

The Streets of Sunnyside, Part Two



Sunnyside street signs. Photo: Amy O’Hair

From Baden to Hamburg: A Neighborhood Built on German Beer

By Amy O’Hair

[This is the second in a series of articles exploring the history of the naming of the streets in the Sunnyside District in San Francisco. Read the first one [here.](#)]

The role that big brewery money played in Sunnyside’s beginning in 1890 has yet to be completely told, as many of the traces have been obscured over the years. It is not surprising that brewery profits helped establish the neighborhood; from the year of the Gold Rush onward, many German immigrants who came to San Francisco brewed beer, and their businesses thrived, accumulating hefty capital. New techniques like steam beer were even developed especially for the California climate.

Some of the money invested in the new neighborhood came from a spate of brewery take-overs that happened shortly before the neighborhood’s birth. Foreign investors paid cash up front for many of San Francisco’s established firms. This left brewery owners or their sons with substantial piles of money, scouting for places to invest it.

Right: Advertisement for Sunnyside real estate, San Francisco Call, 27 May 1891. Strangely devoid of pesky hills.

For anyone with cash to spare in the 1880s and 90s, San Francisco real estate was an irresistible opportunity—the newest way to bring forth gold from dirt. Several brewery men speculated on Sunnyside real estate, getting their family names, or the names of places in Germany they came from, used for the newly laid out streets.

Five of the original Sunnyside streets—**Mangels Avenue, Spreckels Avenue, Wieland Avenue, Baden Street, and Hamburg Street**—I trace directly to these men. Today, three of those names have been changed, leaving only two



remnants of this important element in the story of the neighborhood's beginnings. Spreckels was changed to **Staples Avenue**, Wieland to **Judson Avenue**, and Hamburg to **Ridgewood Avenue**. For the story of those changes, see Part Four of this series (yet to come). In addition, **Edna Street** likely to have been named for the beloved daughter of one of these brewery men, Rudolph Mohr, and this will be covered in Part Six of this series (also yet to come).

The Sunnyside Brewery Boys

The owners of three breweries, and several officers of the Brewers' Protective Association, all German men, are the players in the story Sunnyside's beginnings. Here's a summary, before I spin out the various stories:



► **Robert P. Wieland (1861 – 1908)**: son and heir to the **Philadelphia Brewery** fortune. This brewery was ranked the top producer in the city.¹ Robert's father **John H. Wieland (1829 – 1885)** was from Württemberg, Germany, near **Baden**. John had died several years before Robert became part of the initial group of Sunnyside investors. Even though the brewery was bought by foreign investors, he remained on the board, and also on the board of **Brewers' Protective Association**. Their family name is the source of name of **Wieland Avenue**, original name of **Judson Avenue**, changed in 1909.

Left: Robert Wieland. San Francisco Call, 28 May 1893. From Newspapers.com

► **John Henry Mangels (1865 – 1897)**: son and heir to the fortune left by father **Claus Mangels (1832 – 1891)**, who founded the **Albany Brewery** with Claus Spreckels in the 1850s. The Mangels fortune was also tied up in Spreckels sugar empire. Young Henry put his father's money into real estate, including Sunnyside, but he didn't live long enough to see even one house on his namesake street **Mangels Avenue**. The name survived a wave of street-name changes later.

Right: John Henry Mangels. Photo: Ancestry.com





► **Claus Spreckels (1828 – 1908):** the “Sugar King” and head of the wealthiest family in late nineteenth-century California, which included his four sons. His first money maker in San Francisco was **Albany Brewery**, founded with Claus Mangels in 1850s. By 1869 it was ranked third in the city.² Claus Spreckels suffered ill health and was known to have visited **Baden-Baden**, the spa town in Germany, to restore his health.

Left: Claus Spreckels. Photo: Wikipedia.org.

Claus Spreckels was one of Behrend Joost’s biggest creditors, to the tune of \$50,000 (\$13 million today), revealed when Joost fell into a legal morass due to mounting debts a couple of years after Sunnyside was laid out.³ That sum was just a small part of the \$10 million (\$260 million today) that Spreckels had tied up in San Francisco real estate in those years, but certainly enough cause for Joost to name a Sunnyside street **Spreckels Avenue** (which is now **Staples Avenue**). Perhaps Claus Spreckels also had money in the contemporaneous Visitacion Valley Homestead to the south, where there was a Spreckels Street. This reduplication is likely to have been one of the reasons why Sunnyside’s Spreckels Avenue was changed in 1909 to Staples Avenue. *(For the story of all those changes, see Part Four of this series, yet to come).*

► **Philip Rohrbacher (1838 – 1897):** President of **United States Brewery** in San Francisco. Came to California from Alsace, near **Baden**, Germany. He was a saloon keeper who made a fortune in the Stockton area, came to San Francisco, and bought into this brewery just before it was bought out by foreign investors. He is sure to have profited heavily from his investment. He served on the board of **Sunnyside Land Company**, and was clearly one its initial investors, as well as being an officer in the **Brewers’ Protective Association**.

Right: Philip Rohrbacher. San Francisco Chronicle, 26 April 1897. From Newspapers.com.



► Rudolph Mohr (1858 – 1928): a whip-smart, behind-the-scenes corporate secretary who came to California from Hamburg, Germany, as a young man. He worked his way up from clerk at San Francisco Stock Brewery, a brewery ranked fourth in the city in 1869.⁴ By the 1880s he was the brains behind the **Brewers' Protective Association**, helping to calm nerves during the show-downs with brewery workers. He was secretary of the **Sunnyside Land Company**, as well as a few other home loan and land companies.



