou, who as a 13-year-old had moved into a building near that very corner, wrote: "The Yamamoto Sea Food Market quietly became Sammy's Shoe Shine Parlor and Smoke Shop. Yashigira's Hardware metamorphosed into La Salon de Beauté owned by Miss Clorinda Jackson. The Japanese shops which sold products to Nisei customers were taken over by enterprising Negro businessmen, and in less than a year became permanent homes away from home for the newly arrived Southern blacks. Where the aromas of tempura, raw fish and cha had dominated, the aroma of chitlings, greens and ham hocks now prevailed."

The old neighborhood was gone, and overnight its new inhabitants made it their own. And the neighborhood they created, before the city destroyed it, was one of the most jumping places on the planet. It was called the Fillmore, a.k.a. the Harlem of the West. Or just the 'Mo.

Within months, the Fillmore was exploding with life — and its crown jewel was its jazz clubs. By a coincidence as exuberant as an Art Blakey snare drum roll, the Fillmore's incarnation as a black neighborhood at the beginning of World War II exactly coincided with one of America's great artistic achievements, a rival to abstract expressionism: the birth of modern jazz, in its first incarnation — bebop.

The virtuoso improvisational style created by Bird and Diz and Monk and Max Roach and Bud Powell ushered in a new age of intense, deeply personal and harmonically advanced music. It took serious chops to play bop. To use a phrase coined by Mark Schorer, the great English professor across the bay at U.C. Berkeley, it was "technique as discovery." And what they discovered, during a thousand jam sessions, was an American soundtrack of genius and joy.

For more than 15 years, the Fillmore was the hottest jazz, blues and R&B scene outside New York. Everybody in the 'hood and plenty from outside dressed to the nines and hit the streets to drink, party and listen. The mile-long stretch of Fillmore and its side streets was packed with more than two dozen clubs. All the greats came: Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday and Dexter Gordon, to name just a few. Even Art Tatum, a.k.a. God, played the 'Mo.

In 1949, the old Victorian at 1690 Post underwent its strangest transformation yet. Shuttered-up Nippon Drugs reopened as Vout City, a club run by a jazz guitarist, pianist, composer and singer named Slim Gaillard. Gaillard was a weird and wonderful character, a musician cousin of Lord Buckley. In addition to speaking eight languages, Gaillard made up his own, which he called Vout — hence the name of his club. Jack Kerouac immortalized Gaillard in *On the Road*. He describes going to see him at "a little Frisco nightclub" where "great eager crowds of young semi-intellectuals sat at his feet and listened to him on the guitar, piano and bongo drums. … He does and says anything that comes into his head."

Shockingly, Gaillard turned out to be a terrible businessman, and Vout City quickly folded. The building's owner, Charles Sullivan, had to find a new tenant. Sullivan approached John "Jimbo" Edwards, one of the first black car salesmen in San Francisco, who decided to open a cafe called Jimbo's Waffle Shop in the former Vout space. When local musicians discovered it had an unused back room, they started using it for after-hours jam sessions. Jimbo changed its name to Bop City, word got around, and soon every jazz musician who came to San Francisco started heading there.

The cover photograph of a book about the 'Mo's glory days, *Harlem of the West: The Fillmore Jazz Era*, by Elizabeth Pepin and Lewis Watts, captures an indelible moment. A heartbreakingly young, innocent-looking tenor player stands on the stage. He and fellow tenor man John Handy and trumpeter Frank Fischer are listening to altoist Pony Poindexter soloing. The young man is leaning slightly forward, his eyes half shut, a slight smile on his face. He is listening so intently, so gently, that his whole body seems to be a receptacle for sound. The young man is John Coltrane.

Bop City carried the torch for 15 glorious years. But by the early '60s, musical tastes had changed. Jazz was not as popular with either whites or blacks. The club featured more R&B. In 1965, owner Charles Sullivan closed it down.

