

Whittier Mansion
(California Historical Society's "Mansion")
2090 Jackson Street
San Francisco, San Francisco County
California

HABS No. CAL-1907

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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WHITTIER MANSION

(CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S "MANSION")

San Francisco, San Francisco County, California

ADDRESS: 2090 Jackson Street
OWNER: California Historical Society
OCCUPANT: California Historical Society
USE: Administrative and Publicity Headquarters of Society;
Social Center; Galleries of Exhibit Department

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Built for William Franklin Whittier between 1894 and 1896, this massive Arizona sandstone building has passed through a number of interesting owners. Occupied as a residence until the early 1940's, it was sold to the German Reich in 1941 as a San Francisco consulate. Seized by the Alien Property Custodian (later transferred to the Attorney General of the United States) during World War II, it was auctioned in 1950 to Mrs. Echo Leonetti. From her it passed to George and Mary Barton, thence to Robert Wilhelm and Isabelle and Paul Dessez, and finally to the California Historical Society in 1956. Mortimer Adler's Institute of Philosophical Research occupied part of the building from 1952 to 1956. It is one of the few major houses of the later 19th century to survive to the present day, and is an interesting combination of massive Richardsonian Romanesque with Period styling. The architectural details of the interiors are exceptional in material and in preservation; they reflect studious variations of historical sources which marked the end of 19th century American architecture.

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HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The building was originally designed as a private residence for William Franklin (he always signed: W. Frank) Whittier and his children. (Mrs. Whittier had died earlier.) The best account of the complex business background which made this house possible is in Ninety Years: The Story of William Parmer Fuller.¹ Frank Whittier was born on January 17, 1832 in Vienna, Maine. He came over the Isthmus of Panama to California in 1854; his first major employment was with Sawyer, Johnson and Company, and three years later he purchased (with Caleb Cameron) the proprietors' interest in the firm. The name was changed to Cameron, Whittier and Company; Cameron accidentally drowned at Benicia in 1862, but the firm continued under the joint name until its dissolution in 1867.

In the meantime, Whittier's partner-to-be, William Parmer Fuller, was organizing a successful firm in Sacramento. When he bought out his early associate, Seton Heather, the time was ripe for a merger of Whittier and Fuller - both in the paint business. A partnership was formed in 1862 and continued until Fuller's death in 1890. Fuller was easy-going, affable and uninterested in affairs of state. (His nickname of "Dad" explains much of his kindly relationship to employees.) Whittier was high strung, somewhat ironic in conversation, and deeply interested in the fate of the Republican party in California, as well as in high finance. The combination appeared eminently satisfactory, for each provided something the other lacked. Weathering panics, business competition and legal problems, the firm emerged as the major west coast paint and white lead manufacturer, with extremely profitable side-lines in imported glass, mirrors, oils, etc. (They operated a fleet of sailing vessels and railway tank-cars.) After Fuller's death in 1890, a few years of unpleasant dissension developed between Whittier and Fuller's son, W. P. Fuller Junior. (He was always called the "young W.P." or "W.P. the Second"; his son was W. P. Fuller, Jr.) Whittier wished to buy out Fuller's interest in the firm; the Fuller family thought his price too low. A brief period of enforced harmony came after the creation of a new partnership between Whittier, "young W.P." and F. N. Woods. This failed to solve the difficulties; and later in 1893, the Fuller family bought out Whittier with a promissory note for \$400,000 to be paid in thirty-two monthly installments. This was duly accomplished and full control of the firm passed to what became known as W. P. Fuller and Company.

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At this point, Frank Whittier decided to build a superb new residence. It is quite possible, indeed, that the money coming every month from the Fuller family helped to pay for the new mansion. The San Francisco Chronicle for December 24, 1894 provides a complete "preview" of the house. The property was purchased in 1894.² Height restrictions were placed on Whittier's property acquired in 1894 and 1901 to the north and on Pacific Avenue. Plans for 2090 Jackson Street were drawn by Edward Swain.³ Excavations began in September of 1894 (C. A. Warren, at a cost of \$700). Contracts were signed all through the later part of 1894 for various materials and construction (O. E. Brady for stone work at \$8,670; C. Chisholm for carpentry, and Forderer Cornice Works for Spanish tiles, at \$4,200). Plumbing began in 1895 (E. J. Duffy, at \$2,750). The hydraulic Otis elevator (registered by the Otis Company as one of the earliest residential elevators in San Francisco) was installed by Cahill and Hall Elevator Company in March of 1895 at a cost of \$1,225. Ventilation and heating were contracted by W. W. Montagne in May, at \$2,665. George Goodman installed concrete floors where needed, in and after September at \$1,816.

