

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., July 15, 1882.

Hon. CHAS. J. FOLGER,

Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D.C.:

SIR: In obedience to orders issued by direction of the President upon the request of the National Board of Health, through the War, Navy, and Treasury Departments, we, viz. Col. Charles Sutherland, surgeon, United States Army; John Van Sant, surgeon, United States Marine Hospital Service; G. W. Woods, surgeon, United States Navy, assembled as a commission, on the 5th instant, at the custom-house, San Francisco, Cal., to investigate the existing quarantine regulations at the port of San Francisco, as affecting the introduction of contagious and infectious diseases, with a view to determining what changes may be necessary, if any, for the protection of the public health, and also to consider the recommendation of a suitable site for the establishment of a national quarantine station, should such station be deemed necessary.

The commission was then organized by the selection of Col. Charles Sutherland, surgeon, United States Army, as chairman, and Surgeon G. W. Woods, United States Navy, as secretary.

After numerous sessions, a careful inquiry into the matters appertaining to the subject before the commission, and an inspection of the harbor with a view to the selection of a proper quarantine site, we beg leave to report as follows:

1st. The actual condition of the quarantine arrangements at the port of San Francisco.

The quarantine is established by State law, and enforced through the local board of health created by the same enactment. We find the regulations to be ample, and in accordance with the principles governing quarantine in the other great ports of our seaboard States. A compliance with all these regulations is, however, prevented by the lack of appropriations, and attention is especially called to Section 3022 of the "Quarantine Regulations for the Port of San Francisco," providing for the erection and equipment of suitable hospitals, which, according to the statements of the health officer, J. L. Meares, M. D., and other members of the board of health confirm the statement—is necessarily of no force, as there is no available fund for carrying out its provisions. Under these circumstances it has been the custom to transfer the sick of infected ships to the local hospitals under the control of the board of health, the passengers and crew being removed to steamers, or hulks, within the harbor, there to spend the period of incubation; all expenses to be borne by the consignees.

2d. To determine what may be necessary to protect the public health, and to prevent the importation of contagious and infectious diseases.

The following arrangements are deemed a necessity at this port, viz.: A proper quarantine establishment, floating or on shore, embracing the following divisions. If on shore, (1) a boarding station distinct from the quarantine grounds proper; (2) hospital for the sick with the usual attendants; (3) building for the detention and entertainment of the well; (4) building for the reception and disinfection of cargo, baggage, and personal apparel.

If a floating quarantine, three hulks could be devoted severally to the same purposes. The quarantine regulations of the Atlantic ports are framed to control four diseases, viz. small-pox, typhus or ship-fever, yellow-fever, and cholera. On the Pacific coast it seems to be practically reduced to the control of small-pox, especially present on the steamers and sailing vessels engaged in the transportation of passengers from the ports of China. Cholera may, however, find its way here by the same route from its original Asiatic source, through vessels in the Chinese and Japanese trade, and both this disease and yellow-fever have been imported on vessels coming from the Isthmus of Panama. Therefore, the quarantine regulations of this port must embrace these diseases in their list, and the same preventive measures be employed as in eastern cities.

In reference to vessels from Asiatic ports, we would recommend that the "Act to prevent the introduction of contagious and infectious diseases into the United States," approved June 2, 1879, be rigidly enforced, particularly as regards section 2, in reference to Chinese ports, and that our consuls be instructed not to issue "bills of health" until an honest medical examination has been made of the vessel and her passengers.

3d. The consideration of a suitable site for a national quarantine station, should such a quarantine station be deemed necessary.

The commission deems a quarantine station, such as has been briefly described, a necessity at this port, and with a view to the determination of an appropriate site, have made a careful inspection of the harbor on board the revenue-cutter Richard Rush.

The following points were carefully examined, and their merits or defects are here noted.

(1.) *Point Diablo*.—Shores too precipitous, requiring expensive excavation. Too near the Golden Gate so as to feel the influences of the open sea, and exposed to the southeast winter storms.

(2.) *Lime Point*.—Shore well adapted to the erection of buildings. Cove not capacious

enough for the purposes of quarantine. Large vessels would have to anchor in the stream. Exposed to southeast storms.

(3.) *Saucetito and its vicinity*.—A good position, but being the site of a town and railroad terminus, as well as Yacht Club headquarters, available positions for the erection of buildings could not be obtained without much strife, and a floating quarantine would be equally objected to.

