



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

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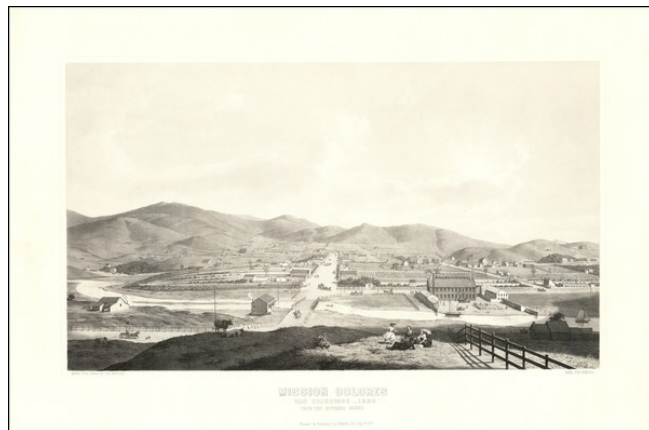
(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Mission Dolores, San Francisco - 1860, From The Potrero Nuevo

Stock#: 92264
Map Maker: Gifford

Date: 1866
Place: San Francisco
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21.2 x 14.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Printed View of San Francisco's Mission District

Rare early view of the area around Mission Dolores, the first Spanish settlement in what would become the city of San Francisco.

Drawn from Potrero Hill looking west, the image is centered on today's 16th Street. Beyond the Mission are Twin Peaks and Mount Sutro, with Kite Hill and Tank Hill visible at the right. Mission Creek appears in the foreground, flowing east toward San Francisco Bay. The present view is one of series of views of specific San Francisco neighborhoods created by Charles B. Gifford and published in San Francisco by Louis Nagel in the 1860s, and quite possibly the most desirable.

Originally inhabited by the Yelamu Tribe of Ohlone People, in 1776, Spanish Franciscan missionaries founded Mission San Francisco de Asís (more commonly known as the Mission Dolores) on a small creek which which would become known as Mission Creek. By the early 19th Century, the area around the Mission grew to include small farms, workshops, a school, hospital and residences, but with the secularization of the Upper California following the Mexican Revolution, the mission-centric local economy ended and most of the Mission District was sold to *rancheros*. For example, the Gifford's view was drawn from Portrero Nuevo (new pasture), which was owned at the time by Francisco de Haro, a *ranchero* and Alcalde of San Francisco, who commissioned the first land survey of the city (then Yerba Buena).

With the start of the California Gold Rush and urbanization of San Francisco, plank roads were built through the surrounding marshlands in order to connect downtown San Francisco to the area around the Mission. The area soon developed a reputation for unsavory forms of entertainment, including saloons, racetracks, bullfighting, and gambling. A significant portion of the land in the view was purchased by John



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Center, a Scottish Forty-Eighter who owned the "Center Woolen Mills" and surrounding lands in the foreground at right.

Gifford's view illustrates the Mission as it looked in 1860, 12 years after the discovery of Gold transformed San Francisco into a vibrant and explosively growing port city. Despite these changes immediately to the northeast of the Mission, the image retains the semi-rural quality of California prior to 1848. The area around the Mission remained disconnected the city, separated by enormous sand dunes that have since been blasted away. While a plank toll road had been built, the easiest route from the waterfront to the Mission was to sail a small boat around Mission Rock and up Mission Creek, as illustrated in the foreground of Gifford's view.

Gifford's view is also noteworthy as one of the earliest and most authentic images of the Mission. The vast majority of 19th-century depictions of the Mission District are either drawn much later or essentially retrospective, providing quasi-historical portrayals. There are surprisingly few contemporary depictions of the Mission.

The earliest surviving image of the Mission seems to be a French lithograph published in 1816, [*Danse des habitants de Californie a la mission de S. Francisco*](#), showing Native Americans engaged in a ritual dance in front of the Mission buildings. A circa 1839 drawing by Captain William Smyth illustrates the fuller extent of the Mission compound and some surrounding buildings and hills.

The first depiction birdseye view of the Mission and surrounding neighborhood was drawn by William H. Dougal in 1850 ([*Mission Dolores, Looking Towards San Francisco*](#)). This view looks northeast across Mission Dolores from Liberty Hill). We find nothing comparable until Gifford's rendition from a decade later, making it the first printed view to focus on the Mission District. The Nahl Brothers also published a version of this same view in 1860.

Rarity

The view is extremely rare. The only other known examples are held by the California State Library, the University of California Berkeley's Bancroft Library as part of the Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material, the Stanford University as part of the Reid W. Dennis collection of California lithographs, and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art.

Provenance: Charles A. Fracchia, collection (PBA Galleries, December 2022).

Detailed Condition:



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Marginal tear, expertly repaired on verso.