

Naming of the City

The village of Yerba Buena, which in 1847 was to be re-christened with the name of San Francisco, in 1835 was still an insignificant outpost frequented by roving seafarers and was little more than a waste of sand and chaparral, sloping down to a beach and small lagoon which has long since been filled in and is now covered by massive commercial structures. El Paraje de Yerba Buena (the Little Valley of the Good Herb) derived its name in the beginning because of the aromatic vine found in the underbrush there.

The Bay

In 1835, the Bay was declared a port of entry by Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola. He appointed as captain of the Port of San Francisco, William Antonio Richardson, a young master mariner who had deserted the British whaler "Orion" in 1822 and set up the first "house" in Yerba Buena Cove, made up of some redwood poles over which was stretched a ship's sail.

During 1836, the Port of San Francisco became an important trading post. On July 1, 1836, Jacob Primer Leese, Ohio-born, partner in a Monterey mercantile firm, arrived by the barque "Don Quixote" from Monterey and by July 4 had thrown up a frame house 25 by 60 feet, the first "real" house to be built - part dwelling and part warehouse. He then summoned all the leading Mexican families and other prominent persons to an Independence Day celebration which lasted two days and a night. During the celebration the Stars and Stripes were raised beside the Mexican flag for the first time in San Francisco.

First Survey

In the autumn of 1839, Jacques Vioget, a versatile Swiss of the Peruvian brig "Delmira," was commissioned by Alcalde de

Haro to make the first land survey of Yerba Buena. By 1841 thirty families comprised the village population. During the next five years some of the prominent early settlers shifted to other localities in the Bay Area. At the same time, Yerba Buena, out-rivalled by the Port of Honolulu, drifted back into obscurity.

"The Portsmouth"

Then, on July 9, 1846, the "U. S. S. Portsmouth" quietly dropped anchor in Yerba Buena Cove, and Capt. John B. Montgomery and 70 sailors and marines came ashore and ran up the Stars and Stripes on Mexico's flagpole atop the adobe Custom House near the Plaza, as the "Portsmouth" gave a 21-gun salute. Thus passed the rule of the village of Yerba Buena from Spanish to American. On August 6, 1846, Captain Montgomery appointed Lieut. Washington Allen Bartlett as the first Alcalde of Yerba Buena under the American flag. Bartlett was confirmed by public vote on September 15. His first important decree ordered the revision of Vioget's survey, which had served to locate building lots since 1839. His civil engineer, Jasper O'Farrell, in making the survey, discovered in 1847 that streets as laid out in the early survey intersected at $2\frac{1}{2}$ degrees from a right angle. Correction of this error, known as "O'Farrell's Swing," was made promptly.

A Reception Center Since Gold Days

When gold was discovered on Jan. 24, 1848, in Sutter's millrace on the American River, and the evidence reached San Francisco's nearly 900 inhabitants, the first gold rush, led by Sam Brannan, publisher of the town's newspaper, "The Star," left only seven inhabitants behind. As the news spread around the world and ships came streaming into the harbor, a year later found over 6,000 miners at the "diggins," and San Francisco again was a conglomeration of tents with a population reported at 2,000 excited transients.