Sullivan was a remarkable man. He was born in Monroe County, Alabama, to an illiterate mother. He ran away from his adoptive father at age 13 and made his way to San Francisco. When the war broke out, he was the only qualified black machinist in California. He tried to get a job at the shipyards, but the union refused to hire blacks. Sullivan got 50 white machinists to testify on his behalf, but it took the personal intervention of President Roosevelt to get the union to hire him. During the war years he began opening bars and liquor stores in the Bay Area, including a liquor store just down the street from Bop City at 1623 Post. It was the first liquor store in San Francisco to make free deliveries. Branching into entertainment, he became the leading black music promoter on the West Coast.

The same year that Bop City closed, Sullivan played a key role in the birth of the music that would permanently relegate jazz to the high-art, low-audience niche. Sullivan loaned his dance license for the Fillmore Auditorium to a young promoter named Bill Graham. The Airplane, the Dead, Big Brother, Zappa and other rock bands played there in 1966 and 1967, kicking off a musical revolution as profound as the one that created jazz.

Sullivan himself met an unhappy fate. In August 1966 he was found dead near Fifth and Bluxome Streets, shot in the heart. The case was never solved.

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Overnight, Japantown Turned Into a Black Neighborhood

▶ FROM PAGE 9

The ghosts of Vout City and Bop City haunt San Francisco, evoking a fabled time and neighborhood that will never return. But those legendary clubs were themselves haunted by a ghost — the ghost of Nippon Drugs, the business that had occupied the building for decades.

When Hatsuto Yamada returned to San Francisco from Topaz, he opened a new drugstore two blocks away at 1698 Sutter. The 1945-46 city directory shows that "Jas. H. Yamada" gave up his old residence on Divisadero and moved to 1950 Bush, between Laguna and Buchanan. Whether he owned the old building and sold it before being shipped off to the camp, or rented it, is not clear. But he never returned to 1690 Post.

Yamada renamed his new store Jim's Drug Company, after the "James" that he apparently began calling himself after the war. One wonders what "Jim" thought as he walked past his old store now bearing the ironically similar name "Jimbo's."

After the war, some of the internees returned to Japantown, but many did not. As Reid Yoshio Yokoyama notes in one of the few studies of Japanese resettlement in San Francisco, many evacuees, believing ethnic enclaves exacerbated racism, thought it would be better to disperse. The major Japanese American organization, the Japanese American Citizens League, took the same position. JACL president Saburo Kido, who visited Japantown in late 1944, wrote that returning Japanese Americans would face four problems: housing, jobs, hostility from labor unions and relations with blacks. Kido warned, "Since [blacks] occupy the former Japanese residential district, they will resent being displaced by returning evacuees."

A confidential government report echoed Kido's fears, predicting that "the release of Japanese from War Relocation Authority Camps will be the cause of friction and racial clashes when the Japanese arrive back in California."

Despite such concerns, about half the former residents of Japantown returned. They found that housing was indeed a major problem. Those who had been renters found that their apartments were occupied by others. Property owners, who may have constituted as much as half of the returnees, fared better, but not always. There were 13 occasions on which their property was seized by the government. At first many stayed in hostels or slept on cots. But gradually the Japanese Americans found places to live.

Work was also hard to find. Anti-Japanese sentiment continued to run deep for years after the war. (In 1949, the famous Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park was still being referred to as the "Oriental Tea Garden." The Hagiwara family, who had lovingly tended it for three generations, was not allowed to return to it; not until 1958 did ownership of the garden return to the Japanese community.) Many businesses would not hire Japanese: Some owners said their veteran workers would kill any "Japs" who were hired.

In late August 1945, more than 60 members of the AFL Machinists Union threatened to strike after they learned that a 37-year-old Nisei named Takeo Miyama had been placed as a mechanic with the Municipal Railway. Mayor Roger Lapham and State Senator Jack Shelley tried to convince the workers not to strike, but they refused to back down. Miyama was going to withdraw, but after a three-hour meeting with JACL and War Relocation Authority officials, he decided he would go to work, saying that he "would be betraying other Nisei and other minority groups if he abandoned his fight for a job." Miyama showed up for work at the barn the next morning, and the machinists put down their tools.