The tile work for five bath-rooms was done by Montagne and Company at a cost of \$1018. This last entry in the informative California Architect and Builder (which had chronicled earlier contracts), for November, 1895, signalled the effective completion of the house, although it was not occupied until August of 1896 after interior finishing was accomplished. Whittier undoubtedly arranged for purchase of many of the rare marbles and imported woods through some of his earlier business contacts in distant parts of the world; Belgian glass had been a staple in Whittier, Fuller and Company's merchandise. Native woods were used wherever feasible, and it has been said that the granite front steps were imported from Whittier's native Maine - although Folsom or Raymond granite would have seemed more logical in California.⁴ The final cost of the house with its various interior fittings was estimated to be about \$152,000.

As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Whittier had died before the house was started. She had been killed in a runaway horse and carriage accident in 1885.⁵ There was one son (W. R. Whittier, sometimes erroneously called W. F. Whittier, Jr.), and two daughters who survived into maturity. Frank Whittier eventually left San Francisco for Hemet in Riverside County - a town he founded and developed. For a time, the house was occupied by his younger surviving daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. William Boyd Weir. (Their own home was in Menlo Park.)

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Frank Whittier died in 1917, and his estate was distributed on September 13, 1918.⁶ Mrs. Weir assumed control of the 2090 Jackson Street property. During the 1920's and 1930's, the house was apparently rented to various occupants. William Dargie, publisher of the Oakland Tribune, who had married a member of the pioneer Peralta family, lived here in the 1920's. (An anonymous society columnist, writing in the Argonaut for May 17, 1957, provides a number of family and social facts about the house.⁷ It was, as she points out, sheer coincidence that Joseph R. Knowland, the later publisher of the Oakland Tribune, became an "occupant" in his role as former President and current Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the California Historical Society.)

In 1941, Mrs. Weir conveyed the property to the Title Insurance Company (April 16), as temporary holder, from whom it was conveyed to Herman Loeper on April 28, and thence to Das Deutsches Reich the following day. It served as the San Francisco consulate of the Nazi regime from late April until July. The dashing Fritz Wiedemann, society darling consul, entertained elegantly and conducted clandestine business for the Nazis - attempting to intimidate German-Americans into "serving the party". After his enforced eviction from the United States in July (a false start via Japan was turned into definite return to Germany via New York), the house remained empty during World War II. It was held in trust by the Alien Property Custodian who later turned it over officially to the United States Attorney General's Office. On March 10, 1950, it was auctioned, along with most of the contents, to Mrs. Echo Leonetti.⁸

Mrs. Leonetti remarried and it was as Mrs. Hill that she sold 2090 Jackson Street to George F. and Mary Barton on June 8, 1951. Title to the property passed from the Bartons to Robert Wilhelm, a single man, resident in Southern California, and to Paul and Isabelle Dessez - half interests held by Wilhelm and the Dessez' - on August 26, 1955.⁹ The Bartons still held a mortgage on the property. Mr. George Harding of the California Historical Society (then Chairman of the Finance Committee) had for some time been searching for a new, permanent home for that organization.¹⁰ He inspected the property - being handled through Coldwell and Banker of San Francisco - in March of 1956. On March 29, 1956 the California Historical Society obtained an option for thirty days, at a purchase price of \$75,000. A Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Society was called by President Joseph R. Knowland for April 2 and purchase of the property was authorized. The

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date of recordation with the Dessez' was May 16 and with Robert Wilhelm, May 22, 1956, although the deed to the Society is dated May 2. The owners (Wilhelm and the Dessez') were paid \$40,915.57 in cash, and the Society assumed the Bartons' mortgage of \$34,084.43. An open house was held on November 30, 1956 for the Society's membership in the "Mansion". The mortgage was completely retired in 1959 and the property has been unencumbered since that date.

It was during the Bartons' period of ownership that Mortimer Adler's Institute of Philosophical Research occupied the first two floors. The lease to Adler was dated July 11, 1952 and extended to September 10, 1956. This lease was assigned to the California Historical Society and Adler continued occupancy for the balance of the lease period. The Dessez' occupied the top floor as an apartment during this time.

