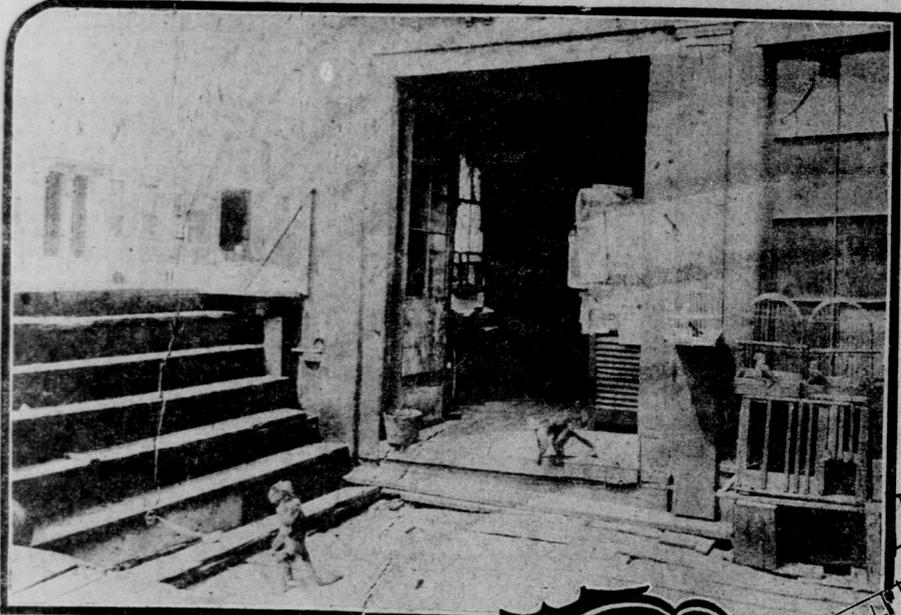


Rare Photographs of Old San Francisco

Seventeenth Installment



⑤ Exterior and animals of the Menagerie.

PROBABLY there is no part of San Francisco, outside the territory on Dolores street, where the padres of the early days of California established the Mission San Francisco Dolores in 1776, better known than that portion commonly called North beach. That district, in the days before "the south of the slot" was thought of, embraced everything north of a line parallel with Vallejo street, as far west as what is now Mason street, taking in all the water front. It was in that section that the early comers, prior to Admission day, 1850, landed on the shores of the new city. At that time the principal landing places were "Clarks point," which is now Francisco and Dupont streets, and the foot of Vallejo street, at the line of Battery. These were the only points where passengers from inbound vessels disembarked from small boats, which conveyed them from the anchorage in the stream at a cost of \$5 a head.

And within that territory there was no more historic spot than the wharf that was built in the earlier fifties by Harry Meiggs and named for him. It was the promenade of the pioneer San Franciscans who, after climbing Montgomery street to reach the apex of Telegraph hill, climbed down the western slope to reach Meiggs wharf and walk to the end, to inhale the delightful sea breeze that came in through the Golden gate, originally called Chrysolalae.

Shortly before the exciting Vigilante days of 1856 there was erected at the head of this wharf, at the northwest corner of Francisco street, a two story frame building, originally intended for stores and a rooming or lodging house. The stores were quickly rented and the upper part was fitted by an individual who soon put up "Rooms to let" signs, and it was not long before it was occupied by families who were anxious to secure a good marine view, an opportunity to see all the ships that passed in and out of the harbor and to be able to gaze on the islands in the bay and on the shores of Marin county.

