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The Priest who Opposed the “Creatures:” Father Terence Caraher, Prostitution, Progressivism
and the Nymphia in Turn-of-the-Century San Francisco

A Senior Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the Department of History
In Candidacy of the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in History

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“God has made Hell for us, but when it attempts to come to North Beach, we say, to Hell with it. Not with the women, not with the boys against whose good morals this spot of iniquity is intended, and who are to be enticed into that institution, but, to Hell with the temptation, to Hell with the evil itself,”¹ the Reverend Dr. Slocum declared on July 12, 1899. Slocum was one of many speakers at a meeting at Washington-Square Hall in San Francisco. The meeting, organized by Father Terence Caraher, intended to keep the brothel, the Nymphia, from opening just blocks from their North Beach neighborhood in the Barbary Coast.² Slocum’s words represented Caraher and his allies’ position regarding prostitution, but the words also exposed the growing anxiety and determination inherent in what became the Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century.

Some historians have seen the Progressive Movement as a response to the urbanization and the industrialization of the American landscape, and others, with regard to the anti-prostitution movement view it as a reaction to the changing role of women in American society.³ Caraher was an exemplar of the Progressive Movement, whose followers aggressively pursued reform by attempting to force the state to take a more active role in regulating the social welfare and the activities of citizens.⁴ Like many reformers at this time, Caraher believed that his actions

¹ “The Crusade Against Vice,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

² Ibid.

³ Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 4.

⁴ Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1987), 139.

were progressive and for the betterment of society as a whole. With the help of the local newspapers he endeavored to control the morals of citizens through the destruction of the Nymphia and prostitution in the Barbary Coast, San Francisco despite occasional opposition from several public officials. Ultimately, his influence on North Beach residents, the courts, the Health Board, the Board of Supervisors and the police shifted ethics in turn-of-the-century San Francisco.

Historians have not given a cohesive definition of the Progressive Movement. For example, Eldon J. Eisenach in his politically focused book *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* refuses to add to the confusing dialogue about the meaning of Progressivism.⁵ Eisenach argues that the Progressive Movement was not only a change in regime that considerably shifted public policy and governmental power⁶ but that it was also important to modern conceptions of liberalist and conservative ideals.⁷ In “An Obituary for ‘The Progressive Movement,’” Peter G. Filene also posits that the definition and the goals of Progressivism were fluctuating, confusing and often changed from person to person. According to Filene, some historians believe Progressivism strove to prohibit the privileged from taking control of politics and economics, and the government’s role was to help the weak and the poor. Other historians think the objective of the Movement was to regulate monopolies, support women’s suffrage, place stricter laws on

⁵ Eldon J. Eisenach, *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 19.

⁶ Eisenach, 18.

⁷ Eisenach, 4.

child labor and to fix social ills.⁸ Filene, however, argues Progressivism lacked cohesiveness, and without this collectivity a “movement” could not exist.⁹

Within the Progressive Movement, prostitution and women’s roles in society became important issues. In *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era*, Mark Thomas Connelly maintains statistics show that the number of women wage earners grew between 1900 and 1910 from 5.3 to 7.6 million.¹⁰ Many working women were also moving away from their families in rural areas to take jobs in the city, which led to anxiety on the part of many traditionalist Americans.¹¹ Connelly further declares that moral changes often accompanied the alteration in women’s roles as well. For some of the younger generation, sex outside of marriage became more acceptable.¹²

Ruth Rosen in *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America* agreed with Connelly’s focus on the changing roles of women. Rosen states that because of the effects of increased industrialization of America, “women’s traditional economic role and men’s patriarchal authority in the family were being challenged and transformed.”¹³ She believes that these changes led many progressives to see prostitution as a threat to the home, and therefore, the traditional way

⁸ Peter G. Filene, “An Obituary for ‘The Progressive Movement,’” *American Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Spring, 1970) 21, www.jstor.org (accessed October 17, 2010).

⁹ Filene, 23.

¹⁰ Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 31.

¹¹ Connelly 36.

¹² Connelly, 18-19.

of life.¹⁴ Rosen realizes that change occurred at a frightening pace for turn of the century Americans and that Progressives, intimidated by the alterations, endeavored to stem the tide of moral shifts.

With Progressives at the helm, the rise and fall of American red light districts followed a similar pattern. For example, in *Sin and the Second City*, Karon Abbott investigates the Levee District of Chicago. Abbott mainly focuses on the Everleigh sisters and their world-famous Everleigh Club and argues that prostitution was a business. The Club, a high-class brothel, catered to the wealthy.¹⁵ Despite the lure of rich customers, the Everleighs, as well as the rest of the Levee, were subject to the intrusion of the Progressives and their need to destroy anything approaching sinful behavior. The Club was shut down by Mayor Harrison in late 1911 after increased pressure from men in the religious sector.¹⁶ Later, in 1912, the rest of the district would be raided and closed.¹⁷

Other red light districts, such as Storyville in New Orleans and Eau Claire in frontier Wisconsin, also closed several years later in 1917¹⁸ and 1914 respectively.¹⁹ In her well

¹³ Rosen, 4.

¹⁴ Rosen, 11.

¹⁵ Karen Abbott, *Sin and the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for the American Soul* (New York: Random House, 2007), 68-82.

¹⁶ Abbott, 258.

¹⁷ Abbott, 282.

¹⁸ Alecia P. Long, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 225.

¹⁹ Bonnie Ripp-Shucha, “‘This Naughty, Naughty City’: Prostitution in Eau Claire from the Frontier to the

researched book on prostitution in America, *Uneasy Virtue*, Barbara Meil Hobson asserts “The closing of Storyville in New Orleans represented the supreme victory [for Progressives].”²⁰ Storyville ceased to operate due to the influence of moral reformers. Bonnie Ripp-Shucha in her journal article “This Naughty Naughty City,” demonstrates the Progressives’ affect on closing red-light districts through exerting power over morals in a small logging community.²¹ Abbott, Hobson and Ripp-Shucha clearly demonstrate in their works the control Progressives attempted to exert over Prostitution at the turn of the century.

While historians have examined prostitution and Progressivism in depth, the Barbary Coast and Father Caraher in particular have received little attention. In *The Madams of San Francisco*, Curt Gentry devotes a few pages to Caraher and only mentions his involvement in fighting to close down several brothels, including the Nymphia and the Municipal Crib in the Barbary Coast.²² Furthermore, it appears as if Gentry, who wrote his book in the 1960s, takes most of his information from Herbert Asbury’s 1933 *The Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld*. Asbury is more detailed in his description of the brothels that Father Terence Caraher fought to close. Both Gentry and Asbury also differ in their treatment of the subject matter. Gentry simply presents facts and does not sensationalize the history, whereas,

Progressive Era,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 81, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 30-54, www.jstor.org (accessed March 28, 2010).

²⁰ Hobson, 171.

²¹ Ripp-Shucha, 30-54.

²² Curt Gentry, *The Madams of San Francisco: An Irreverent History of the City by the Golden Gate* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 186-188.

Asbury is overzealous in his treatment of prostitution on the Coast.²³ Though on the surface Asbury seems interested in moral reform, and showed Caraher as a hero,²⁴ he relish's speaking about the shocking attributes of the brothels. Both Gentry and Asbury do not see Caraher as a serious Progressive reformer, who wanted to keep tight control over the morals of his worlds in order to change the ethics of his community.

Before 1848, white men or women were mostly absent from California's landscape. However, after pioneer James W. Marshall found gold on John Sutter's property, a considerable Westward expansion took place.²⁵ Men such as miner J.C. Stuart traveled west in hopes of making a fortune from gold.²⁶ Adjustment to pioneer existence was often hard, but what was perhaps most difficult for miners like Stuart, who migrated west in the late 1840s, was the absence of white women or women in general in California during the mid nineteenth century.²⁷ The needs of miners domestically²⁸ or sexually often went unmet. For this reason, prostitution was perceived as a necessity by some in 1850s San Francisco and the rest of California. In fact, the first women in California may have been prostitutes looking to make their own living.

²³ Herbert Asbury, *The Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld*, (New York City: Alfred A. Knope, 1933), 232-277.

²⁴ Asbury, 260-274.

²⁵ Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Days of gold: the California gold rush and the American nation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1997), 7.

