EPHRAIM WILLARD BURR
A CALIFORNIA PIONEER

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a culmination of my research regarding one of California’s early pioneers. He was a gold-seeker, a financier, a politician and a dotting husband. He was industrious, secretive, and despised by his sons and daughters. Ephraim Willard Burr arrived in San Francisco in 1849 clad in New England virtuosity and an ambition that would help shape the developing west. Toward the closing of his life he thankfully left a cryptic account of his life dictated by himself to a clerk, and this and a few other documents were later deposited for safekeeping in the Bancroft Library. It is this retelling along with 18 boxes of family letters and ephemera housed in the California Historical Society that create the first part of this thesis.

The second segment of this project will focus on the creation of historical fiction in the classroom. Educational materials relating to the national, local and personal historical frameworks during Ephraim Willard Burr’s life will serve as an introduction for the process of writing historical fiction. This unit is designed to build upon research and documentation skills learned through the history and social science curriculum. Using letters, diaries, newspaper accounts and standard historical texts, students will explore the art of weaving fact and fiction. Students will fill the silences and spaces of history with their own imaginations and in doing so will learn to cherish that which is fact and that which is commentary.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The gracious support and efforts of historian Dee McBroome made this project possible. Her valuable insight and wisdom enabled me to navigate the processes of historical research and inquiry. Her knowledge and insight has been invaluable.

In the process of researching Ephraim W. Burr, Mary Morganti, the head librarian at the California Historical Society, has been wonderfully helpful and patient. Arriving at the California Historical Society after a seven-hour drive and a 45-minute BART ride, I find a reserved table with the requested boxes out and ready for me to begin my research. Her professional assistance and knowledge of the material was extremely helpful.

This project would not have been possible if wasn’t for Jeanne Overstreet who had the foresight to save all eighteen boxes of primary documents and donate them to the California Historical Society. Her respect and willingness to support the preservation of historical documents is admirable.

I would also like to thank my father, Les Overstreet, for assisting me with my research, my mother, Sue Overstreet, for her helpful suggestions, my son, Finn Hakenen, for his tireless computer support, my son, Kirk Hakenen, for his enthusiasm and patience, and my husband, Erik Hakenen, for his love and encouragement.
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INTRODUCTION

America in the 19th century was a land teeming with natural resources, readily available to those with a little ambition, gumption, and greed. Ship captains of 800-ton whalers, scoured seas and braved tempests in search of great leviathans; treasure hunters carved and blasted away the California foothills in search of mythological proportions of gold. Lumber, fish, water, petroleum, coal, gold, copper and silver were only a small part of an ever expanding, seemingly endless, stockpile of resources ready to be mined, hunted, bought and then sold. Those who were adept at profiting from others’ ambitions became wealthy: shopkeepers supplied merchandise for gold miners, and bankers financed loans for entrepreneurs. Innovations in transportation and communication allowed for goods and ideas to be transported from coast to coast.

By 1860 the United States’ population had exploded to thirty-two million including four million slaves. ¹ Demand for goods, merchandise and financing increased as the population grew. Between 1865 and 1901 the American Industrial Revolution transformed the United States from a land of small rural communities to what historian Sean Cashman calls a “compact economic and industrial unit.”² It was the urban center, according to Cashman, that propelled the United States into a leading industrial power. In the 1890s the complex, varied urban markets such as New York and San Francisco

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demanded a wide range of refined materials and manufactured goods that surpassed the railroad as the “principal stimulus of the economy as a whole.” Who were the masterminds behind such unprecedented, urban growth? Who were these men and women whose aptitude for invention and ability to harness the inventions of others catapulted the United States into rapid industrial growth and westward expansion? America, for some, was a veritable tabula rasa, a script waiting to be written, and an archetype in the making.

The shifting paradigm in the 21st century, particularly for Americans who are coming to terms with the finite reality of our once seemingly endless supply of natural resources, requires that we understand earlier attitudes towards our world and its bounty. Oil, fisheries, lumber and clean water, all plentiful resources in 1850, are now scarce if not nonexistent in many parts of the world. It is easy, therefore, to be critical of those who mined and dammed, and those who financed the mining and damming for who is to say that they knew of the possible consequences. Our 21st Century lense offers a tragic hindsight, which makes it difficult not to judge harshly and place blame. Value lies in the process of examination to see how little we have changed, how little we have learned from our mistakes, and how the greed and gumption lives on in the 21st Century. Examining the past allows us to see our likeness in those who came before us, to see ourselves in our ancestors, to recognize the greed, love and ambition and hopefully reflect upon the possible ramifications of our actions.

3 Ibid, p 16.
This is a journey intent on dispelling family myths, flushing out truth, and understanding family history. It is a project focused on finding the silent and mysterious spaces, which remain after one’s life passes. It is a project, which looks at one man’s literary, religious, personal and political influences and how he filters these influences to in turn affect a larger reality. It is a project ultimately determined to heal family wounds, which began, at least for the west coast branch of the Burr family, with the prejudices, constraints and ambitions of San Francisco’s ninth Mayor, Ephraim Willard Burr.

Perhaps we can never truly understand nor know another person. After months of reading letters, biographies, autobiographies, maps, lawsuits, and intimate diaries and endless hours of personal interviews and scrupulous inspection of photographs hoping for some clue, some shred of evidence in a furrowed brow or stoic jaw, there remains a poignant sense of mystery and silence. An empty space with which to leave be or, if one is so inclined, to fill with creative imaginings. Such is the journey into the research of my great, great, great grandfather Ephraim Willard Burr.
Ephraim Willard Burr was born March 7, 1809, in the town of Warren, Rhode Island. He was a lineal descendant of Jonathan Burr from whom are descended the American branch of the Burr family. Jonathan Burr was a physician and druggist in the town of Warren, and died when Ephraim was two years old. Ephraim attended the village school, and when he turned 14 years of age he became a clerk in a local general merchandise store, where he remained four years. Ephraim lived with his widowed mother, and attended school, where he had progressed so well as to have studied Virgil’s *Aeneid* in Latin; at the same time he was attending to his duties in the store, making himself proficient in the business.\(^4\) In all of Ephraim’s journals, diaries, ledgers, memoirs, and dictations, Virgil’s *Aeneid* stands alone as the solitary literary and archetypal influence in his life. Aside from the Bible, it appears to be the only text to have resonated within him. An exploration of the various themes found in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, therefore, will shed light upon the rational and impetus behind Ephraim Willard Burr’s journey west, his commercial ventures and his political decisions which ultimately influenced the urbanization of San Francisco.

Virgil’s unfinished historical epic, *Aeneid*, recounts the sufferings and glories of one of the great heroes of the Trojan War, Aeneas. Aeneas’ journey, preordained by an unchangeable destiny, emphasizes the grandeur of an already successful empire. Aeneas

is challenged to “lead his life through all extremities”\(^5\) committed to what the scholar Harold Bloom calls the “idea of duty.”\(^6\) Virgil’s Roman audience not only valued religious principle, financial prosperity and family loyalty, but also viewed the homeland as a source of identity, strength and moral certitude.\(^7\) At the same time it was perhaps the trials the Trojans face during the first half of the *Aeneid* that resonated so deeply for Ephraim Willard Burr. As their fleets encounter endless storms they are challenged as to which course of action to take in a constantly changing world reminding the reader of a kind of wandering that is an unavoidable reality. Ephraim Willard Burr was about to embark on a voyage west, which would test his adaptability in a world that would seem unrecognizable within the next century.

The sea and its seemingly endless resources and challenges were not simply a personal metaphor for Ephraim Willard Burr but also a national analogy. The sea and its ships found their way into the discourse of politicians in the 1840s and “when the citizen of the United States pictured his nation’s development and situation, he compared the Republic as a ship, its history as a voyage.”\(^8\) Indeed the looming crisis surrounding the eventual “Compromise of 1850” brought forth a seemingly endless sea of nautical metaphors. Harvard scholar, Alan Heimert notes that in 1845 the issue of Texas annexation presented itself to the Whigs as a question of ‘whether our old ship of state


\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid.

shall be launched upon an unknown sea- shall sail upon an unknown voyage.’ Then the Ship’s ‘captain’ ran the vessel ‘into the whirlpool of the Mexican War,’ and it was feared the Ship would go down.9 Fortunately for some, it did not and would in turn prove itself a “steady vessel” as it met the challenges that ultimately lead to the “Compromise of 1850.”10 This tenuous political stability allowed for a decade of discovery and expansion. Shortly after this political coupe, Ephraim Willard Burr, armed with his New England nautical discourse and Aeneas archetype, would leave behind his wife and children and sail west.

In 1827, the owner of the general store who employed Ephraim, decided to sell his business in Warren and remove to Providence, Rhode Island. About the time his employer determined to sell out, a wealthy and distinguished man in Warren, Rhode Island, by name of Captain Childs, visited Mrs. Burr and her son, Ephraim and asked if he would like to buy his employer’s business. Ephraim was told that he could take $3,500 and make an interest on the money and a living for himself. The boy of eighteen liked the proposition, thus early showing his business instincts, and it was agreed that he should take the store and manage it; he took charge and was allowed to draw $250 a year and one-half of the profits, for his share.11

Captain Childs then suggested that Ephraim apply for an appointment to West Point. Ephraim was pleased with the idea, and made his application to be appointed to

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
the Academy, securing the recommendation of many prominent men of the State of Rhode Island, members of the State Senate, and that of the Governor. The appointment, however, was given to the son of a prominent officer. At an early age Ephraim learned that resiliency was needed in order to survive in a world where nothing is given freely except perhaps to those in influential positions.

Ephraim did not go to college but continued in business, and when he was twenty-one had $4,000 to his credit. In that year, 1830, he went into the shipbuilding, and merchandising business with a Mr. Joseph Smith, with whom he was in partnership with until he came to the Pacific Coast. In 1831, having established himself as a successful businessman, he married Captain Child’s daughter Abby Miller Child, and between the years 1836 and 1846 they had five children whom where raised and educated in Warren, Rhode Island.

As early as 1760, the town of Warren, Rhode Island was well known as a whaling port. Ship-building also contributed to Warren’s financial prosperity; however, with the advent of the Revolution it was clear that this town would suffer immense losses. Indeed on May 25, 1778, it was raided by British and Hessian troops, the Baptist meeting-house was burned, dwellings ransacked, and property ruthlessly destroyed. Boats were burned,

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12 Burr- Allyne Papers, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California.
13 “Ephraim Burr Biographical Materials,” H.H. Bancroft Collection, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California. It is uncertain who wrote this biography, but as it is historically accurate it is perhaps important to note the influential details mentioned. This may have been an autobiography dictated by E.W. Burr himself, as there are two additional “rough drafts” in the Bancroft Collection.
and citizens were taken prisoners. At the close of the Revolution, Warren was a
devastated town. Within a decade, however, Warren had resumed ship-building and for
more than half a century this town was famous as well as infamous for the fine vessels
launched from its yards. These vessels engaged in whaling, merchant service, and the
notorious triangle trade of sugar, molasses, rum and slaves.$^{15}$

Shipbuilding and transport by sea was vital to the economic and financial
prosperity of the newly created nation. The natural resources of America were
inaccessible in the early 1800’s because of the primitive state of technology,
transportation, and communications. The whales were any nation’s natural resource and
furthermore, the whales were directly off shore- the New Englanders had only the sea to
turn to for sustenance.$^{16}$ Indeed, Warren was home to the largest whaling vessel in
American service. This 807-ton ship was aptly named the Sea.$^{17}$ Ephraim Burr, with his
experience as a successful business owner, would naturally gravitate to the most lucrative
and vigorous industry of his day. In 1849 Burr, Smith and Company joined business
ventures with the prominent house of N.L. and G. Griswold to form a whaling business.
Ephraim Willard Burr had “control of the Griswold business for three years” during

$^{15}$ “History of Warren, The Town of Warren, Rhode Island Incorporated 1747,”
<http://townofwarren-ri.gov/visitor/history.htm> (May 18, 2008) Prior to the Revolution Rhode
Island was the primary source for trafficking slaves. “This traffic formed one leg of a triangular
route, which brought molasses form the West Indies to Rhode Island, whose distilleries
transformed it to rum. This liquor was bartered along the African coast for slaves, or back home
for domestic service in the mansions of the merchants or on the plantations of South County.”

$^{16}$ David Moment, The Business of Whaling in America in the 1850’s, pp 262-263.

$^{17}$ Ibid, p 269.
which time he managed (was Agent for) four whaling vessels one of which was the famous *Niantic*.\(^{18}\)

In 1849, Burr, Smith and Company and N.L. and G. Griswold sent their whaling ship *Niantic* and Captain Cleveland on a whaling voyage to the Pacific. Arriving in Callao, the Captain heard news of the discovery of gold in California, and determined to take his vessel to Panama, and there embark passengers for California. Sailing to Panama, he adapted and transformed his whaling outfit, took a shipload of passengers for a total of $45,000 in five-dollar gold pieces, and set sail for San Francisco.\(^{19}\) Ephraim Willard Burr and his business partners did not learn of her reinvention and arrival in San Francisco until after the receipt for $45,000 in passenger money had been sent home in gold coin from Panama.\(^{20}\) Whether Ephraim Willard Burr had a secret desire to also pursue the mythos of riches and grandeur or he was simply protecting his lucrative investments we perhaps will never know for certain. Soon after the *Niantic* arrived in Pacific Northwest, Ephraim Willard Burr, as “agent of the *Niantic*”\(^{21}\) set sail in pursuit. His purported intentions were to bring the *Niantic* home. Neither ever returned.\(^{22}\)


\(^{19}\) “Ephraim Burr Biographical Materials,” H.H. Bancroft Collection, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California. The discovery that E.W. Burr was one of the owners of the *Niantic* is of great importance, as there are very few primary documents (ship logs, letters, etc.) that date prior to 1850. The biographies at the Bancroft confirm what was “family legend” and what was perhaps assumed but not known for certain. The *Niantic* also offers an interesting metaphor for E.W. Burr’s journeys and personal transformations, as the *Niantic* went through various adaptations to survive.


