

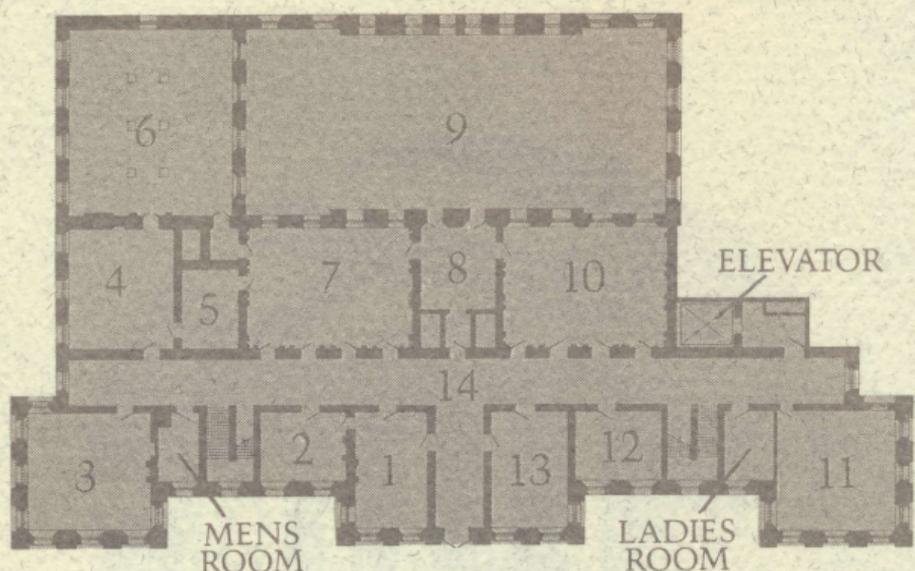


THE
OLD MINT

OF SAN FRANCISCO

A ^{4/11/91}
NATIONAL
HISTORIC
LANDMARK
1874

Fifth and Mission Streets
San Francisco, California 94103

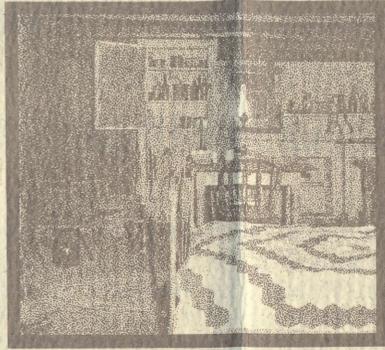
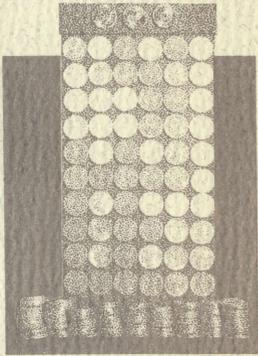


LEVEL ONE

1. Numismatic Sales Room
2. Superintendent's Office c. 1874 and restoration with original furnishings
3. The Director's Office
4. Pioneer Gold Coin Exhibit
Commemorative Silver Coins
5. The Gold Vault
6. American Historical Display
7. South Counting/Receiving Room
8. Treasurer's Office
9. Courtyard
10. Museum Theater
11. Press Room
12. Mint Security Arms and Victrola Exhibit
13. Victorian Bedchamber
14. U.S. National Medals Display
in the Great Hallway

Men's Room
Ladies Room

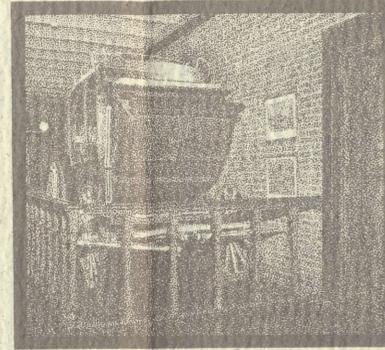
MUSEUM EXHIBITS



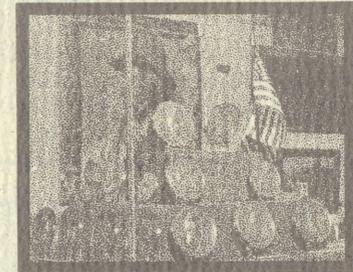
16 Authentic recreation of a miner's cabin