²⁶ "J.C. Stuart: Sacramento City, December 18, 1850 Letter," *Manuscript Collection: BANC MSS 2006/76, Box 2006/84, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley*.

²⁷ Rohrbough, 92-93.

²⁸ Rohrbough, 95-97.

According to Herbert Asbury, most of the approximately 2000 women who arrived in San Francisco in 1850 were harlots. The arrival of so many women ready to give pleasure to lonely pioneers, along with the advent of gambling dens,²⁹ constituted what became the Barbary Coast within a couple of years following Marshall's first discovery of gold.

The Barbary Coast, however, would also become an increasing problem for San Franciscans as the century advanced. The Coast was full of crime, violence and sex by the 1860s. According to an anonymous veteran police officer, the 1860s Coast was "crowded with dives that were patronized by the lowest of the low."³⁰ By the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the Barbary Coast captured the attention of the newspapers and the citizens of San Francisco. *The San Francisco Call* took on the anxiety of Progressive moral reformers and began an early assault on the police in April of 1900 in regards to their inability to do anything about the saloons that many men and women visited on a regular basis. The journalist stated that women painted in makeup showed up at the saloons at an early hour so they "may not miss a transit chance of male companionship."³¹ Nearly a year before the *Call* voiced its anxiety over the Barbary Coast, Father Terence Caraher began his crusade to end prostitution.

Father Caraher's life was dedicated to the Catholic Church from an early age. Caraher was born in County Armagh in Ireland in 1849.³² Caraher had at least three brothers and two

²⁹ Asbury, 22.

³⁰ "The Barbary Coast Fast Becoming a Relic of the Past," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, November 28, 1897, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 20, 2010).

³¹ Ibid.

³² "The Death of Father Caraher," *The Monitor: The Official Organ of the Archdiocese of San Francisco*,

sisters, though little else is known about his childhood. Except for his brother Francis Caraher, who joined the church and lived and worked in Chicago, Illinois, the rest of his siblings remained in Ireland.³³ Caraher purportedly had an interest in studying the priesthood as a child. When he was of age, he received his seminary training at All Hallows College in Dublin, Ireland and was ordained at the seminary on June 24, 1873 for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Caraher moved around during the first twenty years of his service to the church. His first position was in San Rafael, California. In 1875, he was the assistant pastor at Saint Francis of Assisi in San Francisco before he moved on in 1880 to Mission Delores in San Francisco. However, his time at Mission Delores was short lived, and he spent the next fifteen years at the Mission San Jose in Alameda County. Caraher's relationship with Progressivism did not begin until he returned to Saint Francis of Assisi to replace Father Conlon in June of 1896.³⁴

Caraher approached the causes he took up with passion and resolve. He often bordered if not crossed into militancy, especially when it came to his two main interests: the freedom of the Irish and the obliteration of all forms of vice in his community. Caraher was an advocate of Irish home rule and of his Irish heritage. Moreover, he often gave animated lectures on the history of his country and the need for Irish independence from Britain to fellow San Franciscans.³⁵

October 10, 1914, Saint Patrick's Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA.

³³ "Last Will and Testament of Reverend Father Terence Caraher," *Father Terence Caraher File*, no date, Saint Patrick's Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA.

³⁴ Peter Conmy, *Cathedral on the Avenue* (Saint Patrick's Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA: Unpublished manuscript, no date), 97.

³⁵ Conmy, 97.

According to the Catholic newspaper *The Monitor*, the Church of St. Francis was also the place where “he did his greatest work in an unrelenting fight against the various forms of vice which manifested themselves in the district in which the church was the center.”³⁶ Although Caraher often spoke against vices such as gambling, drunkenness, and dancehalls,³⁷ his major focus appeared to be fastened on destroying the dissolute world of prostitution. Father Terence Caraher was determined to attack prostitution and brothels resembling the Nymphia through every legal method he could discover or create.

The Nymphia was a large brothel with a legendary and notorious history. It was owned by the Twinkling Star Improvement Company, whose principals were Emil and Valentine Kehrlin, Sam Blumenberg and a man simply called Mr. Frey.³⁸ According to Herbert Asbury, legend has it that the original intention of the owners of the brothel was to name it the Hotel Nymphomania, but the police found the name questionable and refused a permit under that title. The name was therefore changed to the Nymphia.³⁹ Asbury is the only source to relate the story about the original name. However, even if this story is fiction, the building was nonetheless impressive to an outsider. In June of 1899, *The San Francisco Examiner* interviewed a Mr. Deasy, a supervisor for the city of San Francisco Board, about the Nymphia. He stated that “I am more than surprised at the thing. In its present stage it appears to be scandalous... There appear to

³⁶ “The Death of Father Caraher.”

³⁷ Comny, 97-98.

³⁸ “Nymphia Owners Found Guilty,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 21, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

³⁹ Asbury, 263.

be over 130 little apartments, which I'm told are for women."⁴⁰ Deasy was interviewed when the building for the Nymphia was being renovated and expanded and the structure's use was still uncertain.

Facts about the Nymphia's construction were vague. The Nymphia Hotel was located at the corners of Pacific and Stockton⁴¹ in the midst of Chinatown and the Barbary Coast and on the edge of North Beach. In September of 1899, "madam" Lillian Dale and the alleged owners the Twinkling Star Improvement Company stated that there were only 90 rooms in the brothel.⁴² The newspapers reported that the building was going to stand where Chinese tenements and junkshops originally sat and was to be made of brick with a visually pleasing exterior.⁴³ Yet, according to Asbury, the building was a flimsy U-shaped structure that stood three stories high with about 150 rooms, or rather, small cubicles on each floor.⁴⁴ Reportedly, these cubicles were small and cramped and only used for the purpose of prostitution.⁴⁵ Such blatant debauchery did not go unnoticed by Father Terence Caraher, who was astounded by the preparations made for

⁴⁰ "Hotel Nymphia Work Stopped," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 2, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁴¹ "A Setback for the Hotel Nymphia," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 13, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁴² "Black Eye for the Notorious Hotel Nymphia," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 21, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁴³ "There Will be a Fight Over the Nymphia," *The San Francisco Call*, May 17, 1899, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 1, 2010).

⁴⁴ Asbury, 262.

⁴⁵ "May Condemn the Nymphia," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 30, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

the building and the use of the Nymphia Hotel.

Caraher received his first significant opportunity to influence the ethics of North Beach and the greater San Francisco area in 1899 when the “infamous” Nymphia prepared to open. Though the future use of the building was unknown, Caraher was concerned over the welfare of his neighborhood and professed that the citizens of San Francisco, in particular North Beach, “must protect the young people of [the] city and [they could not] have such a place established in the heart of a section where there [were] thousands of children.”⁴⁶ In fact, Caraher was adamant about keeping the business from starting and promised to lead the biggest fight that the city had ever seen if the Nymphia opened.⁴⁷ Furthermore, after visiting the corner of Stockton and Pacific, Caraher went to Supervisor Deasy and the Fire Wardens and requested that they stop the work going forward.⁴⁸

Board Member Deasy insisted that the Board of Supervisors did not know about the work being done on the proposed Nymphia. He maintained that the work on Stockton and Pacific did not come to his attention until Caraher approached him about the matter.⁴⁹ Seemingly, the Twinkling Star Improvement Company planned to alter the basement of the building to create more rooms for prostitutes to use.⁵⁰ Deasy further stated that the Board had only given the

⁴⁶ “There Will be a Fight Over the Nymphia.”

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Hotel Nymphia Work Stopped.”

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Nymphia Owners Found Guilty.”

Twinkling Star Improvement Company the right to make alterations to the existing structure not add to the existing building. He declared that when the subject came before the Board he would fight to keep the infamous place from opening. As result of Caraher's interference, Deasy went to the Fire Commissioner's office and also demanded that the work cease.⁵¹

Caraher refused to let the matter rest with the Board, even with promises from certain Board Members. He and other residents from the North Beach area met with lawyers about what steps they could take if the Nymphia went forward. Caraher contracted with attorney J.J. Barrett to help his case. Neither Caraher nor Barrett trusted the Board. In the *San Francisco Chronicle* the priest confirmed that Supervisor Holland had promised him that he would work faithfully to keep the proposed project from coming to fruition. However, Caraher was highly disappointed in Holland when he changed his mind and intervened on behalf of the Nymphia. Caraher declared "When I called him to account for his official action, he at first professed to know nothing about the measure to which his name [was] attached. Then he defended it, saying that he understood that the people having the enterprise in hand meant to keep it within the limits of the law."⁵² The fight over the Nymphia had been set into motion, and the corruption of San Francisco government officials was exposed to the public through the work of the local newspapers.