Above right: Rare newspaper photo of Rudolph Mohr. San Francisco Examiner, 20 March 1907. From SFPL microfilm.

Mohr is the only Sunnyside investor from **Hamburg**, Germany, and therefore likely to have been the source of that street name for the new neighborhood (later changed to Ridgewood Ave.). A few years before Sunnyside was laid out, he and his wife had their first child, a daughter named Edna, and thus, I believe, he is also the source of **Edna Street**. (The full story about Edna Mohr Russ in Part Six of this series.)

Big Beer, Big Bucks

Before I relate more detailed stories about these men's lives, here is some background on the beer business of that era. The brewing industry in nineteenth-century San Francisco was profitable and well developed by the 1880s. Brewery workers formed a good proportion of the

labor force in San Francisco, but their lot before unionization was grim: filthy on-site lodging, 16-hour days, and low pay. The brewery workers' union finally became established in 1888, bringing with it the abolition of the lodging system, a 10-hour day, and a living wage. You could raise a family on a brewery worker's pay.⁵

SOOTS TO ORDER AT MODERATE PRICES.
no23 SuMoTuTh

NOTICE!

On and after this day, **Monday, November 24, 1890**, the price of Steam Beer will be:

For 1 Barrel,	\$6.00
For ½ Barrel,	3.00
For ⅓ Barrel,	2.25
For ⅙ Barrel,	1.25

THE BREWERS' Protective Association
OF SAN FRANCISCO.
no24 11

MOVING 1000 MOVING

Left: The Brewers' Protective Association raises the price of steam beer. San Francisco Call, 24 November 1890. From Newspapers.com.

On the other side was the **Brewers' Protective Association**, a cartel of producers that had been in 1874 formed to manage labor issues and set beer prices. It was comprised of brewers, malt makers, and hops growers.⁶ This organization came into its full prominence the following decade, when labor disputes

made it a pressing matter for producers to maintain control over workers and their increasingly powerful unions.⁷ From then on there were regular power struggles and strikes, but overall business was good and growing, and both sides benefited.

Beer was at this time, in an age before mass refrigerated shipping, largely local. There were a great many breweries in San Francisco—almost 40 different firms in 1880, many of them quite small.⁸ Brewing a few tanks of “steam” beer—which was ready for drinking in less than two weeks—was not hugely capital-intensive or complicated. Steam beer accounted for most of the beer brewed in San Francisco.⁹ Despite the number of breweries, a few of the establishments rose to great levels of production, such as **Philadelphia Brewery**, founded in 1857 by **John H. Wieland**. Between 1869 and 1889, the firm quadrupled the numbers of barrels it sold.¹⁰

Right: Advertisement in the SF Directory, 1880. From Archive.org.

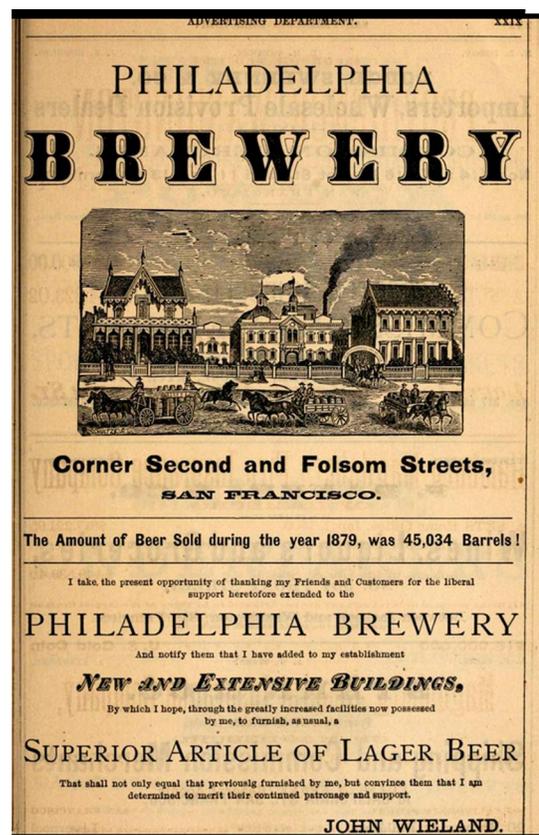
All over the US, there were similar upticks in the brewery industry. So it is hardly surprising that in 1889, faced with an economic downturn in Great Britain, a consortium of British and Irish bankers and investors came to the US with \$200 million in capital (\$5.2 billion today), hoping to cash in on this booming industry.¹¹ They moved across the country, buying up successful breweries, and forming local syndicates.

Not all US breweries were vulnerable or willing to be bought; nonetheless, the “English Syndicate,” as they were called, made a big impact. In San Francisco, they entered into long negotiations with several breweries, included the very successful **Philadelphia Brewery**, the **United States Brewery**, and several others. All told, they spent \$7 million (\$182 million today) in San Francisco, forming San Francisco Breweries Syndicate (Ltd.) by 1890.

Baden Street, an Easy Pick

One more digression before the detailed stories: the matter of Sunnyside’s **Baden Street**.

Baden, the German region that contains the resort town of Baden-Baden, threads its way through some of these men’s histories, and may have been a natural for the “B” street in Sunnyside’s alphabetical series of north-south streets. In the nineteenth century, this spa town in Germany was a preferred locale for holidays and a place where the ill recovered their health. It was fashionable and yet also a place where the growing middle classes in Germany could go for



relaxation. The Encyclopedia Britannica of those years extolls “its extensive pleasure-grounds, gardens, and promenades, and the brilliancy of the life that is led during the season.”¹²



“General View of Baden,” from: Eugène Guinot, *A Summer at Baden-Baden*, 1853 (books.google.com).