Since purchasing 2090 Jackson Street in 1946, the California Historical Society has added the properties at 2099 Pacific (built for J. D. Spreckels, Jr., in 1905) and 2083 Pacific (built for J. D. Spreckels, Jr., in 1905) - so that the Society controls the same area which William Frank Whittier once had owned and restricted by height limitations. The house and property at 2099 Pacific Avenue were acquired in 1962. This building now serves as the Society's Library, named "Schubert Hall" in honor of Miss Ottilie Schubert, from whose estate her brother Walter provided a large part of the money required for renovations. The house and property at 2083 Pacific were acquired in 1963. Both purchases were made possible by a bequest from the Edith Allyne estate.

NOTES (Historical Information)

1. pp. 60-93 and 103-108.
2. Estimated cost \$37,000. Whittier bought lot #5 (northeast corner of Jackson and Laguna) on May 2, 1894, and lot #1 (south east corner of Pacific and Laguna) on July 10, 1894. He added lot #2 on Pacific, east of lot #1, on May 23, 1901.
3. Edward Swain was born in 1852 and died on April 10, 1902. His middle initial is usually given as "R", although Withey (Biographical Dictionary of American Architects--Deceased) gives

"H". He was trained in David Farquharson's office in San Francisco, and began practice for himself in 1877. During the 1890's he assisted A. Page Brown on the "new" Ferry Building. (On the building's cornerstone he is called "Supervising Architect".) After Brown's death in 1895, he was in charge of the structure. He was connected with various buildings for the Midwinter Fair of 1894 (see Inland Architect and News Record, Vol. 23, No. 5, June 1894) and was on the organizing committee of that unfortunate agglomeration of parvenu taste (see Kirker, California's Architectural Frontier, p. 123). Aside from the Whittier Mansion, he did a residence and office for Dr. Dudley Tait (noted in American Architect and Building News, Vol. 67, p. 7, January 6, 1900) and the handsome Park Lodge in Golden Gate Park, during 1896. His obituary occurs in many places: American Institute of Architects' Quarterly Bulletin, San Francisco Call, April 11, 1902, p. 9, American Architect and Building News, Vol. 76, p. 47, May 1902, etc. Also, see Withey (op.cit.) and the San Francisco Directories for other data. He moved to Hawaii in his later years, and continued practicing in Honolulu.

4. The original specifications called for "red beach granite".
5. Her life story is contained in the memorial volume Charlotte (Ann) Robinson Whittier: May 21, 1831 - February 16, 1885, San Francisco, privately printed for Mr. Whittier, 1885. Mrs. Whittier had also come from Vienna, Maine where she and Frank had been childhood friends. He returned to New England in 1858 to marry and bring her to San Francisco. Five children were born to the couple.
6. Aside from specific cash bequests to children, relatives, friends, servants, and one hospital, much of Frank Whittier's estate was placed in trust for ten years to provide monthly or annual payments to his children, grandchild (Genevieve Bothin), relatives, trustees, etc. The 2090 Jackson Street house and property were willed to Mrs. Weir (Mattie S. Whittier).
7. This columnist calls herself simply "The San Franciscan"; she avers that the house changed ownership during the 20's and 30's. This does not seem to be born out by title records.

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8. She had run the colorful Echo Club at 599 Post Street, sold in 1946. (See San Francisco Chronicle, February 3, 1950.) In order to purchase the Jackson Street property she had sold the former Marin Golf and Country Club to Waddell F. Smith who made it into a residence and center of Pony Express history.

9. The dates given here for transfer of title are the dates of recordation at the Title Insurance and Trust Company (San Francisco Office, 148 Montgomery Street). All information on changes of ownership since 1918 have come from Mr. George Harding of the California Historical Society or from Mr. L. H. Gwynn of Title Insurance and Trust Company.

10. The background of the California Historical Society goes probably to 1852, two years before Whittier came to California. Its effective reorganization came in 1922, in the former Wells Fargo Express Building on Second Street, following the disastrous losses of the fire of 1906 and an attendant membership apathy. Later it was housed in the same structure as the Society of California Pioneers at McAllister Street; then it removed to temporary headquarters in the Flood Building prior to relocation at 2090 Jackson Street in 1956.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL AND SOURCES

Books:

Baird, Joseph A. Jr., Time's Wondrous Changes: San Francisco Architecture, 1776-1915, California Historical Society, 1962, p. 47.