Facing 60 angry men, two men rose to defend Miyama. Both of them were bus drivers and part of a different AFL union. The first driver was a black man named Robert Gray. As the *Pacific Citizen* reported, Gray said, "When Negro bus drivers went to work for Muni there was some fuss at first, but soon everybody got used to it. If you boys let this man go to work, you'll find it'll be the same way." The second driver was an American Indian named James Burns, who said, "Do you want the sort of thing here that goes on in the old South?" But the machinists refused to yield, saying that because Miyama had not fought in the war, they would not work with him.

At this moment the chief radio technician at the barn, Harold Stone, spoke up. Just five months earlier, Stone had been awarded a Silver Star for bravery when his carrier, the U.S.S. Franklin, was devastated by Japanese dive-bombers on March 19 and 807 men were killed — the most casualties on any American warship during the war except the Arizona, sunk at Pearl Harbor. Stone said, "I didn't go out to fight in the Pacific so people with differently colored skin would be discriminated against when I got home." The war hero's speech made the difference. By a better than 2-to-1 margin, the machinists voted to stay on the job.

By 1946, 2,500 Japanese Americans had resettled in Japantown, about half of its original population. Within two years, the population was back to its old size. But most of these were newcomers. San Francisco State University professor Ben Kobashigawa found that only one-third of the 1,952 Japanese surnames listed in the directory were prewar names. By 1949 a lively but smaller Japantown was centered at Post and Buchanan, with 150 instead of 400 businesses.

It is difficult to get a clear picture of the relationship between blacks and Japanese-Americans after the war. Research is scanty, and neither group is interested in reopening any old wounds that may still exist. After her family moved to Japantown, the young Maya Angelou was struck by the fact that the Japanese seemed to have vanished into thin air, leaving not even a memory. "No member of my family and none of the family friends ever mentioned the absent Japanese," she wrote. "It was as if they had never owned or lived in the houses we inhabited." Keenly aware of the irony of one victimized people taking the place of another, Angelou wrote, "A person unaware of all the factors that make up oppression might have expected sympathy or even support from the Negro newcomers for the dislodged Japanese." Blacks did not feel such sympathy, Angelou believed, for all-too-human reasons: They were doing well, and because the Japanese weren't whites, they didn't have to fear or even consider them.

Some blacks shared the negative views of the Japanese held by most of society. The NAACP took only a tepid stand against internment. But many blacks had a more favorable view. A reporter for the *Afro-American* newspaper, Vincent Tubbs, went to San Francisco during the evacuation. During the course of his stay, Tubbs's attitude became more sympathetic to Japanese Americans, and he noted that the black community's attitude had also changed. Tubbs came to understand that, like blacks, the Japanese Americans had been victimized solely because of their race. He said that many blacks referred to Japanese Americans as their "good friends."

As for the returning Japanese Americans, they mostly wanted to avoid conflict and resume their lives. Some Issei, and to a lesser degree some Nisei, may have held racist attitudes, but if so, they did not express them. More likely the returnees were simply wary of their new neighbors. In *Making Home from War: Stories of Japanese American Exile and Resettlement*, one aged Nisei, who was sent with his family to live in Hunters Point, describes running away in fear as a child when he saw a large black man on the street, and offers a poignant apology for something that had clearly troubled him his entire life.

"In general, I would say the relations between the blacks and the Japanese were friendly, not chummy," 86-year-old Yokio Takakuwa, whose family returned to their home in Japantown after being interned, told me. "We tolerated each other and were decent to each other. There wasn't that much contact." Certainly the predicted clashes did not take place. When a black group, the Carver Club, put forward, "Should the Japanese be returned to the West Coast?" as a debate topic, no one was willing to argue the negative side. There were numerous documented acts of black kindness toward the Japanese Americans: A black landlord saved Honnami Taieido's stock during Taieido's internment, allowing him to reopen his art goods store. The first cleric to welcome the returnees was a black minister, who invited them to join his church in San Francisco. In Oakland, black neighbors were among the first to welcome back a returning dentist and his wife. A number of black families took Japanese Americans into their homes.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, San Francisco's Little United Nations experienced a renaissance. Japantown, or Nihonmachi, was now a thriving Japanese American neighborhood adjoining a thriving black neighborhood. The two worlds collided at Post and Buchanan: Jimbo's Bop City was right next to one of the oldest Japanese businesses in the city, Uoki Sakai's fish market.

