

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 23 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Dallam-Merritt House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 2355 Washington Street N/A not for publication

city, town San Francisco N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county San Francisco 94115 code 075

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Robert L. and Joyce V. Littell

street & number 2355 Washington Street

city, town San Francisco N/A vicinity of state California 94115

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hall of Records

street & number City Hall

city, town San Francisco state California 94102

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Here Today (Junior League Surv.) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1967 federal state county local

depository for survey records San Francisco History Room
San Francisco Public Library

city, town Civic Center, San Francisco, California 94102
state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>1900</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Set in the residential Pacific Heights section of San Francisco, which is laid out in grid-pattern streets, the Dallam-Merritt House is a detached three-story-and-basement frame dwelling in Italianate style with V-grooved rustic siding. Its elongated rectangle plan is modified by a semi-octagonal bay on the front (north) facade, on the long east facade by two bays and a narrower rear section, and on the rear by a rectangular bay at the second story only. Its most unusual and outstanding feature is a round-gabled and concave-curved Mansard roof covered in alternating bands of scalloped and straight shingles.

This roof rises from a bracketed cornice at mid-third-story and is interrupted by round-headed gables at each of the front bay's three faces, once along each side, and at the center face of the first side bay. The Mansard extends only a little behind the first side bay and returns thence to the west facade, as it was not repeated in any of the rear additions (see Sketch Map). So characteristic is the shape of this roof that it enabled identification of the Dallam-Merritt House at its original site as seen from above rear in the 1877 Muybridge panorama from Nob Hill (photos 4 and 5).

The principal facade emphasizes the vertical by the roof, by tall, narrow double-hung windows and a tall portico atop a flight of steps. The portico's two columns and two attached pilasters have fluted shafts and Corinthian capitals. Their pedestals, the entry recess and the double front door are decorated with paneling and moldings, and with floral reliefs on the door panels. The door opening is segment-headed to echo the first- and second-story windows; the transom is round-headed like the third-floor windows. On the columns rests an entablature supporting a balustraded balcony at a pair of second-floor windows. The first- and second-floor windows have bracketed segmental pediments; the round-headed third-floor windows are topped instead by semi-circular gables, the front edge of which continues the main cornice moldings. The facade's verticality is enhanced by the almost fully exposed basement set in a shallow, London-type areaway.

Each of the four bays is different in plan, but all carry similar ornament. The principal (north) facade bay differs from the standard San Francisco Italianate bay of the 1870s in that the fifth side of its half-octagon plan, instead of returning to a short span of the principal facade wall as was to become the norm in the 1870s, continues uninterrupted into the house's side wall. This bay has a single window on each face at each floor, and its only string course also functions as lintels to the basement windows. The first bay on the east side has the angled sides, abbreviated returns to the main wall and secondary cornice between first and second floors that are typical of San Francisco in the 1870s. However its main face contains two windows on each of the lower three floors; the top floor of this bay has one window on the main face and none on the sides. The 1877 photo shows this bay in place and no extensions on the building behind it. The 1885 and 1891 Sanborn maps show a rear

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7. DESCRIPTION (Cont.):

addition about two-thirds the width of the original house. The present second side bay, which is rectangular, fills this addition out almost to the width of the original house wall at basement and first and second levels. It has moldings and cutouts to match the angled bay, a similar secondary cornice, two windows at each floor on its face and one on its side; but its cornice fits in below the main block's cornice and there is no third floor. The rear bay, also rectangular, occurs only at the second floor. It has three windows on its main face, one on each side and a gently sloping, mitred return to the main house wall underneath.

The house has experienced several changes since its construction in 1870. Originally it seems to have been a rectangle about half again as long as it is wide, with two bays and the characteristic Mansard roof around all four sides. By the time of the 1885 Sanborn map, the first rear addition described approximately a square, two-thirds the width of the original house but only two stories tall. In 1900 the then-owners Drs. George and Emma Merritt moved the house about a mile and a half from the northeast corner of Sutter and Mason, where it had faced south, to its present site facing north, and they remodeled it.¹ As they lived and practiced medicine in the house both before and after 1900, they probably moved it because they liked the house itself but wanted to leave the increasing commercialisation at Sutter and Mason and to have a more fashionable location and more space commensurate with Dr. Emma Merritt's expectations upon the 1898 death of her millionaire father. Their additions appear to have been the second side bay and a second rear addition two-thirds the width and two-thirds the length of the original house. They also compensated for the difference between the old lot which sloped up from front to back and the new, nearly flat site. While not repeating the Mansard roof or continuing the third floor, they carefully matched the original cornice, window trim and interior moldings as shown in photos 6, 7 and 8. Photo 7 shows on the left a 3-4-inch difference in width between the first and second additions, as well as the characteristic Italianate ornamentation put on probably in 1900. Since the original lot was only 37.5' by 87.5', as opposed to the present lot's 50' by 127.68', the second rear addition was not possible before the move in 1900 (see sketch).

