A guide to the Reid W. Dennis photograph collection of San Francisco Gold Rush era art, 1850

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P00-013

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service

2015, National Park Service

**Title:** Reid W. Dennis photograph collection of San Francisco Gold Rush era art

**Date:** 1850

**Identifier/Call Number:** P00-013 (SAFR 23151)

**Creator:** Dennis, Reid W.

Prendergast, John

Tobin, Frederick

**Physical Description:** 10 items.

**Repository:** San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department

Building E, Fort Mason

San Francisco, CA 94123

**Abstract:** The Reid W. Dennis photograph collection of San Francisco Gold Rush era art, 1850, (SAFR 23151, P00-013) is comprised of photographs of John Prendergast pencil drawings and Frederick Tobin paintings depicting San Francisco, California, and the surrounding San Francisco Bay during the Gold Rush. The collection has been processed to the Collection level and is open for use.

**Physical Location:** San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department

**Language(s):** In English.

**Access**

This collection is open for use unless otherwise noted.

**Publication and Use Rights**

Some material may be copyrighted or restricted. It is the researcher's obligation to determine and satisfy copyright or other case restrictions when publishing or otherwise distributing materials found in the collections.

**Processing Note**

See the collection file for 8 x 10 in. color photographic prints made from the color transparencies (Items 04-10). The collection file also contains photocopies of the labels that were on the back of some of the Tobin paintings.

SAFR-01657 was accrued to the collection in October 2014.

The descriptions in this collection guide were compiled using the best available sources of information. Such sources include the creator's annotations or descriptions, collection accession files, primary and secondary source material and subject matter experts. While every effort was made to provide accurate information, in the event that you find any errors in this guide please contact the reference staff in order for us to evaluate and make corrections to this guide.

Please cite the title and collection number in any correspondence with our staff.

**Preferred Citation**

[Item description], [Location within collection organization identified by Collection Number/Series Number/File Unit Number/Item Number], P00-013 (SAFR 23151), Reid W. Dennis photograph collection of San Francisco Gold Rush era art, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

**Acquisition Information**

SAFR-01531

SAFR-01657

SAFR-01531 was a field collection by San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park staff photographers in 2000. Reid W. Dennis loaned photographs of the John Prendergast pencil drawings to the Park. The Park made copy negatives from Dennis' photographs and returned the originals to him. The original photographs were likely salted paper prints.

SAFR-01657 was a field collection by San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park staff photographers in 2001. Reid W. Dennis loaned his Frederick Tobin paintings to the Park. The Park made copy color transparencies and returned the
paintings to Mr. Dennis. The paintings were previous owned by Celia Tobin Clark (no relation to the artist) and Elizabeth Lyman Potter. The original paintings are oil on Whatman paper.

**Historical or Biographical Note**
This collection does not include a historical or biographical note.

**Collection Scope and Content**
The Reid W. Dennis photograph collection of San Francisco Gold Rush era art, 1850, (SAFR 23151, P00-013) is comprised of photographs of John Prendergast pencil drawings and Frederick Tobin paintings depicting San Francisco, California, and the surrounding San Francisco Bay during the Gold Rush. The collection has been processed to the Collection level and is open for use.

Contains photographs of depictions of San Francisco, California, city views and landscapes during the Gold Rush by the artists John Prendergast and Frederick Tobin, 1850. There are 10 unique photographic images (3 black-and-white copy negatives, 4 x 5 in., and 7 color transparencies, 4 x 5 in.). The three photographs of the Prendergast pencil drawings depict San Francisco city views (Items 01-03) while the seven photographs of the Tobin paintings are primarily landscape views of San Francisco and the surrounding bay (Items 04-10).

**Item list:**

**Item 01.** San Francisco, California, view from Broadway Street looking east. Copy negative made from a photograph of a pencil drawing by John Prendergast. Cows are in the foreground and sailing vessels are in the left background with several building in between. The original print was titled “From Broadway looking East” and signed “Prendergast 1850.”

