

The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Online Exhibit



[Union Square, ca. 1900-1905. Dewey Monument, center; St. Francis Hotel, right.]
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Room One: San Francisco in the New Century

So Many Places to Stay

San Francisco had been a destination since 1849 and the tradition continued during the following decades. Drawn to its beautiful location, climate, and economic opportunities, visitors and transplants alike flocked to the city. They often stayed in one of the beautiful high-rise hotels located downtown.

Opened in 1904 and named after the patron saint of San Francisco, the Hotel St. Francis was one of the city's newest buildings. With "an army of well-trained employees under chefs whose names are famous wherever Epicurus is revered," it catered to the whims of the wealthy traveler. According to this souvenir book, the St. Francis offered Tyrolean-themed cuisine, a 4000-volume library, and special tours of Chinatown, among other amenities. The opulence of the Union Square hotel reflected the city's prosperity on the eve of the earthquake and fire.