(4.) *Richardson's Bay*.—Insufficient depth of water.

(5.) *Cove immediately to the north of Peninsula Point, between Peninsula Point and Tiberon Point, in Raccoon Straits*.—An admirable sheltered position, out of the influences of the ebb-tide, and good depth of water up to within such a distance of the shore as to render the building of wharves an easy task. Land adapted to the erection of buildings without expensive earthworks. Cove sufficiently protected from weather influences at all seasons of the year.

(6.) *Tiberon Point*.—Objected to as not having a sufficiently capacious anchorage for vessels so as to escape the strong tide influences of the open straits. To the northward of the point the objection would be that it is directly in the line of travel to San Rafael.

(7.) *Angel Island*.—Four points were examined: 1st. Hospital Cove, in Raccoon Straits; not of sufficient capacity. 2d. Northeast point of island; too precipitous. 3d. Waterman's Bay; same objection. 4th. Southeast point of island; complete exposure to all winds renders this point particularly objectionable. The three last-mentioned places are also objectionable as being on one of the principal lines of interior steamer travel.

(8.) *Goat Island*.—On its northern shore is an extensive shoal. Its eastern shore and harbor is occupied for military and light-house purposes, while its southern and western shores, beside being too precipitous, are not available, being in the line of ferry travel to Oakland.

In selecting a site for a quarantine station it is important, on account of the continuous foggy weather of our summer months, to select a position outside of our thoroughfares for steamboat travel and harbor entrance. This can only be found in Raccoon Straits, a water-way between Angel Island and the mainland of Maria County, through which there is but little travel beyond that of the Italian and Chinese fishermen. These straits are also protected to a great degree by the influence of the local "trade winds" and winter storms.

No. 5 (the cove to the north of Peninsula Point) is, therefore, agreed upon as the most available place within the waters of San Francisco Bay for a quarantine station, presenting the following advantages, viz: Accessibility, good anchorage, out of the influence of the strong ebb-tides, protection from prevailing winds, facilities for the erection of buildings without expensive grading, non-interference with steamers on regular routes of travel. And we recommend this site for the establishment of a quarantine station, whether it be national, State, or municipal.

Fourthly. Are the existing quarantine arrangements of the city of San Francisco sufficient and properly managed?

The commission deems the regulations to be sufficient; but, according to the statements of J. L. Mears, M. D., executive officer of the board of health, and other members of that board, being denied the means of carrying them out in the most efficient manner, the arrangements are deemed inefficient and not in accordance with the usage of our larger commercial ports, where the annoyances of quarantine, to both travel and commerce, are reduced to a minimum; and no quarantine can be efficient which is not prepared for emergencies, with the necessary means for carrying out its regulations with all the speed, comfort, and convenience consistent with safety to the public health.

Extracts from a communication received from Henry Gibbons, jr., M. D., a member of the board of health, to which the concurrence of J. L. Mears, M. D., executive officer of the board of health, is appended, marked A.

This communication explains some of the workings of the present quarantine system, illustrated by recent events, gives some of the history connected with efforts to select a quarantine station, and refers to a present movement on the part of the State board of health to the same end. A statement, in rejoinder, from the consignees of the Altonower, is associated with this abstract.