Benet, James, A Guide to San Francisco and the Bay Region, New York, Random House, 1963, p. 143.

Kirker, Harold, California's Architectural Frontier, San Marino, Huntington Library, 1960, p. 214 (ref. to Swain).

Master Hands in the Affairs of the Pacific Coast, San Francisco, Western Historical and Publishing Company, 1892, p. 266.

Ninety Years: The Story of William Parmer Fuller, San Francisco, privately printed by the Grabhorn Press, 1939 (ref. to Whittier pp. 62-63).

Who was Who in America, Vol. 1 (1897-1942, p. 1341 (Whittier).

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- Withey, Henry R. and Elsie R., Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles, New Age Press, 1956, p. 586 (biog. of Swain).
- Woodbridge, John and Sally, et al., Buildings of the Bay Area, New York, Grove Press, 1960, unpaginated (under Pacific Heights, section 6, San Francisco).

Brochures:

- California Historical Society: four page brochure with cover photograph and brief history of the "Mansion".

Interviews:

- J. A. Baird with L. H. Gwynn, Title Insurance and Trust Company, San Francisco, December, 1963.
- J. A. Baird with George Harding, California Historical Society, December, 1963.

Newspapers and Periodicals:

Argonaut, May 17, 1957.

California Architect and Building News, 1894 and 1895 (various references from October, 1894 - including November and December, 1894, January, March, June, September and November, 1895).

Out West, July, 1912, pp. 60-66 (Hemet).

San Francisco Call, August 28, 1896, p. 9 (house built).

San Francisco Chronicle, December 24, 1894 ("preview" of house).

San Francisco Chronicle, January 27, 1917, p. 2 (Whittier obit.).

San Francisco Chronicle, January 30, 1950 (sale of house).

San Francisco Chronicle, February 3, 1950 (sale to Leonetti).

San Francisco Examiner, February 2, 1950 (sale to Leonetti).

Westways, Vol. 54, No. 3 (March, 1962), pp. 36-37.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The best introduction to the architectural character of the former Whittier house is the "preview account in the San Francisco Chronicle for December 24, 1894 (footnote references provide indications of later changes, or revisions which developed as the house was built):

"Edward R. Swain, the architect, has just completed the drawings and plans for the residence of W. F. Whittier, which is to be erected at the northeast corner of Jackson and Laguna Streets on a site commanding a magnificent view of the bay and the Golden Gate. The house, which will be completed at a cost of about \$90,000, will be ready for occupancy in November, 1895. It will be the first residence in town built entirely of stone.¹ The lot is 80 x 127:8 $\frac{1}{4}$ feet, fronting on Jackson Street. The main portion of the house will be 55 x 75 feet, with a wing on the east side, the full width of the lot. The first story up to the water table will be of Sespe stone, and all above that line, including the chimney and pediments, will be in red Arizona stone. The roof will be covered with red Spanish tiles.

"The architecture of the house, which will be a two story structure with basement and attic (technically there was a third story built with attic above it), is Renaissance in feeling. A handsome portico, seventeen feet wide, projects nine feet from the face of the building. It will be very handsomely carved and highly ornamented. The base stones on which the porch rests, including the steps and platforms leading to it, are of red beach granite. The treads of the steps will be of the same stone, polished.² The vestibule, finished in handsome foreign marbles, will be ten feet wide and six feet deep. The floor will be in mosaic.

"Passing the doors one will step into an entrance hall twelve feet square, which leads through an arch into the main hall, 22 x 30. The main staircase will be on the right of the main hall. Both halls will be finished in natural-colored Eastern oak, with beamed ceiling. The design, which will be in keeping with the general design of the building will consist of a pilaster and arch finish. From the main hall access will be had to the dining room by means of a lobby 8 x 12 feet. The dining room door is opposite the front door. On the right of the entrance hall is the reception-room, entered through open doorways, which will be handsomely draped with portiers. Arches for statuary are on either side of the entrances. The room is octagonal in form

and sixteen feet in diameter. The round corner window will project somewhat beyond the octagon, and the space between will be upholstered for seats. The reception-room will be finished in 'vernis martin', a light wood veneered and spangled with gold.³

"The living-room, 20 x 48, will be on the left of the entrance hall. At a distance of fifteen feet from the front it will be divided by an arch, the side openings of which will be hung with portieres. The room will be finished in east coast Mexican mahogany. The handsome mantel will be eight feet wide. There will be a large open fireplace with facings in 'Jaune antique claire' Numidian marble.⁴ The hearth will be in Florentine mosaic. This room will also have a beamed ceiling.