\(^{21}\) Ibid.

\(^{22}\) Dale L. Morgan, “California As I Saw It: First- Person Narratives of California’s Early Years, 1849-1900,” <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/ > (May 28, 2008). These narratives provide valuable insight into the ship *Niantic* and its historical significance. Mathews writes: “The ship
There are several published, detailed, narratives, which describe the *Niantic*’s voyage. John M. Letts, upon finally departing from Panama enroute to San Francisco, details his experiences in one such narrative:

“At 4 P.M. all the passengers were on board. The captain was still on shore, and there was an intense anxiety manifested. Many had come on board in feeble health; some who had purchased tickets had died on shore; many on board were so feeble that they were not expected to live. I was one of the number; we all felt that getting to sea was our only hope, and all eyes were turned toward shore, fearing the captain might be detained. At half-past five his boat shoved off, when all on board were electrified. As he neared the ship all that were able prepared to greet him, and some, whose lungs had been considered in a feeble and even precarious state, burst out into the most vociferous acclamations. At half-past six, the *Niantic* swung from our moorings, and was headed for the mouth of the ‘Gulf of Panama.’ Again the shouts were deafening. No reasonable politician could have wished a greater display of enthusiasm…”

The narratives describe somber burials at sea, tense arguments with Captain Cleveland, and the viewing of San Francisco for the first time: “We feel that we have attained the acme of our ambition, that we have really entered the ‘Golden Gates.’”

The *Niantic* would endure the transformation from whaler to passenger vessel and then once “high and dry” in San Francisco from warehouse to hotel. Ephraim Willard

*Niantic* was a slow sailing, bluff bowed, three masted, full rigged sailing ship engaged in the China trade originally owned by the prominent house of N. L. and G. Griswold of New York. She was sold to Burr and Smith of Warren, R.I. In 1848, and under command of Captain [Henry] Cleveland, who had his two sons as first and second mates, sailed from Warren on September 16, 1848, for the Pacific where her operations were to commence. Putting into port at Payta, she found a communication from Mr. Nelson, the American Consul at Panama, and urging a passenger certainty versus a whaling venture” pp 16-17. The *Niantic* never returned due to a lack of crew to sail her home and Ephraim never returned initially for the same reason, but later the economic opportunities in San Francisco proved to be too great to return to Rhode Island.

23 Ibid, p 19.
Burr’s adaptability would also be put to test, for unbeknownst to him, Captain Cleveland sold the *Niantic* to parties in San Francisco, who at high tide, hauled her ashore. Her masts were taken out, her rigging removed, piles driven on each side to keep her steady, and she was used as a storehouse at the spot what is now Sansome and Clay. Ephraim Willard Burr arrived in San Francisco soon after, intent upon rescuing not only the *Niantic* but also the last remnants of a dieing industry. Alas, this would not be his fate for he could find neither ship nor crew to sail him home. The sailors, having heard the call of gold had literally abandoned ship, leaving hundreds of ships “high and dry” in the shallow bay. Even before the days of 1849 crews were jumping ship at the tempting ports of Hawaii (then called the Sandwich Islands) and California. After 1849 these departures only increased and by the time Ephraim Willard Burr arrived in San Francisco on March 15, 1850, just six months before California was admitted to the Union as the

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25 Greg Pabst, “High and Dry.” *Gold Rush City: San Francisco in the California Gold Rush,* <http://gregnoevly.home.mindspring.com/welcome.html> (May 28, 2008). Frank Marryat, an Englishman and traveler, wrote and illustrated *Mountains and Molehills* in which he illustrated the *Niantic* as it served as a warehouse. In illustration of the *Niantic* can be found at the above website. “High and dry” was an expression used to refer to the ships that were pulled ashore and subsequently turned into hotels, shops or warehouses.

26 Joe Pomerantz, “The Niantic: Ship, Spring, Store, Hotel.” *San Francisco Thinkwalks- Ecology, art and social history,* <http://www.thinkwalks.org/sfstories/niantic.htm> (May 20, 2008). The ship gradually became less of a ship and more of a building. It was rented out as a hotel, an office and a store. In 1851 the “ship” burnt to water- level. Water- soaked sand prevented combustion of the hold and its contents. A three- story hotel, also named the *Niantic*, was built on the remnant hull. It was said to be the nicest hotel in the city. When, in 1872, the hotel was demolished and replaced, the hull was rediscovered along with 35 baskets of Jacquesson Fils champagne that had been stored before the fire. After the 1906 Great Quake and Fire, the building was again rebuilt, and French champagne was again found in the ruins. The same again happened in 1977 when new construction was underway at 85 Sansome. The bottles, still in their original packing crates, as well as other artifacts and drawings of the *Niantic*, are on display at the Maritime Museum in San Francisco.

27 See footnote 25.
31st state, any captain foolish enough to anchor in San Francisco was inviting the loss of his crew and even himself.28

There were so few sailors to be found, that Ephraim Willard Burr found himself stranded. As he took stock of possible business opportunities, he realized that money could be made in the new state of California. What the gold-seekers and western pioneers needed were supplies and food. Within two weeks of his arrival he bought a crewless sailing vessel named the Charleston for $70029 and set up a market and merchandise store with a Mr. John Mattoon and Mr. Edmund Maston, forming the firm Burr, Mattoon and Company on April 25, 1850.30 Ephraim Willard Burr dictated these early business ventures to a Mr. Donovan on Thursday, December 14, 1882:

“We did business here as wholesale grocers for three or four years. We were located under where the Shermans building is now on Clay Street. It was a little wooden building about 20 x 45 and in September of that year we built a new store on what is now 524 Washington between Sansome and Montgomery. In that interim of three months that we stayed in the store on Clay Street Mr. Nichols came here from Boston and he and myself bought a 50 vara lot right at the corner of Jones and Montgomery where we built five stores.”31

No matter that the horrific fire of May 185132 burnt all their buildings to the ground. The very next day they opened a store on the north side of Jackson Street

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29 Burr-Allyne Family Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California.
30 Ephraim Burr, Dictation, H.H. Bancroft Collection, Bancroft Library.
31 Ibid, p 2. His dictation describes the various businesses that rented his buildings: auctioneers and sheet iron works.
32 “San Francisco Gold Rush Chronology 1850-1851,” The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist/chron6.html> (May 16, 2008). This was the fifth great fire to almost completely destroy San Francisco. The entire business district was destroyed including all but the buried hulk of the ship Niantic.
between Front and Battery and an additional store alongside the ship Edwin which had been hauled in as a storehouse. Ephraim Willard Burr wasted no time in establishing himself as a successful businessman who would not be deterred by fate in the form of wayward sailors or ravaging fires. By 1852 he had not only built two additional stores, one on California and a brick store on Front, but had ventured out into the gold country seeking his fortune in gold quartz. As early as 1850 he details in letters to his wife and children his love affair with gold.

“Saturday Evening Aug. 31, 1850
My own dear wife,
I wrote you a good long letter on the 27th thinking it would suffice for this mail but the thought struck me this evening as I was putting up some gold dust for Mr. Griswold to send you a small sample that in case you required you could use it if not it will do to keep. I have sent in a box consigned to Mr. Griswold a small round tin box soldered up at each end containing 15 oz. 9 grains which are very beautiful specimens of course and fine grains and dust gold and much richer than any I have before seen. The fine was washed out by Mr. Mattoon who I was with, and the coarse was sent to me from Mariposa. On Monday I shall set out with Mr. Nichols and four other gentlemen on a tour to the Southern mines near Mariposa. We have we think got track of a gold quartz mine of great value which the world

34 The Pacific Steamer News, May 15, 1851. Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 11, California Historical Society, San Francisco. A New York newspaper reports: “Rising from the Ashes. Our establishment has been entirely destroyed. The burnings of Moscow, and the great fire of 1666 in London, perhaps alone exceeded in extent and loss the conflagration that San Francisco witnessed on Saturday night. Not blocks alone were burning at the same instant, but a sheet of flame covering perhaps 20 acres above which hung the dense clouds of smoke, imparting an awful grandeur to the scene, exceeding description. In order that the burden may be as light as possible, creditors should practice as much forbearance as possible. And thus prevent any further disasters. Let this be done and we shall not despair of seeing our city again rise from its ashes, assume the business and activity and commercial regularity which has characterized it for the past few months.” Listed among the sufferers and their losses: Burr, Mattoon and Co. all buildings and stocks of goods. This complete and original newspaper edition resides in the Allyne- Burr papers in the California Historical Society.
has not heard of. I shall be absent about three weeks and of course I shall not write by the next steamer but when I get back I hope to tell you that my PILE is made.
Your affectionate husband,
E.W. Burr

He, like so many other pioneers, had become fascinated with gold. The allure of grand wealth, however, was not enough to keep him inland for long- the rough living conditions and “drunkard” and “vagabond” characteristics of the miners did not appeal to his New England sensibilities. He attempted ownership of mine claims from afar, but this did not prove successful. He would not, whether by fate or freewill, make his “pile” in the gold mines.

Mr. William Hubbell, gold-seeker and swindler, “discovered” a quartz claim June 19, 1850 in Placer County and was quick to enlist investors, one of whom was Ephraim Willard Burr. Ephraim was able to entice an additional investor from New York, Mr. John W.D. Morgan, and the two men financed Mr. Hubbell’s foothill adventures. Dozens of letters written by Mr. Hubbell document his constant need of financing for supplies and machinery that was never put to use. For two years Mr. Hubbell attempted to claim possession of the “Quartz Lead” mine, but the miners wouldn’t have it, having laid claim to the mine themselves. In correspondence to Ephraim Willard Burr on March 15, 1852 Mr. Hubbell laments the leaving of the sheriff “for after he is gone I have no doubt there will be a crowd of miners who will try to assassinate me in some way. They have sworn

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35 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters to Abby Child, Box 1, California Historical Society.
36 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters from Business Partners, Box 1, California Historical Society.
37 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters from Business Partners, Box 1. “Jump the Claim” was a common occurrence in which the miners could claim a mine and its proceeds without actually owning the land.
vengeance against me. I would not like to receive the same blows I did before and had I been alone or without the Officer I should have been killed.”38 Had it been Ephraim Willard Burr himself negotiating with the miners perhaps the outcome would have been more successful. Mr. Hubbell was disturbed by his inability to persuade the miners and laments, “Can I not do something to break their prejudice? You have no idea what a disturbance this is when around the prejudice of miners. Still we must take possession of it (Quartz Lead Mine) at the proper time or we never can.”39 They never did and Ephraim realized that perhaps the quest for gold was more difficult than he had realized.

When John W.D. Morgan wrote on June 18th of 1852 that he must exit the “Hubbell Claim” due to factory investments in New York, Ephraim Willard Burr also abandoned his attempt at owning a mine share, not having received even a dust of gold for the hundreds of dollars he sent Hubbell’s way.40 However, the seduction of making his “pile” in the California foothills remained unsatiated; it was the modus operandi of his time and the treasure hunt of his dreams. He would return, therefore, to a mining region named “Las Mariposas” twenty years later in an attempt to salvage what John C. Fremont abandoned in 1863.41

Ephraim Willard Burr’s life, like so many other pioneers, was forever altered by the discovery of gold and the quest to reap its rewards. The announcement of James Marshall’s discovery at Sutter’s Mill had an effect of immediate economic stability at a

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38 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters from Business Partners, Box 1, California Historical Society.
39 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters from Business Partners, Box 1, California Historical Society.
40 Ibid.
41 Allan Nevins, Fremont, Pathmarker of the West, (University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp 583-587.
time of threatening economic depression in the Western world. Reeling from the costs of
the Mexican War and the release of the American Army into an already burgeoning
unemployed labor market had put tremendous financial strain on the economy. Other
countries also benefited from the optimism that gold brought. Rebellion in Ireland and
the ravages of cholera in England had been detrimental to her trade and the news of gold
not only brought businessmen from New England but people from all over the world.42 It
was an illusion of wealth, however, that acted as a trajectory into the future, catapulting
urbanization and commercial wealth as the support services prospered even at the
expense of the miners’ seedy ambition.

In late 1851 Ephraim Willard Burr turned his focus solely to establishing himself
by the means he knew best: commerce and finance within a growing urban center. The
gold would have to come to him by way of commerce. Ephraim Willard Burr had arrived
at one of the West Coast’s fastest growing natural harbors. The city was rapidly
transforming from a city of tents and shacks, to one of brick and stone buildings; sheet
iron buildings and granite buildings put San Francisco on par many Atlantic seaboard
cities.43 In a letter addressed to his wife he describes the burgeoning prosperity.