Judy Hamaguchi was a Nisei girl who grew up in a subdivided Victorian flat on Post Street, right next to Bop City. Despite the crowded conditions, she described Nihonmachi as a "great neighborhood for a child to grow up." Hamaguchi said that Jimbo Edwards would sometimes help her and her toddler brother cross the street to the Miyako resetaurant, where her mother was a waitress.

III. Redevelopment

The Western Addition was far from perfect. It had crime and drugs and high unemployment, and a lot of its buildings were decrepit and overcrowded. But for all of its faults, it was a living neighborhood — until the city decided to fix it.

FROM "HARLEM OF THE WEST"

The old neighborhood was gone, and overnight its new inhabitants made it their own. And the neighborhood they created, before the city destroyed it, was one of the most jumping places on the planet. It was called the Fillmore, a.k.a. the Harlem of the West. Or just the 'Mo.

The destruction of the Western Addition was the result of a perfect storm of good intentions, unconscious racism, naivete, greed and technocratic optimism. It was San Francisco's cardinal sin, and the city is still living with its legacy.

Most accounts of the Western Addition debacle emphasize the high-level planning decisions made after the war. But the die was cast during the war. The residents of Japantown had not even been shipped off to Tanforan when city officials began worrying about what to do with their run-down neighborhood. An April 16, 1942, *Chronicle* editorial headlined "Quick Action on Rehab of Jap Houses" read, "Departure of the Japanese from San Francisco presents an opportunity that will not come again to lift the face of a dreary section of the city — and at the same time creates a danger of the kind we are so prone to neglect until now. A blight now, the 20 blocks of 'Little Tokio' will become an outright slum if left alone. What to do? There's the rub." The paper acknowledged the city had only limited options, since the soon-to-be-imprisoned Japanese owned as much as 60 percent of Japantown.

There matters stood for a year. Then the flood of black shipyard workers into Japantown caught the attention of the authorities. In June 1943 the extreme overcrowding of the neighborhood led a city commission to investigate conditions. Its findings were alarming. In its story about the dire situation there, the *Chronicle* interviewed Robert Flippen, the respected black director of the just-built Westside Courts project, at Bush and Baker. Due to racist policies, they were the only wartime housing projects in San Francisco open to blacks. Flippen told the *Chronicle*, "I know of one place where 15 people live in one room — cook, eat and sleep there. They have no toilet facilities. For that purpose they go to a filling station or out into the street. These 15 are four families. They sleep in shifts . . . They are willing to live in anything and a certain kind of landlord knows it."

The *Chronicle* reported, "All participating in the effort to find a solution emphasized that it is not a racial problem, but a social and health hazard that would be the same if the district were overcrowded with whites."

Japantown was indeed severely overcrowded, and city officials appear to have believed they were simply taking urgent action to clean up a health menace. But there was cultural and racial topspin. The fact that the "slum area" had been first a Japanese and then a black neighborhood clearly led officials to view Japantown as a kind of urban cancer that needed to be cut out. It was only the war that prevented the city from wielding its scalpel. And when the war ended, the scalpel came out.

In fact, the war whetted America's appetite for wielding the scalpel. It is no coincidence that "urban renewal" became a national policy after the war. If America could defeat the Nazis and the Japanese, why couldn't it solve inner-city blight by simply destroying the inner cities and building new ones? There may be an unconscious connection between the "strategic bombing" that left Berlin a heap of rubble and the urban renewal that eviscerated America's inner cities.