19 Stampmill for crushing ore, c. 1870's



22 Stage Coach, c. 1860



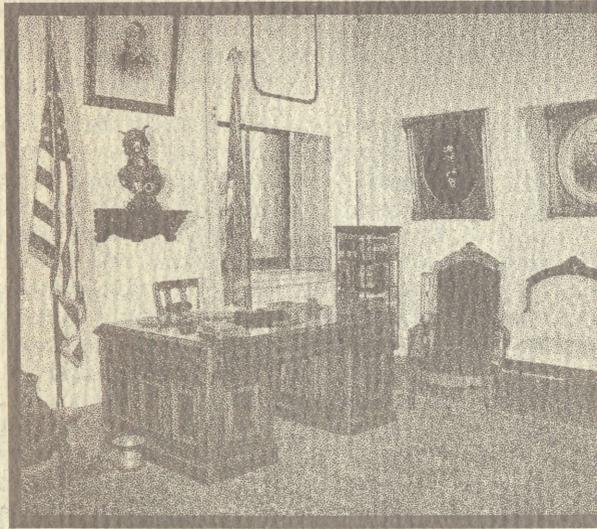
14 U.S. National Medals Display in the Great Hallway



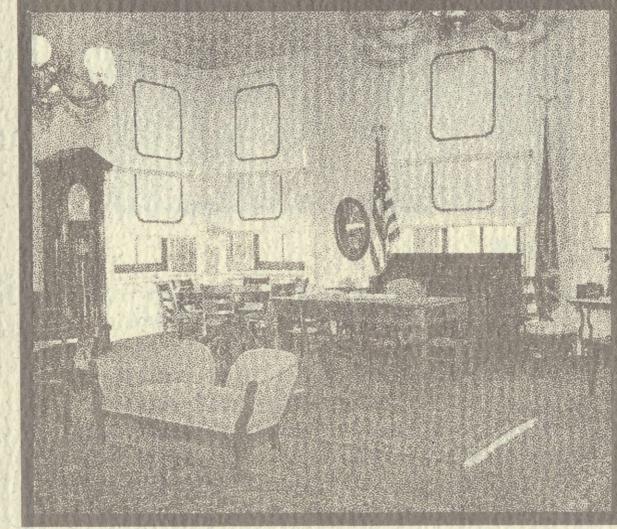
17 California redwood section, dating back to 1250



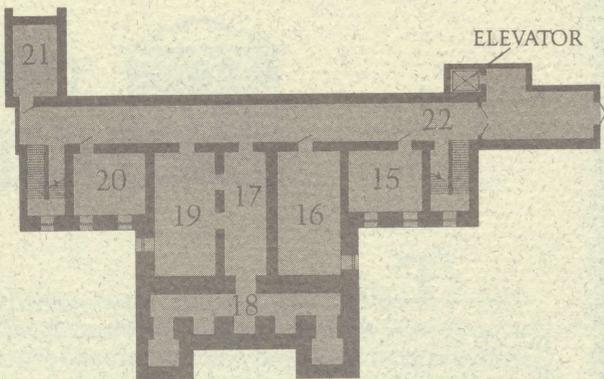
2 Superintendent's Office c. 1874 and restoration with original furnishings



2 Restoration with original furnishings

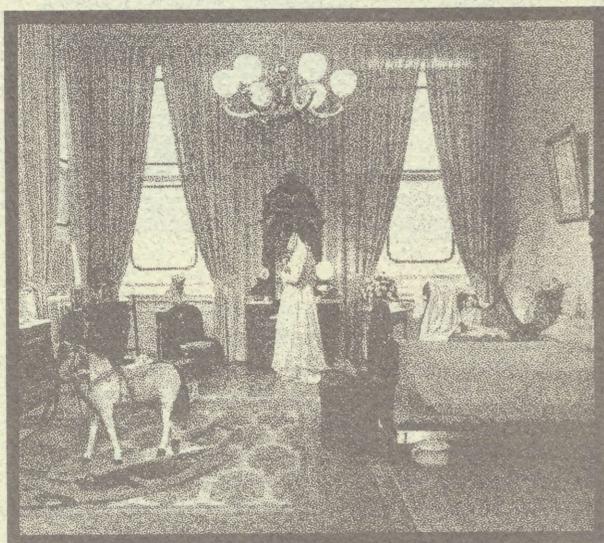


3 The Director's Office



LOWER LEVEL

- 15. Victrola Exhibit 1898-1925
- 16. Authentic recreation of a miner's cabin
- 17. California redwood section, dating back to 1250
- 18. Miniature Gold Mining Scenes
- 19. Stampmill for crushing ore, c. 1870's
- 20. California State Numismatic Association Exhibit
- 21. Original basement vault
- 22. Stage Coach, c. 1860