"To the rear of the living-room in the northwest corner of the house, the visitor will be ushered into the smoking or lounging room, a circular apartment commanding a magnificent view of the bay and the surrounding landscape. The lounging room will be finished in oriental style in vermilion wood.⁵ Through this room access may be had to the dining room. This will be a very handsome apartment, 18 x 25, exclusive of a bay window thirteen feet long and four feet deep. It will be finished in natural white oak. There will be a wainscoting nine feet high, finished with buffets and backed with plate-glass mirrors. The mantel will be finished with oak and faced with "Rose Carnagione" Numidian marble. The ceiling will be domed and paneled in plaster. Just above the wainscoting a frieze, in oils will add greatly to the appearance of the dining-hall.⁶ Adjoining the dining-room will be the butler's pantry, 13 x 16, in ash, with china cases, silver safe, filters and other paraphernalia. The kitchen, 16 x 24, will be in the northeast corner of the building. It will be finished in oak, and, instead of the usual pantries the necessary shelves and bins will extend along the side of the room to a depth of six feet.⁷

"Next to the kitchen, on the Jackson Street side, is a servants' dining-room, 12 x 14, which will be entered from a passage off the rear hall.⁸ The side entrance to the house also communicates with this passage.

"Just off the main hall is the rear hall with the rear stairs. Near these stairs is a passenger elevator, five feet square, which will run from the basement to the attic. In the front part of the basement will be rooms for coal, furniture and general storage. In the central

portion of the basement, under the main hall and part of the living-room will be an apartment in oak, 30 x 50, which may be used for suppers and dances. It may be reached from the main stairs. The rear of the basement will be taken up with the servants' rooms, cold storage, laundry, servants' bathroom and other departments of the household.⁹

"On the second floor¹⁰ will be six handsome bedrooms, to three of which private bathrooms will be attached. The recesses for the fixtures in the bathrooms will be lined with various fancy marbles, and the floors will be of hard wood. The various chambers will be finished in prima vera, birch, cherry and bird's-eye maple. W. F. Whittier's suite will be in the northwest corner of the second story. It will consist of a large bedroom, a sitting room, dressing room and bathroom. W. R. will revel in luxury in the third or "attic" story.¹¹ The whole width of the building on that floor will be taken up by his apartments, including a chamber, bathroom, dressing room and sitting room, 18 x 40, in waxed redwood of natural colors. There will be a large open fireplace and a hardwood floor.¹² On this floor, also, are a guest chamber, a trunk room, servant's room, servant's bathroom, a big linen closet and the "sporting-room". The latter is 8 x 13, and in it will be stored the guns, rods and other implements of the chase which the Messrs. Whittier may require in their sport.¹³

"A handsome stable will adjoin the residence in the rear."¹⁴

This account (with the author's footnotes providing indications of later changes, as well as deviations from the original plans and designs in the final form of the house) may stand as a substantial indication of the character of the house during the period from 1896 to 1941. The Nazi German Consulate was generally content to leave the building as they found it. Interior changes which occurred at this time or later replaced the shell-headed niches and buffets in the dining-room's south walls with glass exhibition cases, and added new lighting fixtures in the main living room and in the dining-room. The ceiling of the smoking room was lowered with a false ceiling; the original is preserved above it. In the living room, the awkwardly placed bookcases on either side of the principal fireplace were removed altogether. Of the original first floor ceiling light fixtures, only that in the reception room (now the Members' Room), moved from the dining room, is left. Since the California Historical Society has occupied the building, the door between the dining room and pantry has been closed. The original carpet from the dining room has been replaced with a fine oriental rug.

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Most of the hangings at the windows are replacements, although they are appropriate to the character of the house and its period.