“San Francisco Aug. 2, 1851
Dearest wife,
Building goes on famously, in fact San Francisco when I arrived and San
Francisco now, are wonderfully different. Large and beautiful buildings are going

42 Dean Albertson, “The Discovery of Gold in California as Viewed by New York and London,”
The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco,
(May 15, 2008). By 1856 a traveler would have sixty hotels to choose from, one of which was the
Niantic on the corner of Clay and Sansome.
up in every direction. The town is full of people and I meet daily hundreds of men I have known in the stores. I have made several efforts as to counting the multitudes that pass my stores and have found it to range from 62 to 70 per minute. You would think the place was a century old. On Montgomery Street there are at least 30 brick buildings of three and four stories which have been erected since the fire of May.”

An article from The Daily Examiner in 1888 reflects upon the impacts the early merchants had upon this city. “They have lifted the village of Yerba Buena (San Francisco) into the second city in commercial importance of the Union. Much of this is due to the men of trade and merchandise. But if in their struggle they have acquired fortunes and have grown gray, they have the satisfaction of leaving behind them the worthy sires who can, with the energy of youth and sturdy loyalty to the city of the Golden Gate, take up the burden which they so valiantly carried in the days of struggle and adversity.” Ephraim Willard Burr was one of many men to set up shop and benefit from the symbiotic relationship between entrepreneur and urbanization. Having finally established a prosperous foothold and confident in the city’s ability to prosper, he sent for his wife and five children.

Ephraim Willard Burr arranged for a Mr. Timothy Elisworth to accompany his family on their journey west. They traveled from New York by ship, across the Isthmus of Panama by mule, and arrived by steamer in San Francisco on March 15, 1852. With

44 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters to Abby Child, Box 1, California Historical Society.
45 “Coming Merchants”, The Daily Examiner, May 6, 1888. (Microfiche Newspaper Collection, San Francisco State University.)
46 Burr-Allyne Papers, Elsie Burr’s Diary, Box 5, California Historical Society. Elsie recalls her father (Edmund Burr’s) experience. “The Burrs, six strong, the eldest 18, came via Nicaragua overland on muleback- the mother leading, the eldest carrying my five year old father on the saddle in front. The tails of the mules tied to the bridles of the following one. Camped on the
five children, they needed a large home, and none of any decent proportions was to be had. There were, however, plenty of deserted ships in the harbor. Ephraim Willard Burr bought the Charleston, a sailing vessel tied up at Clark’s Point at the foot of Broadway, for $700, and moved his family in. Here they lived, Ephraim Willard Burr going daily to attend to business and the children going to shore to attend school. The family lived on the Charleston for nine months while Ephraim Willard Burr and his wife Abby Miller Burr hiked over the hills and sand dunes of the embryo city looking for land to buy. Abby Miller Burr did not fancy living in “the middle of the sand dunes” and while she did not mind a walk into the center of the city, she wanted a view of the Golden Gate.47

Everybody who owned a home in the city had to fight for his property in those days. No man could tell how many claims to it might crop up overnight. Everybody was trying to oust somebody else.48 The irregular 100 vara (a vara was thirty-three and one-third inches) section they finally agreed upon extended from Polk and Greenwich down to Laguna and Lombard on the edge of the Marina (then called Washerwoman’s Lagoon),

sand waiting for the steamer were my father’s happiest reflections where they ate boiled sea gulls, which were peddled by an opportunist. Two 4-berth cabins had been reserved for the Burrs for the Pacific trip but a stranded vessel made them double up and the two older boys slept in the lounge- the five year old in a trunk in the cabin. En route three of them contracted the measles.”

48 Ibid. In 1848 the Alcalde Leavenworth, after whom Leavenworth Street is named, had a survey made, known as the Laguna survey, which comprised twenty-six vara lots. A copy of this survey can be found in the Burr papers at the California Historical Society. These lots were comprised in a rectangular oblong running from the southwest to the northwest diagonally across the lines of the official survey and comprising the property on both sides of Van Ness Avenue from Vallejo Street to Chestnut. These properties were sold to various tenants by the Alcalde and in a brief time a regular colony settled there and remained isolated from the rest of the city.
and then swung west to Gough and Vallejo. The corner of Van Ness and Filbert was chosen for the home site.49

In 1852 there were few, if any, saw mills, and what new houses there were had been imported from eastern states. To compound the shortage of lumber in the city, the fire in May of 1851 and the rebuilding of the city required the use of any reserve lumber. Therefore, Ephraim Willard Burr, like many new homebuilders, arranged to have his house prefabricated “back East” and sent around the Horn. It was actually two houses, which once joined together in a T-form, made a dwelling of eight rooms with a large basement. All the material for the house was on hand except the lime for making the mortar. To obtain the necessary amount Ephraim Willard Burr employed men, who said they understood the burning of lime, to hunt for a deposit of limestone. This was eventually found at the foot of Mount Diablo. The house was plastered with the limestone, but unfortunately the “burners of the stone” were not sufficiently experienced and as a consequence during the next ten years the walls constantly broke out in blisters by the gradual slaking of the lime. Ephraim Willard Burr’s son, Edmund Burr, would later write, “aside from the half- fallen adobe walls of the Mexican barracks at the Presidio, there were no other similar dwellings.”50 The house was completed in

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49 Ibid. In 1891 the board voted to extend Van Ness Avenue through Ephraim Willard Burr’s property to the bay. He protested the move, but to no avail. The home was moved in order to accommodate Van Ness. The home was later dynamited to supposedly stop the fires that resulted from the 1906 earthquake. On the foundation on the old house the present building was erected from plans drawn along similar lines to those of the original house but with modern additions.

50 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 5. California Historical Society. Edmund Burr recalls in his writings how terrified the children were in this house. At night the coyotes would howl keeping the children awake. They were much happier on the Charleston. “Trees covered the slopes of all the hills as far as one could see with exception of the sand dunes. It was not uncommon sight to see
November 1852 and the family walked a trail, which later became Presidio Road, through the sand dunes and into the city each day.51

During much of the following year Ephraim Willard Burr worked with John Archibald and John P. Buck to form the first savings association in California, the San Francisco Accumulating Fund Association, which opened in 1854 as Ephraim Willard Burr for its first president, where he remained president for 21 years.52 This savings association reflected the financial prosperity of early entrepreneurs and opportunists. Indeed it had only been two decades since the city’s commercial era began. “The tide and tallow trade that flourished in the early 1800s required no bankers, and the Yankee skippers paid cash for their merchandise and kept their money in the ship’s strong box.”53 It wasn’t until the gold rush of late 1848 and early 1849 that pioneers, financiers and urban developers created a need for banking.54 It was the prosperity of the city itself, which gave impetus for Ephraim Willard Burr’s first truly successful business.

The San Francisco Savings and Loan Society, commonly known as the Clay Street Bank, opened June 22, 1854, with Ephraim Willard Burr as its president. Its members paid $5 each month, and a penalty of 25 cents was exacted from those who failed to pay their installment. Loans were made mostly to the members, and were repaid

deer and other wild animals in the valley which led down to a lagoon called Washerwoman’s Bay.”
51 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box8. California Historical Society. “The view,” however, was “wonderful”.
52 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1. California Historical Society. “In July, 1856, a meeting, which was held in one of the courtrooms in the old City Hall. The courtroom was full of people who all joined the enterprise.”
54 Ibid.
by the $5 installment upon as many shares as were required, in order to repay the loan within a certain specified time.\textsuperscript{55} For the first six months the deposits were about $18,000; they continued to grow until they reached $300,000 to $400,000 per month. At first there was no capital stock, and in 1867 the bank reorganized with a paid-in capital of $500,000, incorporated with Ephraim Willard Burr continuing as president, John Archibald, vice-president, and William F. Herrick as secretary.\textsuperscript{56} The San Francisco Almanac for 1859 carried a full-page advertisement for the Savings and Loan Society listing all officers for whom T. H. Hittell states in History of California “the conductors of it were all first-class men—men who were known and had been tried and could be relied on.”\textsuperscript{57}

However innocent Ephraim Willard Burr’s intentions, it is evident by the multitude of lawsuits on file at the California Historical Society that Ephraim Willard Burr found himself in the very least complicit in various schemes by others and perhaps himself to get rich. He was never indicted, but after the Call ran nine columns on July 1, 55 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1. California Historical Society. This method continued in existence for one year, and was then discontinued because it was found that the penalty for nonpayment of the monthly installment was a hardship on the poorer members.

56 Amy R. Russell, “Early Years of William F. Herrick,” California Historical Quarterly, pp 229-232. William Herrick, an engraver at the Alta California newspaper and the San Francisco Evening Bulletin, left engraving during the height of the Vigilante excitement, to join the Savings and Loan Association as detailed in a letter from his wife Lucy Kendall Herrick to his mother, “he needed more remunerative work” to support his growing family of eleven. However, he continued his engraving. The San Francisco Directory for 1859 lists him both as “wood graver and secretary of the Savings and Loan Society.”

57 Ibid, p 232. T.H. Hittell, History of California, (San Francisco, 1898), III, pp 656-57. Other trustees named were Albert Miller, John P Buckley, S.B. Stoddard, M.S. Whiting, James de Fremery, C.O. Gerberding, Thomas P. Bevans, Charles Pac, Frederick Hennell; attorney, Giles H. Gray; surveyor, Garner Elliot. The minutes of the society’s meetings in W.F. Herrick’s handwriting are preserved in the state library at Sacramento.
1878 covering several lawsuits, including one filed by the United States government itself, against Ephraim Willard Burr, President of the Savings and Loan Society and W.H. Culver, President of the Masonic bank, Ephraim Willard Burr retired from his position as President of the Savings and Loan Society. He argued successfully that “untrustworthy swindlers” had deceived him and the suit was dropped. Regardless, in the early 1850s Ephraim Willard Burr and other investors prospered and the necessary capital for further economic development benefited not only the developing metropolis, but also the business owners themselves. Indeed, his business ventures at the Clay Street Bank allowed him to amass a personal estate valued at $6 million.

By the summer of 1856 San Francisco was in economic and political turmoil. The historian Thomas Bender, reflecting on the possibilities of long-distance trade and increase of mobility and circulation of people during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notes that this rapid conflagration created “new kinds of conflict” for which some were “reactionary, seeking to restore” while “others would nervously embrace the new.” San Francisco emerged out of a variety of immigrant groups drawn together by

58 “Charge Against A President,” *New York Times*, September 1, 1878. The lawsuits brought on by the U.S. government charging that Ephraim Burr made a commission from “bogus” Navy pay certificates. It was charged that Ephraim Burr knew that Mr. George M. Pinney owed the two banks $500,000 which was lost in stock and mining operations and that Ephraim Burr and a Mr. Culver were aware of the worthless character of the Navy pay certificates as securities at the time they lent the banks money on them; that Burr was in receipt of a five percent commission on the loans he made to Pinney; that Pinney and Culver were in partnership in stock speculations; that Pinney returned to the city upon agreement that Burr and Culver would shield him from prosecution.
60 William F. Heintz, *San Francisco’s Mayors*, p 44.
the California gold rush and seeking, as one journalist wrote in the *Journal of West*, a “sense of identity, security and fulfillment.” One newcomer declared: “What a port! What a town! What a population! French, Germans, Mexicans, English, Americans, Irish, and even Chinese, white, black, yellow, brown, Protestants, Catholics, atheists, thieves, convicts, assassins; behold the population of San Francisco!”\(^{62}\) The result of such an influx was that people of common backgrounds, unable to cope with such anomic aspects of a rapidly growing city, grouped together for not only companionship but also survival.\(^{63}\) Ephraim Willard Burr, in order to satisfy he and his family’s transplanted Yankee social needs, found themselves identifying with other New Englanders in San Francisco’s First Unitarian Church. The Unitarian Church provided much of their social life and drive to recreate in their new home what they considered civilized attributes of society that they left behind.\(^{64}\) So it was that Ephraim Willard Burr found himself in 1856 aligned with other Protestants, who in the political chaos of 1856 were blaming the Catholics for the instability, despotism and violence in the city.

Ephraim Willard Burr, by 1856 a successful banker and financier, also aligned himself with the struggling merchants. The market was glutted with supplies. By 1856, word had spread that more money could be made by selling provisions to miners, city dwellers and wayward travelers. The result was a surplus of supplies and a rapid drop in


\(^{63}\) Ibid, p 600.

\(^{64}\) Interview, Jeanne Overstreet, May 3, 2008, Family archivist and great daughter-in-law to E.W. Burr.
profits. To compound matters, several prominent banks had overextended themselves in railroad speculation, shipping gold dust to the East and political backing.\textsuperscript{65} One such bank was the banking house of Palmer, Cook, and Co. which acted as “bondsman” for state and local Democrat officials.\textsuperscript{66} In June of 1856, while the Vigilantes Committee was destroying the local Democratic Party, it failed to meet the interest payments on state and city bonds and went out of business. The result of prominent bank failure was a “run on the banks” which only compounded the already dire situation. Ephraim Willard Burr was a shrewd and cautious businessman. In the midst of all the financial turmoil, the Clay Street Bank remained successful, employing men, making calculated loans, and reinvesting profits.\textsuperscript{67} His ability to weather financial storms did not go unnoticed by other merchants and members of the Vigilantes Committee. In fact, when it came time for the November 1856 city elections, he was the Vigilantes’ number one man.\textsuperscript{68}

In 1856 San Francisco was also reeling from a sense of rumored lawlessness. Accusations of falsified ballots characterized city elections. Rumors circulated that gangs of ballot box stuffers had tampered with ballots of the Van Ness election in 1855.