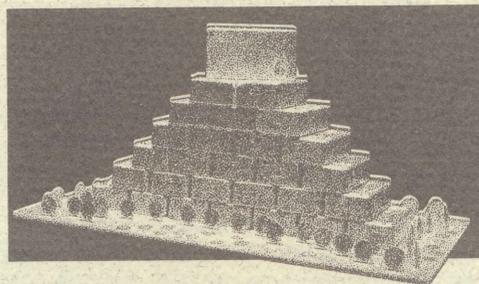


13 Victorian Bedchamber



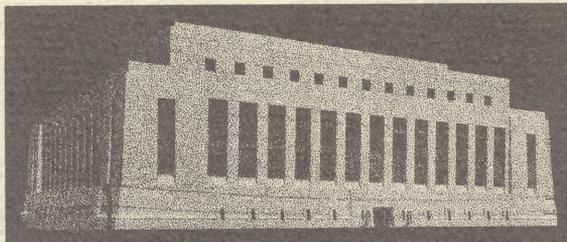
STRIKE A MEDAL

An 1869 coin press has been equipped with a special trigger attachment so visitors may activate the 160-ton press to strike a 1½" bronze souvenir medal of the Old Mint. Bronze blanks cost \$1.



GOLD BARS

A glittering pyramid of 28 bars of 999.9 fine gold. Total weight-10,642.90 ounces with a value of \$449,343 at the official government rate of \$42.22 per troy ounce. On today's market, it is worth millions. Surrounded by Gold Coins-\$20 Double Eagles, \$10 Eagles, and \$5 Half-Eagles, dating from 1856-1915 all with the "S" Mint Mark, and American Eagle Bullion Coins, \$50 one ounce, \$25 ½ ounce, \$10 ¼ ounce and \$5 ⅓ ounce. All feature the classic Augustus Saint-Gaudens design of Liberty. Also displayed is the Charles H. Segerstrom 52 ounce gold leaf specimen collection from the Sonora Mines.



SAN FRANCISCO ASSAY OFFICE

GOLD! THERE'S GOLD! In California. When the rare yellow metal was found at Coloma (Sutter's Mill) by James W. Marshall in 1848, the cry of discovery reached the corners of the world and the gold rush was on. Prospectors swarmed into the territory and by 1850, the gold mined in the hills had grown from a trickle to a deluge. On July 3, 1852, Congress approved the building of a mint in San Francisco and the first mint opened in 1854. Operations were conducted in a small building on Commercial Street, just sixty feet square. Soon outgrowing that, a new mint was erected at 5th and Mission Streets and occupied in the summer of 1874. The steadily increasing demands of the Nation made mandatory the enlargement of mint facilities and in the summer of 1937, San Francisco personnel made another move, this time into an imposing 3-story marble edifice located at 155 Hermann Street.

The Philadelphia and Denver Mints were being improved and it was the feeling that these expanded facilities would be adequate to meet the Nation's coin demand for some time to come. Therefore, in March of 1955, coinage operations at San Francisco were discontinued. During the fall of 1963 it became apparent that a coin shortage was building up and by July of 1964 space was reacquired and adapted once again to the making of coins. Reactivation of minting operations at San Francisco was authorized by the Coinage Act of 1965.

Today the San Francisco facility produces the proof set incorporating only those coins currently being manufactured for general circulation. The production of proof coins is a unique operation, with special handling being given to both the dies and the blanks. The dies, made solely for the purpose, are first sandblasted, resulting in a frosted appearance and texture to the die surface. The portrait on the die is then covered with tape, the background polished with several grades of diamond polish, and buffed. When the tape is removed, the frosted relief in the design against the polished background gives a beautiful two-toned effect to the die which is transferred to the blanks as they are struck. The carefully selected coin blanks are burnished with thousands of steel beads and cleaning chemicals to buff out imperfections and polish the surface. The polished blanks are then rinsed, dried and transferred to the press room where a final cleaning and inspection is made. Proof coin manufacture requires the same careful, painstaking finishing operations as do pieces of expensive jewelry. After each coin is reviewed to detect any defects, the remaining coins are placed individually into a plastic insert which is sealed ultrasonically to form the proof coin case. These sealed cases are automatically packaged in individual cardboard containers, placed in mailing packages, labelled and turned over to the U.S. Postal Service.