On the second floor, all of the original carpets were removed when the California Historical Society assumed ownership and green linoleum was placed over the wood floors. The original woodwork was painted white, and the walls have been repainted a number of times. (The walls of the "Supper room" and first floor have been repainted more than once above the fine wood dados and trim; original ceiling polychromy has been simplified to a neutral white. The paneling in the "reception room" has been painted over.) The bath room in the south-center of the second floor has been altered to provide a powder-room and a corridor between east and west chambers. On the third floor, a glass and wooden screen was erected during the mid 1950's for privacy, when it became an apartment. The only other significant interior change was the alteration of the original servant's room at the northeast to a simple kitchen, to service the former "lounging room", converted to a dining room.

Stylistically, the Whittier house was built at a time when the fashions of the later 19th century were beginning to give way to a resurgence of more correct Period styling. Thus the general massing of the structure with its strongly emphasized circular corner towers is Richardsonian and Queen Anne. The color of the stone (red Arizona sandstone) is also suggestive of the mid-western and western derivations from Richardson's richly textured and colored stone effects. However, the rigid symmetry of the facade suggests a new interest in formality - alien to the late 19th century's fascination with asymmetry and "picturesque" effects. A very Classical portico (using the Ionic order) is symptomatic of that return to Classicism, and its sources in Antiquity and classicizing Baroque, which swept the United States by 1895-1900.

There are hints here of the pedantry of architecture at the turn of the century, too. The curious temple-front enrichment of the facade's second story center, as if an Ionic temple portico had been squashed against the massive stone facade, immediately brings to mind certain late Roman near-Eastern buildings - notably Petra, as does the color of the stone. This is obviously not so forcefully Baroque as Petra's buildings, but it has the same rock-cut effect - sculptural rather than tectonic. The exterior reveals consistently the influence of carefully studied details from books of photographs and engravings after older European buildings. Edward Swain went to the same lavishly

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bound folios which inspired so many architects of his time, which now languish in libraries of the history of architecture rather than on the shelves of practicing architects. Some of the details are ancient Roman; some are Renaissance, some Mannerist, and some Baroque. All are executed with finesse and thoughtful attention to their place in the ensemble.

The final exterior effect of the building, which has begun to suffer the usual fate of sandstone in its dissolution of sharp corners and crisp details, is unfortunately not entirely felicitous. The arresting of the physical dissolution has been attempted with surface coatings of preservatives which have slightly changed the color values of the facade (where they have been used). The building looked aggressively massive in its early photographs, when the softening effects of foliage were absent. It has never been surrounded by trees, so that even now it presents a rather formidably "architectural" appearance. There is, perhaps, a too studied arrangement in certain parts; and the proportions of the windows in the top central pediment of the facade are dispiritedly squat. The Whittier house is a noble building which tries for monumentality, but ends by being a house that looks like an institution. This was a common fate in San Francisco architecture at this period. The very character of the persons who occupied these houses ill-accorded with their ceremonial intentions. They were palaces without aristocratic occupants; and no amount of good will on the part of an architect could mask the middle class background and nouveau riche pretensions of the owners. It is undoubtedly entirely fitting that most have become institutions rather than homes. Their splendors are more suited to that end.

Aside from the relatively minor changes discussed above, the building has suffered few radical renovations in its checkered history of ownership. It represents (like the Flood house on upper Broadway, built for Jennie Flood, or the somewhat older Flood house on California at Mason, now the Pacific Union Club - revised after the fire of 1906 gutted its interior) a remarkable continuation into the present of the general architectural grandeur of the very late 19th century. Its excellent materials, in many instances verging on the magnificent, provide a notable indication of craftsmanship at the time. The bizarre mixture of interior furnishings which characterized these houses has almost entirely disappeared. The present combinations of mid-19th and even earlier furniture with later pieces seems more agreeable today than the equally eclectic but somewhat less felicitous combinations assembled when the house was built.

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SITE

The Whittier house is situated on the present lot 7 of the block bounded by Jackson and Pacific (south and north) and Laguna and Octavia (west and east). It faces south to Jackson Street (number 2090), with its western wall directly adjacent to the city sidewalk of Laguna Street's steep inclination. The lot which the house occupies is approximately 80 x 140 feet, although at the back (north) there is a slight extension to the east. The exact dimensions are 80 feet on Jackson Street, 140 feet, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches on Laguna Street, 87 feet, 6 inches on the north line and 12 feet, $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches from that line's eastern point south, where it goes back west 7 feet, 6 inches and then turns south again to Jackson Street for 127 feet, $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Since the California Historical Society now owns not only lot 7 but also the adjacent lots 8 and 9 to the north on Pacific Avenue, there is no problem about an easement which once extended from lot 9 back of lot 8 to Laguna Street, on the north property line of lot 7. (The lot numbers prior to 1906 were 5, 1 and 2 - corresponding to present 7, 8, and 9.) The garden (at the north) was re-worked by Thomas Church in 1957.