Behrend Joost’s electric streetcar, which carried people to Sunnyside, had as its terminus Baden, California, a town in San Mateo County that later became South San Francisco. Joost himself was not from Baden, nor anywhere in the south of Germany, so he did not choose the name for its family ties. But as I’ve noted above, some of the brewery men who invested in Sunnyside were from the south of Germany, near Baden, and they may have suggested or promoted it for a street name. However, the town of Baden, California, was founded in 1857,¹³ so that predates everything in Sunnyside—perhaps the town’s name is the simple source of the street name. Joost choose that town as his streetcar terminus because it was an increasingly important town down the peninsula.

Determining cause and effect here is difficult, but suffice it to say that convincing these investors that there should be a **Baden Street** in Sunnyside was not likely to have been a difficult sell.

Now for some more detailed stories about the lives of the men I’ve mentioned thus far.

Native Son about Town

The **Philadelphia Brewery** was established by **John H. Wieland** in the 1850s, but by the time of its sale to the English Syndicate in 1889 for \$3 million (\$78 million today),¹⁴ it was run by Wieland’s sons. Wieland senior died in a fire in his brewery in 1885, while saving two of his children from the flames.

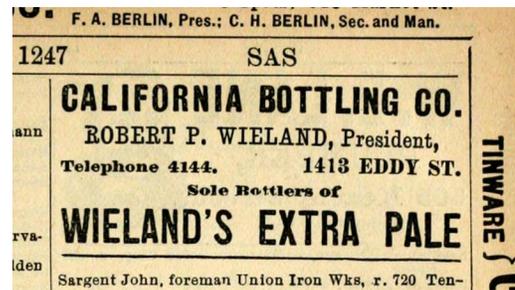


Left: The Wieland Brewery building, which still stands, somewhat altered, on Second Street between Howard and Folsom. Photo: San Francisco History Center, via sf.curbed.com.

His son **Robert P. Wieland** became a preeminent figure in the San Francisco brewing industry by 1890, being the oldest living son and heir. Both his elder brothers had died young of Bright's disease.¹⁵ He served on the board of the **Brewers'**

Protective Association in 1889 and 1890, and remained on the board of the brewery even after its sale to the English Syndicate.¹⁶

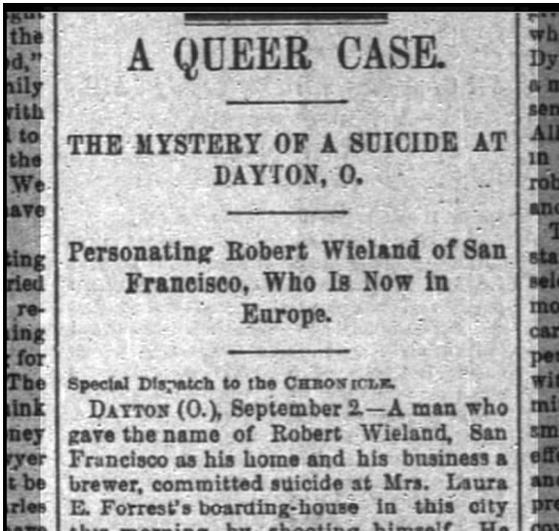
Right: Advertisement from SF Directory, 1894. From Archive.org



Robert Wieland, known as Bob to his friends, turns up in the news during these years for many other reasons than his business. He was a man-about-town, known for showing up at the races, becoming president of a baseball league, sporting a dainty cane, hoping off to Paris, and singing spontaneously in public.¹⁷ One of the

oddest stories I came across was an incident that happened shortly after Sunnyside lots first go on sale. A man in Dayton, Ohio, checked himself into a boarding house, stayed a month, and

shot his brains out one night. No one knew who he was, but because he called himself "Captain Robert Wieland," people all across the country read in the news that he killed himself.¹⁸



Left: San Francisco Chronicle, 3 September 1891. From Newspapers.com.

The real Robert Wieland was still in Europe, spending some of that brewery buy-out money, his family assured the newspapers. The news of the big sale of his father's company was still fresh in peoples' minds, and one reporter at the Chronicle speculated that the suicide took grim satisfaction in the notoriety before doing himself in.

Wieland's 15 Years of Fame

In any case, Robert Wieland had money to spare when shares in the Sunnyside real estate speculation project were offered around 1890 – 1891. He may have already invested in Visitacion Valley, where there was another street named Wieland. In Sunnyside, Wieland Avenue remained so named until 1909 when the City changes many street names. By then the prominence that he and his family had basked in for many years had lost its gleam, and there was confusion with the other Wieland street, so the street name was changed to **Judson Avenue**, in honor of a nineteenth-century San Francisco inventor and dynamite chemistry merchant (more in Part Four of this series).