Later additions include a detached 1934 frame garage at the lot's south east corner, a carport next to it of uncertain date and very poor condition, and a 1982 rear wooden staircase to the third floor. Between about 1910 and 1940 there was some now-vanished structure in the slot between the house and the west lot line; all of it that remains is an independent entrance to the former basement ballroom, flanked by a half-column and a half-pilaster which nearly match those of the portico (see photo 9).

(See Continuation Sheet, Page 3.)

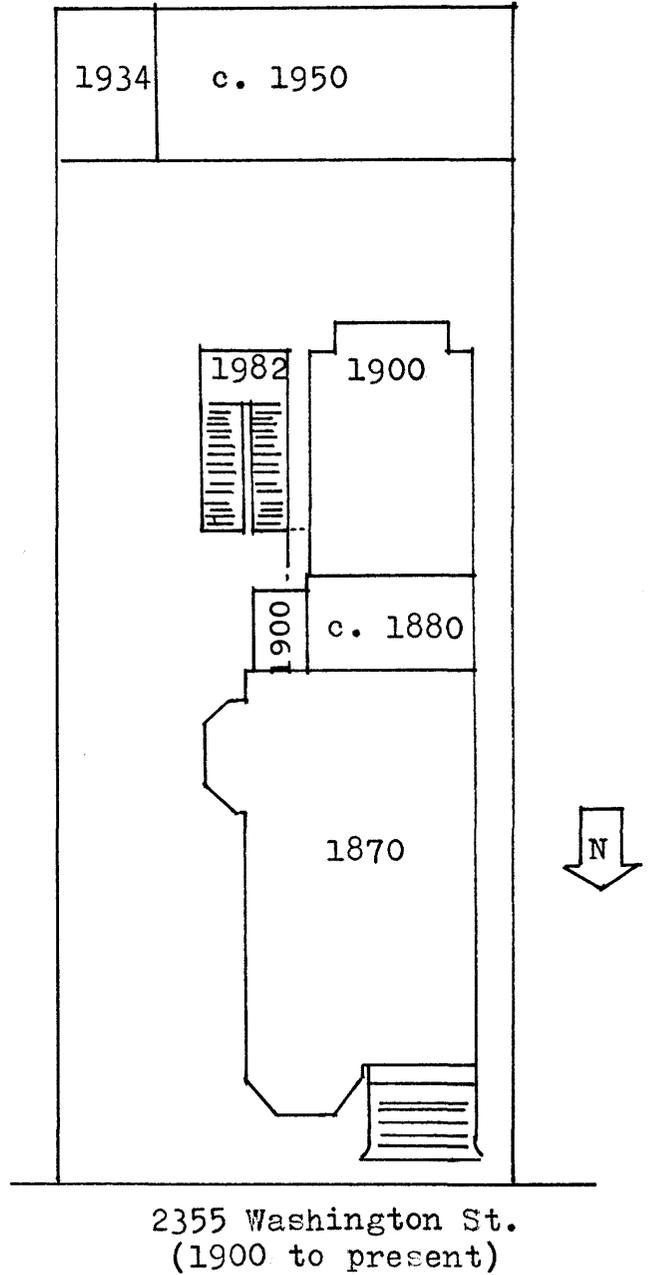
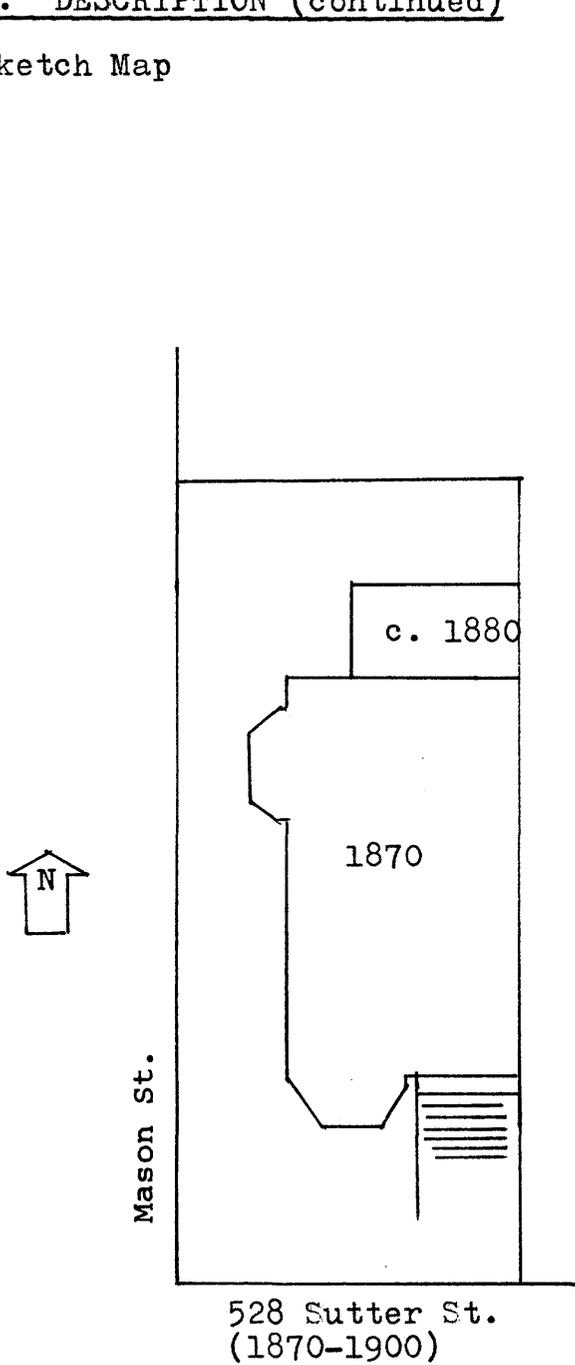
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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Sketch Map