After the disappointment Caraher experienced, he brought together his neighborhood and any other concerned citizens to denounce the corrupt city officials and to shut down the

⁵¹ "Hotel Nymphia Work Stopped."

⁵² "Citizens Cry Against Vice," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 4, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

Nymphia. The meeting took place June 7, 1899 in the basement of St. Francis of Assisi.⁵³

Caraher delivered a speech full of fire and damnation, which was directed at several unnamed city officials. He believed that if city had not given the Twinkling Star Improvement Company official support to begin with the Company would never have embarked in the creation of the Nymphia. Caraher also announced that he had “some of their names and [would] make them public if [they] were not successful in their crusade.”⁵⁴ He was willing to push until the government’s behavior changed.

Attorney J.J Barrett revealed that a representative of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company had approached Caraher and offered him any amount of money he wanted if the priest abandoned his militant opposition to the Nymphia.⁵⁵ Caraher accordingly turned down the offer and, along with his allies, passed resolutions that showed the seriousness of Caraher’s determination to destroy the brothel. The citizens of North Beach were not dissuaded. As tax payers, they felt they had the right to crush vice in their neighborhood.⁵⁶

The Board of Supervisors appeared impressed with the seriousness of the situation and took action. On June 13, 1899, the Board of Supervisors postponed indefinitely the resolution that would grant the Twinkling Star Improvement Company’s contractors the right to make any

⁵³ “Make War of Home of Vice,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 8, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁵⁴ “Against the Hotel Nymphia,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, June 8, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ “Make War on Home of Vice.”

further alterations on the Nymphia's structure. At the head of this postponement was Supervisor Holland, whom Caraher had attacked in a previous newspaper article. According to the Mayor James D. Phelan, in response to Attorney J.J. Barrett's concerns on behalf of Caraher, this indefinite postponement would mean the end of all future problems with the Nymphia.⁵⁷ Furthermore, bowing to public pressure, the Board of Supervisors ordered the Nymphia closed upon Holland's recommendation. The Board agreed unanimously stating in their final decision that "the Hotel Nymphia [was] a house of ill-fame devoted to prostitution...all such houses [were] to be declared to be public nuisances."⁵⁸ Regardless, declaring the Nymphia a nuisance did not mean it closed automatically.

Within weeks of the Board of Supervisors unanimous decision to close the infamous Nymphia Hotel, Caraher's attorney J.J. Barrett, went before the Court of San Francisco to have the owners of the Nymphia arrested, but the Twinkling Star Improvement Company stubbornly resisted. Barrett brought the matter before Judge Graham and decided that the owners of the Nymphia could be brought before the court on charges of conducting notorious houses. However, it seemed that the owners of the Nymphia were aware of their precarious situation because they were astute enough to send a representative to Father Caraher to convince him to call off the police.⁵⁹ The Twinkling Star Improvement Company hoped they could meet

⁵⁷ "A Setback for the Hotel Nymphia."

⁵⁸ "Hotel Nymphia Ordered Closed," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 23, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁵⁹ "Directors Are to be Arrested," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, August 1, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

Caraher's conditions and everyone would walk away happy, yet, the priest was not willing to settle. Once again, the newspapers showed Caraher as a moral arbiter. They reprinted his decisive words in response to the Twinkling Star Improvement Company's offer. To him, nothing short of the total destruction of the Nymphia would be acceptable. He avowed:

The fact is that the Nymphia abomination sets a premium on immorality and will increase instead of diminish it, because it appears to have and indirectly has official sanction. If we had not opposed the Nymphia a number of other buildings would now be in course of erection, and this section of the city would be thoroughly contaminated.⁶⁰

For Father Caraher, places like the Nymphia were the problem with the turn of the century society. Like many Progressives, he clung to traditional Christian views of sexuality. Sex was only acceptable within the confines of marriage with one's spouse, not with prostitutes or other loose women. Although in the same article he argued that it was the illegality of the Nymphia that concerned him and that if it were legal they would not be in such an uproar,⁶¹ it seems unlikely such decriminalization of prostitution would be allowed into the law book as long as he was around.

With Caraher's rejection of Twinkling Star Improvement Company's proposed agreement, the police arrested the owners of the Nymphia. Ever zealous for the condemnation of the Nymphia and the triumph of Terence Caraher, *The San Francisco Call* reported on September 21, 1899 that the Twinkling Star Improvement Company, consisting of S.P.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Blumenberg, Mr. Frey, and Emile Kehrlin and Valentine Kehrlein, were convicted in the court of Judge Graham. All four men were found guilty of leasing the Nymphia for prostitution purposes. Blumenberg and the other directors claimed they leased the building to a woman named Lillian Dale for \$500 a month.⁶² However, when Lillian Dale took the stand she incriminated them. The newspapers maintained that Lillian Dale had testified that with the Nymphia “running at full blast, always with at least forty occupants, a minimum of \$120 rental a day, or \$3 a day paid by each woman resident...produced about \$4200 a month in rents.”⁶³ It was further shown at trial that, despite the Twinkling Star Improvement Company’s dissent, Blumenberg in particular had approached a man named F. Venturia and beseeched him to buy stock in the Nymphia because the “city’s whole population of unfortunates would become the tenants of Hotel Nymphia.”⁶⁴ After such damning evidence, the Twinkling Star Improvement Company principals faced the possibility of up to six months in prison and a fine.⁶⁵

Next, Caraher’s attempted to compel the police to shut down the Nymphia. Along with Father Redehan, Reverend Dr. Slocum, Reverend Urmey and Reverend Wilson, Caraher visited Chief of Police Lees. A mere twenty-four hours had passed since a jury in Judge Graham’s court room found the directors of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company guilty, and Caraher and his cronies were already impatient to see the business ended. J.J. Barrett stated to *The San*

⁶² “Black Eye for the Notorious Hotel Nymphia.”

⁶³ “Nymphia Owners Found Guilty.”

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Black Eye for the Notorious Nymphia.”

San Francisco Call that the Nymphia's business should have terminated immediately.⁶⁶ However, while he did agree to do all in his power, Police Chief Lees disagreed. He did not believe that he could legally act until judgment was passed on the offending parties. *The San Francisco Call* set out to brand Chief Lees as an unreasonable corrupt official.⁶⁷ Father Caraher and his group were livid. The meeting quickly turned into a shouting match in which their raised voices echoed down the Police Department corridors. Caraher and Urmy left abruptly, failing to convince Lees that it was legal to close the Nymphia right away.⁶⁸ Whether or not Chief Lees was a corrupt official is debatable, but his actions spoke to Caraher's concern over the immorality and corruption that seemed rampant among San Francisco city officials.

Police Chief Lees' nonchalant attitude towards the Nymphia and Father Caraher's contingent resulted in a backlash against him. Around 300 residents of North Beach convened at Apollo Hall on Pacific Street to condemn the ineptitude or corruption of Police Chief Lees.⁶⁹ However, he was not just accused of an inability to do his job but also of rudeness and lack of honesty.⁷⁰ Attorney Barrett was somewhat more reasonable than Caraher in his attack on the

⁶⁶ "Will be Asked to Close the Nymphia," *The San Francisco Call*, September 22, 1899, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 12, 2010).

⁶⁷ "Nymphia Fight to be Kept Up," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 23, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁶⁸ "Lees Refuses to Close the Nymphia Hotel," *The San Francisco Call*, September 23, 1899, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 12, 2010).

⁶⁹ "Hotel Nymphia Must be Closed," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 26, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁷⁰ "North Beach Citizens Condemn Chief Lees," *The San Francisco Call*, September 26, 1899, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 12, 2010).