\textsuperscript{66} “Palmer, Cook and Co. Their Connection With the Fremont-Mariposa Estate,” \textit{New York Times}, Allyne- Burr Papers, California Historical Society. This article, found in Ephraim Willard Burr’s business papers, details the financial backing from Palmer, Cook and Co. Bank of Fremont’s “Las Mariposas” in which Trenor Park, then manger of the estate for Fremont, testifies to the extent of the bank’s investments. Unfortunately, the date of the article has been removed, but by inference it appears to be August 31, 1858.

\textsuperscript{67} Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 11. California Historical Society. The ledgers detail the profit margins of the Clay Street Bank, and although there is no specific evidence that it was Ephraim Burr himself who made the bank profitable, as President of the bank he must have had the final say in investments and employment.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
Furthermore, the Democrats were accused of racking up a $4 million dollar deficit. The accusations of indebtedness, wielded by troubled merchants and laborers, were not necessarily the wrongdoings of the Democrats who had became an easy scapegoat, but the shady dealings of the city treasurer under the Know-Nothing administration of Mayor Webb in 1854.69 Rumors of random violence, theft and miscreant activities filled the streets but were not validated in the press except by way of editorials written by men like James King who were “self-appointed, nonpartisan, moral leaders of the city.”70

The historian Robert Senkewicz observed that the common historical view of the press during the early 1850s was that “political violence and fraud were widely practiced, making it virtually impossible to topple the rotten system.”71 However, the events that lead to the San Francisco Vigilance Committee’s nomination of Ephraim Willard Burr for Mayor in 1856 were perhaps not as violent as advertised. The fear-mongering by editorials in the press was perhaps more a process of scapegoating the Democratic Party for the effects of several years of exorbitant fiscal expenditures, ravages of fires and the economic uncertainty of a developing city.72 It was also more of an attempt to oust the Democratic organization that was largely dominated by Catholics.73 As Senkewicz argues that for “all the talk of corruption and fraud,” the San Francisco political system

71 Ibid, p 104.
72 Ibid, p 82. For a more detailed discussion on the effects that surplus inventory had on merchants’ economic prosperity and the “weathering of markets” see Senkewicz’s chapter: scapegoats.
from 1851 to 1855 was more of a “competitive one.”\textsuperscript{74} The Whigs won in 1851 and 1852, the Democrats in 1853, the Know-Nothings in 1854, and the Democrats in 1855, and in these five years, only in the 1854 elections were there “specific incidents of serious violence connected with voting.”\textsuperscript{75} Senkewicz also argues that for all the brawls, spinning revolvers, and good old fashioned hitting, “election riots” were entertaining, made the press, and promoted political organization\textsuperscript{76}.

Opposition to the Democratic machine was Protestant and so were the majority of members of the Vigilance Committee of 1856, a “reform association” organized to rid the city of lawlessness. According to the Reverend Isaac Brayton, editor of the leading Protestant newspaper in the city, the \textit{Pacific}, Protestant endorsement of the 1856 Committee was overwhelming. The great majority of Protestant clergymen in San Francisco agreed with his view\textsuperscript{77}.

Protestants often spoke of lawlessness, politics, and Catholics as one entity. James King, the editor of the San Francisco \textit{Evening Bulletin} wrote in April 1856: “Our public men are the most notorious scoundrels in the community.” James P. Casey, an

\textsuperscript{74} Robert Senkewicz, \textit{Vigilantes in Gold Rush San Francisco}, p 107.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, p 116.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, p 108. Senkewicz quotes one such scene from \textit{The Chronicle}, May 29, 1855: “About half past one o’clock, a Democrat accused a Know-Nothing of circulating spurious Democratic tickets…The Democrat drew a revolver and then beat his opponent over the head, but the belligerents were finally separated. The affair occurred in the midst of a dense crowd and several policemen tried to get at the combatants, but the Democrats managed to carry off their man, and after they supposed him to be beyond danger of arrest, they gave three cheers for the Democratic Party,” p 108.
Irish- Catholic city official and member of the Democratic Party shot him one month later. Ephraim Willard Burr, witness to the shooting, dictated the events in his memoir:

“I was standing on the corner of Washington and Montgomery when I saw a man come out of a saloon, walk out into the middle of the street, drop his cloak, deliberately raise his pistol and shoot Mr. King in the shoulder. Mr. King was crossing diagonally from the Montgomery Block and he had got within 15 feet of the crossing.”

The murder gave many citizens who were opposed to the Democratic organization a martyr in James King. As one citizen recalled “during the first 36 hours after the shooting there were 2,600 names enrolled in the Vigilance Committee’s books. Of that number, I am proud to say, I was the 96th member, and the membership increased until it amounted to over 7,000.” The San Francisco Evening Bulletin ran an editorial on April 18, 1856, which read “that the banded bad men of the community had so severely entrenched themselves behind the form of law that nothing but force could dislodge them.” Thus the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856 was born, and one of their first acts was to perpetrate the violence they so decried. On Sunday, May 18th, three thousand Vigilantes marched to the jail which held James P. Casey as well as Charles Cora who had shot and killed General Richardson, United States Marshal for the

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78 Ephraim Willard Burr, *Diary*, Bancroft Library. What is interesting aside from the fact that he witnessed the shooting is his particular attention to location: street names, corners and crossing.  
80 Ibid.  
Northern District of California. They wheeled a cannon to the front of building and demanded Casey and Cora. Without hesitation, the Sheriff released both prisoners to be tried by the Vigilantes. Mayor Van Ness protested this blatant disregard for civil law; he even wired the governor for troops but to no avail. King James died on May 20 and by Thursday, May 22, Casey and Cora were hanging from the second-story windows of Fort Gunnybags, the Vigilante headquarters. The *Herald* made the grievous error of editorializing against the actions of the Vigilance Committee of 1856. The result was that the merchants pulled their advertising and the newspaper was ruined.

Ephraim Willard Burr’s son Edmund witnessed the hanging at the impressionable age of ten years and later recounted “the horrors” of the hanging of Casey and Cora to his daughters Elsie, Alice and Marian. Elsie, in her own memoir, spoke of this as a “determining factor” in her father’s life, an experience which would later put him at odds with his father who had witnessed the shooting of King and was “in awe of the

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82 Lell Hawley Woolley, “Charles Cora.” The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist6/woolley.html> (May 19, 2008) Facts from court showed that the marshal had been the aggressor in the affair. James King, who was later shot, wrote in an editorial that attacked Cora saying that if Cora escaped the sheriff and the jail keeper should be hanged. He also called for the reformation of the Vigilance Committee which had disbanded in 1851, attacked “gambling, dueling, houses of ill repute, nonobservance of the Sabbath (especially by Germans), a dinner honoring Tom Paine, a book attacking Christianity and Broderick.”


83 Ibid, p 2.

84 William F. Heintz, *San Francisco’s Mayors*, p 34.

85 Ibid, p 172. Father Michael Accolli formally married Charles Cora and Arabella Ryan on the same day of Charles Cora’s hanging.


87 Burr-Allyne Papers, Elsie’s memoirs, Box 5, California Historical Society.
thousands of marching Vigilantees as they took the two men from jail. It was the grandest and most awe inspiring sight I had ever witnessed.”

The Vigilance Committee of 1856 sent three letters to Ephraim Willard Burr in an attempt to persuade him to run on the newly created “People’s Reform Ticket.” A mass meeting of Vigilantes was held on August 11, 1856 to create a “People’s Reform Ticket” for the fall elections. A secret committee of twenty-one members was selected who were assigned the task of choosing the slate of officers to run in the upcoming campaigns. This committee who to this day remain anonymous, attempted to persuade Ephraim Willard Burr on three separate occasions to run for the office of mayor. He declined in writing twice; thanking the Committee for the compliment, but telling them he had no taste for public office. They were insistent, and finally got J.R. Rawlinson, who was a very close friend of Ephraim Willard Burr, to use his influence with him. He finally acquiesced and on September 11, 1856 the People’s Reform Ticket was announced by publication in San Francisco newspapers. Ephraim Willard Burr was the choice nomination for Mayor.

While Ephraim Willard Burr’s primary interests where in finance, he was also a product of the political strife that Rhode Island faced just nine years prior to his journey

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89 Tom H. Watkins and R.R. Olmsted, *Mirrors of the Dream: An Illustrated History of San Francisco*, p 78. This secret group of twenty-one citizens appointed by the People’s Party had total and absolute control of the party. This nominating committee perpetuated itself by appointing successors before each election. It created lists of candidates for each election in secret without the approval or discussion to a popular vote amongst the party members- the vigilantes.
West. According to the historian Steven Mintz, Rhode Island in 1841 had an "unusually large urban, industrial, and foreign-born working class” who were unable to vote due to a Royal Charter granted in 1663 which restricted suffrage to landowners and their eldest sons. Under this charter the industrial cities such as Warren and Providence were underrepresented in the state legislature. Mintz notes, “As Rhode Island grew increasingly urban and industrial, the state’s landless population increased and fewer residents were eligible to vote.” By 1841, out of 26,000 adult males, Ephraim Willard Burr was one of only 11,239 men eligible to vote. Ephraim Willard Burr, who had cast his first vote for Andrew Jackson in 1830, was a landowner, and a merchant, and while he himself was not particularly concerned with the suffrage of others, he was impressed with the revolutionary tactics of a man by the name of Thomas W. Dorr.

Thomas W. Dorr, a Harvard-educated attorney, had according to Mintz organized an extralegal convention to frame a new state constitution and to abolish voting restrictions. The state’s governor declared Dorr and his supporters guilty of insurrection, proclaimed a state of emergency, and called out the state militia. Dorr attempted to take control of the state arsenal at Providence, but he was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. The governor pardoned Dorr a year later, and the state adopted a new constitution in 1843 that “extended the vote to all taxpaying native-born adult males

92 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society.
Ephraim Willard Burr realized that not only did politics and government have to ultimately reflect the needs of the people, but that the actions of one man could have a significant impact upon the lives of others.99

Ephraim Willard Burr was never “officially” connected with the Vigilance Committee, but he did “approve of some of its acts.” He clearly viewed the acts of the committee as benefiting the city and its occupants. When the balloting was held on November 4, 1856, police wagons were stationed at each polling place, and vigilantes served as election judges. The event was heralded as the first “honest election,” even though the pressure at the polls in the direction of the “People’s Party” was obvious.100

From the standpoint of the committee Ephraim Willard Burr was the man who had founded the city’s first enterprise based entirely on saving money. He promised the committee that he would “serve faithfully,” and his acceptance speech was published in every city paper.101 Here are the first two paragraphs:

November 15, 1856
“Gentlemen: The position assigned me by my fellow-citizens, to preside over your deliberations, is alike foreign to my tastes, habits, and inclinations. A novice in parliamentary rules and practice, I bespeak from you that forbearance, indulgence, and support, which I shall so constantly require at your hands. And in return, can only tender to you my hearty co-operation in carrying into effect such measure as your wisdom may devise for the public interest.

Under ordinary circumstances I should not have yielded my preference for the private walks of life, nor have permitted partial friends to present my name before the enlightened community for their suffrages. But there are occasions when to decline the tender of public confidence is to evade responsibility; when to refuse to perform a public duty, is to repudiate the obligations we owe to society.

98 Ibid.
99 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society.
100 William F. Heintz, San Francisco’s Mayors, p 44.
101 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society.
To my mind the circumstances and the occasion combined, demand of every citizen a sacrifice to the public good. With this view I accepted this trust—doubting my own powers—with God’s help, and such ability as I am endowed with, I shall labor with untiring devotion for the best interests of this city and country.”

He continues to speak about the need to “divorce from this municipal government from any party influence” and to “reform abuses that have eaten our substance and have overwhelmed us with debt.”

Whether he truly believed that the Vigilance Committee was free from “party influence” or he secretly believed that this was the political dogma required to oust the Democrats is difficult to discern; however, letters written just prior to Ephraim Willard Burr’s death by his son Edwund reveal Ephraim Willard Burr’s “distaste for Democrats and all that they represent.”

Later newspaper articles reinforced the growing myths surrounding Ephraim Willard Burr’s entry into politics. He seemed, over the years, to take on heroic stature in regard to taking command of the city and county budget. The San Francisco Chronicle ran one such article in the Sunday edition November 2, 1915 which read, “When Burr went to take over the job, he found that the City Treasurer had entrenched himself behind the law, and refused to be ejected from his office. Whereupon Burr sallied forth and collected a party of husky draymen, who got a spar from a ship at the wharf-side; and,

102 “President Burr’s Address,” Daily Alta California. November 15, 1856. (Microfiche Newspaper Collection, Humboldt State University)
103 Ibid.
104 Burr-Allyne Papers, Letters from E.C. Burr to Elsie, Box 4, California Historical Society. These letters are written to Edmund Burr’s daughter Elsie Overstreet.
using the latter as a battering ram, burst their way into the Treasurer’s office.”\textsuperscript{105} It seems that this was more figurative than literal but it did serve to help mythologize Ephraim Willard Burr as a man of law and justice determined to rid the world of excess and ready to use force if need be.