The federal government played a critical role in the nationwide campaign to remake inner cities. The 1949 Housing Act allocated $1.5 billion for urban renewal, defined as redevelopment of "blighted areas." The federal government would pay two-thirds of the costs of "renewing" such areas.

In 1947, the city hired the respected planner Mel Scott, a former journalist, to look into redeveloping the Western Addition. Located near downtown and with a politically weak population, it was a prime location for pro-growth forces.

Scott's role in what was to come was heartbreaking. He clearly meant well. He was not a racist. In his 1959 *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective*, he defended the black residents who flooded into the Western Addition during the war, saying that "most of them were products of a social system that resolutely kept them 'in their place.'" He was one of America's first anti-sprawl and open-space advocates. His 1961 survey triggered the movement to save the bay, a fact that qualifies him as one of the city's heroes. But Scott's report on the Western Addition was a product of the ignorance and hubris that marked urban planning at that time, and it sent the city down a terribly wrong path.

His official 74-page report asserted that rehabilitation would not work: "Nothing short of a clean sweep and a new start can make of the district a genuinely good place to live." A shorter version of the report, titled "New City: San Francisco Redeveloped," featured an illustration of a white couple standing on the balcony of a high-rise, looking out over the city. The text was hopeful modernist Muzak: "It is a green city. Broad lawns, trees, ample flowers form a setting for your 10-story apartment house. You look down on tree-lined walks and attractive spots for relaxation." The next page featured a ludicrously propagandistic double-page photo-collage depicting the blighted old neighborhood, "with its death-trap intersections" and "alleys in which juvenile gangs plotted mischief that sometimes ended in murder." Decaying Victorians, a wrecked car, a junk-filled yard, an overflowing trash can with a liquor bottle crudely drawn atop it, and a building with cartoon-like flames painted on it form the background against which two vaguely Filipino-looking urchins look out in mute appeal, next to a young white delinquent covering his face. With his striped double-breasted coat, jeans and pre-Elvis pompadour, he looks like he stepped out of the pages of Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock*.

Tactfully, no ominous black hoodlums are pictured in the report — in fact, no black people are depicted at all.

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The Heart and Soul of Black San Francisco Was Torn Out

▶ FROM PAGE 11

But the city had no plan to include minorities in the "new city of space and living green." Noting that few of the "colored and foreign-born families" could afford to live in the new neighborhood, Scott asked the city to ensure they would be adequately housed in "future projects." The key word, and the one that revealed the limits of 1947 liberalism, was "future."

James Baldwin famously said, "Urban renewal is Negro removal." In his study of the Western Addition debacle, Jordan Klein correctly argues that it is too simplistic to reduce the entire complex movement to that motive. But as he also correctly notes, "in the Western Addition . . . urban renewal was 'Negro Removal' *by design*."

On June 3, 1948, despite resistance from black and Japanese American residents, the Board of Supervisors declared the Western Addition a blighted area and designated it for redevelopment. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was duly created in 1948, but for 10 years it did almost nothing. Then, in 1959, Justin Herman took charge. He was the man who was most responsible for urban renewal — and, ultimately, Negro removal — in San Francisco.

Herman was a dynamic, politically connected leader who made things happen. The city acquired the properties in the area by eminent domain and began bulldozing them. In 1960, Geary Boulevard was demolished and work began on the enormous Geary Expressway.

This third great transformation of the Western Addition turned out to be the most catastrophic of all of them. Redevelopment was supposed to be a win-win-win: Corporations and real estate interests would grow, the city would increase its tax base and clean up blighted areas, and the neighborhood's residents would be compensated for their losses and relocated in better housing. If the third part did not happen, the whole endeavor would be a failure. As Herman himself wrote, "Without adequate housing for the poor, critics will rightly condemn urban renewal as a land-grab for the rich and a heartless push-out for the poor and nonwhites."