Chief. Barrett believed, though Lees appeared to be back peddling or ignoring the law after the verdict, Lees was instrumental in gathering an abundance of evidence against the Nymphia when the Twinkling Star Improvement Company was put on trial. Neither Caraher nor Barrett could begin to comprehend why Lees would chose to let the Nymphia stand. Though Lees held firm that he could not do anything without sentencing, there was nothing in the newspapers stating that Lees attempted to get a warrant. Caraher declared in response to Lees, “He might as well have told me that a murderer must be allowed to go ahead and murder until he is sentenced.”⁷¹ Caraher’s analogy was an exaggeration, but it exposes what lengths the priest would go to in order to convert San Francisco’s way of thinking.

Caraher’s words were not completely ignored by Police Chief Lees. Several days after the meeting at the Apollo, Lees decided to take action to clear his name. On September 29, 1899, Lees approached the San Francisco Board of Health, and with Board members Dr. W.H. Coffey and J.W. Keeney, they toured the Nymphia. Shortly thereafter all of the members of the Health Board visited the brothel and found the establishment to be a health hazard. Board member Dr. Lawlor, declared “A Berkshire pig in England is better housed than those creatures in the Nymphia.”⁷² Lawlor found the rooms unfit and that the owners’ plan to extend the building under one of the sidewalks unsanitary. The sewers were adjacent to the proposed extensions, and there was a stagnant pool of filthy water that released a foul odor into the unventilated rooms.⁷³ Police

⁷¹ “Hotel Nymphia Must Be Closed.”

⁷² “May Condemn the Nymphia.”

⁷³ Ibid.

Chief Lees believed that they would condemn the building soon after the tour and then he could enforce the order. However, the Board of Health took several weeks before it came officially to a decision. On October 19, 1899, the *Chronicle* announced in a short paragraph that the Health Board unanimously determined to condemn the Hotel Nymphia as a hazard to the area.⁷⁴

Simultaneously, the Twinkling Star Improvement Company was back in court for sentencing. On October 5, 1899, Blumenberg, Frey and the two Kehrleins' stood before Judge Graham. Graham was less than sympathetic to the men's' plight and sentenced them to six months in prison for running a house of prostitution. The attorney for the Twinkling Star Improvement Company, J.J. Dunne, immediately asked for a retrial based on allegations that the jury received evidence outside of court and that the judge did not instruct the jury in the matters of the law for which the defense asked. Graham denied the motion,⁷⁵ but Dunne gave notice for an appeal.⁷⁶ Unfortunately for Father Caraher, the notice of appeal provided the Twinkling Star Improvement Company with immunity from police interference,⁷⁷ which left Police Chief Lees in an awkward position while waiting for an answer.

In November of 1899, J.J. Barrett presented an injunction to Judge Seawell of the Superior Court of San Francisco on behalf of Lillian Dale to keep the Health Board from closing

⁷⁴ "The Nymphia is Condemned," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 19, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁷⁵ "Owners of the Nymphia Sentenced," *The San Francisco Examiner*, October 5, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁷⁶ "May Spend Six Months in Jail," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 5, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

the brothel. Though Dale seemed to be the source of the injunction, she was most likely, once again, a cover for Blumenberg and the other directors of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company. Dale insisted that the Nymphia did not disturb the public peace, yet the attorney for the Health Board, Charles J. Heggerty, brought forward an affidavit provided by Officer Lawler stating the opposite. The affidavit attempted to expose the unsanitary conditions in the brothel and included many examples the local newspapers had given in the early stages of the Board's investigations. The Health Board certainly painted a gruesome picture of what the women supposedly endured in the Nymphia, which seemed to impress the court.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, Caraher and the community did not appear concerned about the women's welfare, though he likely believed that he was improving the women's lives by setting them free from prostitution.

Around the same time, Caraher wrote an accusation against the San Francisco Grand Jury to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, stating that a news article from a week before insisted that the Grand Jury was in favor of the Nymphia. Caraher believed that the Grand Jury was supposed to alert the court when there were violations in the law and had gone beyond its duties. He further argued that the Grand Jury was shown to have unanimously agreed that the Nymphia was a necessity to society. Caraher responded, "they might as well declare that burglary, garroting, are necessary evils, and the law makes no distinction between these crimes and those committed in

⁷⁷ "Owners of the Nymphia Sentenced."

⁷⁸ "Nymphia Case on Argument," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

the Nymphia except in degree.”⁷⁹ A few days later, the Grand Jury fully denied the accusations. The origin of the story remained a mystery.

Shortly after the New Year and the opening of a new century, the police, led by the San Francisco’s new Police Chief, Biggy, began several legal assaults on the Nymphia and its inmates. According to *The San Francisco Call*, Biggy, Police Captain Wittman and the other patrolmen raided the Hotel Nymphia at about 9:10pm on January 10, 1900.⁸⁰ They planned on taking the women and their visitors by surprise at the Nymphia as well as other dens of iniquity. The police squads set loose on the Nymphia and the part of the Barbary Coast, which spilled into Chinatown. They were provided with means of opening locked doors such as jimmys, sledge hammers, and bars.⁸¹ When the police entered the Nymphia it was crowded. The Nymphia’s male visitors were left unmolested while thirty-three women were arrested.⁸² Each woman, with names such as Beulah Williams, Edna Roberts, Kittie Rogers, Lulu Lockwood, and Elsie Woods, were charged with vagrancy.⁸³ Lillian Dale was also arrested and charged with maintaining a house of prostitution and vagrancy. By midnight, supporters of the Nymphia had bailed out the women for \$150 each. Dale remained in custody under a \$400 bond. Billy Abbott, who ran a

⁷⁹ “Father Caraher on the Nymphia Hotel,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, November 15, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁸⁰ “Police Raid the Nymphia,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 11, 1900, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁸¹ “Hotel Nymphia is Raided by Sixty Police,” *The San Francisco Call*, January 11, 1900, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 13, 2010).

⁸² “Police Raid the Nymphia”

⁸³ “Hotel Nymphia is Raided by Sixty Police.”

brothel on Grant Avenue, attempted to raise the money for her removal.⁸⁴

The following day, Chief Biggy and Wittman repeated their efforts against the Nymphia. Unlike the night before, the police met with some resistance by the prostitutes' attorney L.C. Pistolesi.⁸⁵ Pistolesi met the police at the entrance of the establishment and insisted that the police could not arrest the women "pending a settlement of the cases [then] before the courts."⁸⁶ These pending settlements were not discussed in the newspapers' treatment of the raids that night, but the women's attorney seemed to believe there was cause for the police to maintain distance. On the other hand, the police believed they had every right to arrest the women. Pistolesi had also given advice to Minnie McLaughlin not to open the door of the Nymphia for the police.⁸⁷ The attorney was forcibly removed by the police because of his interference,⁸⁸ and twenty-six women were arrested on vagrancy charges. On this occasion, the arrested prostitutes were released on bonds paid by the Twinkling Star Improvement Company and Blumenberg's mother, Sarah.⁸⁹ By this time, the police were taking Caraher's denouncement of the Nymphia and other forms of vice seriously. Determined not to be portrayed as a corrupt official, Biggy

⁸⁴ "Police Raid the Nymphia."

⁸⁵ "Police Still Active in Chinatown District," *The San Francisco Call*, January 12, 1900, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 13, 2010).

⁸⁶ "More Trouble for the Nymphia," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 12, 1900, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ "Police Still Active in Chinatown District."

⁸⁹ "More Trouble for the Nymphia."

was more pliable than his predecessor, Police Chief Lees, who was unwilling to raid the Nymphia early on in the priest's fight with the establishment. Caraher's continued efforts forced the police to change their ethics and practices regarding the Barbary Coast and prostitution.

On February 9, 1900, Mary Russell, one of the alleged prostitutes of the Nymphia, was brought before Judge Cabanis at midnight. Russell was charged and convicted of vagrancy. The newspaper asserted hopefully, "since this case has gone against the woman, others will probably be prosecuted along the same lines, and the career of the hotel finally rendered unprofitable to its owners."⁹⁰ Russell's arrest, as well as any other prostitutes that were prosecuted and convicted, took a toll on the Twinkling Star Improvement Company and Lillian Dale. The Twinkling Star Improvement Company, Dale and the Nymphia virtually vanished from the newspapers for two years.