One of Ephraim Willard Burr’s first accomplishments as President Burr\textsuperscript{106} was to remove Mr. Bob Woods then the City Treasurer. President Burr and Judge Freeland went to the office of Woods, on Clay Street, and “took possession of affairs without fear or favor.”\textsuperscript{107} There is no mention of “spars” or “battering rams” in his diary and dictations.\textsuperscript{108}

Most biographies of Ephraim Willard Burr praise his abilities to have reformed the municipal offices of San Francisco. It is viewed as an accomplishment that President Burr could boast economy and that he went from an annual budget of $2,293,000 to that of $353,292. The cost of operating the entire city government was only 30\% more than the cost of supporting the volunteer fire department in 1855.\textsuperscript{109} President Burr was indeed dedicated to economy; however, with this dedication came a price. Funds for street improvements were reduced to one dollar for every $1,000 that had been spent in the prior administration. School budgets were reduced; taxes and city official positions


\textsuperscript{106} Election dates and Spanish nomenclature was changed under the auspices of the Vigilantes. The title “mayor” was deleted in favor of “President of the Board of Supervisors.” The latter term proved to be difficult for the people and the press to assimilate and on July 1, 1862, the term “mayor” was reinstated. William T. Heintz, \textit{San Francisco Mayors}, p 44.

\textsuperscript{107} Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 5, California Historical Society.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid. There is considerable attention paid to location of Mr. Woods’ office on Clay Street.

were cut. The police force, now headed by the former chief of the vigilante chief, was also reduced.\textsuperscript{110} The historian Hubert Howe Bancroft notes that “the new officials turned off the gas, and each supervisor, judge or other public night-worker brought his tallow-dip, whose dim but honest flicker argued a brighter, purer light than any hitherto flashed by brazen iniquity.”\textsuperscript{111} In other words, the lights went out. The \textit{Alta} newspaper along with recording the minutes of the supervisors’ meetings also commented on the fact that “President Burr brought a candle last evening” to the meeting.\textsuperscript{112}

When Ephraim Willard Burr was sworn in as mayor on November 15, 1856 he was the first mayor to face the terms of the Consolidation Act of the City and County of San Francisco. This bill combined two governments into one, which had never been attempted before in California. Written by the Know-Nothing Party, this bill divided the city into twelve wards, with one supervisor elected from each, and the board was to serve without pay. The purpose was to give more representation to the people and curb government expenditures.\textsuperscript{113} As soon as it became evident that President Burr was able to successfully reduce the budget, the People’s Party quickly claimed the tangible results as evidence of success. Yet, as Senkiwicz notes, at least some of the savings resulted from the Consolidation Act’s “explicit strictures concerning the budget and from its merging of some overlapping city and county administrative agencies.”\textsuperscript{114}

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\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} As quoted in William Herrick, \textit{San Francisco’s Mayors}, p 46.
\textsuperscript{112} “Board Of Supervisors,” \textit{Daily Alta California}, January 18, 1851. (Microfiche Newspaper Collection, Humboldt State University.)
\textsuperscript{113} William Herrick, \textit{San Francisco Mayors}, p 44.
\textsuperscript{114} Robert M.Senkewicz, \textit{Vigilantes in Gold Rush San Francisco}, p 207.
\end{flushleft}
foundation for a reduced budget was already in place when Ephraim Willard Burr took office.

Aside from President Burr’s expertise in finance and his success at trimming the city budget, there was a personal reason for accepting the Vigilance Committee’s nomination in 1856. The city needed clean water. In 1855, Willard Child Burr, his oldest son of nineteen years, had contracted cholera and died. The blame, according to family members was the lack of sanitation due to open-stream pollution caused by the slaughterhouses along Presidio Road. Ephraim Willard Burr had petitioned the city council shortly after Willard’s death claiming that the slaughterhouses had infected the water with cholera, which had caused two other deaths that year in addition to his son’s death.115

In 1856 clean water was still a scarcity. A writer in *The San Francisco New Letter*, reflecting on the state of water in the city in 1856, writes:

“The want of an abundant supply of pure, soft water for household purposes, to say nothing of its importance in other respects, is certainly a serious evil in this city. Nothing speaks so convincingly of the purity of the atmosphere of this locality as the absence of anything like pestilential diseases, notwithstanding the accumulations of filth and garbage in the numerous courts of the city and the horrible state of many of the slips and docks. Very much of this filth is justly chargeable to the scarcity of water, which, purchased by the bucket, is too expensive to be used except for the indispensable purposes of drinking, cooking and very slight lavations.”116

115 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society. Whether E.W. Burr purchased “clean” water, or required his family to drink from the free, but “filthy” water supply is unknown. He was, however, guilty on many occasions of being a “miser” with his money.  
116 "San Francisco News Letter, September 1925,” The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/56hist.html> (May 26, 2008) Of as much importance was the need for large quantities of water in case of fire. The city was still reeling from the effect of the May 1851 fire, which literally “burned the city down.”
One of President Burr’s first tasks as “President of the Board of Supervisors” was to address the dire water problem. Newspapers such as The Daily Alta decried the need for clean, affordable drinking water almost daily. Thus began the quest for city-owned water that would ultimately end with the damming of the Hetch Hetchy Valley of the Tuolumne River in 1934.\textsuperscript{117} The first attempt by the Board to bring clean water was to remedy the previously existing Mountain Lake Water Company’s misuse of funds and inability to successfully lay pipes by financially backing the Bensely Water Company. The Bensely Water Company also failed to meet the deadline 1858,\textsuperscript{118} and according to Daily Alta California,\textsuperscript{119} President Burr and the Board of Supervisors were to blame; nevertheless, that same year, 1858, he won an unprecedented third term for mayor. In June of 1858, the newly incorporated Spring Valley Water Company took over as the main water company to supply San Francisco and by the 1930s it was providing the city with six million gallons of water a day.\textsuperscript{120}

During his three years as mayor, “President Burr” successfully reduced the budget, albeit at the price of street lamps (during his three terms he reduced the city to one street lamp), school and police budgets, and brought clean water into the city. He


\textsuperscript{118} William Heintz, 	extit{Mirror of the Dream}, p 46.

\textsuperscript{119} “Board Of Supervisors,” 	extit{Daily Alta California}, January 1, 1858- May 1858. (Microfiche Newspaper Collection, Humboldt State University. He was later praised when the Spring Valley Water Company took over.

also attempted to impose his own moral code upon the city, which was not always successful.

He immediately after the first election attempted to ban alcohol consumption, the sale of and or distribution of on the Sabbath and after 12 o’clock at night. The city went wild with ridicule. Wholesale alcohol distributors took out ads that ran directly before and after the ordinance either decrying the ordinance or promoting the increase need to “stock up on Saturday.” President Burr quickly repealed the ordinance, stating before the Board,

“I do not apprehend that any good can be effected by the enactment of such stringent laws, under the most favorable circumstances, and in a community like this, composed of a large element of foreign population, who, though generally most peaceably disposed, have no appreciation of the meaning and intent of such regulations, and not understanding our language, such a law will, in the main, prove inoperative.”

It was clear to President Burr that the “foreigners” where to blame for any visible misconduct and that the policing of this population was out of his control. Along with alcohol consumption, other public nuisances such as “furious” riding, slaughterhouses, pigsties, glue-boilers, and other public were addressed weekly. Although adept at handling the minutia of city politics, three years as mayor of San Francisco was enough. He retired from politics in 1859, “thereby sealing the list of the decade of leaders who had guided or misguided the city during its gold rush era.”

123 “Board Of Supervisors,” *Daily Alta California*, February 7, 1857. “Furious” riding was restricted to eight miles per hour.
124 William Heintz, *San Francisco’s Mayor’s*, p 46
The approaching Civil War was to force San Francisco to be more self-sufficient, increase foreign trade; in short, the future required new techniques and new leadership. At the time that the *Niantic* set sail from Panama, not in pursuit of the great whale, but rather in pursuit of the great leviathan of gold, so began the tenuous expansion of territory that would ultimately put the concept of a “united” states to test. Writer and historian James McPherson notes that the discovery of gold and the mass emigration of eighty thousand Forty-niners created a need for California’s territorial government. This territory’s “quest to become the thirty-first state sparked a renewed sectional crisis” in Congress. Congress broke out in “fist fights” over the proposal set forth by President Polk who recommended extension of the 35 30 line to the Pacific thus making California and New Mexico free territories.\(^{125}\) In the House, northern congressmen drafted a territorial bill for California that excluded slavery, and southern congressmen threatened secession. This crisis in Congress was debated and fought over for two years and ultimately led to the aptly named Compromise of 1850 which among the eight resolutions presented to the Senate by Henry Clay stipulated that California would be admitted as a free state. However, as the title so denotes the compromise also stipulated that slaveholders could recover their property when it fled to free states, and thus the issue of slavery festered for ten more years- neither the North nor the South willing to concede.\(^{126}\) It is only possible to speculate on Ephraim Willard Burr’s feelings toward slavery. In several of his letters to his wife he comments on the “unfortunate tendencies” of the


\(^{126}\) Ibid.
“whiskey drinking Indians” for if it “wasn’t for the alcohol” they would most certainly be cheap if not free labor.” He was a man who reduced people to their dollar value be it the Indians or even his family. He was after all from the only colony and the only state to engage in a regular and continuous trade in African slaves.

Only in Rhode Island did the trade assume long-term social and economic significance. In fact, according to historian Jay Coughtry, only in Rhode Island was there anything that could “properly be termed a slave trade.” However, the Rhode Island slaving vessels did not return with slaves, they returned with molasses. Rhode Island, from 1725 to 1807 was part of the typical triangular trade pattern associated with both English and American slave trade. Most slavers departed Rhode Island as rum-men, exchanging rum for slaves along the African coast, set sail for the Caribbean where they then exchanged the slaves for sugar, money and molasses. Rhode Island was the only government that not only mentioned, but also emphasized the importance of its participation in the African trade. This slave trade ended just two years prior to Ephraim Willard Burr’s birth, and as a trader and shop owner he must have been well

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127 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society.
versed in Rhode Island’s trade triangle. Regardless, he bowed out of politics at the beginning of the Civil War and turned to what he loved most: money.

In 1860 he devoted his energies to the Savings and Loan Society and the creation of the San Francisco Fire Insurance Company. He was, above all, a shrewd businessman and though he was finished with the tedious duties of public life he knew that in order to remain financially viable he had better remain involved in civic duty. He chose fire. Fighting fire or preventing fire didn’t necessarily intrigue him, nor did the glories associated with volunteer fire fighting like his contemporary David C. Broderick appeal to him. Indeed, a sure way of notoriety in the 1850s was to form a fire department, albeit a volunteer fire company. Between 1849 and 1861, San Francisco had suffered from over a dozen devastating fires and hundreds of earthquake shocks and tremors. The citizens understood the definition of property loss. To capitalize on this

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131 Although Ephraim Burr does not mention Rhode Island’s slave trade, he was a merchant who was guilty in his later years of reducing human life to a financial value. Rhode Island was the smallest town in the smallest state of the Union and the few merchants who prospered were directly affected by the ending of the slave trade. Ephraim Burr was a man representative of his time period, and it is only speculation but his attitudes toward people in general reflect his capitalist tendencies.

132 Robert Senkewicz, *Vigilantes in Gold Rush San Francisco*, pp 193-199. David C. Broderick was one of San Francisco’s illustrious citizens and professional politicians during the 19th Century. He organized and equipped volunteer fire departments as well as participated in the formation of “paid” fire departments. He was an entrepreneur, a politician (elected as state senator in January 1850 as well as served as clerk of the State Supreme Court), was “in complete control of the Democratic Party in San Francisco in the early 1850s, and was shot on September 13, 1859. His activities in commerce served to support his political ambitions, whereas, E.W. Burr made a brief appearance into politics, but found that he was much more successful in finance.

133 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society. For more information on Broderick see *The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War* by Leonard Richards.


135 “Early History of the San Francisco Fire Department,” The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, [http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist1/fire.html](http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist1/fire.html) (June 2, 2008)
fear, in 1861 Ephraim Willard Burr created the San Francisco Fire Insurance Company which was started up with a capital of $150,000, with Ephraim Willard Burr as president and George C. Boardman as secretary. According to the writer Caspar T. Hopkins, “this company was ‘very closely managed’ and ‘highly successful’.” When Mr. Boardman resigned in 1866 to take a position at Aetna, the company dissolved, dividing more than double its capital besides regular ad interim dividends. Luckily for Ephraim Willard Burr there was no large fires in San Francisco between 1861 and 1866, nor were there claims made for even small fires. In 1866, Ephraim Willard Burr walked away from his one and only insurance venture a very rich man.

His interests once again focused on the Savings and Loan or Clay Street Bank where he lent office space to Mr. Andrew Hallidie. In 1867, Mr. Hallidie had taken out his first patent for the “Hallidie Ropeway,” a method of transporting ore and other material across mountainous districts by means of an elevated traveling line. He realized that he needed an extremely durable cable, so he developed a crucible steel cable with six strands of nineteen wires each. Each wire was .062 of an inch diameter, had a tensile strength of 160,000 pounds per square inch area, and was capable of bending over itself with a round turn, straightening out and repeating at the same spot without fracture. By

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137 Ibid.
138 Burr-Allyne Papers, Box1, California Historical Society. It is estimated that at this time, 1866, his estate was worth five million.
1871, he had completed plans by which cable cars could be propelled by underground cables. 139 All he needed was money.