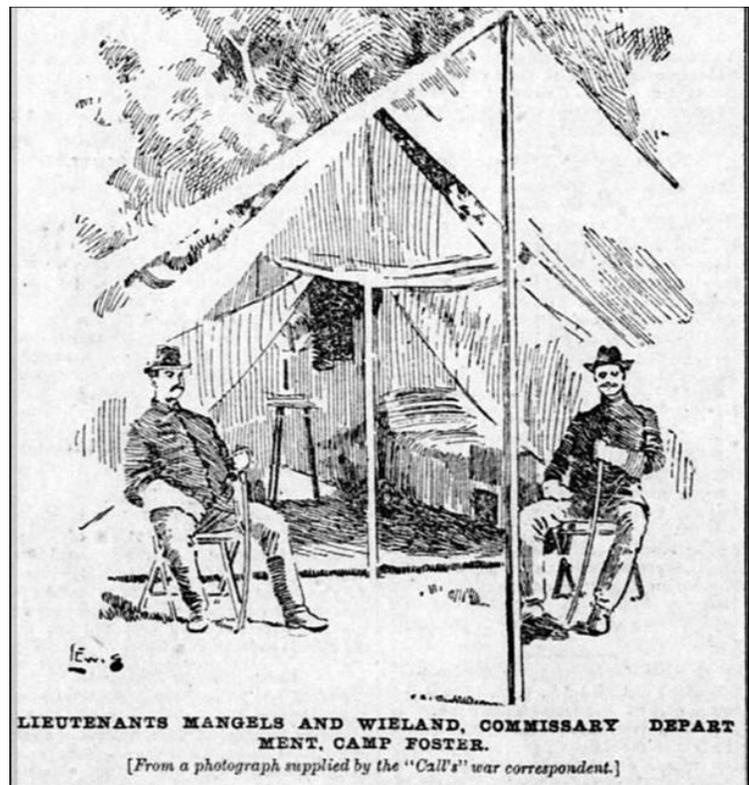
Good Buddies in Business, Pleasure, and Rifles

Dashing young Wieland was fast friends with another Native Son, **John Henry Mangels**, the only son of **Claus Mangels**. He was called Henry by friends and family. The buddies served in the National Guard together, which appears to have been a good excuse for camping out in far-flung places like Ukiah, shooting things and drinking.¹⁹ Together they were both forced to resign after a scandal involving their commanding officer, who got himself into trouble with some young girls in Santa Cruz, and who did not have the respect or obedience of his men.²⁰ Together Bob and Henry sponsored a shooting trophy which bore their joint names.²¹

Right: Henry and Bob, at ease with their swords. San Francisco Call, 22 June 1895. From Newspapers.com.

John Henry Mangels was heir to the fortune that his father Claus Mangels had made as a close associate of Claus Spreckels. First with the **Albany Brewery**, then with Spreckels' sugar company, **California Sugar Refinery**, the senior Mangels had made a fortune. He died the week Sunnyside lots went public, making it far more likely that it was his only living son Henry, not himself, who was the investor in the venture. The senior Mangels's obituary is very modest.²² He never became King of anything, but we still have a **Mangels Avenue** in Sunnyside.

Young Mangels and Wieland were part of the group of twenty initial investors in Sunnyside. Perhaps Henry Mangels ponied up more money than his buddy Bob Wieland for his shares; Mangels Avenue was four times the length of Wieland Avenue in the original layout.²³ That these two Native Sons were investing buddies is clear: six months before Sunnyside lots went on sale, they were founding members together of



another property speculation project, Humboldt Building and Loan, along with **Rudolph Mohr** and **C.E.A. Foerster** (see Parts Six and Seven of this series, yet to come, for their stories).

Left: The Mangels Mansion on Howard Street, now South Van Ness. Photo: Ancestry.com.



John Henry Mangels died young of alcohol-related illness, at the Mangels Mansion (above). The building, minus the northern portion, still stands in a dilapidated state at 822 South Van Ness, San Francisco.

The Spreckels Profit Machine

By far the most documented life amongst the brewery men of Sunnyside is a man known best not for beer, but sugar—**Claus Spreckels**. Staples Avenue was called Spreckels for the

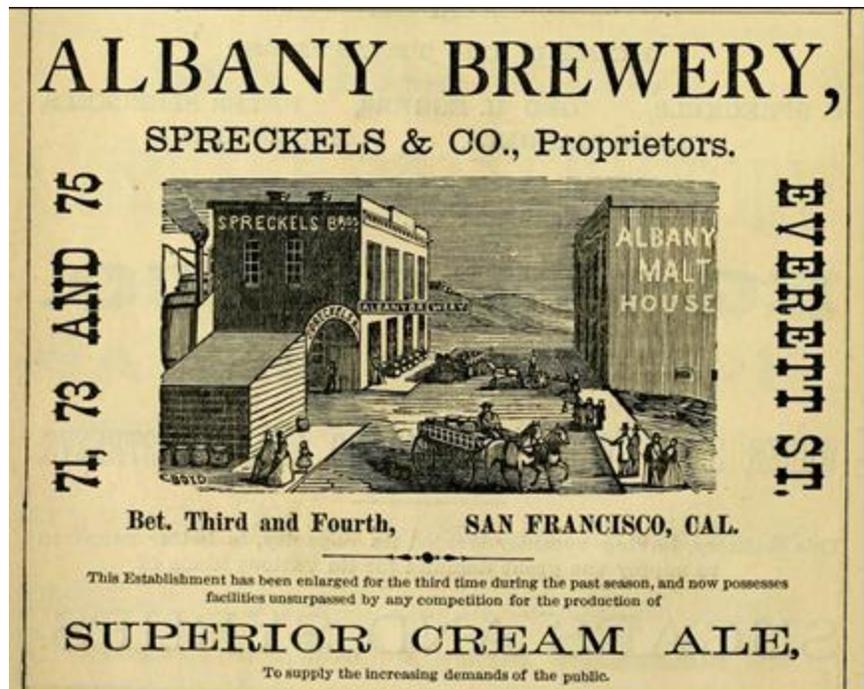
first 18 years of Sunnyside's existence. The Spreckels family has left their marks all over San Francisco, including the lake in Golden Gate Park and the mansion that son Adolph Spreckels built in 1912 that still stands. But the traces of the investment that Claus—or one of his four sons, or possibly his real-estate-minded brother Peter—made in Sunnyside upon its initial offering are now lost from general knowledge.