By bringing together his community and aggressively urging the government to take action, Caraher appeared to have overcome the Nymphia and the Twinkling Star Improvement Company. Yet in 1902, both Caraher and the Twinkling Star Improvement Company would reappear in a letter that showed that the connection between the Twinkling Star Improvement Company and the Nymphia had not completely dissolved. Blumenberg wrote the letter to the Archbishop P.W. Riordan on February 21, 1902. Though Blumenberg never named the Nymphia specifically, he did name the address where the Nymphia existed over two years before. He also stated the owners' desire to put the property in the right condition in order to rent out the

⁹⁰ "Mary Russell Convicted," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, February 9, 1900, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

building. Blumenberg insisted that the structure was left in a dilapidated condition due to Father Caraher's involvement in a confrontation against the Twinkling Star Improvement Company at the turn of the century.⁹¹ Apparently, Caraher was still speaking out against Blumenberg because he mentioned several times that Caraher was harassing him and the other owners of the land. For example, at one point, Blumenberg asserted:

I am assured by numbers of people who are Catholics that they do not think that his [Caraher's] views or persecution should be approved by the Church and I do not think myself, though I am not Catholic that the Church would indorse [sic] tacitly or otherwise any such notorious persecution of individual or individuals.⁹²

Blumenberg believed that the Church should not allow Caraher or men like him to ruin their businesses with their calculating ways. Notwithstanding, Caraher may have had serious cause for concern and distrust of the men who brought the Nymphia to San Francisco in the first place. Blumenberg claimed innocence, but the following years would demonstrate that the Nymphia was not so easy to crush.

From 1902 until 1904, the Nymphia fought to reopen and to stay open, and Caraher again exerted his power over the morals of San Francisco. The struggle between the "good" Father Terence Caraher and the "evil" owners of the Nymphia played out in the courts once again and included another round of injunctions versus police raids. By 1903, Thomas F. Berry had taken over Caraher's legal needs. The new tenant, John Donahoe, brought suits against the police for

⁹¹ "Blumenberg Letter to the Archbishop P.W. Riordan," *Father Terence Caraher File*, February 21, 1902, Saint Patrick's Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA., 2.

⁹² *Ibid.*

interfering with his business.⁹³ Judge Hebbard removed all injunctions placed on the police so that they could raid the resort and arrest the alleged prostitutes. However, Hebbard allowed the police to raid the Nymphia, not because he agreed with Caraher or the other reformers about the “social evil,” but because it was the law. The Nymphia was a public place and could be entered by police as well as citizens. If the police happened to see illegal activity, they could make arrests based on what they witnessed.⁹⁴ Hebbard argued San Francisco should have “the courage of its convictions like other municipalities in this and other countries.”⁹⁵ Believing prohibition of prostitution was almost always unsuccessful Hebbard thought the practice should be regulated instead.⁹⁶

Following months of battling in court over injunctions and several name changes on leases, the Nymphia made one last effort to open and survive. In November of 1903, two men, Luccich and Gustin, attempted to open a restaurant in what was once the Nymphia. The Police Commission refused to grant a license to open a restaurant in that location.⁹⁷ The property had a stigma attached to it, and taking a cue from Caraher, the police did not trust Luccich and Gustin’s intentions. Nevertheless, the two men opened their restaurant with the belief that the

⁹³ “Hebbard Upholds his First Order,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, March 24, 1903, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁹⁴ “Police Are Given Free Rein at the Nymphia,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, April 4, 1903, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁹⁵ “Hebbard Seals Nymphia’s Doom,” *The San Francisco Call*, April 3, 1903, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 17, 2010).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Say ‘Nymphia’ Will be Opened” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, November 8, 1903, San Francisco

Commission would eventually assent to the business. A reporter for *The San Francisco Chronicle* went undercover and spoke with the bartender of the new restaurant. The bartender seemed confident that business would be booming in the near future. Furthermore, the bartender stated “with a leer that the rest of the vicious hole would be thrown open to the public at the same time, and that one week hence the bedraggled ‘Nymphia’ would be itself again in all its shameful glory.”⁹⁸ The journalist, like the mighty Caraher, was shocked by the certainty of the two men.

After Luccich and Gustin’s establishment was raided by the police, the men requested an injunction against future raids, denying that their restaurant was in any way connected to the Nymphia. Judge Hebbard originally believed them and gave the two men a temporary injunction, but also stated that the police could arrest women at the Nymphia as long as they did not bring them through the restaurant. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Police Chief Whittman and Captain Drake obeyed Hebbard’s restriction.⁹⁹ However, the side entrance to the Nymphia was padlocked and the ever active Drake allowed his men to break the lock to gain access.¹⁰⁰ Judge Hebbard’s stance on the issue proved ineffective when the police had to break a padlock to make arrests.

Weeks later in February 1904, Hebbard reversed the injunction when he realized that

Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “Another Raid on the Nymphia,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, February 14, 1904, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Luccich and Gustin were lying and that the only entrance to the Nymphia was through their restaurant. For what appeared to be the first time in two years, Blumenberg's name was brought into the mix. The newspaper asserted that Blumenberg was behind the attempted injunctions brought by the two men running the restaurant and the Nymphia. Blumenberg even showed up to court at one point. Though the Twinkling Star Improvement Company did not seem to play into the equation, Blumenberg deceptively never loosened his grip on the Nymphia or the profits. However, with or without his presence, the court refused to believe the men. Judge Hebbard denied the injunction, thereby placing the Nymphia once again in the path of the police and granting Caraher's years of effort to keep the Nymphia from existence.¹⁰¹ The final judgment left the Nymphia no choice. The owners, the brothel and the women disappeared from the newspapers. By crushing possibly the biggest brothel in the Barbary Coast and San Francisco, Caraher emerged victorious. He persuaded San Franciscans to become involved in Progressivism and to alter beliefs and practices.

About ten years after the disappearance of the Nymphia, Father Caraher died. Though the closing of the Nymphia was his biggest accomplishment, he continued his attempts to control sexuality in San Francisco through the fight against smaller brothels, such as the Marsicania and the Municipal Brothel.¹⁰² According to Caraher's obituary in the Catholic newspaper, *The Monitor*, the priest died on Sunday, October 4, 1914 at the O'Connor Sanatorium in San Jose.

¹⁰¹ "Nymphia Men Lose Again," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1904, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

¹⁰² Conmy, 97.

His obituary asserted that, “whatever San Francisco has gained in morals she must forever connect such gain in a large measure with the name of Father Caraher.”¹⁰³ According to the Catholic Church, Caraher was a moral arbiter, who would be greatly missed and needed.

Shortly before Caraher’s death, there was a disturbance involving a new law called the Redlight Abatement Act. This law spread throughout several major cities in America, but did not affect the Barbary Coast for some years to come. The law, which was enacted in San Francisco and California in the early part of 1913,¹⁰⁴ placed the blame for running an illicit house of prostitution squarely on those who own, operate or occupy them, and¹⁰⁵ the owners could be charged with nuisance. Furthermore, county or district attorneys, as well as private citizens, could initiate proceedings against those running houses of prostitution.¹⁰⁶

Regardless of the Redlight Abatement Act looming in 1913, the Barbary Coast and its dens of iniquity continued until Valentine’s Day 1917. A female reporter named Bessie Beatty visited the Coast on its last day as a home to “open” brothels. When she arrived in the Barbary Coast, the streets were portentously empty of men. The police were standing guard and keeping

¹⁰³ “The Death of Father Caraher.”

¹⁰⁴ “Redlight Act Has Keen Opposition,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, April 16, 1913, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

¹⁰⁵ Porritt, Annie G. “Public Morality: Red Light Injunction and Abatement Law.” In *Laws Affecting Women and Children in the Suffrage and Non-suffrage States*, (New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1917; Library of Congress), 58.
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/ampage?collId=rbnawsa&fileName=n3563//rbnawsan3563.db&recNum=156&itemLink=r%3Fammem/nawbib:%40field\(NUMBER%2B%40od1\(rbnawsa%2Bn3563\)\)&linkText=0](http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/ampage?collId=rbnawsa&fileName=n3563//rbnawsan3563.db&recNum=156&itemLink=r%3Fammem/nawbib:%40field(NUMBER%2B%40od1(rbnawsa%2Bn3563))&linkText=0) (accessed September 20, 2010).

