



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

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**Official Map Of The City Of San Francisco, California. Published by Josiah J. Lecount . . .  
Approved By Geo. R. Turner City & County Surveyor**

**Stock#:** 92058  
**Map Maker:** Britton & Co. / Le Count  
**Date:** 1859  
**Place:** San Francisco  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 23.5 x 28 inches  
**Price:** \$ 12,500.00



**Description:**

***Annotated to Show Important Court Battles and References to Dennis Mahoney, Pioneer Settler and One of San Francisco's First Entrepreneurs***

A very rare and important early map of San Francisco, based on official surveys and development plans, issued at the beginning of the Comstock Silver Rush.

This particular example refers directly to legal actions taken by Dennis Mahoney, one of the city's most influential entrepreneurs and landowners, making it a unique historical document.

This map is the definitive plan of the city produced at the very beginning of the era of the 'Comstock Lode'. Notably, the map depicts both the block and street system of San Francisco as it already existed and also as it was projected to develop in the coming years. In devising the map, Le Count was given special access to the archive of city maps, property surveys and projected development plans held by George R. Turner, Surveyor of the City & County of San Francisco. While the map was a commercial publication, given the its



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large format and exacting detail, it would have been considered invaluable by Turner's office, the Board of Supervisors and property owners.

The map shows the area of the city bounded by the Bay and westwards to Divisadero Street and as far south as Alta Street. A striking aspect of the map is that underneath the city grid along the shoreline areas is the outline of the Bay's original shoreline as it existed in 1850, before a series of massive land reclamation projects extended the city. Most notable is the crescent of land that makes up the downtown core of the city, centered on the foot of Market Street. Also noteworthy, as the extension to the city along the shoreline to the southeast of Brannan Street, as well as to the north of Telegraph Hill and the Western Addition.

At the time, the built-up, or urbanized area of San Francisco barely extended westward to Larkin Street and the areas south of Market Street were still in development. The crescent of reclaimed land around the foot of Market Street, with its various wharfs, was the most densely populated part of the city, where every block had been subdivided into lots, as depicted by the diagram below the title, the "Original Division of Lots" between Sacramento and Clay Streets. The square colored in green identifies Portsmouth Square, the original center of the town as it stood in 1849, before the land reclamation projects commenced. The pink lines that divide the city denote the boundaries of San Francisco's numbered wards.

As far west as Larkin the streets had already been laid out and most blocks were already built-up, however, the grid of street with single numbered lots in the outer areas, such as the Western Addition and Potrero Nuevo were still in the 'projected' stage, and while the streets and lots had been surveyed, very little of that we see on the map actually existed at the time, although this development plan would eventually be largely followed. The diagonal numbered grid that appears beneath the street grid the northeastern part of the Western Addition outlines the cadastral divisions according to old disputed land titles. Another proposed, but unrealized, element can be found downtown, as the grid of streets (for example, Kearney, Montgomery, Filbert and Greenwich) are shown to extend over Telegraph Hill, when, in fact, the steep topography interrupts the grid.

The map shows the city at an especially interesting time, immediately before a period of explosive growth. While the Gold Rush had been responsible for the foundation of San Francisco, it was the great wealth brought by the exploitation of silver mines in Nevada, the 'Comstock Lode', starting from 1859, that made the city truly prosperous. That year, San Francisco had a population of approximately 55,000, but this would grow to 150,000 by 1870! This map is therefore the definitive blueprint for the city's development during this transformative period.

The map includes contemporary manuscript additions numbering the named streets in the downtown area



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south of Market Street. While the streets 'First' to 'Fifth' were known as numbered streets, the succeeding streets that are today known as numbered were still named after individuals. As denoted by the numbers in manuscript, Simmons Street (is noted as "VI"), Harris ("VII"), Price ("VIII"), Johnston ("IX"), Thorne ("X"), Wood ("XI"), Brown ("XII") and Ellen Street is "XIII". During the 1860s, the new numbered system would gradually replace the archaic names.

#### **Josiah Le Count**

Josiah Le Count was one of the most important figures in the realm of printed culture in San Francisco during the 1850s. Shortly after arriving in the bustling Gold Rush town, he founded a lithography business in partnership with William B. Cooke, which was dissolved in 1852. That year he set up his own company 'Josiah J. LeCount, Manufacturer & Importer: Stationary, Law, School, Medical, & Miscellaneous Books', located in the Granite Building on Montgomery Street, in the heart of the city's printers' district.

While primarily a stationer and bookseller, he was responsible for producing several important early maps of San Francisco, including an 1852 map of the city (with Alfred Wheeler) and a map that was included in *Le Count & Strong's San Francisco City Directory for the year 1854*.

Around 1858, Le Count formed a close working relationship with the lithography firm of Britton & Rey, which was responsible for producing the present map. As noted above, Le Count was given special access to the archive of city maps, property surveys and projected development plans held by George R. Turner, Surveyor of the City & County of San Francisco. As such it immediately became an essential source map for real estate developers, speculators and related litigation.