Claus Spreckels came from the north of Germany, from Lamstedt in the Kingdom of Hanover—the same area where Behrend Joost was from.²⁴ He came to America in 1848. He had a lifelong association with Claus Mangels, whom he included in many projects throughout his life. Spreckels married Mangels's sister Agnes, apparently his childhood sweetheart. He had a grocery in New York City, which yielded enough capital to move to California in the mid-1850s. There was money to be made in the West, and most people left their scruples back East when they came. A Spreckels family story shows how enterprising the two men were: in mining camps they sold spoiled hams to miners that they had got very cheaply, by scraping the mold off and rehabilitating them with a bit of cooking.²⁵ The miners paid in gold dust; soon the enterprising pair were off to San Francisco.

There Spreckels and Mangels started a grocery, but for Spreckels it wasn't enough. In 1857, they founded **Albany Brewery**, with Spreckels's brother Peter. It was located on an alley called Everett (later Natoma) near Fourth and Howard. Later they built their own malt-house nearby, instead of relying on an outside supplier. Spreckels was an intensely keen business man, described by a contemporary thus: He "was known as a hustler and a better. He was shrewd and energetic and stout-hearted, besides possessing a keen eye for the main chance."²⁶

Right: Advertisement from SF Directory, 1874. From Archive.org.

Spreckels' Steamy Legacy
Spreckels, always an innovator “with a keen eye for the main chance,” invented a beer just for our temperate climate—“steam” beer. Now it is trademark of Anchor Brewery, and can be used by no other brewer. But at this time it was a widely used method of brewing that didn’t require cooling, something that while easy to come by half the year in Germany isn’t readily available here in California.



Below: From anchorbrewing.com.



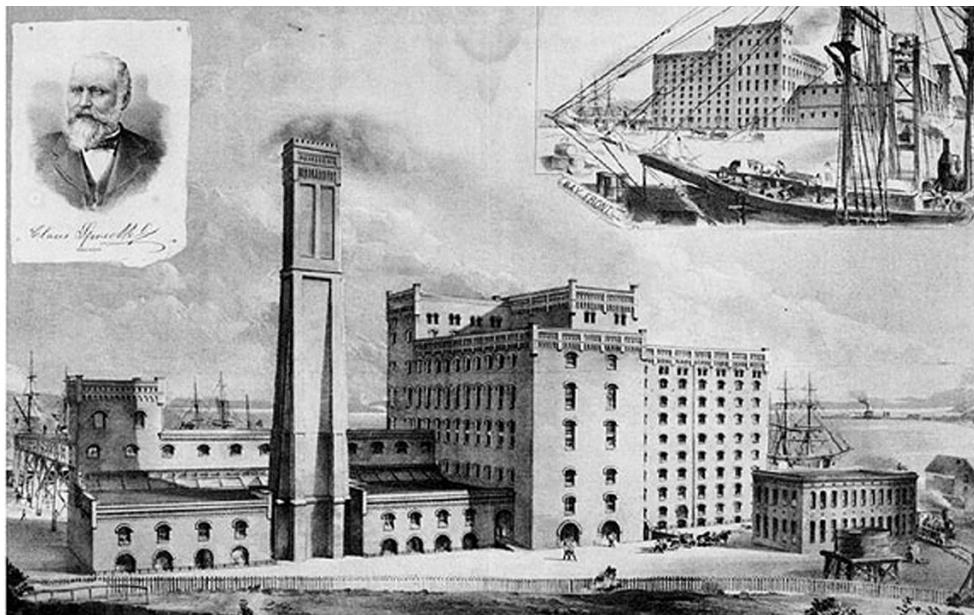
The other advantage of steam beer was how quickly it was ready for sale—10 to 12 days. The downside for the workers was that the vats had to be watched continually, day and night, so that when a vat reached a certain point of fermentation it could be immediately put into the next stage of processing. This necessity may have driven the in-house lodging system that was pervasive in breweries for workers until unionization: someone always had to be onsite. Although you could get blocks of ice shipped to San Francisco, Steam beer was clearly cheaper and more profitable to brew here.

Though steam beer was popular, even then there were beer snobs, who tended to despise its harshness. The very term connoted something lower-class or without much worth: a letter to the editor at the time refers to the “steam-beer class” as a disparaging euphemism for poor immigrants.²⁷ Traditional German lager beer was considered the best of brews, but lager brewing required a cold fermentation—about 45°F—something hard to come by given the ambient temperatures in San Francisco. Its name comes not from any steam used in processing, but from the hiss of releasing carbonation that is produced upon tapping a barrel.²⁸

Sweet Profits and Sour Feuds

Although the Albany Brewery was profitable, showing up in an 1869 ranking near the top of the city’s many breweries, it apparently wasn’t the money-maker Claus Spreckels was looking for. However it did provide enough capital for his next venture: in the 1860s Spreckels sold up his

shares and moved onto sugar. He labored tirelessly to dominate this highly profitable industry, funding cutting-edge research into newer and cheaper ways to feed the public's appetite for sweetened foods. By his death in 1908 he was universally acclaimed the "Sugar King."