NOTES (Architectural Information)

1. The San Francisco Water Department's records (formerly Spring Valley Water Company) indicate that service was connected on October 29, 1894 for three wash trays, fifteen wash basins, six baths and ten water closets. In a house of this magnitude, it was another year before structural developments made this service connection meaningful, and almost another year before all the interior was finished and the family moved in. The house was not constructed "entirely of stone", as interior steel beams were used for reinforcing. The author obviously means that the exterior shell was of stone.
2. Gray granite was actually used here.
3. Many of the fixtures and hardware were made specifically for the house. The silvered fixtures were of "nickeled" silver (silver on a whitish metal, technically called "German" silver). The glass was imported from Belgium. Carpets throughout were made to order and many survive today in remarkably good

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condition; those in the "reception room" (now called the Members' Room") and in the "lounging room" (actually a smoking room off the dining room) are of exceptional interest - the former is an octagonal Aubusson in the manner of Louis XVI and the latter seems to combine motifs from the near-East and the American southwest. The carpets cover softwood floors; around their edges are the hardwood borders customary in this period. The plaster relief ceilings in the present "Members' Room" were done in the wet-sand method, and then placed in position (most of the first floor ceilings had some polychromy originally). The special section of the living room directly to the west of the vestibule was called the "small" living room, although it purported to be a music room (with only an upright piano to justify its promise). Earthquake tremors prior to 1906, and particularly those of April 1906, cracked some ceilings and damaged chimneys. After 1906, Mr. Whittier had gas logs or grates put into the former open fireplaces. None of the original furnishings of the "first" generation have survived in the house; a sofa and two arm chairs in the style of about 1920 are the only witnesses to the taste of the "second" generation of Whittier occupants. The original clutter of William Morris and Mission furniture, set in a grimly luxurious framework of heavy draperies and potted palms, gave way in the second generation to less profuse interior groupings and to substitution of more 18th century furniture for the late 19th century pieces. It is interesting, however, that the bedrooms were generally closer to the taste of Lady Mendl than William Morris - even in the first generation. There were many furnishings in the house in 1950 when Mrs. Leonetti bought the contents at auction, along with the house - but whether they were Whittier or German-inspired is hard to tell. Currently, the California Historical Society is attempting to combine fine period variations and Victorian items - the combination dependent on the kinds of gifts of this type received by the Society.

4. This was changed to reddish striated marble - probably the same as the "Rose Carnagione" in the dining room. (The author mixes his language descriptions in these marble types, freely mingling English, French and Italian words.)

5. The wood here turned out to be the same mahogany (probably from Honduras) as in the living room - of a reddish finish, but not "vermilion". An elaborate pseudo-Moorish plaster relief

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ceiling is now partly concealed by a lower false ceiling, which could be removed; the "exotic" character of the room can be seen in the ceiling frieze, and especially in the handcarved door of the humidior on the west wall. This "lounging or smoking room" is not to be confused with the author's mention of a "lounging room" on the third floor (which actually turned out to be a "billiard room").

6. The final form of the dining room differed somewhat from this "preview". A more unusual wood was substituted for the oak; it is variously thought to be Phillipine Tamano wood (accounting for the present name of "Tamano Room") or possibly Guatemalan Primavera wood. Elaborate built-in cupboards for china and linen on the south walls of the dining room were later removed; simple display cases replaced them.

7. The pantry is now the Secretary's office (the massive silver safe being used for California Historical Society records) and the kitchen is the Director's office. "Shelves" remain only on the west wall; the "bins" have since been removed.

8. Now the Accountant's office, California Historical Society.

9. 36 x 54 feet are the actual dimensions of the "supper room", in the basement. Like the dining room, this was finished in a more exotic wood than oak - generally thought to be Primavera, although it may be a form of maple. Modern Period wall paper has been added above the dado as well as Period draperies. This room is now used primarily as an assembly place. Smaller rooms nearby which once were storage, coal room, etc., are still used for diverse storage. A special new vault occupies space east of the furnacc area. (This furnace has been converted from coal to gas; a small stove still remains near the furnace - thought to have been used to destroy documents when Fritz Wiedemann had to leave San Francisco). Mailing, painting storage, etc. occupy the former servants' (?) rooms, cold storage, etc. The elevator could be made operable, although the water needed to run it (with electric assists) would be costly today.