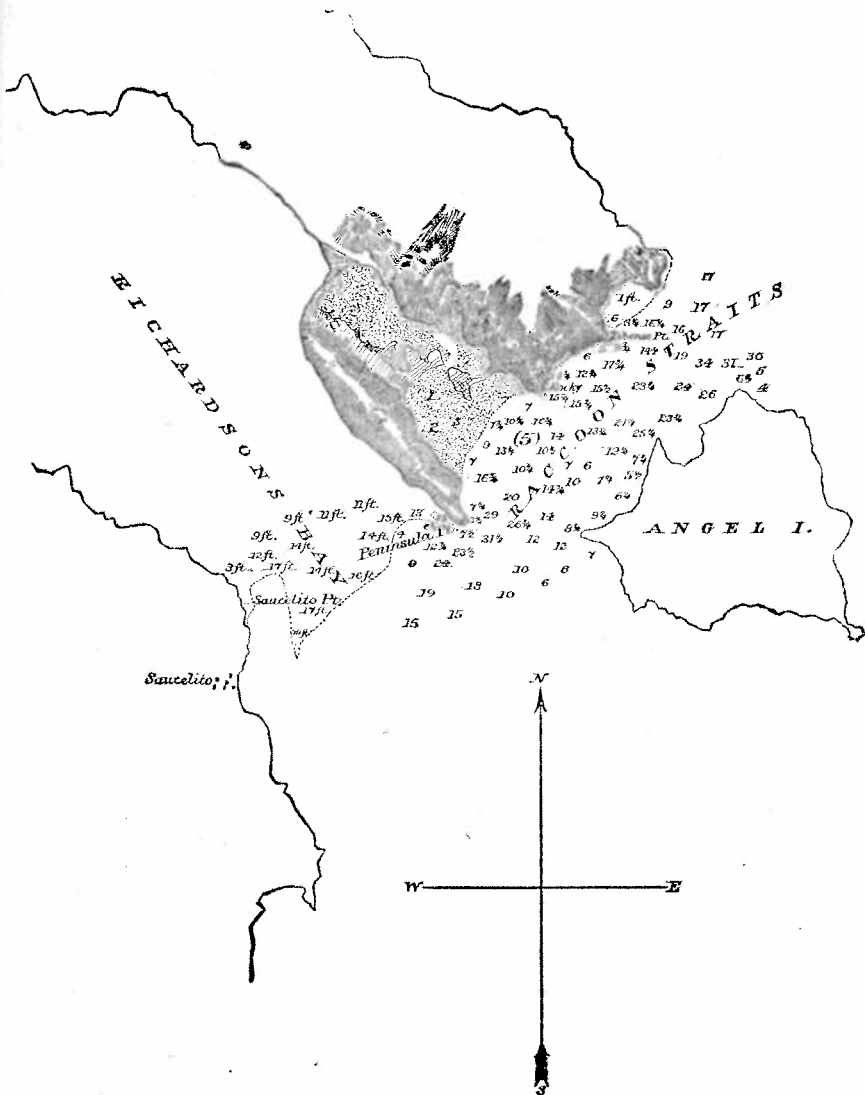
The commission having completed its labors, adjourned July 15, 1882.

We are, respectfully, &c.,

C. SUTHERLAND,
Surgeon United States Army.
JNO. VAN SANT,
Surgeon United States Marine-Hospital Service.
G. W. WOOD,
Surgeon United States Navy.

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APPENDIX V.



[Extracts from letter of Henry Gibbons, jr., M. D., member of the Board of Health].

Several years ago, while I was health officer, I saw the necessity for a quarantine station and drew attention to the matter with no result. Since becoming a member of the board of health, this board has earnestly sought to secure a location. Two years since, we secured the co-operation of Hon. Horace Davis, our representative, in an endeavor to obtain from Government some island, or part thereof in the harbor for our uses. Through the State board of health, we communicated with the National Board, and obtained its assistance. The General Government made inquiry of its military officers here and appointed a committee, Colonels Mendel and Stewart, to report if there was any available site for quarantine purposes.

General McDowell strongly objected to Angel island, and recommended part of Goat island or Lime point, or Kershaw's island. The engineers objected to our having Lime

point or Goat island, as they were required for the defenses of the harbor, and upon inspection of Kershaw's island, in company with the colonels above-named, and Hon. H. Davis, we went out in a tug and spent some time there. The board and engineers argued that it was ineligible, too rocky and steep, and would require an outlay of an immense amount of money to make it at all available. I should have said that originally our own inquiry was as to whether we could secure the southeastern extremity of Angel island, which could be easily fenced off from the main part of the island, but the engineers required it for a battery to command, with Alcatraz, the passage between these two points; and finally, it was our understanding that the engineers named would recommend for our uses the northeastern angle of Angel island. I may say that the San Rafael people were very much exercised on learning that we were endeavoring to secure part of Angel island, since it is in the line of travel between San Francisco and San Rafael and small-pox might blow over from the island to passing steamboats.

When Secretary of War Ramsay was here the board of health called upon him in a body and presented our case. You will remember that both he and Mr. Davis soon went out of office, and their influence was lost.

It was suggested that Tiboron point would be a good location, and that as the United States Government claims it it might be set aside for us. But we learned that the land is in dispute and is indeed held by settlers, and years may elapse before possession could be given.

As a last resort we secured the passage of a bill through the last legislature authorizing the governor to appoint a committee of the State board of health to examine the locations in the harbor, select a site, and report the result to the next legislature, and here the matter rests.