Herman's words turned out to be prophetic. There was no adequate housing for the poor, because the planning for it was fatally flawed from the beginning. Klein lists the five critical mistakes. First, the destruction of housing units was not phased: Thousands of units were demolished, and new housing not built for years. As a result, by the time housing was available, the community had scattered. Second, the redevelopment plans relied on invalid, overly optimistic predictions of turnover and vacancy. Third, the income of the displaced people was overstated. Fourth, the planning ignored segregation and racial covenants. Fifth, it relied on SROs as replacement housing, but no one wanted to live in SROs.

Facing the destruction of their community, the residents of the Western Addition organized. In 1967 a coalition of progressive ministers and community leaders, including black leaders like Hannibal Williams and Japanese American ones like Yori Wada, formed the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO) to try to save their neighborhood. They picketed the SFRA, organized and blocked bulldozers. WACO won some legal battles, managed to delay redevelopment, and got additional housing built, but it was too late. The battle was lost.

By the time the bulldozers fell silent, 883 businesses had been closed, 20,000 to 30,000 residents displaced and 2,500 Victorian houses demolished. Most of the displaced people left the neighborhood for good.

The old, racially mixed neighborhood around Japantown was trashed. The Geary Expressway, designed in part to carry commuters to department stores on Masonic that no longer exist, was not only an ugly gash, it became a Berlin Wall separating blacks and Japanese Americans. The corporate Japan Center gutted Japantown. With the exception of old people, few Japanese Americans live in Japantown today.

What happened to Fillmore Street was worse. The heart and soul of black San Francisco was torn out. The loss only exacerbated a crisis fueled by unemployment. The demise of the shipyards and the disappearance of construction jobs forced blacks to look for work in service and tourism, where all too often they faced discrimination. "It's the same old loaded dice for a Negro in San Francisco," said a Fillmore resident. "They just sugar 'em up a little." As for the big housing projects built in the 1960s, they proved to be far more efficient petri dishes for growing crime and social pathologies than the crumbling old Victorians they replaced.

Minnie's Can-Do Club, the last of the great Fillmore clubs, died in 1974. Much of the Fillmore stood empty until the 1980s. Only one of the original businesses on Fillmore remained: the New Chicago Barber Shop at O'Farrell [which closed in 2013]. Its proprietor, Reggie Pettus, coined the phrase "Fillmo' no mo'."

The phrase could apply both to a neighborhood and a community. There are fewer and fewer blacks in San Francisco. Late one summer night in 2011 I walked the entire length of Fillmore, from Geary to Haight. I saw only one black person.

Trying to make amends for the past, in 1995 the city created the Historic Fillmore Jazz Preservation District in the heart of the old Fillmore. In a well-meaning attempt to revitalize the area, the city poured $15 million into loans to launch four jazz-themed restaurants and clubs, including a swanky San Francisco branch of the great Oakland jazz club Yoshi's. But it hasn't worked. All four businesses have had to repeatedly go back to the city for more money. They're too expensive for the black residents of the area and not enough nonresidents are coming in. The peculiar, sterile vibe of this stretch of Fillmore, with its high-rises and empty public spaces, doesn't help. But the real reason the "jazz district" is a failure is simple: Jazz isn't popular. Yoshi's was losing so much money it had to start booking non-jazz acts. The whole enterprise reeks of artificiality and museum culture and guilt.

As the Victorians crashed to the ground across the Western Addition, architectural preservationists and historians began cataloging them. A number of the most significant buildings were saved, but most were destroyed.

In the late 1970s, the Queen Anne Victorian at 1690 Post was slated to be razed as part of the Japantown renovation. But in another attempt at rectification, the Redevelopment Agency decided to make it part of a city-subsidized retail development called Victorian Village. Along with five other buildings, it was moved two blocks, to where it now stands, at 1712 Fillmore.