Ephraim Willard Burr was in no hurry to support a transportation enterprise, particularly one that even remotely resembled a train. Prior to his election as President of the Board, he had invested in the Sacramento Valley Railroad, which was a rail line that was to run from Sacramento to Folsom. John Sherman, J.K Garrison, Edward Jones of Palmer, Cook and Co., L. Wilson, Ephraim Willard Burr and others entered into a contract with L.L Robinson at $5,000 a mile- 1/3 cash, 1/3 bonds, 1/3 in stock. That was “the first and last piece of railroading I ever had anything to do with in California. The whole thing was sunk. I had $10,000 in it and sold it for $1,900.”140 It sunk due to the aggressive tactics of San Francisco engineer Theodore Judah and a group of men who organized themselves into The Central Pacific Railroad of California. This powerful railroad group, along with the passage of the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862 successfully thwarted the ambitions of not only the Sacramento Valley Railroad Company, but also other companies such as the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and the California Stage Company.141

When Andrew Hallidie approached Ephraim Willard Burr with his idea, he received a cautious and skeptical response. Ephraim Willard Burr soon recognized, however, the financial benefit of having the cable cars pass directly in front of his bank,

141 Tom Watkins and R.R. Olmsted, Mirror of the Dream; An Illustrated History of San Francisco, p 100.
and besides the competition for cable car development in San Francisco was minimal if not nonexistent. A working model was set up in the office of the Clay Street Bank Building for all to view. Nob Hill residents, who would also benefit from the cable car route, pledged a total of $40,000, but only $28,000 of the pledges came to fruition. Andrew Hallidie contributed $20,000, all he had, and three friends Joseph Britton, Henry L. Davis, and James Moffitt donated $40,000. Andrew Hallidie was still short the necessary funds to complete the project. He was finally able to secure a ten-year loan bearing ten percent interest for $30,000 through Ephraim Willard Burr. Ephraim Willard Burr was not taking another financial risk.

Ephraim Willard Burr anxiously awaited the completion of what he called the “Hallidie Cars.” Andrew Hallidie had proved himself to be a brilliant engineer, and Ephraim Willard Burr was convinced that his investments would not “sink again.” On August 1, 1873, Hallidie and his associates including Ephraim Willard Burr stood at the top of Clay Street hill at the Jones Crossing. According to the writer Edgar Kahn, “Day was breaking. A dense fog was coming through the Golden Gate and was rolling over Nob and Russian hills. The early morning mist obscured the bottom of the steep Clay

143 Ibid.
144 Hallidie traveled from Scotland to Mariposa in 1852 in search of gold. His father returned to England in 1853, but Hallidei remained in California, where he had ample experience with the difficulties of mining. He became instrumental to many mining districts through his inventions of ropeways that carried large iron buckets containing rock and ore across deep chasms and steep mountainsides. He used this same method of an endless wire rope in San Francisco, only he placed it underground. Ibid.
Street grade. From the open slot near the middle of the street came a mysterious rattle. Hallidie listened intently, nodded with an air of satisfaction and ordered, ‘All aboard’.”

“Hallidie’s Cars” rumbled daily past the Clay Street Bank and up into the riches of Nob Hill. It was a fruitful investment, which started the wheels turning once to other investments, which could possibly reap tremendous profits. Ephraim Willard Burr once again turned to the gold mines, not quite willing to give up on the illusive leviathan that had been the impetus for his place in San Francisco.

On September 18, 1874 the Mariposa Land and Mining Company was incorporated with Mr. Mark Brumagim as President and Ephraim Willard Burr and Judge S. Heydnfeldt as Trustees in assignment to work and develop “Las Mariposas”. In other words, Ephraim Willard Burr was hired to “clean up” an extremely convoluted, complicated and chaotic gold mining region known as Mariposa. Notorious for its riotous history of vengeful miners and Native Americans (called “Diggers”), corrupt law enforcement and proslavery sentiments, Mariposa was not an easy “claim.” At first glance, Ephraim Willard Burr seemingly suffered from delusional ideas of grandeur, but it appears that he was simply fond of “rescuing” be it a whaling ship, a failing political institution, or a gold mine (particularly if there was the possibility of making money).

145 Ibid.
146 “Las Mariposas, Trust For Developing, E.W. Burr. Esq., and Honorable S. Heydenfeldt Trustees” (San Francisco, Wm. P. Harrison, Printer, 1874) p 1-20.
147 The November 13, 1849 California constitution election only 13,000 bothered to vote. The low turnout “raised fears among newsmen that Congress would underestimate the population of California- and not admit it to the Union.” The constitution passed, however, 12,061 in favor, 811 against. The dissenters included “66 voters in Mariposa County, who called for a constitution with no restrictions on slavery.” Leonard L Richards, The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007) p 91.
So, once again armed with his Aeneus archetype and Christian sense of duty, he returned, in spirit, to the foothills of California. At sixty-four years old he deemed himself unfit for the travel inland, so he sent the next best man, his son Edmund Coffin Burr. Much to Edmund’s dismay he was sent to the Museum of Practical Study and Royal School of Mines in London and upon his return sent directly out to manage the mines.\textsuperscript{148} He deeply resented this assignment and spoke despairingly of Mariposa in his journals,\textsuperscript{149} but that story is another chapter in a book not yet written.

On July 1, 1846 John C. Fremont, an explored, politician and fortune-seeker, and a small contingency of men called the Bear Flag army chased an even smaller contingency of \textit{Californios} all around the San Francisco Bay. The conflict against Mexico for land had begun. Unbeknownst to Fremont, President James K. Polk had already declared war with Mexico on May 12, 1846,\textsuperscript{150} a war, which would ultimately lead to the Civil War\textsuperscript{151} and ironically contributed to the financial ruin of John C. Fremont.\textsuperscript{152} The war between Mexico and the United States concluded in 1848 when the

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\item \textsuperscript{148} Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society. Edmund was also sent to a Chemistry School in Germany where he fell in love, married and fathered a daughter. Ephraim Willard Burr refused to acknowledge the marriage, and demanded that Edmund return to the United States alone.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Burr-Allyne Papers, Box 1, California Historical Society. His journal contains single entries regarding the tunnel progress. “May, Thursday 27, 1875: 5ft. tunnel progress today. Headache.” “May, Friday 28, 1875: 4ft. tunnel progress today. Headache.”
\item \textsuperscript{150} Tom Watkins, \textit{Mirror of the Dream: An Illustrated History of Early San Francisco}, p 17-18
\item \textsuperscript{151} Thomas Bender, \textit{A Nation Among Nations: America’s Place in World History}, p 117-119.
\item \textsuperscript{152} “Trenor Park Letters,” \textit{Park McCullough Collection}, University of Vermont Special Collections, Burlington, Vermont, pp 301-441. These letters are written between Trenor W. Park from North Bennington, Vermont, and Frederick Billings, also from Vermont, were managers of the Fremont estate. These letters detail the anxiety the partners felt regarding the start of the Civil War. Several letters speculate that the lack of financing and investment in Las Mariposas was due to “war anxiety.”
\end{itemize}
Senate ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in which the United States took one-half of Mexico’s national territory; however, the conclusion of the war left the nation divided on the issue of slavery in the new territories. These sectional conflicts lead to what historian Thomas Bender calls a “political earthquake.”\textsuperscript{153} The white Southerners solidified forces against northern opposition to slavery. “And,” as Lincoln, stated, “the war came.”\textsuperscript{154}

The Civil War created additional problems for John C. Fremont’s Las Mariposas. A nemesis from the beginning, Las Mariposas, came ripe with difficulty. It was originally a “floating” land grant owned by Mexican governor of California (1836-1842) Juan B. Alvarado, which meant it had no fixed boundaries. When John C. Fremont mistakenly purchased these 44,400 acres for $3,280 in 1846 he found himself in a battle to establish its specific boundaries that would last until 1859.\textsuperscript{155} Mired in legal battles over the mineral rights to the land, running up significant debts for mining machinery and supplies, his partners, Frederick Billings, Abia Selover, and Trenor W. Park convinced Fremont in 1861 that he needed to travel to Europe in order to procure loans that might stave off the mines’ growing indebtedness.\textsuperscript{156} Calvin Park, Trenor Park’s brother, arrived in Mariposa to work for the estate. Upon hearing of Fremont’s quest for financing he wrote to Trenor:

\textsuperscript{153} Thomas Bender, \textit{A Nation Among Nations: America’s Place in World History}, pp 116-118.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, p 118.
\textsuperscript{156} “Trenor Park Letters,” \textit{Park McCullough Collection}, University of Vermont Special Collections, p 356.
“Bear Valley, Dec. 31, 1861. I understand that Selover is going to Europe with Fremont and of course that will lessen their chances of getting money. If Wright and Selover go I know they will not raise any money. I do not think Billings was a suitable man either; an Englishman will be disgusted with gasconade and should be approached in a quiet business like manner. I hope and pray that you are not becoming in any way responsible for any further advances of money in this business.”157

The letters between the men illustrate the ensuing panic the partners experienced.

Northrup writes to Trenor “this war will disprove everything”158 that they worked toward.

The ensuing Civil War was blamed for lack of available financing, not to mention raids on shipments of gold by Confederate Officers.159 Floods ravaged the mines, and Mr. Mark Brumagim, a San Francisco banker and the largest creditor next to Trenor Park, became a scourge to be avoided by the other partners. He wanted his money. His regular appearance in the letters as “anxious” and “crowding” and a regular “capper” who “cried poor” and threatened to “go broke” end on a sour note by Northrup “I have seen Brumagin again today and he is sick with a boil on his ass.”160 Regardless, by the time Mr. Mark Brumagim had physically manifested his own reputation the Mariposa mines were in a dire financial situation. By early 1862, the Mariposa debt had exceeded two million dollars and it became imperative to stop the drain of interest. The Mariposa Company, 34 Wall Street, New York was formed in 1863 by a series of complicated negotiations, and John C. Fremont’s interest in the great Mariposa principality came to an end.

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157 Ibid.
158 Ibid, p 368.
159 Ibid, p 370.
Mr. Mark Brumagim, however, remained an officer and by 1874 had reorganized “Las Mariposas” with himself as appointed president, and Ephraim Willard Burr and Judge S. Heydenfeldt as trustees in the hopes of reinvesting in the mines of Mariposa.

Ephraim Willard Burr, with the financial backing of the Savings and Loan Society of San Francisco, and Judge Heydenfeldt were to see to the “management, development, and working of the mines, leads, lodes, dips, spurs, and angles” and to “run tunnels, sink shafts, build dams, reservoirs, canals, ditches and flumes, erect mills, machinery, hoisting and reduction works, with the intent to make the Mariposas a successful and profitable mining property.” In exchange they were to receive all the proceeds after the “indebtedness of the company” was paid off. Mark Brumagim had found a financially savvy businessman in Ephraim Willard Burr and he was certain he would finally receive payments on his investments, but alas, not even Ephraim Willard Burr could make a “mine out of a mine.”

162 “Las Mariposas”, Trust For Developing, E.W. Burr. Esq., and Honorable S. Heydenfeldt Trustees, (San Francisco, Wm. P. Harrison, Printer, 1874)
Mark Brumagin had applied the “latest mining improvement,” the Burleigh percussive drill.\textsuperscript{165} It was thought that the gold-bearing veins of the Mariposa Estate were inexhaustible, yet at the same time inaccessible. The Mariposa tunnel carved by the Burleigh drill began at the north end of Mount Bullion, about 560 feet from the Merced River. The object of this tunnel was the natural drainage of the distant mines thought to hold ore, but when drilling commenced the miners found that the mountain was solid metamorphic rock. Miles of impermeable rock, and “as the tunnel advanced the slate became harder and blacker.”\textsuperscript{166} In four years only 1,400 feet had been drilled and no gold found.

By 1878 when progress had not been made and the debt had not been repaid Ephraim Willard Burr left his gold seeking dreams behind for good and focused instead on another type of gold mine: real estate. In 1878 he purchased 384 acres in the area known today as Portola Redwoods State Park.\textsuperscript{167} This property, called the Mountain Home Ranch by family members was where they spent summers, living in an adobe dwelling built in 1835 by Charles Brown, whose narrative “Early Events in California” is in the Bancroft Library.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{165}“Las Mariposas, Trust For Developing, E.W. Burr. Esq., and Honorable S. Heydenfeldt Trustees,” (San Francisco, Wm. P. Harrison, Printer, 1874), p 26. Details of the tunnel progress and mining region.
\textsuperscript{166}Ibid. The reports call this metamorphic rock “slate” however; subsequent research shows that the rock was not slate, which is actually soft rock, but that it was volcanic and therefore metamorphic rock, which is why the Burleigh drill made so little progress.
\textsuperscript{168}Ibid.
Ephraim Willard Burr and Edward L. Northam founded the Pacific Improvement Corporation April 9, 1878 whose purpose was to develop coalmines on 320 acres at the base of Mount Diablo. Northam died, however, before any mining activity commenced and left Ephraim Willard Burr the combined total of over 500 acres. In the late 1880s his various business partners began retiring and Ephraim Willard Burr, ever vigilant for ownership of land and lots began buying them out. John Mattoon, having moved to Northfield Massachusetts, sold all three of his San Francisco properties to Ephraim as well as their joint business interests.

During the last few years of his life he managed his accounts, properties, stocks, and family. His penchant for detail, while benefiting his finances, did not translate well personally. He charged his adult offspring rent when they took up residence at the Mountain Home Ranch or the Van Ness home. He forbade marriages, arranged marriages and dictated his sons’ careers. The four ledgers housed in the California Historical Society detail the business activities of the remainder of his days. Indeed, there are entries for each of his children and every expense relating to his or her existence. Entries for rice and bread, his wife’s garden, business partners, mining shares for gold, silver, copper and coal, water companies, insurance companies, petroleum shares, banking stock, real estate, hundreds of pages detailing his ambitious financial activities. He was a man of detail and commerce. He was shrewd and not fond of the limelight of politics.