Now I wish to say a few words regarding the difficulties we labor under, and the plans we have pursued in individual cases. Until within the last two months, as soon as an infected ship arrived in the harbor, all cases of small-pox were removed at once to the small-pox hospital, and the ship was kept in quarantine for two weeks or more, or as in the case of the Pacific Mail steamers, if the owners could furnish a suitable vessel on which to place the passengers they were permitted to make the removal, and the infected ship was then thoroughly disinfected and allowed to come to the wharf and discharge cargo.

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company and Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company, being regular lines and owned by responsible parties, on whose promises we could rely, there was no hesitancy in permitting the transfer, and we never, in a single instance, had reason to regret our confidence.

Two months ago, however, an "ocean tramp," the Altonower, arrived in the harbor with small-pox on board. We placed her in quarantine and debated whether we should permit a transfer of her passengers, but the consignees offering no suitable vessel to place them on, we refused.

The number of cases of small-pox increasing rapidly, we refused to receive them in the hospital unless their expenses were paid. The consignees acceded to this proposition. We again debated the question as to whether we should permit a transfer of the passengers that the cargo of the Altonower might be discharged, and had determined to grant the permit, when we learned that the consignees had obtained a legal opinion that in the event of a transfer they would not be legally responsible for the maintenance of said passengers and might abandon them to the care of the city. Fearing treachery we kept the Altonower in quarantine.

On the arrival of the Belgic the other day, knowing that we could trust its owners, and receiving from them a guarantee that all our orders would be strictly enforced, we granted them permission to transfer their passengers, and to dock their ship after proper disinfection.

Very truly, yours,

SAN FRANCISCO, July 5, 1882.

HENRY GIBBONS, JR.

I concur with above statements of Dr. Gibbons. [And additionally states:] No appropriation has been made to carry out section 3022, quarantine regulations.

J. L. MEARES, M. D.,
Health Officer.

A true copy.

G. W. WOOD,
United States Navy, Secretary to Commission.

SAN FRANCISCO, *July 15, 1882.*Dr. GEO. W. WOODS, *U. S. N.,**Mare Island Navy-Yard, Mare Island, Cal.:*

DEAR SIR: As you have stated to us that you have been informed by the board of health of this city that our legal advisers informed us that should the board of health allow the passengers of the steamship Altonower to be transferred to a hulk, the city would become responsible for their maintenance and support after such transfer, we beg to state that we never received any such opinion from our attorneys, but, on the contrary, we repeatedly assured the said board of our willingness to take upon ourselves whatever expense or responsibility might arise from such transfer, and we further employed our attorney, Mr. Hall McAllister, of the firm of McAllister & Bergin, to appear before the board and convince them that our bond would fully relieve the city from all such expense or liability, to which argument the board made no reply, and apparently paid no attention whatever. We claim that the hulk provided by us was in every way most fit for the accommodation of the Chinese passengers upon the above steamer, and we must beg to submit our positive opinion that the board of health acted in a most negligent manner with respect to this business, catering rather to the local popular prejudice than to the commercial interests of the port.

We remain, dear sir, your obedient servants,

MACONDRAY & CO.,
Agents Steamship Altonower.

A true copy.

G. W. WOODS,
Surgeon, United States Navy, Secretary of Commission.

Hon. J. L. CABELL,

President National Board of Health, Washington, D. C.:

SIR: In reply to yours making inquiry respecting quarantine affairs at this port, and inclosing copies of an order of the National Board of Health and letter from the Chinese consul, with newspaper comments, we beg leave to inclose a copy of our quarantine laws, and state the practice followed in carrying them into effect.

When a vessel arrives with no disease of a contagious character we permit her to proceed to the wharf immediately, the only exception to this has been steamers plying between this port, Hong-Kong, and Yokohama, which are detained in quarantine long enough to vaccinate the passengers and fumigate the vessel. When the passengers are properly vaccinated by the ship's surgeon during the voyage even this detention is not exacted.