There can be no happy ending to the tragedy of the Western Addition, but there has been one for the haunted house. The building that once housed Nippon Drugs and Jimbo's Bop City is now home to Marcus Books, the oldest African American bookstore in the United States. I walked in there one fall day. The proprietor, Karen Johnson, was sitting behind the counter. She was a distinguished-looking black woman with a short gray Afro and the sardonic, dry wit of a book person. I asked her about the building's history and what she knew about Bop City. "My parents started the store in the 1960s," she told me in a soft voice that was at once steely and wry. "Dr. Julian and Raye Richardson. [Ray Richardson was the head of the Black Studies Department at S.F. State.] It was one block up from here on Fillmore. My dad was a friend of Jimbo's. He used to go hear music there."

We talked briefly about the redevelopment fiasco. Johnson's contempt was glacial. "The store was in various locations during redevelopment," she said. "It was at Fillmore and Turk. Then we moved to Leavenworth and Golden Gate. There was a community groundswell to bring our store back to the neighborhood. Our family bought this building after it was moved. It had stood empty for seven years. They butchered it when they moved it. They messed up the plumbing, stole all the Victorian details, the fireplaces. We've been here since 1981. We're the only black business that returned to the Fillmore."

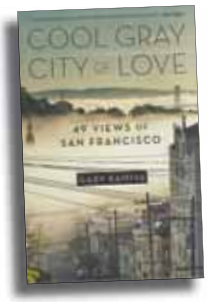
I asked Johnson where the famous back room that hosted the after-hours club was. She walked around to a table of books that stood in the center of the long, narrow room. "All of this was the back room," she said. "The restaurant in front was an add-on."

She picked up a copy of *Harlem of the West*, the book with the amazing photograph of John Coltrane on the cover. "This picture was taken right here," she said. "Isn't that the coolest thing ever?" We stood there for a moment, seeing the ghosts.

I said goodbye to Johnson and walked out onto the street. It was still a scattershot scene. A Burger King and a senior housing place stood across the road. A handsome Indian restaurant was catty-corner from a Goodwill store.

I turned and looked back at the old purple building. It had been through most of San Francisco's history: The lighthearted 1890s. The great earthquake and fire. The Little United Nations days when kids of all colors went to the same schools and lived on the same street. The decades when it was the Nippon Drugstore, run by a well-dressed man named Hatsuto — later James — Yamada. The Vout City interlude-orooni. The 15 years when it was Jimbo's Bop City, a legendary jazz club run by a black man who used to walk a little Japanese American girl across the street to find her mother. The years when everything around it was torn down. The day it was jacked up and moved. The years it stood empty. And the 32 years it has been a bookstore, owned by a family who remember what needs to be remembered.

I walked over to Geary. People hurried down the sidewalk. The traffic roared underneath. Like a great river, the city flowed indifferently on.



Excerpted with the author's permission from the critically acclaimed Cool Gray City of Love: 49 Views of San Francisco *© 2013 by Gary Kamiya. Available at Browser Books on Fillmore, Books Inc. in Laurel Village and other independent bookstores throughout San Francisco.*

■ EPILOGUE

SUSIE BIEHLER

Marcus Books shut down

The long fight to keep Marcus Books in its historic home on Fillmore Street that was once the home of the legendary Jimbo's Bop City jazz club reached another milestone — and perhaps its conclusion — when the new owners of the building locked out the owners of the bookstore on May 6. An eviction notice was posted by Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi. The contents of the building were emptied on May 21.

In an open letter emailed to supporters, the owners of the bookstore wrote:

"It was difficult to know what to tell you about our struggle to stay in our building, its winding path of lawyers and judges and protests and promises, hopes and gravities made it difficult to report our status on a curved road. But the current property owner has changed the locks to the door of 1712 Fillmore Street."

NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Days	Date	Asking	Sale
2200 Lyon St	3	2.5	1	2400	19	5/13/2014	2,100,000	2,900,000
1815 Laguna St	4	2.5	2	3412	10	5/6/2014	2,195,000	2,905,000
2938 Pine St	4	3	2		10	4/18/2014	2,700,000	2,965,000
58 Wilmot St	3	3.5	2	2689	2	4/22/2014	2,850,000	3,305,000
2514 Gough St	2	2.5	3		8	5/6/2014	1,995,000	3,400,000
2557 California St	4	4	2	3480	13	4/30/2014	3,450,000	3,610,000
3927 Clay St	4	2.5	1		5	5/14/2014	3,250,000	3,975,000
2850 Filbert St	4	3.5	1		13	5/8/2014	4,295,000	4,200,000
2946 Broderick St	4	3.5	2	3308	4	5/13/2014	4,695,000	4,999,900
2881 Jackson St	4	4	2	5000	3	5/5/2014	6,600,000	6,415,000
2800 Pacific Ave	6	5	2	6090		4/30/2014	8,900,000	8,600,000
2330 Lyon St	6	6.5	5	6175	180	4/29/2014	10,950,000	10,117,400
Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts								
1450 Post St #511	1	1	1	740	38	4/25/2014	350,000	325,000
2162 Pine St #102	0	1	0		14	5/1/2014	349,000	368,000
2999 California St #75	1	1	1	615	8	5/1/2014	525,000	530,000
1800 Washington St #414	0	1	1	476	15	4/25/2014	499,000	550,000
1905 Laguna St #306	1	1	0	685	53	5/1/2014	530,000	556,000
2145 California St #2	1	1	0	565	0	4/22/2014	539,000	600,000
2217 Pacific Ave #6	1	1	0	776	29	4/18/2014	668,000	715,000
2999 California St #302	1	1	2	989	20	4/18/2014	599,000	750,000
2230 Pacific Ave #203	1	1	1		22	5/7/2014	795,000	835,000
1521 Sutter St #507	1	2	1	799	8	5/2/2014	749,000	850,000
1914 Pine St #2	1	1.5	0	1190	11	5/6/2014	749,000	900,000
2701 Van Ness Ave #504	1	1	1		14	5/5/2014	698,000	925,000
2060 Sutter St #209	2	2	1	965	30	5/15/2014	899,000	930,000
1800 Washington St #219	2	2	1	1042	24	4/22/2014	899,000	962,500
2200 Sacramento St #506	2	2	1		2	4/22/2014	995,000	1,000,000
2299 Sacramento St #18	2	1	1	1252	12	4/22/2014	925,000	1,075,000
3065 Clay St #101	1	1.5	1	1072	18	4/28/2014	888,000	1,100,000
2831-2833 Webster St #4	3	2.5	1		31	4/23/2014	1,099,000	1,161,000
2111 Franklin St #4	2	2	1	1565	137	4/22/2014	1,300,000	1,180,000
2016 Pacific Ave #401	2	2.5	1	1154	7	5/1/2014	1,089,000	1,301,000
2253 California St	3	1.5	0	1846	37	5/1/2014	1,425,000	1,350,000
1940 Sacramento St #5	3	2	0	1700	8	4/18/2014	1,399,000	1,370,000
2255 California St	2	2.5	0	1866	35	5/1/2014	1,175,000	1,425,000
3351 Clay St #2	3	2	2		0	4/30/2014	1,498,000	1,498,000
3565 Sacramento St	3	2	1	1610	23	4/18/2014	1,450,000	1,555,000
2049 Vallejo St	2	2	2	1394	12	4/29/2014	1,499,000	1,730,000
3230 Washington St	3	2	1		7	4/25/2014	1,595,000	2,010,000
3042 Jackson St #4	2	2	1	2153	25	4/30/2014	1,895,000	2,020,000
2990 Clay St #2	2	2	1		18	4/25/2014	1,795,000	2,075,000
2100 Pacific Ave #3B	4	3.5	1	2800	51	5/9/2014	2,595,000	2,150,000
3186 Clay St	2	2	1	2043	0	5/13/2014	2,100,000	2,150,000

Soccer ball.
Tortilla chips.
Speakers.
Lawn chairs.
Cooler.
Bocce set.
Picnic blanket.
Sunglasses.
Solo cups.
Frisbee.
Parka.

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