Spreckels sugar refinery, Potrero Shore, 1880s. From Bancroft Library, via FoundSF.org

The family became exceedingly rich and politically influential—the richest family in California by the late 1800s. Claus Spreckels had four sons, two of whom he seemed to like, John D. and Adolph, who followed in his hard-driving footsteps, and two whom he did not, Claus August (“Gus”) and Rudolph. The family was notorious for its public feuds. [*There are links to biographies at the end of this article.*]

Spreckels in Sunnyside, Spreckels in Visitacion Valley

What prompted one or more members of the Spreckels clan to join in Sunnyside property investment? Claus was known to be speculating heavily in San Francisco real estate in the 1880s and early 1890s. I propose that one of these men, Claus or his sons, or possibly his real-estate developer brother Peter, was amongst the initial twenty investors in Sunnyside in 1890 – 1891.

As one street in Sunnyside was given over to the family name, the Spreckels investment was likely to have been a substantial portion of the initial one million dollars in shares that were offered, though the details of this investment are not likely to be ever known.²⁹ Like Wieland, there was another street with the Spreckels name in the Visitacion Valley homestead, predating the one in Sunnyside. Perhaps two of the brothers, contentious as always, were trying to beat each other to this minor but presumably permanent immortalization of the family name. In any case, neither street named Spreckels lasted beyond a few years into the twentieth century.

The change from Spreckels Avenue to **Staples Avenue** in Sunnyside happened the year after Claus died in 1908, so perhaps by then he and his family had lost the pervasive sway they had

once held in public life. By then Sunnyside had gone from being a dicey speculation project to an actual neighborhood the city took an interest in. These changes took place during the heady years of willful civic betterment that grasped the public's imagination between the Fire in 1906 and the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in 1915. The namesake for the new choice, **David J. Staples**, was an admirable civic figure, not a rapacious industrial baron profiting from spoiled teeth and enslaved native Hawaiians (more in Part Four of this series, yet to come). Exit Spreckels, in name and presumably in influence, from Sunnyside.

The Druid of Sunnyside

Philip Rohrbacher was one of the initial Sunnyside investors and was on the board of directors of the **Sunnyside Land Company**. He came to California from Alsace (then part of Germany and near **Baden**) at age sixteen. He ran a hotel and saloon in Stockton, California, which made him rich. He brought his family to San Francisco in 1881, and bought into the **United States Brewery**.³⁰

Right: Advertisement for United States Brewery. San Francisco Call, 4 November 1890. From Newspapers.com. "Special Brews for Family Use" raises some questions about the deployment of alcohol by parents at the time.

When the brewery was purchased in about 1890 by the English Syndicate, the amount paid to him and the other three owners was \$1 million (\$26 million today).³¹ Philip Rohrbacher was also on the board of **Brewers'**

Protective Association, the beer price-fixing cartel.

Rohrbacher was a large man, weighing 300 pounds, something the Chronicle once made much of in a spoof article on a fictitious "Fat Men's Club."³² He died seven years after Sunnyside's beginning, at the age of 59. He was leader of the fraternal organization known as the Druids, an occupation which seems to have dominated his life. Despite being a minor figure in business at the time, his funeral was vastly more publicized than any other of the men in this article. He was apparently well-loved, and he returned the sentiment by bequeathing the whole of his fortune to community property, though of course his widow and children were allotted just the minimum interest the law required.³³

Rohrbacher's Remains Lying in State at Druids' Hall.



Left: Rohrbacher's well-publicized funeral. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 April 1897. From *Newsbank.com*.

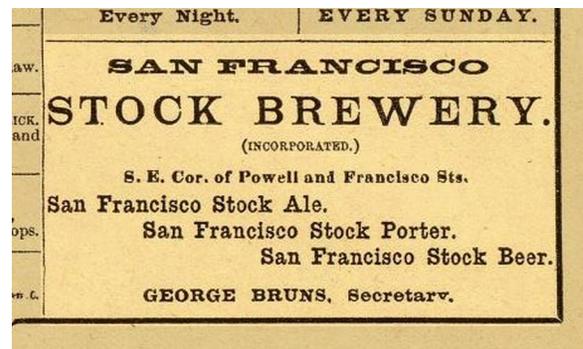
Outside of his listing as an officer of the Sunnyside Land Company, and exerting some possible influence on the choice of Baden for a street names, Rohrbacher did not leave any other traces of his influence on the neighborhood. But perhaps this suited him, as he seems to have been more public-spirited and philanthropic than the other capitalist characters involved with early Sunnyside.

Everyone's Right-hand Man

Lastly we come to **Rudolph Mohr**, another apparently less self-promoting figure in the story, not that this meant he was any less bent on thick profits. His life, as well as I can discern from the consistent traces left in newspapers and census data, seems to have been an exemplar of the sober yet quietly ruthless industriousness that German immigrants in the nineteenth century were known for. I will sketch his life as a brewer and an investor here, and return to it in greater detail in Part Six of this series of articles.

Young Rudolph Mohr, apparently well-educated in his home town of **Hamburg**, Germany, arrived in San Francisco some time before 1873, when he was 20 years old.³⁴ He never did any sort of sales or manual labor; right away he worked as a clerk for **San Francisco Stock Brewery**, one of the top breweries. After a few years, the directory shows, he became secretary of that establishment, while also serving as secretary of the Oakland-Alameda-Piedmont Railroad Company, an office held for many years.³⁵ He expanded into more areas. By 1895 he had his fingers in a bewildering number of pies; the directory and newspapers show that he was secretary of six different organizations: Germania Building and Loan, Humboldt Building and Loan, Monarch Mutual Building and Loan, **Sunnyside Land Company**, Golden State Land Company, and **Brewers' Protective Association**.

