



**The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley**

BANC MSS C-D 5093

Selection from: San Francisco, the city I love

— 24 —

San Francisco, the City I Love

I had a season ticket for Grand Opera that opened at the Grand Opera House on Mission St. near Third St. Monday night April 16-1906. I heard Mmes Walker in the Queen of Sheba that night and the next night I heard Caruso in Carman [sic].

It was the second season of Grand Opera in San Francisco by the entire Company from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City.

The next morning April 18- I woke up very early reliving the Opera and humming Carman solo parts when suddenly the earth began to shake — a slight tremor then continued in a terrific shock, I had the feeling the walls at the ceiling would bulge out and the roof fall in, the noise was the same as when the ferry boats go in the slip a sort of grinding sound. My bed was in the back parlor (old fashion home) just as I dashed thru the portiers hanging in the archway a terrific twisting movement of the earth sent the paino out from the wall coming to a stop crisscross in the center of the room. That same movement threw me on my back with the paino almost on top of me. I jumped up and reached for the knob of the hall door as it swung in but out in the hall I was thrown on my face so I crawled on my hands and knees to the dinning room door I got to my feet to open that door as it opened in, just inside the door there was a book case with glass doors, the doors had opened and all the books were thrown on the floor. I had to push enough books away to squeeze in the door way and scramble over all those books. Papa met me in the dinning room and together in our bare feet we hurried over— such a mess—for all the

— 25 —

cupboards had emptied out on the floor in the kitchen broken dishes and glass sugar flour mush all package food with their containers smashed open etc.etc.etc. such a mess. Out on the back porch we waded thru bricks for the kitchen chimney had fallen. We raced down the back stairs into our garden just as the "quake" quieted down.

We lived in our upper flat and rented the lower to a family of 5 children. We called to them but not a sound after we called several times the father came to the door he said "we all crawled under the beds"

After a while we went upstairs to dress and look things over. A life size oil portrait of my brother that hanging over the paino was thrown out of its frame diagonally across the room into the bay window but the 4 inch gold and white old fashion frame still hung squeegee on the wall.

Mama had put a rose bud in a vase on the mantel-piece and oddly enough it was there just where I saw her put it. Mama had taken my youngest brother and my little boy to Napa on Monday for Easter vacation.

Papa walked to my brother Roy's haberdasher store on Third St. near Mission St. It had burned to the ground. Papa hurried home to tell me "The city is doomed water mains broken it will be worse then the Chicago fire" Our fire Chief was killed in the fire house during the earthquake. Papa and I went upstairs and brought down a trunk

— 26 —

and Papa dug a deep hole in the center of our garden while I trip after trip carried down and filled the trunk with our silver, cut glass, fine china that escaped being broken, family album, all records and deeds, every thing that could not be replaced and we buried the trunk. Papa had stopped on his way home to have my brother Guy his wife and baby come out to our house they were living on San Carlos St. near 20 th St. Papa was so worried about my brother Roy he wanted us all to be together so I walked over to his home California St. near Fillmore St.

On my way over to Roy's home I walked down Valencia St. I passed the Valencia Hotel near 18 St. It was a 3 story building the 1st. and 2 story had collapsed flat the 3d story still in tact was in the middle of the street. That same twisting force that sent our paino into the center of the room must of sliced the 3d floor of the Hotel clean off and slid it in the middle of the street. for the movement must have been in the same direction. The fire hydron that was on the corner of 18th St. and Valencia was broken off and the water shooting sky high The Valencia Hotel was built on "filled in" ground there was a creek running thru that part of the Mission and in early days it was all "filled in" and streets were layed out and homes built in that distrcet Many homes along that "filled in" ground went off their foundations and some callopsed completly. By noon the next day all that district and several blocks more were burned to ground. When I reached my brother's home about mid afternoon the neighbors told me he got an Army truck and moved his wife and baby and next door neighbor out to the Presicio. He took the piano