His son, Edmund Coffin Burr, reflecting upon his father’s life in a letter to Elsie Burr Overstreet, Ephraim Willard Burr’s granddaughter, wrote:
March 8 1914
Dear Chum,
One hundred and five years ago yesterday, your Grandfather Burr was born. Put it down on your memory tablet. When he was a boy they used evil-smelling whale oil lamps and tallow dips for illumination. In Rhode Island, at least, they had not yet found or used coal for fuel. He lived to see and use gas for lighting, and saw the horse car come into use. In his lifetime there were no trolley cars, no typewriters, no electric lights. The telephone was new and its use not widespread. Of the wireless telegraph he never dreamed. What will another hundred years bring forth?”

Indeed. Ephraim Willard Burr helped urbanize San Francisco for half a century. He financed inventions, developed water systems, and witnessed murders. He sought ships, chased gold and amassed a fortune. He died on July 20, 1894, and funeral services were held at the First Unitarian Church located at the corner of Franklin and Geary Streets in San Francisco. “Please omit Flowers.”169

169“Funeral Notices,” The Morning Call, July 20, 1894.
CONCLUSION

I chose to end the first part of the thesis with Ephraim Willard Burr’s son’s historical framework of his father. Edmund, though he often spoke disparagingly of his father in letters, understood his father’s history, his father’s story. In doing so, in giving his daughter an historical awareness, he gave himself as well as his daughter meaning and a sense of place in this world and perhaps forgiveness. History is a woven basket of time, each fiber representing an influence: a marriage, a novel, a president, a bill passed in congress, a death, a dusting of gold. What is chosen to be told? What is omitted? What is missing from the detailed ledgers or what is telling in the translation of human life into dollars? This is really where the story begins. Ephraim Willard Burr’s life serving as a foundation from which to create and weave the tapestry of history and fiction together, choosing to omit and choosing to include in order to tell a story “One hundred and five years ago yesterday…”
The extensive list of California State Standards found in Appendix reflects the in-depth nature and equally extensive amount of time that this unit requires. This unit, designed for the 11th grade language arts classroom, is a three part unit: the first segment is historical research, the second segment is analysis of fiction written during the historical time period and the third segment is the synthesis of the historical and fictional research using the process of historical fiction writing. This unit should be taught during the spring term, as it requires prior development of research and literary skills. Collaboration with the history and social science departments is ideal.

Students will become historical fiction writers as a means of exploring firsthand the research required to write a historical fiction novel. In doing so students will learn to analyze the historical influences and details within literature read in the classroom. This unit is designed to foster historical interest in research and writing. Students will utilize secondary as well as primary documents available on websites such as www.gilderlehman.org and www.historynow.org. While this is an examination of the historical influences
within literature, it is ultimately designed to reinforce and collaborate with the eleventh grade history curriculum.

Students will choose an American historical figure to research. They are required to examine the personal and political influences of this person’s life as well as the national and local issues this person faced. They will then analyze a historical novel that is set in the historical figure’s lifetime. They will analyze this novel from a literary and historical perspective. The culminating project synthesizes their research and literary analysis through the process of writing an original short story. This short story will include historically accurate details, characters and information.

This unit, designed to reinforce research skills, is an examination of the relationship between literature and history. The focus and expected outcome is not only that students recognize historical influences and details within a particular work of literature as well as garner respect for the research required to write historical fiction, but to be able to differentiate between fact and fiction, concrete details and commentary.
Prior Content Knowledge and Skills:

Students should have read at least one novel as a class prior to beginning this unit. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck serves as an excellent springboard. The ability to identify historical frameworks, references and content within literature enriches the students’ classroom experience. Students should also be familiar with using primary documents. Collaboration between the history, language arts department and librarian is beneficial in regard to bibliography format, note taking and research skills. Students are also told at the beginning of the school year that they will be required to study an American historical figure; this should give them time to choose whom they would like to research.

Discussion of Content Hook

This hook will create an impetus for historical research as it relates to American historical figures. When students enter the classroom there are two photographs projected onto the white board. The first photo depicts Ephraim Burr in 1850 and the second photo depicts Ephraim Burr in 1860 (See Appendix B).
Questions to ask the class:

1. What time period do you think these photos were taken in?
2. How many years separate the two photos?
3. What do the photos tell you about his life?

We discuss the national, state and local events of his lifetime as a class, using the overheads to generate ideas (See Appendices C-J).

Questions to ask the class:

1. After a brief glance at these overheads, what do know about the time period within which this man lived?
2. What were the reasons many people came to San Francisco?
3. What sort of town was San Francisco in 1850? How has it changed?
4. What were some of conflicts in this developing urban center?
5. Which national conflict did the nation face in the late 1850s?
6. Which president led the nation during this war?
7. What was the outcome?
8. In what ways could these national, state and local issues affect Ephraim W. Burr’s life?

We will read a letter written about Ephraim Burr (See Appendix K). We will generate a class list of novels written during and about this century. We will then return to the photos and students are given twenty minutes to create a characterization from the photos, what they discussed as a class and read in the
letter as well as prior knowledge from literature written during and about this
time period. This characterization is a rough sketch intended to introduce the
students to historical fiction. Students are asked to turn in their narratives to be
used for tomorrow’s lesson.

At the conclusion of the hook students are given the three-part assignment
sheet as an overview of the assignment and expectations (See Appendix L).
Lesson Content

Research Project

Day One:

The hook will take up the first day of the lesson.

Day Two:

Read one or two of the character narratives that the students wrote during the
hook. Have a follow-up discussion regarding their observations and insights
while writing.

Questions to ask the class:

1. What historical influence or background did you choose? Why?
2. What were some of the difficulties in creating an historical narrative?

Students are then placed into their assigned groups of four and asked to
brainstorm lists of American historical figures. They are given fifteen minutes to
think of at least ten American figures. We reconvene as a class and generate a
class list that is kept on the wall for the duration of the unit. We spend at least ten
minutes discussing the list. Invariably, figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
and President Abraham Lincoln make this list. Students are asked to choose a key
figure by tomorrow, if they haven’t already done so. I then give background
regarding the research process of Ephraim Burr. I use him as an example because
he was difficult to research—there was very little available and what was available required travel to San Francisco and Vermont. This serves as a model for research but also ameliorates student anxiety because they will be choosing well-known figures with a plethora of information to choose from in their research. It is important, however, to remind students that there are still discoveries to be made, that not everything is known about their chosen figure, and that connections, insights, and discoveries are still possible. This provides impetus: they are simply not regurgitating knowledge, but are explorers themselves. They may also use my model of researching a family member who was historically influential if they have access to letters and primary documents.

Day Three:

Students should have chosen their historical figure to research. They are given the Research Paper Assignment, which we review and clarify (See Appendix M). We then go to the library to begin our research. The librarian reviews website critique and note taking strategies. We will spend the majority of each class period in the library for the next two weeks.

Day Four:

We practice commenting on factual information, students are given daily reminders to cite their research, and the remainder of the period is spent in the library.

Day Five:
Students are given a list of historical fiction novels that are set in the chosen time period. Students are also given a list of novels that were written during their chosen time period. This list is dependant upon the chosen time periods, and there are online sources of historical fiction novels (See Appendix N). They are told that they need to choose a novel and have the novel approved by the instructor. They should begin reading this novel and have it completed within four weeks. They will receive the Historical Novel Assignment when they are finishing the rough draft of their Research Project.

Historical Novel

The Historical Novel assignment has two parts- plot summary and a personal reactions section in which the student critiques the novel as a work of literature. The plot summary is intended to instruct students on how to write a concise summary of a novel using elements of plot and character-identifying appositive phrases. The personal reactions section requires the student to critique the novel as a literary and historical work, using literary terminology already introduced in the course. The emphasis is on the historical analysis; here, the student delineates the historical detail imbedded in the novel that might prove useful in choosing a setting or conflict, characterization, scene description, for the short story.

At the conclusion of the Research Project students are given a week to finish up their novels. It is during this week that students present their oral Research Project reports. Day One:
Students were given the Historical Novel assignment a week prior to the conclusion of the Research Project (See Appendix O). The first day of the Historical Novel focuses on the plot summary. Students are told that becoming familiar with the basic plot of the novel is helpful in writing their short story. The first step is to write a plot diagram (See Appendix P). This involves a sequencing of the key events of the entire novel on a page or less. The students use sentence fragments and arrows, rather than complete sentences, to produce a skeleton of the key events of the novel. The arrows mean, “This leads to the next event”. At the bottom of the plot diagram is listed the elements of plot, with numbers one to six, exposition being the first and conclusion, last. Using a plot diagram quickly shows a student if too many events and details are being included.

Day Two:

Students turn their plot diagram into a plot summary. In writing the summary, the student takes the sentence fragments and turns them into complete sentences. The elements of plot have to be integrated into the appropriate places in the summary. Students must also use character-identifying appositive phrases wherever characters’ names are mentioned in order to introduce the key characters and make sense of the plot.

Day Three- Five:

Students need this time to finish their plot diagrams and plot summary. Homework for this week consists in the personal reactions handout (See Appendix Q).

Historical Fiction Short Story
The culminating project is the Historical Fiction Short Story. Students have three weeks to write an original short story of between 1,000-4,000 words that is set in the time period of their American historical figure.

Day One:

The first step in for the students to review both the Research Project and the Novel Analysis. Students should be reminded that by now they have a good store of historical detail to use for generating story ideas, creating realistic characters, choosing valid conflicts, and painting their scenes and settings with realistic background details. They should also understand the key criterion for evaluating the success of the story will be how well historical detail is imbedded in the narrative. After the assignment has been introduced, students then spend the remainder of the period brainstorming viable conflict situations from their historical time period to be used tomorrow.

Day Two:

Students are placed into groups of three or four for this activity. Students take an 11” x 8” paper and place it sideways and fold it into five equal vertical columns. At the top of the middle column, they write the word “Middle.” Using no more that 50 words in the middle column, they are told to describe the conflict as it is happening right now. Ask students, “What are you seeing? What characters are there? What is happening?”

After about three minutes, they share what they’ve written in their group. They label the column just left of the middle column “Before.” Students are then instructed to write down in 25-50 words telling what is happening before the middle scene. They are
told to write it as if they are witnessing it as it happens. The same process is used for the “After” column, and by the end of the class period all five columns should be filled in.

Day Three:

Character Description. They need to decide who their main character is. Regardless of whom they choose, their American historical figure must at least make an appearance in their short story. They need to give their character a name- a name that fits with that historical time period- and put that name in the middle of a blank piece of paper and circle it. The next step is to write 20 unique traits about this character around the name. Suggest hobbies, occupation, mode of travel, likes and dislikes.

The next step is to write a 100-word characterization sketch, using their cluster. It is important for students to know that their characterization could be historically accurate and not fictional. They can use this prewriting activity in their short story.

Day Four:

Sample Story Beginnings. Students are given a handout that will assist them in beginning their short story (See Appendix S). They choose one sample and write a 100 word beginning. They may use this beginning for their short story.
Day Five:

Having completed the prewriting activities, students are ready to begin writing. They need at least four days in the computer lab.

The Writing Process:

Once the first draft is completed, students exchange their rough drafts within their assigned groups and make comments on their members’ first drafts using Story Writing Guidelines (See Appendix T).

When the final draft is complete, students have to analyze and self-assess their own story, using the same terminology they used when they wrote their critiques of the novels they read (See Appendix U). A key part of this analysis is what conscious decisions did the students make as author to infuse historical detail into the story and thus make the historical setting an integral part of the realism of the story.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their Research Project by a power point presentation as well as their written report (See Appendix V). Their Historical Novel Assignment is also evaluated in two parts: the Plot Diagram and the Personal Reactions assessment (See Appendix P and Q). It is the Short Story assignment and self-evaluation that is the crucial assessment due to the assimilating nature of this assignment (See Appendix S and U). It is helpful for students to have the self-evaluation handout before they begin writing their short story.
APPENDIX A

Standards Addressed
Standards Addressed

This research project satisfies many of the California Language Arts Content Standards including 1.0 Writing Strategies, Organization and Focus as well as Research and Technology, and 2.0 Writing Applications: 2.4 which is the process of writing historical investigation reports.

Evaluation of the research report will be based partly on the oral report and power point on historical investigation that applies to 2.0 Speaking Applications: 2.2 (See Appendix V). Students will also be required to read a novel either set or written during the historical figure’s lifetime. Analysis of the novel and its historical merit applies to 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis as well as 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics). The culminating project, the short story, addresses 1.0 Writing Strategies as well as 2.0 Writing Applications: 2.1 the creation of fictional works.
California State Standards Addressed:

California Language Arts Content Standards Eleventh Grade:

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)
Students combine the rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description to produce texts of at least 1,500 words each. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the writing strategies of grades eleven and twelve outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

a. Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience.

b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.

c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.

d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.

e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

2.2 Write responses to literature:

a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.

b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text.

c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.

d. Demonstrate an understanding of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.

e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.
2.4 Write historical investigation reports:  
   a. Use exposition, narration, description, argumentation, or some combination of rhetorical strategies to support the main proposition.
   b. Analyze several historical records of a single event, examining critical relationships between elements of the research topic.
      c. Explain the perceived reason or reasons for the similarities and differences in historical records with information derived from primary and secondary sources to support or enhance the presentation.
   d. Include information from all relevant perspectives and take into consideration the validity and reliability of sources.
   e. Include a formal bibliography.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

2.2 Deliver oral reports on historical investigations:
   a. Use exposition, narration, description, persuasion, or some combination of those to support the thesis

2.4 Deliver multimedia presentations:
   a. Combine text, images, and sound by incorporating information from a wide range of media, including films, newspapers, magazines, CD-ROMs, online information, television, videos, and electronic media-generated images.
   b. Select an appropriate medium for each element of the presentation.
   c. Use the selected media skillfully, editing appropriately and monitoring for quality.