10. The light fixtures on the second and third floor are equipped for both gas and electricity (the gas was obviously an emergency provision). Perhaps the clearest indication of the original use of rooms in the house can be obtained from the handsome switch

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boards still intact, and in use. These are in special closets - one near the Secretary's office in the first floor back hall, and the other directly above on the second floor - at the north end of the main hall on that level. Elegant brass tags beneath each copper switch indicate the layout of the house. From the board on the second floor, it would appear that the final disposition of rooms on second and third levels was more complex than suggested in the Chronicle "preview". On the second floor was a suite for Miss Whittier (Mattie Smith) - chamber, sitting room (and bath). These were undoubtedly the group at the south, over the front entrance. (Miss Whittier's bath has been modified and now a separate corridor links her sitting room and chamber across the front. None of the bathrooms appear on the switch boards, although they had light fixtures. These circuits were probably tied-in to adjacent room circuits.) William Frank Whittier occupied a suite on the view side, at the northwest of the second floor - consisting of chamber, dressing room, sitting room (and bath). "Miss T" had a chamber on the second floor - probably the one adjacent to Mattie's at the southwest. The "extra chamber" was certainly that between Miss T's and Whittier's bath on the west. The housekeeper's room (with lavatory-closet) was probably the room at the northeast (still possessed of a fine view). The "garment room" was probably the cupboard-lined corridor at the east, between stairs and elevator, which ends in a toilet and lavatory. On the third floor was a "billiard room" (called a "lounging room" in the Chronicle "preview") at the north, paneled in redwood, with a circular tower room adjacent at the northwest. Continuing south on the west side of the third floor, there was a "guest chamber" (with lavatory in the room), a "sporting room" (this is not on the board), directly beyond the "trunk room" which has stairs going to the attic. On the south side of the third floor - occupying the entire width of the house as Mattie's suite did below - was W. R. Whittier's suite of chamber, dressing room, sitting room (and bath). A "Linen room" (not on the board) was probably the room north of the stairs, above the "garment room" on the second floor. A servant's room was above the housekeeper's room on the northeast corner of the third floor. Separate furnaces were installed in the attic to serve the third floor when it was occupied as an apartment by the Dessez'.

The switch board on the first floor indicates that the Chronicle

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"preview" was more precise for first floor and basement. Special switches for "cane and coat" (the closet just north of the "reception room", with its very early use of a light which automatically goes off when the door is closed) and "picture circuits" must augment the basic room arrangement already described. (Mr. Whittier attached importance to culture through paintings as did Crocker, Huntington, et al. Unfortunately he did not have Duveen to supply his wants, and the "picture circuits" were generally for banal 19th century works.)

11. There is an attic above the third story.

12. Notable in the stairway area leading to the third floor are round, "porthole" - like windows moving on side pins, in the east wall. The former "billiard room" (called a "lounging room" in the Chronicle) is now the "Crocker Room", to honor C. Templeton Crocker - generous benefactor of the California Historical Society.

13. Reached by a long corridor that goes west from the main hall.

14. It seems that Frank Whittier kept his horses, at the time the house was built, in a nearby livery stable. There appears to have been no provision for a stable on the property, or for garages later. Not mentioned in the Chronicle "preview" is the charming house of stone, just north of the basement. Its south (entrance) facade has Ionic columns, giving it a most agreeable pavilion quality. It now consists of a large room with small kitchen and bath (added later in former closets or small rooms); it is occupied by the caretaker of the premises. This may have been intended as a garden house; later, it may have passed to the Chinese cook, as his room. The "preview" places some servants' rooms in the basement - probably the row of rooms on the north side, although these are dismal indeed compared to the elegant view rooms occupied by the housekeeper, Miss "T" and unspecified servants on the second and third floors. Mr. Whittier's will provided \$500 for Way Ling "my faithful Chinese cook" (generally known as "Charlie") and \$1000 for Minnie Stengel, "my faithful housekeeper". There was a separate servants' dining room in the basement, under the main kitchen, with toilet and bath facilities across the hall.

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