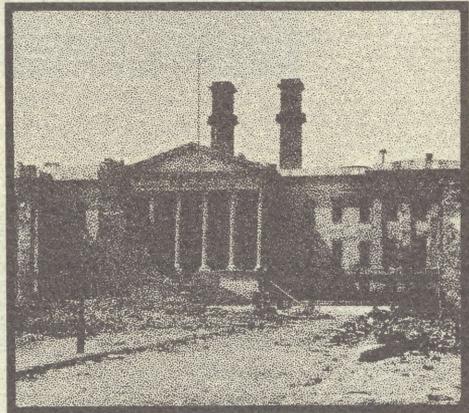


THE OLD MINT

The Old Mint, which first opened in 1874, is one of the finest examples of Federal classic revival architecture in the West. It stands as a monument to the boom days of the California gold rush and was the second Mint Congress authorized to be constructed in San Francisco to service the rich mineral districts of the western region. When first occupied, it was considered to be one of the best appointed Mints in the world and news reports predicted the substantially-constructed granite and sandstone building would "stand up for centuries." The first critical test of survival came in 1906 during the devastating San Francisco earthquake and fire. The Mint withstood the violent quakes and fires that ravaged the city. The destruction of the city gas works, however, forced suspension of the melting, annealing and assaying operations fueled by gas. Left intact and standing virtually alone amid the rubble of the disaster, the Mint was the only financial institution able to open its doors for business. The subtreasury and all the bank buildings lay in ruins. Until the banks could once again begin operations, the Mint assumed the responsibilities of administering the relief funds and other monetary affairs of the crippled city.

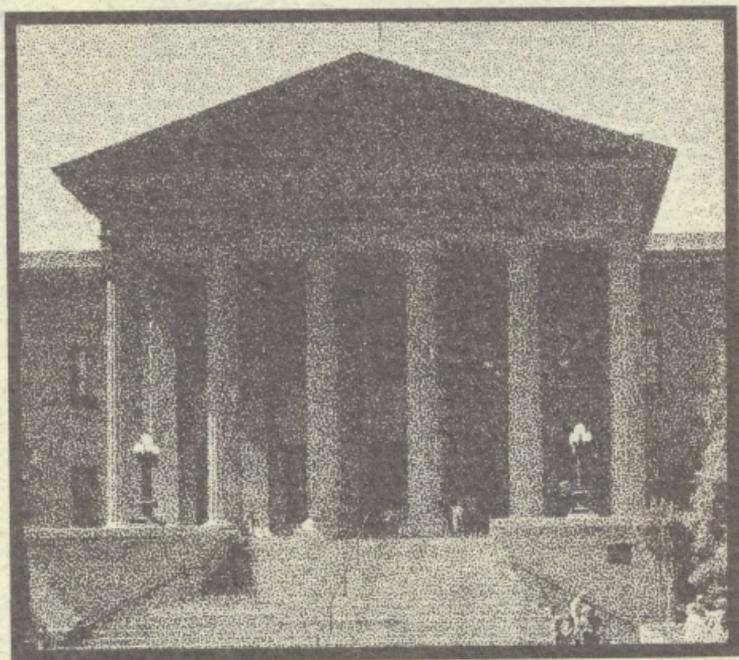
Criticized as "unnecessarily large" in 1874, the Mint by the 1930s was determined to be inadequate to keep pace with the growing commercial demands of the nation. A new, larger Mint was authorized and minting operations were transferred to the new facility (now the San Francisco Mint) in 1937. Thereafter, other government agencies occupied the premises until 1968 when the building was finally vacated and declared surplus to the Federal government's needs.

The empty and rapidly deteriorating building soon became an object of controversy between those groups wanting to tear it down and those championing its preservation and restoration. Its exceptional architectural, historical and cultural significance won another critical battle for existence for the Old Mint. In 1972, the General Services Administration returned the Old Mint to the Treasury Department for restoration.



THE GRANITE LADY

An award-winning color film, starring the Old Mint. An absorbing story of the Old West of romantic legend, of the heydays of the California gold rush, of the terrible San Francisco earthquake and fire and abandonment and rejuvenation—and of the role played by the Old Mint in these dramatic events.



INFORMATION & TOURS

See a collection of U.S. Silver Commemorative Coins. The famous Collection of Pioneer Gold coins. The Western art display. And many other antiques, minting equipment and artifacts, Western memorabilia and graphics displays.

Tour the vaults that once held a third of the nation's wealth in gold coin and bullion. Telephone and make an appointment to use the Numismatic Library. Add your name to the Mint's mail order list for special coins and medals produced by the United States Mint.

Visit a Numismatic Sales Room for over-the-counter purchases of: the National Medals of the United States; Commemorative Proof and Uncirculated Sets; and other numismatic related items.

Call for tours or walk in



Monday through Friday
(except holidays)
10:00 AM until 4:00 PM
No admission charge.


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