

Every ghost has a story to tell

Fading images on old buildings hint at TL's character



LISE STAMPFLI

At home. Nan Castle checks contact sheets of some of the 100 images she's taken over the last three decades. She also day trips out of the city to Peninsula and North Bay sites, and is organizing her photos and research into a book project.

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gum, or services like blacksmithing or career schools, others like the YMCA at 220 Golden Gate Ave. and the Shawmut Hotel at O'Farrell and Jones call attention to place. Castle follows all promising leads camera-in-hand to capture and save the images before they disappear forever.

She likes to shoot after a rain. The ghosts, usually found on brick, stucco or wooden buildings, are most visible when they're wet and lighted by even

cloud cover. The colors pop more, helping the ghosts — the lowest form of long-lasting outdoor advertising involving no framework, hardware, neon tubing or attachments — to compete once more for peoples' attention.

"They were painted directly on specially primed walls by 'wall rats,'" Castle says, "who used a combination of grid line transfer from scaled artwork and freehand painting."

Many of the ghosts featured in Castle's exhibit can still be seen on TL walls, and a few are represented here. ■

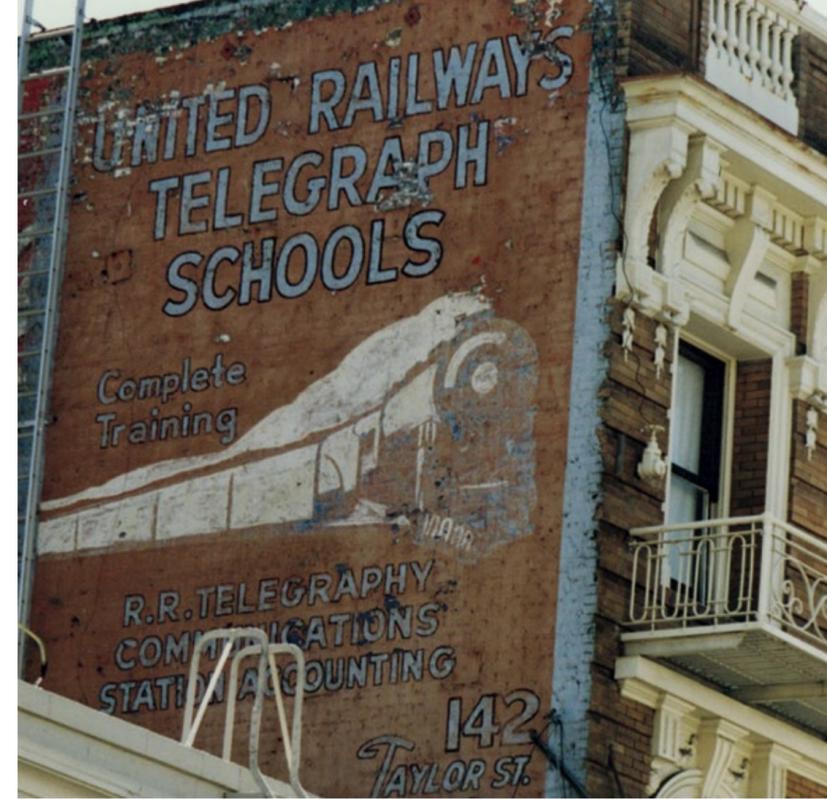


PHOTOS COURTESY © NAN CASTLE

The Hotel Toronto, on the 900 block of Geary, and the advertisement for the Turkish blend tobacco cigarettes — 2 packages for 15¢ — both are gone. The P. Lorillard Co. introduced its Zubelda smokes in 1912, named in honor of the Khedive of Egypt's wife. The late Edwardian-style hand lettering is typical of this kind of product at the turn of the 20th century.



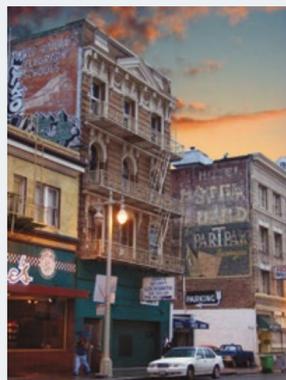
Clockwise from top: The safety of "steel frame" reinforcing the Herald Hotel at 308 Eddy, built in 1910 and the largest tourist hotel in the Tenderloin at the time, would have been a plus for potential residents since so many buildings had to be razed after the '06 earthquake and fire. This location marker has been repainted recently, but the date is unknown. Nan Castle shot this original ghost promoting the United Railways Telegraph Schools on the building at 136 Taylor St. before an aggressive restoration in 2011. Castle says, "The train in the original was so much more detailed and dynamic, and the aged texture of the original ghost was what made it special." The profile of a Native American still graces the side of the Hotel Shawmut at 516 O'Farrell St., built in 1912. Photographer and historian Mark Ellinger (see sidebar) says that the hotel's name, Anglicized to mean spring, referred to its private baths, unusual at the time the Shawmut was built.



Tenderloin love affair runs deep

Many are drawn to the visual beauty of the Tenderloin, none more so than photographer and neighborhood historian Mark Ellinger. His *Up From the Deep*, an online documentation of the TL, has been a comprehensive resource and graphic delight for almost a decade. "I have indulged in a passionate love affair with midtown San Francisco ever since it became my home turf in February 2001," Ellinger writes in the introduction to his site. "The long-neglected central city embraced me as one of its own."