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7. DESCRIPTION (Cont.):

Little is left of the original interior. After the Merritts moved away about 1913, it became a boarding house and piano teacher's studio in the 1930s. In 1943 it was still more defaced, to the extent of added walls and removed fireplaces, for conversion to seven apartments. The addition's roof has been turned into a deck and the rear gable altered for access. In reducing the number of units to three, the present owners have stripped most of the interior to the studs. They are using parquet flooring cues to remove the extra walls, bracing the house with steel beams and sheer walls, adding bathrooms and curved walls, changing or cutting several minor side windows, remodeling the kitchen and cutting a new door at the rear (see photo 10). To conform with zoning requirements for independent access, they have constructed an exterior staircase to the third floor: wooden, tucked behind the second bay on the east side, unenclosed, five flights with landings, supported on plain 6x6" wood posts (see photo 11). The owners also expect to replace the garage and carport. Most of the open lot space has been paved for a number of years, but quite a few large poplar trees give the property a sense of privacy. The facade and most of the exterior are intact in relation to the 1900 additions.

-
1. "The large frame dwelling which for so many years stood at the northwest corner of Sutter and Mason streets has been removed to the south side of Washington street, between Buchanan and Webster, where it is being remodeled and improved by Dr. Merritt, daughter of the late Adolph Sutro." San Francisco Chronicle, 7 July 1900: 13/7, under "Real Estate News."

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) medicine &
Specific dates	1870, 1900	Builder/Architect	Unknown	women's history

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dallam-Merritt House is one of San Francisco's very few surviving luxury residences built about 1870, as most such dwellings were destroyed by the great fire of 1906. This house escaped because in 1900 it had been moved outside the area that later burned. The owners who moved it, Dr. George Washington Merritt and Dr. Emma Sutro Merritt, significant persons in San Francisco's medical history, resided in the house both before and after the move and made additions which still stamp the building's character. Dr. Emma Merritt in particular is outstanding as a prominent early woman physician, as a worker in the woman's movement, as executor of the estate of her millionaire father the former mayor Adolph Sutro, and as a benefactor in her own right. The house's earliest residents, Richard B. Dallam and Alsop J. Holmes, were prominent respectively in San Francisco manufacturing and Western mining. The building itself is an unusual example of Second Empire and Italianate styles, especially remarkable for the shape of its Mansard roof and for the way the Merritts matched the Italianate ornamentation in their 1900 additions.