— 27 —

and bedding on the truck after he had filled a box with their wedding silver etc. etc. and buried it in the back yard "like father like son"

The city was under Marshal Law almost immediately no one was allowed to cook in the house or turn on the gas or electric light or use candles. So the first afternoon Papa and Guy moved our beds and old fashion wood and coal cooking stove down in our garden the kitchen table pots pans dishes and cups that escaped being broken. They riged up a cupboard for our food our garden was 30 by 40 feet plenty of room. The Militia kept ahead of the fire to order people out of their homes to safty we were ordered out the 2d afternoon We had sold our horse and buggy 2 weeks before but we still had our cart Papa told me to go to our grocer around the corner and buy food as if we were going on a camping trip then Papa and Guy loaded the cart with food mattresses bedding etc. and what a time they had pulling and pushing the cart 2 blocks away to an open field where Guy his wife and baby spent the night but Papa and I stayed home all night We watched 21st. street hill if the fire came to the top of that hill we were doomed. How many times I went to the top of our back stairs to watch we had to hold umbrellas over our heads as the air was full of falling lime and sand (plaster) from the houses that the Army were dymaniting to stop the fire. The fire was out the next (3d day) afternoon stopped at 20th St. 3 days and 2 nights without sleep WE were fortunate in our distric neither water or sewer pipes were broken so our whole neighborhood had

— 28a —

plenty of good drinking water and we could use our bathroom We continued to sleep and cook and eat in our garden as long as we were under Marshall [sic] Law

Our home remained firm on its foundation no cracks in the plaster Old fashioned homes were built solid in those days Our house just swayed with the motion of the earth.

— 28b —

The vaults in the banks were kept closed for weeks and weeks as they were too hot to be opened

The Italians living clustered together forming a "little Italy" in the North Beach District were the only people who had ready cash as they always kept their money buried under their homes in tin cans. This district didn't burn till the second afternoon

As soon as it was possible for people already burned out and those in the line of the advancing fire to get to the Ferry Building at the foot of Market St. crowds were leaving the City.

The Southern Pacific Company took them on board the Ferry Boats (continuous trips all day) to Oakland Mole where they boarded the Southern Pacific Trains.

— 28c —

China Town just to the North of the Downtown Business District was completely destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and fire.

It is astonishing how quickly they rebuilt the largest and finest China Town outside of China. The full length of Grant Ave. is just beautiful with buildings of artistic Chinese architecture.

They have their own United States Post Office with a staff of (Chinese) United States Government employees where they receive and mail out letters and parcel post packages addressed in Chinese.

They have their own telephone building staffed with Chinese girls who speak Chinese (although they have become Americanized) and therefore can operate the large exchange board quickly and efficiently.

They have their Theatre where plays strictly in Chinese as played in China. With friends I attended one of these performances and we had a lot of fun trying to figure out what it was all about. Of course they have their American movie houses.

And Chinese New Year—They have their delightful beautiful parade with the large long dragon and the perfect precision of their young girls drum corps with the artistic Drum Major was a delight to see.

— 29 —

After the earthquake many of our school teachers, City Hall and Public employees moved across the Bay and refused to live in San Francisco although one story comfortable temporary homes were rapidly built in several of our Parks they still refused to live here. So an ordinance was passed they had to live in San Francisco or give up their positions and that settled it they moved back. Why be "scare crows" at night and come over in the day time. They were paid by the City and should have been more than willing to help repopulate the City.

I always admired Robert Wallace's spirit. He was the owner of an old established fur firm on Geary St. near Grant Ave. "downtown" San Francisco. He began right away to clear out his "fire gutted" store and was the only firm for quite a while to do a successful business in the same old location so soon after the city was completely destroyed. Many of the downtown stores remodeled the beautiful mansions on the west side of Van Ness Ave. as the fire did not cross that Ave. so the well established firms were soon doing a splendid business. Most of the Mission District stores and Polk St. stores opened for business on Fillmore St. The Alcazar Theatre opened on Sutter St. near Fillmore St. I saw Bert Lytell and Evelyn Vaughn in Old Heidelberg and The Squaw Man there.