Above right: Advertisement on 1886 business map of San Francisco, Post Publishing Company. From: *DavidRumsey.com*.



As corporate secretary he carried out various legal and technical aspects of running a company, while taking orders from those more ego-driven men who needed to run the show—and surely in the process learning an enormous amount about the behind-the-scenes workings of such operations. Later he would have his own companies. By 1900 his directory listing condenses all those corporate pies down to “Capitalist.”



Three left and ready for occupancy

In MOHR'S SUBDIVISION

Staples and Genesee Streets, adjoining Westwood Park on the East. Two short blocks from Monterey Boulevard and car line.

MINIMUM PAYMENTS \$500 DOWN, \$45 PER MONTH

These modern HOMES have 4-5-6 rooms
with Sun Porch, Hardwood Floors, High Basement, Garage.

Superior Construction—Lowest Prices—Highest Value

To reach these HOMES take Guerrero St. Car No. 10 to Genesee St., or phone our office for auto.

RUDOLPH MOHR & SONS
233 PACIFIC BLDG. Phone Sutter 2559

One thing that sets Rudolph Mohr apart from these other initial Sunnyside investors is that he and his sons remained involved in Sunnyside real estate—selling lots and building houses—until well into the 1930s. In the 1920s, they developed en masse several of the empty blocks in the western end of Sunnyside, exerting a level of aesthetic and architectural planning that was not typical of the neighborhood.

Above: Advertisement for homes newly built by Rudolph Mohr and Sons, on Staples and Genessee. San Francisco Chronicle, 14 May 1921. From Newsbank.com. “Sun Porch” in these houses likely to be stretching the truth a bit.

Two Street Names for the Quiet Guy

Rudolph Mohr and his wife Mathilda Pape Mohr had four children. Their first, a daughter named Edna, was born a few years before Sunnyside was laid out in 1890. None of the other men I’ve identified have a wife or daughter named Edna at this time, so I propose that it is due to his request or preference during the planning that there is included an **Edna Street** in Sunnyside—the “E” street in the alphabetical north-south streets. The name Edna was just beginning to be popular then. By the end of the decade it was the 11th most popular name for girls, then fading from common use by the 1920s.³⁶

In addition, **Hamburg** is his hometown in Germany, and I contend that this is the reason the “H” street was named after that place originally. All the Joost men, and Claus Spreckels and Claus Mangels, were all from Hanover, Germany; if any of them had chosen our “H” street, they would surely have offered their own hometown. **Hamburg Street** was changed to **Ridgewood Avenue** about 1930, so as to better match the “-wood” streets of adjacent Westwood.

It seems typical of this quiet man not to insist on a “Mohr” street; perhaps it pleased him better to have his cherished daughter and his hometown—where his mother still lived—memorialized instead.

A Booze-Soaked Neighborhood?

Although there are a number of apocryphal stories about Sunnyside residents' bootlegging operations in the 1920s, I don't think there is anything about the neighborhood that remains especially associated with alcoholic beverages.³⁷ It was simply that German immigrant brewers in San Francisco accrued massive profits at just the time when the city was undergoing a massive expansion in the late nineteenth century. The beer industry was at an all-time high in terms of profit everywhere in the US. But that would soon change, as beer began its slow decline in the march toward Prohibition in 1919. Those British investors later regretted their expensive buy-outs in the US; by the turn of the century some complained of being "cheated by the Yankees."³⁸

With homesteading taking place all over San Francisco, anyone with money to burn was betting on property. These brewery men knew each other; they were part of a coherent business community; their daughters went to each other's tea parties; their wives raised money for the same good causes. And of course they shared a native country. Although the Germany they had left was by no means yet a unified one, here they were all "The Germans" in the newspapers, joined together to exert an influence in politics and business.

Personally, I wish those investor-planners had had a bit more beer to drink before sketching out our rather severe grid of streets in Sunnyside. Although we have the same sorts of steep hills as are found in Glen Park, someone in 1890 got out the straight-edge ruler for our streets. It might have been nice to have a few of those Baldwin-and-Howell-type curves snaking around our numerous hills....

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Biographical Summaries:

- **Claus Spreckels (1828 – 1908)** Born in Hanover, Germany; died in San Francisco, California.
- **Claus Mangels (1832 – 1891)** Born in Hanover Germany; died in San Francisco.
- **John Henry Mangels (1865 – 1897)** Born and died in San Francisco.
- **John H. Wieland (1829 – 1885)** Born in Württemberg, Germany; died in San Francisco.
- **Robert P. Wieland (1861 – 1908)** Born and died in San Francisco.
- **Philip Rohrbacher (1838 – 1897)** Born in Alsace, then in Germany; died in Stockton, California.
- **Rudolph Mohr (1858 – 1928)** Born near Hamburg, Germany; died onboard a ship near Panama Canal en route to East Coast, USA.

Links:

Historical Essay: Sunnyside by Jacqueline Proctor. <http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=Sunnyside>

"Brewery Workers" on FoundSF.org. http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=BREWERY_WORKERS

Comprehensive biography of Claus Spreckels. http://www.ghi-dc.org/files/pdf/Research_projects/ie/Spreckels.pdf

Another bio: <http://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=5>

Wieland Brewery Building, San Francisco.

http://sf.curbed.com/archives/2012/04/27/then_now_wieland_brewery.php

Oral history about J.H. Mangels by his niece Alice Mertz on Ancestry.com (subscription required). http://mv.ancestry.com/viewer/0dcac896-f0df-4af8-bfb9-cde7c1027b15/14561659/125386788?_phsrc=Es14&usePUBJs=true

Excellent book on beer and brewing in the US: Stanley Wade Baron, *Brewed in America*, (Boston: Little Brown), 1962. Available at the SF Public Library.)