The site of the future Dallam-Merritt House, a 37½x87½-foot lot at the northeast corner of Sutter and Mason streets, was recorded sold on Thursday 15 January 1869 by Charles Main, of the noted Western saddlery firm Main & Winchester, to Armes & Dallam, importers of willow ware and manufacturers of wooden ware and brooms. The \$7,675 price reflected the lot's expected use as a luxury residence. Within one block there were or were soon to be the elegant homes of: clothing manufacturer Isidor Wormser, French banker Henry Barroilhet, Pacific Mail Steamship agent "Capt." Oliver Eldridge, Ralston's partner and rival William Sharon, capitalist Alexander Boyd, real estate tycoon Edward Barron, and commission merchant Raphael Gallejos of Montealegre & Company--quite a cosmopolitan group of neighbors.

By the April, 1871, San Francisco Directory (but not in its immediate predecessor of December 1869), Richard Boothby Dallam had moved into his fine new house at 528 Sutter with his wife of eight years and their children. The June 1870 Census taker had not found them there; so the house must have been completed in late 1870 or early 1871. Probably designed by a good architect, the building must have been one of 711 structures which the San Francisco Bulletin reported in mid-December 1870 were under construction or had been completed and occupied in the previous six months. The article said, "The dwelling houses are of various styles of architecture. Most of them are two or three stories high, are approached by raised steps and have bay windows."² It does not mention Mansard or French roofs, but the then-current Directory had noted

(See Continuation Sheet, Page 4.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet, Pages 8-9

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.14 acre

Quadrangle name San Francisco North, California

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	5	5	0	1	0	0	4	1	8	2	6	6	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies city lot 21 of block 613 and is roughly 50' x 127.7' in size. Boundaries are drawn on the limits of the lot occupied by the building since its move in 1900.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state		code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Bloomfield

organization consultant

date 5 August 1983
revised 28 December 1983

street & number 2229 Webster Street

telephone (415) 922-1963

city or town San Francisco

state California 94115

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Maicon Mitchell Wilson

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date Feb. 9, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

J. Helores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/19/84

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Cont.):

two such roofs, remarking that historian H. H. Bancroft's "third story will be finished in the now-prevailing style for mansions, with a Mansard attic roof, giving a rural appearance."³ The next Directory explained the prevalence of frame buildings "from the fear of earthquakes, also from the more pleasant and healthful character of such structures, their economy and facility of ornamentation, the confidence and efficiency of the Fire Department and the low rates" for fire insurance.⁴

The same volume carried a full-page ad for Armes & Dallam's "wood and willow ware, twines, baskets, brushes, paper bags, etc., . . . Armes' Star Extra Broom . . . cog wringers."⁵ Newly established in his fashionably located small frame mansion, Richard Dallam must have felt expansive to pay for such an ad. Born in Kentucky in 1824, educated in St. Louis, trained as a wood-turner and experienced in the Mexican War, Dallam had been a forty-niner and an 1856 Vigilante. In 1857 his sister married George W. Armes, who with his brother Charles Armes had grown the first broom corn in California. In 1859 the three men bought out the 1852 firm of Hauxhurst & Son and began their importing of willow ware and their local manufacture of wooden household items. Dallam's share was to supervise the factory, in the Vigilance Committee's building 1859-1864, later on Davis Street. In 1876, in order to use convict labor, Armes & Dallam moved its factory inside San Quentin prison, and Richard Dallam sold his Sutter Street house for \$30,000, later moving to Oakland near his partners.

The buyer was Alsop Joseph Holmes (b. New York State 1820), a peripatetic miner and builder of quartz mills. After successfully developing the mining district of Esmeralda County, Nevada, he retired to San Francisco, realized a fortune selling part interest in his Northern Belle Mine, and bought the Dallam House. He is probably responsible for its first addition in the rear. Six months after the purchase he married, and settled in at 528 Sutter at least into 1883.

The next known owners were the Merritts, who occupied the house at least by 1888, rented other quarters 1893-1900 and leased this house to other physicians as offices. They moved the house and added to it in 1900, lived in it 1901-1913, and retained ownership until their heirs sold it in 1950. Before the Merritts purchased the present site on Washington Street, the new lot had been occupied by a stable, first erected by Augustus Starr for his livery stable business about 1874, rented to John Peters 1877 to 1881, run by Starr again 1883-1884, and then by William Rayhill. The 1893 Sanborn map shows a nearly square, X-marked building the full width of the lot but less than half its depth; it's labeled

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Cont.):

"Milk Depot." (Previous identification of 2355 Washington as what the Newsoms built for an A. M. Starr in 1886 appears incorrect.) About 1894 Augustus Starr sold the lot to Charles C. Graeber, a butcher on Fillmore Street a couple blocks away. Graeber sold to the Merritts, who pulled down the old stable to make way for their still older house.