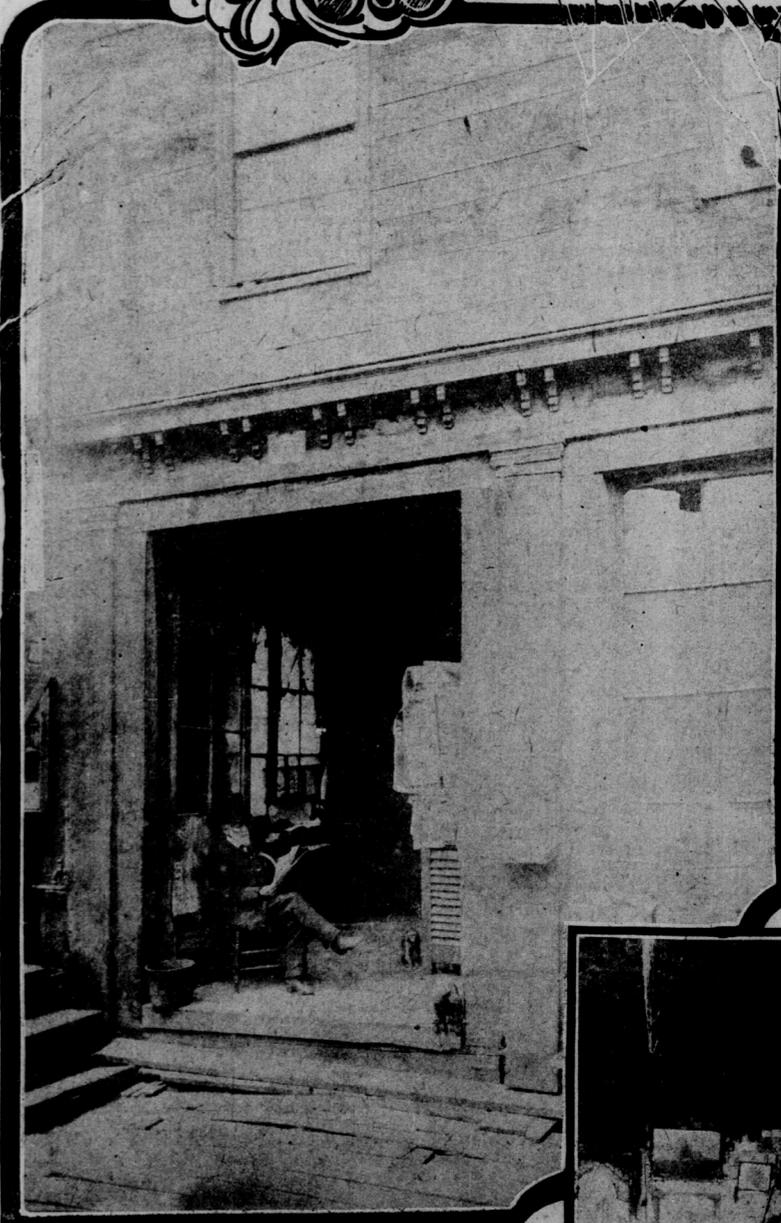
Among the tenants was Abraham Warner, who rented the corner store and opened it as a saloon. Warner came to this city in the early fifties and was as early as 1853 engaged in the business of a retail butcher at 9 Commercial street, which was at the head of Long wharf, then the principal wharf landing for the steamers plying between this city, Sacramento, Stockton and Marysville and the ocean steamers of the Panama line. In this new place he did a good business. In time he made up his mind that he would stand at the old place, and, as he was somewhat peculiar, not to say eccentric, he decided to make his place of business one of the sights of the city. First he secured a few monkeys and parrots, which he kept in cages on the eastern side of the saloon. In time he became interested in the collection of animals to the extent that he added to this collection in the nature of baby bears, not of the Teddy class, but live cinnamon and brown bears, lynxes, badgers and other wild beasts. The collection became so large that he had to hire space on the east side of the wharf end and there build a shed for the accommodation of his menagerie.

As he was adding to his outside show he was busy securing many curios for the interior of his saloon. He got up a fine collection of walrus tusks, plain, polished and many ornamented with quaint designs, the work of tattooers, who, when unable to get sailors to have subjects worked on their bodies, practiced on the tusks. He had several hundred of these, and they hung on the wall behind the counter where he was

went to stand with stovepipe hat on his head and ask each customer who entered, "What shall it be?" Then he added many curios in the shape of Indian baskets, tomahawks, bows and arrows and in later years relics of the civil war. He got up a collection of paintings and pictures, among the latter many illustrative of the days of the vigilance committees of 1851 and 1855, also a full collection of the caricatures by that old time artist, E. Jump, who used to make sketches of prominent people on his thumb nail, enlarge and print them in groups. Some of the pictures were good, some indifferent and some bad, but they all helped to cover the walls of the place. In the latter years of his life the owner of the place, who was known as "Old Abe Warner," became superstitious to the extent that he would not allow any one to dust his curiosities, nor would

he dust them himself, because he believed that it would bring bad luck to him to sweep away the cobwebs. From this superstition his place acquired the name of "Cobweb Palace."

The pictures reproduced in this issue show the old building with the proprietor at the door, show him in his favorite attitude when serving customers, show the aggregation of curios behind the bar, the remarkable collection of pictures behind the old fashioned barroom stove and views of the menagerie and the monkeys and parrots. The old gentleman kept the place until the nineties, when he was called away, and the cobweb palace passed out of existence. There was a time in the history of the city when if a visitor to San Francisco failed to visit the Cobweb Palace he missed as much as if he failed to visit Chinatown or the Cliff house.



① The cobweb Palace at the head of Meiggs' Wharf



② Costly Paintings Covered with Cobwebs.



④ Bar of the Palace with Abe Warner on Duty.



③ Interior of the Palace showing curios.