¹⁰⁶ Porritt, 59.

out any newcomers and any curious male bystanders. At half past two o'clock, Beatty and police officer Kate O'Connor of the morals squad entered the Coast. Betty noticed girls from the brothels as they made their way with what belongings they had to unknown destinations.¹⁰⁷

Beatty was remarkable because she insisted on speaking to the women anonymously and finding out their stories. Unlike Beatty, Father Terence Caraher and the newspapers frequently seemed unconcerned with the prostitutes and what would become of them if vice was ended. Beatty and O'Connor went into an anonymous brothel on Commercial Street and spoke with about half a dozen girls. Although Beatty cared about the women's plight, she was still hopeful of redemption. When she asked if one of the girls present wanted help out of prostitution, she responded, "No; it's impossible. I have tried the other life. I know myself. It can't be done. I'll go somewhere else to an open town."¹⁰⁸ This one prostitute was not alone in the house Beatty visited. Many of them were educated and had started into the life willingly. Another girl had a baby she had to take care of and refused to give up the child. She also knew that there was no money working a regular job. She had made \$35 a month as stenographer. Many of the women were willing to move to other cities to continue their trade and had moved to San Francisco from other cities.¹⁰⁹ On her part, Beatty left the women without any hope of deliverance from a life of "sin." Though Herbert Asbury states that the Coast attempted one last time to open with the

¹⁰⁷ Bessie Beatty, "Bessie Beatty Tells of City's Saddest Flight," *The Bulletin*, February 15, 1917, San Francisco Public Library, History Center.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

introduction of several saloons in 1921,¹¹⁰ the Coast, as early San Francisco had known it, never reemerged.

Ultimately, Father Terence Caraher had failed in his attempt to end prostitution completely in North Beach, the Barbary Coast and greater San Francisco. Prostitution was and is about supply and demand. As long as there are men who are willing to pay for sexual services, there will always be women willing to give sex for money. Also, Caraher often overlooked the plight of prostitutes. Nevertheless, through his puritanical beliefs about sexuality and his determination to purify moral practices, Caraher was able to advance a change in ethics in political, governmental and social spheres in San Francisco. He mobilized North Beach and created community discontent over the corrupt nature of the local government. Through this concern, Caraher was able to compel the Health Board, the Board of supervisors, the Court system and the police to take action against illegal activity. In this way, Caraher was both retrogressive and progressive. His unwavering belief in the possibility of a sinless society helped transform San Francisco for the new century.

¹¹⁰ Asbury, 313.

Primary Source Bibliography

“Against the Hotel Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Examiner*. June 8, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article described a mass meeting regarding the building and renovation of the Nymphia. The key speaker was Father Caraher, who asserted that there are laws against prostitution. He also accused the government of corruption. After Caraher spoke, attorney John J. Barrett argued that Father Caraher was disinterested, and that the “good” priest had rejected the Twinkling Star Company’s offer of money to abandon his opposition of the Nymphia.

“Another Raid on the Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. February 14, 1904. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article discussed the temporary injunction Judge Hebbard placed on the police so they could not arrest prostitutes from the Nymphia through the restaurant in the front of the building. However, Hebbard insisted that the Nymphia was a public place and that the police had the right to raid the building. Police chief Whittman broke a lock on the back door, which was not mentioned in the injunction. Whittman stated that he was following the Penal Code.

Asbury, Herbert. *The Barbary Coast*. U.S.A: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1933.

This book, written sixteen years after the Coast was finally closed down, examined the prostitute’s first appearance in the gold rush shanty towns, the height of their success in cribs and cow-yards and their final dismissal from San Francisco. There was not a central thesis. Herbert Asbury was a journalist, and he worked on several newspapers throughout his career. Asbury included a decent bibliography, but the work lacked consistent footnotes. The book could be considered both a secondary and primary source.

“A Setback for the Hotel Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. June 13, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article discussed the Board of Supervisors postponement of the resolution that granted the Twinkling Star Improvement Company the right to make alterations on the building at Stockton and Pacific. Holland moved for its indefinite postponement. At a previous meeting the Board had not realized the building was going to be used for prostitution. The newspaper insisted Holland was against the Nymphia.

Beatty, Bessie. "Bessie Beatty Tells of City's Saddest Flight." *The Bulletin*. February 15, 1917. San Francisco Public Library, History Center.

The article described the last day brothels and prostitutes were allowed to openly live and work in Barbary Coast on Valentine's Day 1917. Bessie Beatty entered the Barbary Coast to watch the removal of prostitutes from the houses. She interviewed a few of the girls from one brothel. The Prostitutes stated they would find a city where prostitution was still "open." They also all agreed there was no turning their life around, they started out bad and would stay bad. Others, including the madam, said it was the need for money that drove them to prostitution.

"Black Eye for the Notorious Hotel Nymphia." *The San Francisco Chronicle*. September 21, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article examined the conviction of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company for using the Nymphia as a house of prostitution. According to the journalist, the evidence at trial showed that the Nymphia was being used for lewd purposes. The defendants' lawyer attempted to demonstrate that the clients did not rent the premises to the women. One of the convicted, Blumenberg, insisted that the place was leased to Lillian Dale, who swore she rented the place for \$500 a month from Blumenberg and his men.

"Blumenberg Letter to the Archbishop P.W. Riordan." *Father Terence Caraher File*. February 21, 1902, Saint Patrick's Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA.

The Letter, written by Blumenburg, asserted that something must be done to stop Father Caraher, and that it was not right or proper that Father Caraher was prosecuting them. According to the letter, Blumenburg knew several Catholics who disagreed with the treatment the Nymphia received. He continued by asserting that the things Caraher said were an insult to the city of San Francisco.

"Citizens Cry Against Vice," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 4, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article discussed the purposed opening of the Nymphia and the anger that ran through the neighborhood over the possibility of opening a brothel near their homes. According to the newspaper, the Board gave the Nymphia project official sanction and that they knew what the building was going to be used for.

"Directors Are to be Arrested." *The San Francisco Chronicle*. August 1, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

In the article, J.J. Barrett concluded arrangements in court, with Judge Graham, to arrest the

directors of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company. The Company was charged with conducting a notorious house of prostitution. Father Caraher stated that the law was clear and that such a house was illegal. Furthermore, Caraher argued that if the legislature were to make prostitution legal, he would not have such a problem with the establishment.

“Father Caraher on the Nymphia Hotel.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. November 15, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article contained a letter written by Father Caraher to the Chronicle. He upbraided the North Beach Improvement Club, who seemed to endorse the Nymphia as long as it stayed south of Pacific Street. Caraher refused to give up on the fight against the Nymphia.

“Hebbard Seals Nymphia’s Doom.” *The San Francisco Call*. April 3, 1903.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 17, 2010).

In the article, Judge Hebbard dissolved preliminary injunctions, which restrained the police from raiding the Nymphia. This gave Chief Wittman the ability to enter the resort and make arrests whenever he thought necessary. The article further established how Hebbard felt about the ‘Social Evil.’ He believed that it should be regulated and that prohibiting it was impossible.

“Hebbard Upholds his First Order.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. March 24, 1903. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

In the article, Judge Hubbard refused to modify his injunction, which prohibited the police from blockading the Hotel Nymphia. The Judge stated that the injunction only prohibited them from blockading the street. However, the police could arrest the visitors of the resort.

“Hotel Nymphia Must be Closed.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. September 26, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article detailed the meeting of some 300 residents of the North Beach District at Apollo Hall. Attorney J.J. Barrett and Father Caraher spoke at the meeting. Barrett asserted that he had met with Police Chief Lees, who was helpful with evidence during the trial, and asked why the Nymphia had not closed. Caraher argued that Lees might as well ask him to wait till a murderer was sentenced to arrest him.

“Hotel Nymphia Ordered Closed.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. July 23, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article described a meeting of the Board of Supervisors. With Holland at the helm, the Board voted to suppress the Nymphia as a nuisance. The decision was unanimous.

“Hotel Nymphia is Raided by Sixty Police.” *The San Francisco Call*. January 11, 1900.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 13, 2010).