Dr. George Washington Merritt (1855-1928) was born in Hawaii, came to California in 1857, went to school in Los Angeles, graduated from San Jose State Normal School in 1878, took his M.D. at the University of California in 1882 and interned at San Francisco General Hospital. In London in 1883 he married Emma Sutro, whom he had met in medical school, and they studied together for four years at the Ecole de Medicine in Paris. Though their specialties differed, he protected her from harrassment by attending lectures and clinics with her. They returned to San Francisco, were certified to practice on the same day, 3 August 1887, and took up residence at the corner of Sutter and Mason. At first he carried on his eye, ear, nose and throat practice there, later he rented office space elsewhere. He helped manage his father-in-law's properties. About 1896 he joined the University of California Medical School staff and became chief of its ophthalmological clinic in 1899. After the house had been moved to Washington Street, he built an early medical office building at the Sutter and Mason site, conducting his own office on its fourth floor. After the 1906 earthquake and fire he resigned from the Medical School but became more identified than ever with the Polyclinic, both as staff and as board member and president. Bilingual from his Los Angeles childhood, he made much use of Spanish in his profession. Later in life he was a director of the Down Town Association and of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs, active in local betterment long after he had retired from medicine.

Dr. Emma Sutro Merritt (1856-1938) was born and educated in San Francisco, graduated from Vassar College in 1877, took her M.D. at the University of California in 1881 and proceeded to Europe for further study. Her father was Adolph Sutro, creator of the tunnel that drained the Comstock mines in Nevada. The year after her graduation from Vassar he completed this tunnel and sold out for about a million dollars, much of which he wisely invested in undeveloped land in the western part of San Francisco, owning about one-tenth the acreage of the whole city. Thereafter he managed his holdings, collected the country's fourth largest private library, built Sutro Baths and his own mansion in a bestatued garden overlooking the ocean and his Cliff House, and gave liberally to public causes, including donation of the thirteen acres on which the University of California San

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Cont.):

Francisco now stands. He was mayor of San Francisco 1895-1897. As his oldest child, Dr. Emma Merritt was executor of this vast estate, her duties having begun in 1897 as his court-appointed guardian, when she took him into her home for his final year of illness. In the 1906 fire, when Capt. Murphy's firemen were about to dynamite the Montgomery Block where part of her father's library was stored, she prevailed upon them instead to save the library, and also the building, which stood until 1959 a proud reminder of pioneer days. She and the other heirs subsequently gave the Sutro Library to the State, and the Sutro Baths to the City. In 1913 the Merritts moved from Washington Street to her father's mansion above Cliff House. With the reservation that she live out her life there, she deeded to the City that house and its grounds, now Sutro Heights Park, but the City demolished the building.

Professionally Dr. Emma Sutro Merritt played an important role in the local history of women physicians. While not among the true pioneers--the California Medical Society had admitted its first five women members while she was still at Vassar--she joined the staff of Children's Hospital immediately upon her return from France in 1887, when the twelve-year-old institution, begun, staffed and funded by women to serve women, first moved to its present location on California Street. In 1891 she was one of eight physicians the hospital listed. Dr. Merritt had charge of medical and surgical diseases of children there for some twenty years, serving like Children's other staffers without pay. Her private practice office was at her home address, first in the Dallam-Merritt House on Sutter, then in various rented quarters, then in the subject house again after it was moved to Washington Street. In city directories she and Dr. George Merritt had equal and separate bold-face listings. In 1893 when Children's wanted a Milk Laboratory to treat cow's milk for bottle-fed babies, Adolph Sutro donated \$250 to the project and Dr. Emma established it in the basement of their rented home.* Less than two years after the introduction of serum treatment for diphtheria, in 1896, she read to the San Francisco Medical Society a paper on "The Differential Diagnosis of Diphtheria." Concerned with new procedures, the paper was well received, and she may have given others. She continued practicing, though probably at a reduced rate, into the 1920s, when she was in her sixties.

Dr. Emma made other contributions to the women's movement. First she convinced her father and husband to support equal rights for women. The two Merritts practiced medicine as partners for 45 years. In addition Davis says that in 1891 Dr. Emma lobbied the State Legislature for the right of women to vote in school elections, a measure that passed the

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*This rented property was located at 928 Sutter Street.