In April, 1880, this board passed an order that all Chinese passengers should be vaccinated before being permitted to land. The necessity for such an order arose from their dread of vaccination rendering it impossible after they once got ashore, in fact our experience taught us that the almost continual prevalence of small-pox in this city was largely due to the presence of so many thousands of unvaccinated Chinese in our midst; since the above date, therefore, every passenger is detained on board the ship on which he arrives until he submits to be vaccinated. Had this passenger traffic remained with the regular steamship lines, whose vessels were constructed for carrying passengers, and, when their steamers were placed in quarantine, furnished another ship with equal accommodations, to which those exposed to the disease were transferred, the occasion for such exaggerated and partial statements as these made by the Chinese consul regarding the Altonower would not have arisen. Unfortunately the immense hordes of Chinese desiring to come to this country, some 30,000 this year, brought into the passenger-carrying business a class of British steamers never intended for such traffic, constructed only for freight, without any convenience for cleanliness, carrying no surgeon, overcrowded so as to violate the United States laws; filthy beyond description, they presented on their arrival in this port an appearance much more resembling the slave-ships of former times than a passenger steamer of the present day.

To this class belonged the Altonower, the cause of Consul Bee's communication, arriving here from Hong-Kong with 874 Chinese passengers.

Upon proceeding to fumigate the hold, the quarantine officer discovered a Chinaman with variola in the eighth day of the eruption. This man was immediately removed to the hospital on shore, all on board vaccinated, and each succeeding case as it was developed, transferred to the hospital until over twenty had been so placed; it then occurred to the authorities of this city that the expense of supporting and attending an unlimited number of Chinese coolies suffering from variola *should by right be borne by those bringing them here.* They therefore refused to take charge of any more unless the ship paid for them. After a delay of some days the consignees of the Altonower agreed to do so, when

all infected were removed to the hospital as the disease developed, numbering some eighty-four in all. The remaining passengers on the Altonower who had been exposed to the disease would have been transferred to another vessel suitable to accommodate them had such been offered.

The old ferry-boat proposed for that purpose we considered entirely unsuitable, as well as unsafe, liable to capsize if a storm occurred on the bay, and we did not desire to assume the responsibility of endangering their lives for the purpose of releasing the ship and satisfying the representative of the Imperial Government of China. Having no accommodations on shore, and no safe vessel to transfer them to, they remained on board the Altonower until the period of incubation had passed after the development of the last case, when the ship was released from quarantine.

With regard to the comments of such newspapers as the Beacon (Berkeley) and the Argus (Petaluma), it requires little strain of the imagination to discover the source of their "merciful appeal"; we do know that there are two villages in this vicinity with the above names which "mercifully" send their sick poor to the hospital of this city for treatment at our expense. Never having before heard of the existence of the newspapers referred to, we may be pardoned for thinking that the copy received by your honorable board may have exhausted the edition.

Finally as to our present means of preventing the introduction of contagious or infectious diseases and the need of a quarantine station.

San Francisco has no quarantine establishment, no facilities of any kind for purifying and disinfecting immigrants arriving with contagious or infectious diseases; a small steam launch and the quarantine officer comprise everything at the disposal of the health authorities for such purposes. The geographical position of San Francisco causes it to receive all the emigration from the different nationalities of Asia coming to the United States and intercept any disease they may bring. The especial character of this immigration, chiefly Chinese coolies, having no regard to sanitary laws, and bringing with them diseases of a most contagious character, render it absolutely necessary that this port should possess a quarantine station commensurate with the important position it occupies in guarding against the introduction of such diseases as small-pox and Asiatic cholera into the United States.

This board has persistently for years urged upon the authorities of our own State and the United States the necessity of some action in this matter. Two years ago our representative in Congress, the Hon. Horace Davis, called the attention of Congress and the United States Government to our lack of quarantine facilities.

The president of our State board of health, Dr. Henry Gibbons, solicited the assistance of the National Board of Health, and Dr. Billings promised to aid us with all the power possessed by the board.

The Hon. H. Ramsey, Secretary of War, when here in 1880, had pointed out to him our condition, and was requested to grant us a small piece of land from one of the many suitable places in our harbor belonging to the United States.

To avoid detail we may refer you to the records in Washington for information regarding the efforts made, all of which for reasons unknown to us were unsuccessful, and we had about concluded further appeals were useless when we received your communication and feel thankful that the Chinese consul has succeeded in arousing, which we failed to do, the attention of the health authorities of the United States to the importance and necessity for a quarantine station at this port. Further, we assure you that we will most heartily co-operate with any commission appointed to report upon this subject, and give them all the assistance and information in our power.

Very respectfully,

JAS. SIMPSON, M. D.,
HENRY GIBBONS, M. D.,
W. ANDREW DOUGLASS, M. D.,

Committee of the Board of Health of San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., July 25, 1882.

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