This article discussed Chief Biggy’s raids on the Nymphia. There were sixty-police involved in the raids, and other businesses around the Nymphia were also attacked by the police. Prostitutes were arrested and taken to the police station to be charged with vagrancy.

“Hotel Nymphia Work Stopped,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 2, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article discussed the building and the renovation of the Nymphia in San Francisco. Supervisor Deasy insisted to the newspaper that he found out about the building from Father Caraher, and that he interceded for the Father. Deasy stated he was surprised the owners got as far as they did. He also insisted he would vote against the permit for the Nymphia.

“Last Will and Testament of Reverend Father Terence Caraher,” *Father Terence Caraher File*, no date, Saint Patrick’s Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA.

The last will and testament of Father Caraher included information on his family members. The will did not say anything regarding his parentage. The will also exposed his rather generous nature and the fact that he had a good deal of money when he passed away. He left several thousands to charities and several thousands to his remaining siblings.

“Lees Refuses to Close the Nymphia Hotel.” *The San Francisco Call*. September 23, 1899.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 12, 2010).

The article described the meeting between Father Caraher, several other San Francisco ministers and Chief Lees. The men hoped to get the police to shut down the Nymphia after the Twinkling Star Improvement Company’s conviction in court. Father Caraher insisted Lees told them he could do nothing to the Nymphia until sentencing. After a loud confrontation, Caraher walked out.

“Make War of Home of Vice.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. June 8, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article described a meeting Father Caraher and several North Beach residents held regarding the infamous Nymphia. The Twinkling Star Improvement Company wanted to reconstruct the existing building and possibly build onto the structure for the same “evil” purpose. At the meeting, Caraher and his cohorts passed resolutions stating they would not stop until the Nymphia was destroyed.

“Mary Russell Convicted.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. February 9, 1900, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The short article stated that Mary Russell was convicted of the charge of vagrancy. Russell occupied room 44 at the Nymphia and was arrested when it was raided on January 10, 1900. The article also insisted that the council for the defense made a number of objections during the trial and that defense argued the Nymphia was a necessary evil. No effort was made to prove Russell was not an inmate of the Nymphia.

“May Condemn the Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. September 30, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article described Chief Lees efforts to close the Nymphia down by convincing the Health Board it was unsafe. Lees and the Board went to visit the Nymphia. Dr Lawlor of the Board stated the building was uninhabitable and unsanitary and should be closed down.

“May Spend Six Months in Jail.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. October 5, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article stated that the directors of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company were sentenced to six month in prison. However, their Lawyer, J.J. Dunn, appealed the decision. They were released on \$1000 bonds.

“More Trouble for the Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. January 12, 1900. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article stated that the Hotel Nymphia was raided only one night after the first raid. The police rounded up and arrested twenty-six of the women working at the brothel. The police were met at the door by attorney L.C. Pistolessi in protest. When Pistolessi attempted to stop the intrusion he was ejected from the building, but he was not arrested. The women were released on bonds provided by one of the members of the Twinkling Star Improvement Company.

“North Beach Citizens Condemn Chief Lees.” *The San Francisco Call*. September 26, 1899. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 12, 2010).

The article described a meeting of North Beachers with minister Urmey, Attorney J.J. Barrett and Father Caraher. Barrett made a speech regarding the subterfuges of police Chief Lees. Furthermore, Barrett blamed the Chief wholly. Barrett and Caraher stated that no matter what religion the audience was, they should join forces to end vice in their neighborhood.

“Nymphia Case on Argument.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. November 18, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article detailed Lillian Dale’s attempt to get an injunction against the police. She denied charges made by the board of health and J.J. Barrett about the Nymphia. Dale stated the building was new and was not diseased. J.J. Dunn, Dale’s lawyer, further argued that just because the house “might be” a house of prostitution that did not give the Health Board the right to condemn it.

“Nymphia Owners Found Guilty,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 21, 1899, San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article stated that the directors of Twinkling Star Improvement Company were found guilty by a jury of their peers. The article detailed the various setbacks to the improvement of the Nymphia, including getting a liquor license for a bar and an attempt to add on to the building’s basement.

“Nymphia Fight to be Kept Up.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. September 23, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article stated that Caraher and several other members of different churches called on Police Chief Lees to force him to close the Nymphia. Chief Lees told the men he could not do anything until the Judge passed sentence on the Twinkling Star Improvement Company.

“Nymphia Men Lose Against.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. February 26, 1904. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article asserted Judge Hebbard denied the owners of the restaurant in front of the Nymphia an injunction against the police. The Court no longer believed the restaurant was separate because the only entrance to the Nymphia was through the restaurant.

“Owners of the Nymphia Sentenced.” *The San Francisco Examiner*. October 5, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article described the sentencing of the owners of the Nymphia to six months in jail for keeping a house of ill-repute. However, they appealed, and the court allowed the owners’ immunity from police interference until the appeal was settled.

“Police Are Given Free Rein at the Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Examiner*. April 4, 1903. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article discussed Judge Hubbard’s dismissal of temporary restraining orders against police. Furthermore, he denied motions to issue others. He also let the men know he favored regulation of the “social evil” because it had always been around. However, he also stated the Nymphia, was public and police may lawfully enter and make arrests.

“Police Raid the Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. January 11, 1900. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article described Police Chief Biggy’s raid on the Nymphia. Biggy contemplated such a raid for days but waited to gather enough evidence against the women who worked there. They arrested thirty-three women and brought them in patrol wagons to the City Prison. The women were charged with vagrancy. Lillian Dale, the manager of the establishment, was also arrested and charged with vagrancy and for running a house of ill-repute.

“Police Still active in Chinatown District,” *The San Francisco Call*, January 12, 1900, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 13, 2010).

The article described the second raid on the Nymphia in a two day period. The prostitutes’ lawyer, A.C. Pistolesi, was present on the occasion. Pistolesi attempted to keep the police out and from arresting the women, but he was ejected from the building and the women were arrested again. They were taken to the police and charged with vagrancy.

Porritt, Annie G. “Public Morality: Red Light Injunction and Abatement Law.” In *Laws Affecting Women and Children in the Suffrage and Non-suffrage States, 157-169*. New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1917; Library of Congress, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbnawsa&fileName=n3563//rbnawsan3563.db&recNum=156&itemLink=r%3Fammem/nawbib:%40field\(NUMBER%2B%40od1\(rbnawsa%2Bn3563\)\)&linkText=0](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbnawsa&fileName=n3563//rbnawsan3563.db&recNum=156&itemLink=r%3Fammem/nawbib:%40field(NUMBER%2B%40od1(rbnawsa%2Bn3563))&linkText=0) (accessed September 20, 2010).

This book examined women’s legal status from minimum wage laws, to married women’s property rights, to prostitution. In the chapter “Public Morality,” the laws in twenty-six states regarding houses of prostitution were described. The chapter also looked at the ‘Red Light’ laws in California. The book explained these laws did not attack the unfortunate women who practice prostitution but the houses themselves. The houses, which were used for lewdness, assignation, or prostitution, were labeled public nuisances. The law allowed anyone, either a district attorney or a private citizen, to bring the owners of the house to justice.

“Redlight Act Has Keen Opposition.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. April 16, 1913. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The short article described several men who were against the enforcement of the Relight Abatement Act. The article does not state why they were against it.

“Say ‘Nymphia’ Will Be Opened.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. November 8, 1903. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

The article stated that the Police Commission refused to grant a license to run a restaurant at the Nymphia, but the business would open anyway. The bartender insisted, although the Commission originally denied their request, the request would be accepted the next time around. The writer also argued that the bartender made it seem that the election was the only reason it was denied in the first place.

“Stuart, J.C.: Sacramento city Dec. 18th 1850 letter.” *Manuscript Collection* : BANC MSS 2006/76, Box 2006/84. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

The letter, written by frontier miner J.C. Stuart to J. Condley back east, recounted life in wild California. He wished to hear from family and warned that California was not the Promised Land. Experiencing disappointment, Stuart told Condley and everyone else to stay in the east.

“The Barbary Coast Fast Becoming a Relic of the Past.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. November 28, 1897. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 20, 2010).

This article recounted the early dangerous days of the Barbary Coast. According to an anonymous police officer, the Coast was peopled with the worst of the worst. However, the Journalist believed the Barbary Coast was on its way out and would disappear in the future.