So San Francisco like the Phoenix Bird rose bravely almost immediately after that great disaster.

— 30 —

All who still had their season tickets for GRAND OPERA were asked to present them to an authorized representative of the Metropolitan Opera Company and receive full value. Of course I had mine and redeemed them.

I still have my season program for Grand Opera I have just been looking it over and have decided to copy interesting parts of it. I will copy exact as nearly as my typewriter will p[er]mit.

— 31 —

[Grand Opera House Program for April 16 and 17, 1906]

GRAND ** OPERA ** HOUSE

Charles W. Strine.

Announces the second season of

GRAND OPERA

in San Francisco

by the Entire Company from the

METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE

Under the Direction of

Mr. Heinrich Condied

Mr. Ernest Goerlitz

Acting Manager and Personal

Representative of Mr. Heinrich Condied

— 32 —

Monday Evening, April 16th, 1906 at 8 o'clock P.M.

DIE KONIGIN VON SABA (The Queen of Sheba)

Opera in four acts and five tableaux

Music by CARL GOLDMARK

(book by Mosenthal)

(in German)

The QUEEN OF SHEBA

Mmes. WALKER

(First appearance here)

SULAMITH

RAPPOLD

(First appearance here)

ASTAROTH

ALTEN

ASSAD

MM. DIPPLE

KING SOLOMON

VAN ROODY

THE HIGH PRIEST

BLASS

BAAL-HANAN

MUEHLMANN

Voice of the Guardian of the Temple

BAYER

Conductor

MR. ALFRED HERTZ.

Stage Manager

MR. FRANK RIGO

Isn't it interesting that our own MR. ALFRED HERTZ was Conductor the first evening of GRAND OPERA.

— 33 —

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

ACT I —

A Hall in the PALACE OF SOLOMON

ACT II —

Scene 1 — A Garden.

Scene 2 — the Temple.

ACT III —

A Banqueting Hall.

ACT IV —

The Desert.

ACT I —

Marche Fantastique, Corps de Ballet

ACT II —

Dance de LaBelle. MLLE. BIANCA FROEHLICH

Divertissement by the Corps de Ballet

WEBER PIANOS USED EXCLUSIVELY.

— 34 —

Tuesday Evening, April 17, 1906 at 8 o'clock P.M.

CARMEN

Opera in Four Acts

Music by BIZET

Book by Henri Meilhac and Lucovic Halevy

(in French)

CARMEN

Mmes. FREMSTAD

MICAELA

ABOTT

FRASQUITA

RALPH

MERCEDES

JACOBY

DON JOSE

MM. CARUSO

ESCAMILLO

JOURNET

ZUNIGA

BEGUE

MORALES

PARVIS

DANCAIRO

DUFRICHE

REMENDADO

REISS

Conductor

Mr. ARTURO VIGNA

Stage Manager

Mr. EUGENE DUFRICHE

— 35 —

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

ACT I —

A Square in Seville.

ACT II —

The Posada (Inn) of Lillas Pastia

ACT III —

In the Mountains.

ACT IV —

Entrance to Plaza de Toros.

In ACTS I and IV incidental dances by
Mlle. Bianca Froehlich and Corps de Ballet.