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

3.5 Analyze recognized works of American literature representing a variety of genres and traditions:
   a. Trace the development of American literature from the colonial period forward.
   b. Contrast the major periods, themes, styles, and trends and describe how works by members of different cultures relate to one another in each period.
      c. Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.

3.7 Analyze recognized works of world literature from a variety of authors:
   a. Contrast the major literary forms, techniques, and characteristics of the major literary periods (e.g., Homeric Greece, medieval, romantic, neoclassic, modern).
   b. Relate literary works and authors to the major themes and issues of their eras.
   c. Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.
APPENDIX B

Characterization Overheads$^{170}$

APPENDIX C

California Gold Rush Overhead

For California!” (image). Arizona Gold Prospectors
FOR CALIFORNIA!
DIRECT
EXTRAORDINARY INDUCEMENTS!!
THIRTY-FIVE DAYS TO GOLD REGIONS!
The "California Steam Navigation Co."
STEAM SHIP!
NICARAGUA

On FRIDAY, MARCH 23d, 1849,
Via the River St. John and Lake Nicaragua, across the Isthmus of Leon.

200 JACK ASSSES!
The Quickest, Safest and Cheapest!!
Price of Passage Through Ninety Dollars!

For further particulars apply to Mr. A. M. Reeve, 135 Wall Street, New York; or to Mr. G. W. Hopkins, Agent at New York. All communications for the Company should be addressed to Mr. T. H. Hume, Nisqually, California.
APPENDIX D

The Ship *Niantic*172

172 Francis Samuel Marryat. Painting: “High and Dry” Calisphere, University of California <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb2p300215/FID2> (July 20, 2008) The *Niantic*, once a ship, is now a store. The ship, like many of the early California pioneers, would experience many transformations in order to survive and adapt.
APPENDIX E

Panorama of San Francisco 1850\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{173} “San Francisco in 1850” (image). Zelda McKay Collection, Calisphere, University of California <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf3q2nb45t/hi-res> (July 22, 2008) Thousands of ships in the harbor—most deserted.
APPENDIX F

San Francisco Fire 1851\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{174}“San Francisco Fire 1851” (image). The Virtual Museum of San Francisco. 
FIRE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

In the Night from the 3rd-4th May, 1851.

Loss $20,000,000.
APPENDIX G

View of San Francisco 1860175

175Henry Payot. “View of San Francisco 1860” (image). Bancroft Library
(July 22, 2008)
APPENDIX H

Executions of Casey and Cora

176 “Executions of Casey and Cora, by the San Francisco Vigilance Committee May 22nd, 1856” (image). Bancroft Library
Execution of CASEY & CORA.
by the San Francisco Vigilance Committee
May 22, 1856.
APPENDIX I

Civil War Memorial177

177 Ed Hamilton. “Spirit of Freedom Memorial” (image)  
APPENDIX J

Abraham Lincoln\textsuperscript{178}

APPENDIX K

Letter Written By Edmund C. Burr179

Mar 8 1911

My dear son,

Your letter arrived yesterday, five years ago, yesterday, your grandmother Bron was born. But it shows on your memory tablet. When she was a boy they used whale oil lamps and taller ships for illumination. In Rhode Island, at least, they had not been forced to use coal for fuel, the lobster to use acid, acid gas for lighting, and saw the houses came into use. In his lifetime there were no today cars, no typewriters, no electric lights. The telephone was new and its use not widespread. Of the wireless, telegraphy, he never dreamed. That will another hundred years' story.

Yesterday we went to the dedication of the Hopkins Institute for Medical Research. The dedication was at the Affiliated Colleges and Lutheran had a long and high flight of stairs to the third story. The mail she was well paid for the trip Tuesday, by the address delivered. I couldn't hear much of one word or phrase in twenty, so if you wish to know what
Letter to Elsie Burr

From Edmund C. Burr

1722 Vallejo Street
San Francisco, California

Mar 8 1914

Dear Chum,

One hundred and five years ago, yesterday, your Grandfather Burr was born. Put it down on your memory tablet. When he was a boy they used evil-smelling whale oil lamps and tallow dips for illumination- In Rhode Island, at least, they had not yet found or used coal for fuel. He lived to see and use gas for lighting, and saw the horse car come into use. In his lifetime there were no trolley cars, no typewriters, no electric lights, the telephone was new and its use not widespread. Of the wireless telegraph he never dreamed. What will another hundred years bring forth?
APPENDIX L

Historical Fiction Unit Assignment
Historical Fiction Unit Assignment

An Overview

Part 1:

Research Project

1. Choose American Historical Figure
2. Note taking and citation
3. Research websites for primary and secondary data
4. Writing of Research Project
5. Bibliography
6. Editing and rough draft work
7. Final draft and oral report

Part 2:

Novel Analysis

1. Read novel
2. Plot diagram/Plot summary
3. Personal reactions/ novel as literature and history

Part 3:

Short Story

1. Prewriting Exercises
2. Rough Draft/ Final Draft Readings
APPENDIX M

Research Project Assignment
Research Project Assignment

Your report should include information on a variety of facets of life during the lifetime of the American Historical Figure you have chosen. You should include the nation, state and local political influences of the era. You may wish to include transportation, clothing, cultural customs, other key figures of importance, battles and wars, housing, religious customs, medical practices, jobs, economic factors and political practices. This report should be a survey of the time period as well as a survey of your American Historical Figure.

Your final product will include the following

1. Rough Draft
2. Note cards
3. Final Draft
4. Bibliography
5. Printed Copy of Power Point

You must use two websites, two books and two periodicals. You must also use two Primary Documents in your report.
APPENDIX N

Online Sources for Historical Fiction
READING LISTS

CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDED LITERATURE LIST
Search database by genre and grade level.
http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll

ANCHORAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY- one of the most complete lists of Historical Fiction for Children and Young Adults
http://lexicon.ci.anchorage.ak.us/guides/kids/booklists/historicalfiction/

PLYMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY- Historical Fiction for Middle and High School
http://plymouthlibrary.org/yahistbib.htm

HISTORICAL FICTION NETWORK
http://www.histfiction.net/ya.php

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION BOOKLIST
http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices.html

LITERATURE LINKS
http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/litlinks.asp

OUTSTANDING BOOKS FOR THE COLLEGE BOUND
http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/outsandindingbooks/introduction.cfm
APPENDIX O

Historical Novel Assignment
Historical Novel Assignment

Read a novel that is set in the particular historical time period of your American Historical figure. You may consider reading a novel that was written during the chosen historical time period. For example *Moby Dick* would be an interesting read if you were researching Ephraim Burr. The novel should be at least 150 pages in length and be approved by the instructor.

Write an analysis of the novel that includes each of the following:

1. Plot summary- 2 pages. Attach plot diagram as the rough draft component.

2. Analysis of historical time period. This paper should include information that you learned while reading the novel and should be two to three pages in length.

3. Personal reactions page in which you give your personal impressions of the novel as a work of literature, and this page should be one to two pages in length.
APPENDIX P

Plot Diagram
Plot Diagram

PLOT DIAGRAM FOR LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

1. LRRH hears that Grandma is sick, needs food > LRRH sets off for Grandma’s house, deep in the woods.
2. LRRH meets Big Bad Wolf > LRRH tells wolf where and why she is going > wolf takes shortcut, arrives at Grandma’s > wolf puts Grandma in the closet, puts on her clothes, gets in her bed > LRRH arrives > LRRH notices differences.
3. LRRH between Grandma and wolf > wolf reveals identity, tries to eat LRRH > LRRH screams, attracts the woodcutter.
4. Woodcutter shoots wolf > Grandma is rescued from closet > LRRH and Grandma visit.
5. Grandma gets food from LRRH > LRRH goes home.

ELEMENTS OF PLOT:

1 EXPOSITION >>> 2 CONFLICT >>> 3 COMPLICATION >>>> 4 CLIMAX >> 5 RESOLUTION >>> 6 CONCLUSION
APPENDIX Q

Personal Reactions
Personal Reactions to Novel as Work of Literature

Historical Fiction Unit

1. Did the plot have clear conflicts, good complications (rising action), and culminate with a satisfying climax and resolution?

2. Were there instances of situational irony as events unfolded?

3. Were there any slow, predictable, or boring sections of the novel?

4. Were the characters credible and interesting? Were any dynamic? Did any have epiphanies?

5. Were there any stereotypical or stock characters?

6. Did the author make good use of indirect characterization techniques?

7. What tone did the author take toward the subject and/or characters?

8. What type of point of view did the author use in narration? Did it work well?

9. What theme emerged out of the resolution of the conflict?

10. How did setting contribute to the conflict(s) in the novel?

11. Did the way the author used historical detail help or lesson your enjoyment of the novel?

12. Did you like the story? Would you recommend it to a friend? Why or why not?
APPENDIX R

Historical Fiction Short Story Assignment
Historical Fiction Short Story Assignment

Write an original short story of at least 1,000 but no more than 4,000 words, which is set in the historical period you have chosen for the first two parts of this assignment. Be sure to include the elements of good short story writing we have talked about – clear conflict, dialogue throughout, indirect characterization, epiphanies, a climax, and a theme. Attach a 1-2 page analysis of your story, which explains what conscious decision you made as author to infuse historical detail into your story and thus make the historical setting an integral part of the realism of your story.

Your final product will also include all rough draft work.
APPENDIX S

Short Story Beginnings Handout
Short Story Beginnings Handout

Authors do not just start telling a story. Their story beginnings are carefully planned to catch and hold the interest of the reader.

BEGIN WITH ACTION: This gets the reader interested immediately and he/she is swept along with the rising action from the start.

BEGIN WITH TALK: The reader gets to know the characters right away.

BEGIN WITH DESCRIPTION: A vivid description catches the reader, makes the reader want to know what is going to happen.

BEGIN BY CREATING A MOOD: Using emotion-packed words that elicit an emotional reaction on the part of the reader, makes the reader immediately feel happy, amazed, or sad- and is more willing to continue with the story.

BEGIN WITH THE END: Some stories tell the ending first, and then fill in the preceding action in flashbacks.
APPENDIX T

Historical Fiction Unit Short Story Writing Guidelines
These guidelines are meant to be used as reminders as you write and for writing process revision of the rough draft. They will also be used in grading your story.

1. Does the story have an interesting beginning? Are the characters and setting introduced early in the story? Is it easy to tell the time and place of this story?
2. Does a clear conflict emerge fairly early in the story? Does the conflict clearly fit the historical era in which the story is set?
3. Does the story have sufficient complication events to build dramatic tension? Is the plot too predictable? Does the story appear too similar to other published stories?
4. Is there a clear climax that makes sense in light of what has already happened in the story?
5. Does the writer “show” rather than simply “tell” the story? Is indirect characterization used frequently?
6. Is dialogue used throughout the story? Does what is said and how it is said reflect the historical time period?
7. Is there a perceptible bias for or against certain characters by the author? Does the writer avoid using stock or “stereotypical” characters?
8. Is there an epiphany? Is there growth or change in a main character as a result of experiencing the conflict?
9. Does there appear to be an identifiable theme in the story?
10. What effect does this story have on the reader?
11. To what extent does the author make clear use of researched historical detail in the story? Which scenes particularly show this and how? Are names, places, events and other details reflective of the historical time period?
APPENDIX U

Short Story Analysis
Short Story Analysis

Historical Fiction Unit

**Directions:** Now that you have completed the final draft of your historical fiction short story, write a one-to-three page analysis of your own story. Use as many of the literary terms below as you can in explaining what you were attempting to accomplish as you wrote the short story.

Historical Content: what details and information did you insert into your story to make it realistic and representative of your historical setting?

Characters

Motivation

Characterization: Direct? Indirect? Where and Why?

Conflicts: What kinds? Whom/what did they involve?

Theme

Point of View: Which one did you choose? Why?

Flashback

Foreshadowing

Frame Story

Elements of plot (see Little Red Riding Hood Handout)

Epiphany

Tone

Symbolism/use of symbols

Irony: Verbal? Situational? Dramatic?

Mood of particular scenes you tried to achieve

What made your story a good story?
APPENDIX V

Oral Presentation Rubric
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Developing (1)</th>
<th>Accomplished (2)</th>
<th>Advanced (3)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery:</td>
<td>Volume is loud enough for all to hear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate allows for full pronunciation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker is enthusiastic (forceful, animated, energetic)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivery of speech and response to questions is done with poise</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absence of filler words</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presenter is prepared/rehearsed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Developing (1)</td>
<td>Accomplished (2)</td>
<td>Advanced (3)</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Followed directions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduces topic clearly, gaining audience’s attention and relating topic to audience; previews body of speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Memorable closing (reviews major points and provides vivid ending)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information is accurate and complete (sources were cited)</td>
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<td>Body Language:</td>
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<td>Developing (1)</td>
<td>Accomplished (2)</td>
<td>Advanced (3)</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye contact includes entire audience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate amount of movement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expression (face, body, vocal) is vibrant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate use of gesticulations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Good posture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoids distracting mannerisms</td>
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**GRAND TOTAL**
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