“The Crusade Against Vice.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. July 12, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This article described Washington-square Hall meeting between citizens, priests, ministers and attorneys of North Beach, who were against the building of the Nymphia. Caraher and Reverend Dr. Slocum gave speeches regarding the Nymphia. Attorney J.J. Barrett argued it would be embarrassing for anyone living in North Beach if the brothel was built. Good, decent people would not want to move to North Beach any longer.

“The Death of Father Caraher.” *The Monitor: The Official Organ of the Archdiocese of San Francisco*. October 10, 1914. Saint Patrick’s Seminary. The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA.

The article gave an obituary for Father Carher. It offered some of Caraher’s history and stated he willingly went before Boards, Courts, and anyone else in order to end vice in his neighborhood. The article insisted Caraher was a moral arbiter for the San Francisco community.

“The Nymphia is Condemned.” *The San Francisco Chronicle*. October 19, 1899. San Francisco Public Library, Magazines and Newspapers Center.

This short article stated that Board of Health reached a decision on the condition of the Nymphia. They unanimously concluded the Nymphia should be condemned because it was unsanitary and unsafe.

“There Will be a Fight Over the Nymphia,” *The San Francisco Call*, May 17, 1899, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 1, 2010).

The article described the proposed opening of the Nymphia and opposition against project. The reporter declared citizens objected to the use of the building. The newspaper also argued Father Caraher was determined to fight “tooth and nail” against the brothel. Chief Lees was also interviewed, and he replied that since the place had not been built yet, there were no laws being broken.

“Will be Asked to Close the Nymphia.” *The San Francisco Call*. September 22, 1899. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (accessed September 12, 2010).

The article discussed the fact ministers and North Beach residents were angry with the city government. Even though the owners of the Nymphia had been convicted, Police Chief Lees had not closed the brothel down. The ministers and Caraher went to visit Lees, but it quickly turned into a shouting match. Lees stated over and over he did not have a right to close the Nymphia until the sentence passed on the owners.

Secondary Source Bibliography

Abbot, Karen. *Sin and the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys and the Battle for America's Soul*. New York: Random House, 2007.

This source examines one of Chicago's most famous upscale brothels, the Everleigh Club. The author focuses on the history of two sisters, Minna and Ada Everleigh, who owned and managed the establishment. In her thesis, Abbott asserts prostitution was a business. Abbott is a freelance journalist. She uses a narrative style to tell the history of the area and incorporates an extensive bibliography with a list of archives. The book is published by a popular publishing company.

Asbury, Herbert. *The Barbary Coast*. U.S.A: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1933.

This book, written sixteen years after the Coast was finally closed down, examines prostitutes' first appearance in the gold rush shanty towns, the height of their success in cribs and cow-yards and their final dismissal. There is not a central thesis. Herbert Asbury was a journalist. The book includes a decent bibliography, although the work lacks consistent footnotes.

Comny, Peter. *Cathedral on the Avenue*. Saint Patrick's Seminary, The Archdiocese of San Francisco, Menlo Park, CA.: Unpublished manuscript, no date, 97.

This book gives short biographies on the priests of San Francisco churches. There is an entire chapter dedicated to Father Caraher. Comny takes a look at what Father Caraher's contribution was to San Francisco. He includes descriptions of his work against vice in the area. Comny describes Caraher as militant in his work against the Nymphs, the Marsicania and the Municipal Crib, as well as for the independence of his homeland, Ireland.

Connelly, Mark T. *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era*. Chapel Hill: Chapel Hill University Press, 1980.

The book investigates the symbolic nature of prostitution in the Progressive Era and that reform came out of and gave focus to middle-class anxieties about the changes in American life. In his thesis, Connelly argues progressives seized onto prostitution because it threatened the occasionally puritanical Progressive concept of sexual needs and drives. There is no readily available information regarding Connelly and his career, however, the book is published by a University Press. The work contains a thorough bibliography.

Eisenach, Eldon J. *The Lost Promise of Progressivism*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, 1994.

This source examines the all encompassing movement of Progressivism in America and how it controlled media, politics, and education from the late 1800s into the twentieth century. In his thesis, Eisenach argues Progressives beliefs still linger in present day America. Progressivism was about social and civic responsibility, community values and nationalism. Eisenach is an associate professor and Chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Tulsa and has written several other books about politics and history.

Filene, Peter G. "An Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement.'" *American Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Spring, 1970), 20-34. www.jstor.org (accessed October 17, 2010).

Filene examines the Progressive Movement through historians' works. He argues in his thesis that the Progressive Movement never really existed. As evidence, he looks at the often muddled and confusing definitions given to the movement over the decades and the lack of a specific cause. Filene insists a Movement cannot exist without a sense of collectivity, which he believes did not exist between the different factions of Progressivism. Some of the members of the Movement wanted less control of the government by the privileged, while others saw the Movement as revamping outdated systems, such as the creation of child labor laws and women's right to vote. Filene is the author of several other non-fiction works.

Gentry, Curt. *The Madams of San Francisco: An Irreverent History of the City by the Golden Gate*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964.

The source scrutinizes the life and work of the Madams of the brothels, from the gold rush to 1940s San Francisco. There does not appear to be a clear thesis. Rather, Gentry examines the lives of the Madams, such as Ah Toy, Bella Cora, and Tessie Wall. Gentry is an American Writer who is best known for co-writing *Helter Skelter*. The book includes an extensive bibliography. The author is not a historian and the book is not published by a scholarly company, but the book appears to be well researched.

Hobson, Barbara Meil. *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition*. New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1986.

This source examines the reform of prostitution policy in America from the 1820s to more modern times. Hobson asserts in her thesis that women, as prostitutes, were singled out by the law as criminals, while male prostitutes were usually not. In her thesis, she also insists regulation of prostitution only caused prostitutes to be prisoners in red light districts and not free working women. Hobson is currently a research associate at the Center for the Study of Politics, History, and Culture at the University of Chicago and at the Swedish Center for Working Life. The book

does not contain a traditional bibliography, but does include extensive notes, which lists which works were used. The book is written by a historian, though the publishing company is not a scholarly press.

Long, Alecia. *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2004.

The work investigates the acceptance of prostitution and miscegenation within the southern climate of New Orleans from post Civil War to the 1920s. Long asserts in her thesis and was able to establish that there was a connection in New Orleans between the geographical segregation of prostitutes and the growing racial segregation after the Civil War. Long is an assistant professor of history at Louisiana State University and has written several articles on sex, Storyville, and race in New Orleans. Long includes a detailed bibliography. The author is a historian and the book is peer reviewed.

Ripp-Shucha, Bonnie. “ ‘This Naughty, Naughty City’: Prostitution in Eau Claire from the Frontier to the Progressive Era,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 81, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 30-54, www.jstor.org (accessed March 28, 2010).

This article investigates prostitution in Eau Claire, Wisconsin from the logging camps of the frontier to the progressive era. Ripp-Shucha explores the importance of prostitution in the frontier of Wisconsin and how prostitutes and the red light district played an important role in settlement because of the small amount of women in the West during westward expansion. She argues in her thesis that most of the women in the trade sold their bodies in desperation because they either needed the money or were escaping violent homes. Her article includes extensive footnotes. Though there is not much information about the author, the work is published in a magazine printed by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Rohrbough, Malcolm J. *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

This book surveys in-depth the Gold Rush in California and its effects on America in the mid-nineteenth century. The writer attempts to use a first person perspective to expose the gold rush in California. In his thesis, Rohrbough argues that the Gold Rush was a multiethnic experience, made up of many different types of people. Rohrbough is a professor of history at the University of Iowa, as well as the author of two other books on the westward movement and its culture. The source includes a decent bibliography. The author is a historian and the book is peer reviewed.

Rosen, Ruth. *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982.

This source explores prostitution in America from the turn of the twentieth century until 1918. In her thesis, Rosen asserts prostitution was often a viable way for poor women to make a living when they were single and without any other means of support. Rosen is a professor emerita of History at the University of California at Davis, a visiting professor at the European Peace University in Austria and Ireland, and at The Goldman School of Public Policy at U.C. Berkeley. The work includes an extensive bibliography. The author is a renowned historian in the subject of gender and sexuality and the work is peer reviewed.