— 36 —

REPERTOIRE FOR BALANCE OF SEASON

Wednesday afternoon April 18 at 2 o'clock

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

Wednesday evening April 18 at 8 o'clock

LOHENGRIN

Thursday evening April 19 at 8 o'clock

LA BOHEME

Friday evening April 20 at 8 o'clock

DIE WALKUERE

Saturday Matinee April 21 at 2 o'clock

DON PASQUALE and HANSEL AND GRETEL

Saturday evening April 21 at 8 o'clock

FAUST

Monday evening April 23 at 8 o'clock

MARTA

Tuesday evening April 24 at 8 o'clock

SIEGFRIED

Wednesday afternoon April 25 at 2 o'clock

LA BOHEME

Wednesday evening April 25 at 8 o'clock

TOSCA

Thursday evening April 26 at 8 o'clock

TANNHAUSER

Friday evening April 27 at 8 o'clock

FAUST

FAREWELL MATINEE, Saturday afternoon April 28 at 2 o'clock

OPERA TO BE ANNOUNCED

FAREWELL MATINEE [sic], Saturday evening April 28 at 8 o'clock

OPERA TO BE ANNOUNCED

[Additional Comments on Opera Program]

— 37 —

A Photograph of each of the members of Metropolitan Opera Company Artists are on a page in the center of the advertisements. Many of the firms advertising in the program are still in business in San Francisco and a few are in the same location.

Here is a list of the Artists pictured. Marcella Sembrich.... Alois Burgstaller.... Edyth Walker.... Louise Homer.... Antonio Scotti.... Giuseppe Campanari.... Anton Van Rooy.... Otto goritz.... Marie Rappold.... Andreas Dippel.... Bessie Abott.... Pol Planeon.... Marcel Journet.... Josephine Jacoby.... Bella Alten.... Robert Blass.... Marion Weed.... Bianca Froehlich, Premiere Danseuse....

On another page 12 men are pictured each by himself in a sort of oval frame. They are Albert Mahlman.... Albert Reiss.... Alfred Hertz.... Jacques Bars.... Arturo Vigna.... Taurino Parvas.... Tony Franke.... Bernard Begue.... Nahan Franko.... Eugene Dufriche.... Giovanni Paroli.... Arcangelo Rossi....

All the men have mustaches and a few have beards too.

— 38 —

Here are some of the interesting adverstisements that were scattered throughout the program.

"After the Opera visit St. Francis Cafe or Luxurious White and Gold Room, Huber's Orchestre" and [to] the side of this ad is a picture of the dining room of the St. Francis Hotel.

On another page is "After the Opera dine in the beautiful Palm Garden of the Palace Hotel" and [to the] side of this ad is a picture of the Palm Garden of the Palace Hotel.

One ad takes a whole page — Printed in large ketters at the top "Before and After the Opera", then a picture of the dining room and under the picture is printed "The Rardee and Immel Oyster Grotto. Largest and handsomest in America. Oysters and Shell Fish exclusively." And around all this is a fancy scroll of sea serpents and fancy shells.

Advertising the Redfern Whalebone Corset is a picture of a lady laced in so tight at the waist a regular "HOUR GLASS" form.

The Baldwin Piano has a whole page with a beautiful picture of Sembrich with an endorsement by her.

The Studebaker ad has a picture of a coupe (described by Webster), "a four wheeled closed carriage for two persons inside with an outside seat in front for the driver." The coachman is sitting on the seat outside and the liveryman stands "straight as an arrow" beside the door.

It certainly is amusing to look over all these advertisements. Webster's description I have given you so you will have a mental picture of the coupe, coachman, and the liveryman.

— 38a —

Our Opera House, with the largest stage outside of New York City (I remember seeing Ben Hur there. The horses and chariots were driven right onto the stage), it was completely destroyed in the 1906 Earthquake and fire. The Metropolitan Opera Company of New York City lost all their scenery, costumes, orchestra

instruments that they brought with them from the Opera House in New York City.

The entire Company were [sic] staying at the Palace Hotel and within a few hours after the Earthquake and before the fire got such a head start the Southern Pacific Company made up a special Pullman train at their 3rd St. and Townsend St. depot, not many blocks away especially for the Metropolitan Opera Company and got them out of the City and out of danger and on their way back to New York City.

The Metropolitan Opera Company never came back to San Francisco.