

## The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Online Exhibit



Photograph of Stanford Mansion  
[Artistic Homes of CA: Stanford & Hopkins]  
BANC: BANC PIC 1905.02960--PIC

### Room One: San Francisco in the New Century

#### Wealth and the Wealthy

Mark Hopkins and Leland Stanford were one half of "The Big Four," industrial barons who made their fortunes through railroads (the other two members were Charles Crocker and Collis P. Huntington). During the 1870s, Stanford and Hopkins built enormous, ostentatious mansions on San Francisco's Nob Hill, a neighborhood dominated by the very rich. The two men personified San Francisco's easy-come economy, and they intended their houses as public monuments to their wealth and power. Completed in 1876, Stanford's residence consisted of 50 rooms and housed an art collection worth an estimated \$2 million. Next door was the Hopkins home. Finished in 1878 after Hopkins' death, it was an artless melange of architectural styles that featured a profusion of spires, turrets, and other gingerbread details.

Stanford and Hopkins were both long dead by 1906, but their mansions remained as examples of the conspicuous consumption that colored San Francisco's already colorful reputation. On a more somber note, the buildings also symbolized the wide gap between social classes that only a great calamity could possibly narrow.