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Legislature only to be vetoed by the Governor. Davis also says she participated in the Woman's Congress or Pacific Woman's Congress that took place in San Francisco 20-26 May 1895, attracting Susan B. Anthony, Rev. Anna Shaw, and women from all over the West.⁶ They were officially and enthusiastically welcomed by the Mayor, Dr. Emma's father.

1. San Francisco Newsletter, 30 Jan. 1869: 13/1.
2. "Progress of the City: New Buildings," clipping probably from the San Francisco Bulletin, collected in Neville Scrapbook No. 3 (at California Historical Society, S.F.): 107.
3. Langley. San Francisco Directory, San Francisco, Dec. 1869: 20-21.
4. Langley. San Francisco Directory, San Francisco, April 1871: 25.
5. Ibid.: xxxiii.
6. Davis. California Women: A Guide to Their Politics, 1885-1911, San Francisco, 1967: 165.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (concluded)

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1928: 4/1 (obituary).

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San Francisco. Great Register, 1867: Richard Boothby Dallam.

San Francisco Newsletter, 30 Jan. 1869: 13/1 (purchase of lot).
15 Jan. 1876, Postscript: 3/1 (sale of house).

Sanborn Map Company. San Francisco, 1885, vol. 2: 35. 1891, vol. 2:
35. 1893, vol. 4: 96. 1905, vol. 1: 50. 1905, vol. 3: 294.
1912, vol. 3: 294. 1936, vol. 3: 251.

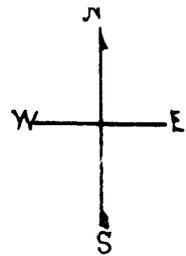
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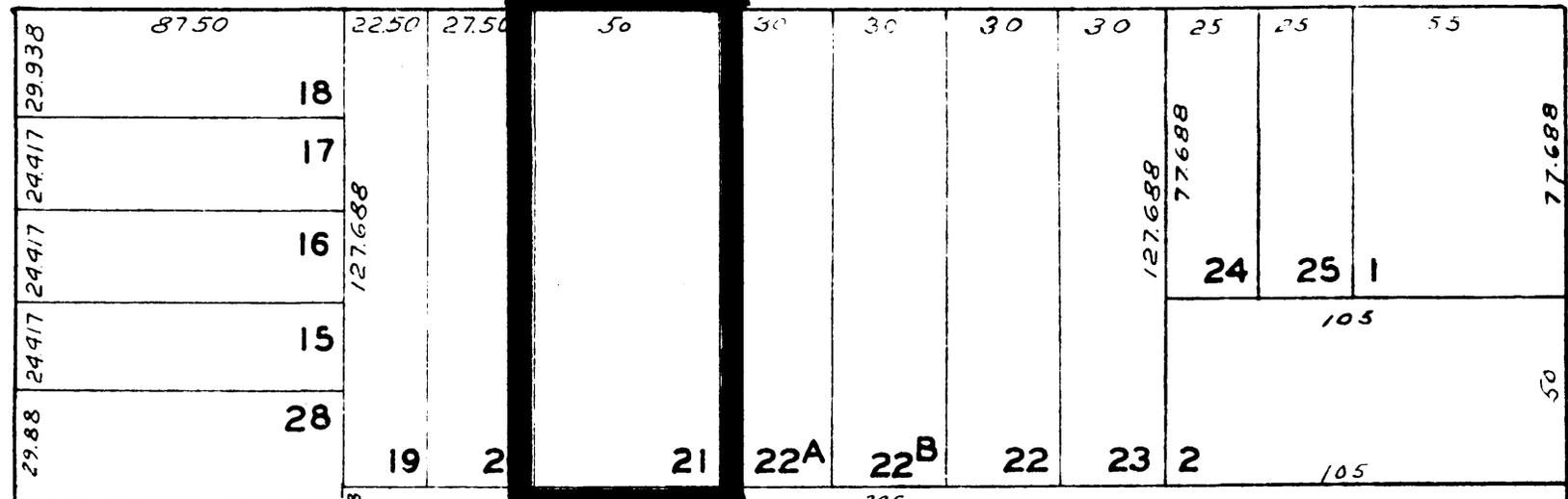


WASHINGTON

WEBSTER

BUCHANAN

2301



2200
19706

196438
2301

FORMER N'LY LINE OF CLAY

29

Dallam-Merritt House
2355 Washington Street
San Francisco, CA

City lot 21 of block 613.

Assessor's Parcel Map.