#### **Early Provenance and Use**

The example offered here makes it evident that this document was used precisely to establish such legal claims. Two small printed slips of paper glued to the margin and the seemingly related hand-written notations on the map related to contemporary land related litigation. The short printed text, pasted in the lower-left margin, appears to be cut from a newspaper or legal document defining the extent of a plot in the Western Addition. It discusses land purchased well before the new street grid was projected and states that the holdings in question essentially run through the middle of the block separating Fulton and Grove Streets, culminating in Alamo Square.

A more prominent slip, glued to the bottom of the map, also refers to a large land-holding in the Western Addition. Here too, the purpose of the text is to formally delineate a large plot. It refers directly to the legal dispute to which this delineation pertains: *"The said action is brought to recover from said*



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*defendants, the possession of all that tract or parcel of land situate in the City and Council of San Francisco and State of California and described and bound as follows, to wit:*" The text then goes on to define a swath of land that stretches from Larkin Street to Laguna Street, and which includes all of what would soon become Lafayette Square.

Both slips have a name written in ink above them. While the smaller seemingly spells Moore or Moone, whom we cannot identify, the larger slip is headlined with the name 'Dennis Mahoney.' This is a name of some import in San Francisco history, as Mahoney was among the earliest European immigrants to settle in San Francisco. Both Dennis Mahoney Sr. and his son (same name) were influential entrepreneurs and landowners during the formative years of San Francisco.

**Dennis Mahoney Sr.** was born in Ireland in 1818 and emigrated to New York in 1838, where he married and had his first three children. Some years later, in August of 1849, he relocated to California, settling in the boom-town of San Francisco and becoming one of the city's pioneers. After his family joined him from New York, the Mahoneys would have another eight children, many of whom became notable figures in San Francisco history. Mahoney first tried his luck in mining but soon realized this was not his metier. He then set up a ranch (*Mahoney Rancho*) outside town, where he focused on raising sheep. As the Gold Rush brought in money, people, and supplies, Mahoney realized that with the population growth came the growing need for food. He set up the city's first slaughterhouse on the corner of Jackson Street and Van Ness Avenue. This enterprise made him a rich man, and Mahoney used this money to invest heavily in real estate, eventually owning some of the most valuable lands in the city.

**Other Annotations**

The map is covered with period ink annotations that define the ownership of large swathes of land in the Western Addition. A significant section at the northeast corner of Lafayette Square in what today is known as Pacific Heights is marked with the name 'Stevenson.' This is most likely a reference to a **Col. Jonathan Drake Stevenson**, who brought his First Regiment of New York Volunteers to California as early as 1846. Later Stevenson also organized the establishment of a regiment of volunteers from San Francisco. After the Mexican-American war, Stevenson settled in the mining community of Mokelumne Hill, where he was made *alcalde*. He returned to San Francisco to enter the real estate business with Dr. William C. Parker, who had been assistant surgeon in the Regiment of New York Volunteers.

In 1849, Stevenson bought the southern half of *Rancho Los Medanos*. Here he planned the new town of "New York of the Pacific"(changed to Pittsburg in 1911). He was active in Freemasonry and was both founder and grand master of the San Francisco lodge. In 1872, he was made Shipping Commissioner for the Port of San Francisco. There is a Stevenson Street in his honor as early as 1849.



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Nearby we see a four block section overwritten with the names **Herrick & Rowley**. Herrick could refer to Samuel Herrick, a well-known patent attorney from Washington, D.C. who hired famous SF trial lawyer T.L. Christianson as his California representative. However, it is perhaps more likely to refer to Ebenezer Herrick Dyer, brother Ephraim Dyer and San Francisco's biggest sugar magnate.

Below that, in large letters, is the name **Dyer**. This probably refers to **Ephraim Dyer Sr.** of Sullivan, Maine, who in 1850 sailed to California, struck by gold fever. Arriving in San Francisco, he worked various jobs and then went to Union City to work for the farmer and rancher, J.M. Horner. In 1858, Dyer was the first passenger to make the journey to Maine via the Overland Mail Railroad, exploring whether driving cattle cross country was viable. He returned to California by steamship with his new wife in 1859. They settled in Alvarado, where he was appointed U.S. Deputy Surveyor in 1861. He conducted several Government surveys for the land that extended from the Oregon border to Lake Tahoe (hence Mount Dyer).

In 1864, Ephraim Dyer, Sr. was elected Captain and Commander of the California State Militia. In 1870, he invested in his family's sugar-manufacturing business built by his brother, Ebenezer Herrick Dyer, and became a rich man. Calisphere contains at least three hand-drawn survey maps of 'ranches' executed by Ephraim Dyer in the early 1860s. This was probably done in his role as surveyor, and not as land owner.

#### **Rarity**

The map is very rare.

We are aware of only 2 examples in institutional collections (Berkeley and Stanford) and one other example in private hands.

**Provenance:** Charles A. Fracchia, historian of California and San Francisco, a Fellow of the California Historical Society, the Founder and President Emeritus of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society, and one of the founders of Rolling Stone magazine.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Glued down on old backing board, some glue and tape stains, paper toned, a few chips and small pieces missing.