Historical archives of the *San Francisco Chronicle*: Sign in here with your SF Public Library account to search and view: <http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000028601#/alpha/s> [Page down to San Francisco Chronicle]

References (see next page)

- ¹ San Francisco Chronicle, 23 January 1869, page 2.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ San Francisco Chronicle, 28 July 1893, page 5. “Bonds On a String”.
- ⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, 23 January 1869, page 2.
- ⁵ Several resources on the subject: Stanley Wade Baron, *Brewed in America*, (Boston: Little Brown), 1962; Paul Chatom Jr., “Industrial Relations in the Brewery, Metal, and Teaming Trades of San Francisco,” MS Thesis, UC Berkeley, 1915 (available at the California Historical Society library); William L. Downard, *Dictionary of the History of the American Brewing and Distilling Industries*, (Westport CT: Greenwood Press), 1980.
- ⁶ Chatom, page 23.
- ⁷ E.g. San Francisco Chronicle, 5 May 1887, page 8: “Brewer’s Troubles – Interesting Conference – Brewers have a Conference with their Employees.”
- ⁸ Downard, page 165.
- ⁹ San Francisco Chronicle, 5 May 1887, page 8: in article about brewery labor issues the figure is given that 80% of beer brewed was “steam” type.
- ¹⁰ San Francisco Chronicle: 26 January 1869, page 3, and 30 June 1889, page 16. Both sources give number of barrels produced.
- ¹¹ San Francisco Chronicle, 30 June 1889, page 16: “English Capital.”
- ¹² [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica_Ninth_Edition/Baden_\(2.\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica_Ninth_Edition/Baden_(2.))
- ¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_San_Francisco_California
- ¹⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, 29 June 1889, page 6.
- ¹⁵ Daily Alta California, 8 Dec 1888, page 1; and San Francisco Chronicle, 8 Sept 1890, page 6, for accounts of brothers’ deaths.
- ¹⁶ San Francisco Call, 17 July 1890, page 2: “Syndicate Breweries – Details of the Organization – List of the Officers.” BPA board elections: San Francisco Chronicle, 5 May 1889, page 16; and 4 May 1890, page 14.
- ¹⁷ Wieland romping on New Year’s Eve: San Francisco Call, 1 Jan 1896, page 10. Wieland singing a cappella at the Racetrack: San Francisco Chronicle, 7 April 1893, page 5: “With the Bang-Tails.” Wieland, expert diver in the Olympic Club, San Francisco Call, 21 May 1893, page 7. Wieland as president of the California Baseball League, San Francisco Call, 6 June 1893, page 7. The Wielands go to Paris for a few months, San Francisco Call, 29 March 1892, page 7.
- ¹⁸ San Francisco Chronicle, 3 Sept 1891, page 1: “A Queer Case.”
- ¹⁹ E.g., San Francisco Call, 222 June 1895, page 4, the source of the drawing of the two men.
- ²⁰ San Francisco Chronicle: “Koster and his Men” 10 June 1893, page 14; and “Koster’s Defense” 23 July 1893, page 8.
- ²¹ Mangels-Wieland Trophy awarded at shooting contests in the 1890s. E.g., San Francisco Call, 21 Sept 1896, page 7.
- ²² Daily Alta California, 23 April 1891, page 8. Contains possible errors as well.
- ²³ There is a lovely map of original layout in San Francisco Chronicle, 26 April 1891.
- ²⁴ Much of the information about Spreckels here comes from an extensive online biography (PDF): http://www.ghi-dc.org/files/pdf/Research_projects/ie/Spreckels.pdf
- ²⁵ Story told by Claus Spreckels’s granddaughter Alice Hueter Mertz in “Mangels Family,” an oral history on Ancestry.com (paid subscription). http://mv.ancestry.com/viewer/0dcac896-f0df-4af8-bfb9-cde7c1027b15/14561659/125386788?_phsrc=Esl4&usePUBJs=true
- ²⁶ Document in archives of Society of California Pioneers, “Albany Brewery.” Cited on Ancestry.com. I am in the process of verifying its parvenu.
- ²⁷ San Francisco Call, 17 August 1890, page 9.
- ²⁸ Carl Forget (ed.), *Dictionary of Beer and Brewing*, (Boulder CO: Brewers’ Publications), 1988, pages 138-9.
- ²⁹ Daily Alta California, 27 January 1891, page 2, “Two New Corporations.”
- ³⁰ Rohrbacher’s obituary, San Francisco Chronicle, 26 April 1897, page 10.
- ³¹ San Francisco Chronicle, 16 May 1890, page 8.
- ³² San Francisco Chronicle, 19 September 1890, page 5: “A Fat Men’s Club.”
- ³³ Report of Rohrbacher will, San Francisco Chronicle, 15 May 1897, page 14.
- ³⁴ The San Francisco Directory first lists this Rudolph Mohr that year.
- ³⁵ Earliest reference to Mohr as secretary of OAPRR Co.: Daily Alta California, 16 Feb 1875, page 1. Latest reference: *The Manual of Statistics: Stock Exchange Handbook*, 1893, page 379.
- ³⁶ Graphical fun with girls’ names statistics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVh2Qw5KSFg>
- ³⁷ The San Francisco History Center has a copy of the Sunnyside oral histories collected 1995 – 2006 by a group of local historians. [But I cannot find a reference page for it on the SFPL website.]
- ³⁸ Baron, page 270.