**Item 02.** San Francisco, California, view from the head of Clay Street. Copy negative made from a photograph of a pencil drawing by John Prendergast. Tents and several buildings are in the foreground. Sailing vessels and Yerba Buena Island are in the background. The original print was titled “From the head of Clay St.” and signed “Prendergast 1850.”

**Item 03.** San Francisco, California, view from south of the city looking north. Copy negative made from a photograph of a pencil drawing by John Prendergast. One tent is among the buildings in the foreground. Sailing vessels and piers are in the right middle distance. Telegraph Hill is in the background. The original print signed “Prendergast 1850.”

**Item 04.** San Francisco, California, view looking east across the San Francisco Bay. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin. The label on the back of the original painting reads (with penciled annotations noted in brackets), ”Second Session, Thursday Evening, May 4th. Views of American Cities, Etc. (Continued). 257. San Francisco, California. Original Oil Painting on Whatman paper, by Fred Tobin, 1850. Height, 13 1/2 inches; width, 19 1/4 inches. View from west [southern part] of the town, looking east across the Bay. In the foreground the land between Market St. from about the point of the old Marine Railway [?Potrero?] to Point San Quentin can be seen, with a few scattered houses, marshy land in south, range of hills across the Bay.”

**Item 05.** San Francisco, California, view looking east across the San Francisco Bay, with numerous ships anchored offshore and a large white building in the left foreground. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin.

**Item 06.** San Francisco, California, view looking toward Yerba Buena Island in the middle distance. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin. Many buildings line the waterfront in what is now part of the Financial District, and numerous ships are anchored offshore.

**Item 07.** Cemetery, apparently on Russian Hill, in San Francisco, California, view toward Marin with Mount Tamalpais near the center in the distance. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin. The label on the back of the original painting reads, ”258. San Francisco, California. Original Oil Painting on Whatman paper, by Fred Tobin, 1850. Height, 13 1/2 inches; width, 19 1/4 inches. View of the Burying Ground on the North Beach and Sanceletor, the anchorage of the Vessels of War.”

**Item 08.** View from San Francisco, California, toward Angel Island, with Alcatraz Island in the left middle ground and Point Richmond in the right background. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin. Five ships and schooners are anchored offshore on the left and small boats are underway on the right.

**Item 09.** San Francisco, California, as seen from Rincon Point looking toward the city and Telegraph Hill, with numerous ships anchored offshore. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin. The label on the back of the original painting reads, ”255. San Francisco, California. Original Oil Painting on Whatman paper, by Fred Tobin, 1850. Height, 13 1/2 inches; width, 19 1/4 inches. View of San Francisco taken from the Southern Extremity of the town, called Rincon Point, looking towards the town, with Telegraph Hill in Centre background, showing idle shipping in harbor. Rare contemporary view of San Francisco in the early mining days, taken on the spot. The
following statement was penciled on the back of one of the old frames from which this and the following four paintings were taken, --"Painted by Fred Tobin, 1850.--who had recently been Secretary to the Society of Foreign Artists. 'This and the following four lots are apparently the earliest authentic view of San Francisco extant."

Item 10. San Francisco, California, north shore looking west toward the Golden Gate. Color transparency of a painting by Frederick Tobin. The label on the back of the original painting reads, "259. San Francisco, California. Original Oil Painting on Whatman paper, by Fred Tobin, 1850. Height, 13 1/2 inches; width, 19 1/4 inches. View of the North Shore, from vicinity of North Point, where a few scattered miners' cabins are shown, looking west through the Golden Horn, with hills on opposite shore."

Collection Arrangement
No arrangement due to the small size of the collection.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
San Francisco (Calif.)--Pictorial works
San Francisco (Calif.)--History--19th century
San Francisco (Calif.)
San Francisco Bay (Calif.)
Black-and-white negatives
Color transparencies