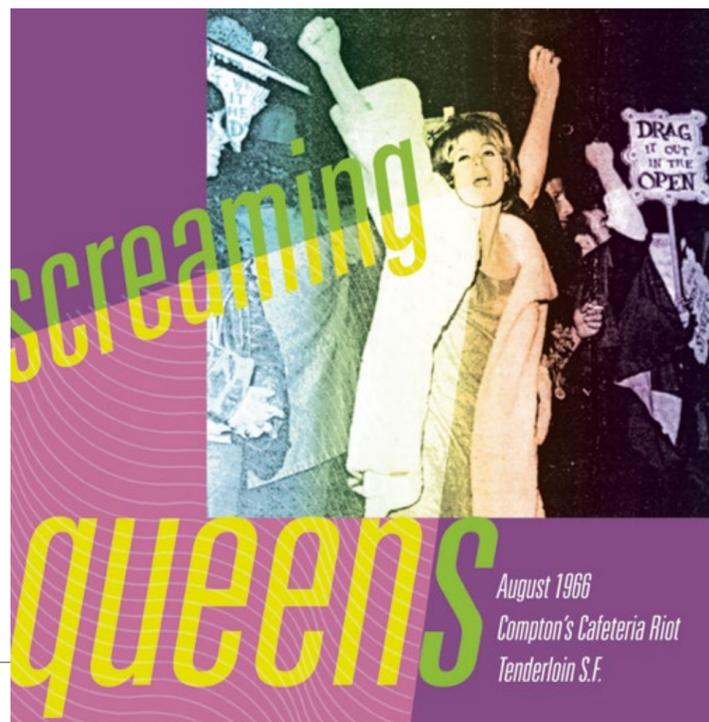
He called his first photo works, shot starting in 2002, the Hotel Project. A City Hall exhibition three years later led to a blog of the same name, and that morphed in 2008 to *Up From the Deep*. Ellinger is part of the tradition of helping us celebrate our surroundings. "I have found that, as a general rule, people rarely look upward past eye level," he says. "They are most often surprised when their attention is directed above to something they have passed



"Down over Taylor Street" by Mark Ellinger

by without seeing, perhaps for years." View Ellinger's work at upfromthedeep.com.

— Marjorie Beggs



Honoring ground zero

City pays tribute to transgender riot on tough Turk & Taylor block

By MARK HEDIN

FOR GROUND ZERO in the gay civil rights movement, look not to New York City's Stonewall riots of 1969 but to San Francisco's own hot corner, Turk and Taylor. There, in an almost identical resistance to S.F. police harassment, drag queens beat New Yorkers to the punch by three full years.

That was 50 years ago, 1966, when the "weirdniks," as Chronicle columnist Herb Caen described the late-night denizens of Gene Compton's Cafeteria at 101 Turk St., got fed up with police picking on them and, in a barrage of dishware, hot coffee and window-breaking, resisted a wee-hour raid.

"It's hard to imagine, but people were arrested all the time just on the

basis of what you were wearing," Felicia Flames Elizondo said at the fifth annual Howard Grayson LGBT Elder Life Conference, May 21 at the Cadillac Hotel. "There were laws against cross-dressing, even in San Francisco at the time. If the police caught you wearing long hair they would take you to jail."

Compton's, a chain of all-night diners, was one of the few places to get away from the "constant violence in the neighborhood," the late Amanda St. Jaymes said in "Screaming Queens," a short documentary about the riots made in 2005. "We went there to gossip about what we did and to let people know that we're alive. We survived the night."

"It was the center of the universe for us. It was our community," Elizondo,

a 29-year AIDS survivor and Vietnam War veteran, said.

But police harassment was a fact of life for that community, and St. Jaymes and Elizondo both spoke of how, finally, the constant hassle grew to be too much. When police came in that August evening and started, as Elizondo put it, "meeting their quota" at Compton's, the first person they accosted splashed her cup of coffee at the officer. And then it was on. Sugar shakers went through the restaurant's plate-glass windows, plates and saucers and such went flying and officers were hit with heavy handbags until they withdrew to the street awaiting backup, according to the only published report of the incident.

As the nighthawks fled the diner, out on the street a newspaper shack was set afire and a police car's windows were smashed.

The night after that melee, when barred from returning to Compton's, protests began again, and just-replaced windows were rebroken.

But the transgender community and drag queens were so marginalized that the riot was not reported in either of the city's daily papers. Police records, too, gave no clues of what happened. But for a mention in the alternative newspaper, *Gay Pride*, all word of it might have been lost to history.

"Screaming Queens" filmmaker Susan Stryker, director of LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona, first learned of the riots in the mid-'90s, when she stumbled across that obscure reference. "I tried every way I could to verify that story," she says. "I searched the archives looking for clues and I searched the streets of the Tenderloin for people who might remember what happened that night."

For all that, no one's even sure exactly which night it was. Police records of the era, Stryker learned from San Francisco Public Library City Archivist Susan Goldstein, "have been disappeared" since the early '70s.

"Had I not come across the written description and started making inquiries, it most likely would still be lost to history," Stryker said. "I think ultimately it would've been recovered; it was there

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