

Historic Sutro Baths Will Close Last Time Monday; to Be Torn Down

S. F. Landmark to Disappear

Giant Apartment House or Hotel
Expected to Take Its Place

By JOHN F. ALLEN

A large and nostalgic chunk of San Francisco's past was nearing its end yesterday.

Sutro Baths, the famed natatorium which for fifty-six years has been a many-tinted landmark on the Pt. Lobos cliffs, is to be wrecked and sold at auction.

In its place there may rise a giant modern apartment house or a hotel, all sleek slabs of granite and window glass, but for thousands of San Franciscans nothing will ever take the place of the strange, sprawling, rococo crystal palace.

Closes Sept. 1—

At 10:30 p. m. on September 1, the last swimmer or iceskater—a latter-day innovation—will ascend the long steep stairs, turn in his rented gear and walk into the night.

If he has an eye to the past he will remember many things about Sutro Baths, days of fun and social glory—when Sutro was where you went with your girl after a long buggy ride from downtown San Francisco.

It began back in 1896, when the original Adolph Sutro, heavy with Mother Lode gold, decided that some of his funds could well go into a monumental contribution to the leisure life of his favorite city.

7 Swimming Pools—

The baths cost him \$1,000,000, a prodigious sum in those days. At the foot of the cliffs, barely above sea level, the Sutro engineers laid out seven swimming pools, one a giant, L-shaped pond that was far bigger than any then in existence.

The others were smaller, but still far bigger than average. Marching down the cliffs, they built tier on tier of balconies, bleacher seats and dressing rooms.

And over all, they erected an intricate mass of steel girders and ties, the whole covered by panes of glass that caught the infrequent sun of the shore and turned it to flashing blobs of green and yellow, red and magenta.

World Famous—

It was—and is—like a gigantic green house, touched by technical color and rising four stories and more into the sky.

It became immediately famous

throughout the world, and San Franciscans flocked to it by the thousands.

Water was no problem. A catch basin was built at the foot of the cliff to store water washed in by the waves.

This was mixed with fresh water from a spring that bubbled from the hillside, to fill the pools. Many a San Franciscan remembers now his first childhood sight of the fairyland-like baths.

Laughter, Shouts—

Once through the ticket gate, with rented towel, suit and locker key clasped firmly in hand, he stood upon a balcony that seemed to float like a cloud above the shimmering pools far below.

All around him was the echoing, enveloping sound of splash and laughter and shouts; the close feel of heat and high humidity; the engrossing smell compounded of salt water dampness, wet cloth, human bodies and frying hotdogs.

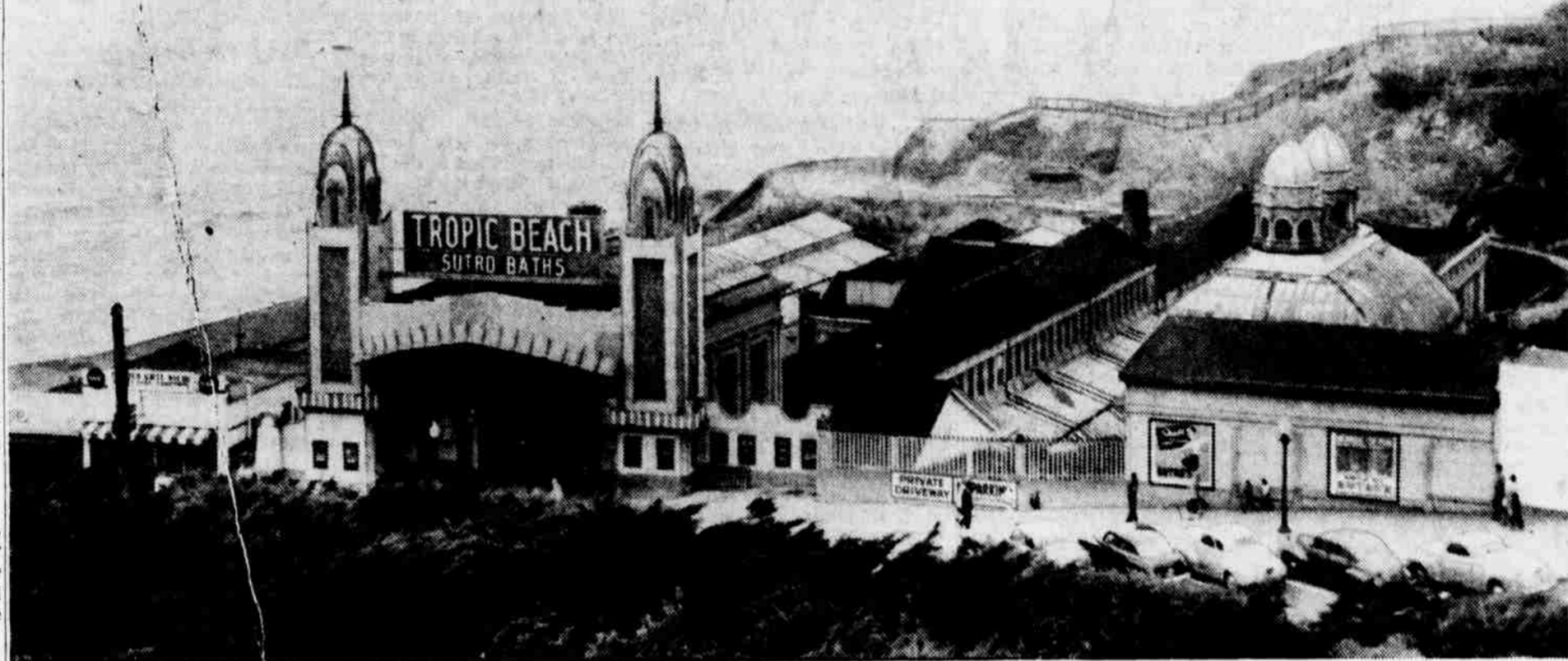
All this in the midst of a tropic garden, growing in wild profusion from hundreds of pots and tubs. He might linger there on the balcony to peer curiously in glass cases at stuffed birds and snakes and other fauna, or at a highly anachronistic collection of Egyptian mummies and scarabs.

Through descending balconies plant and animal life, he would trudge wonderingly down to the pool, noting as he went his elders lurching as they gazed out over the waves toward Seal Rocks.

Black Bathing Suit—

Once engaged into his voluminous black bathing suit, his locker key safely hung about his neck, he would watch awed as the stout of heart plunged with great bluster into the coldest—and really ice-cold—of the seven pools.

Moving along the row of pools—each warmer than the last—he would finally launch into the large



DOOMED RESORT—This is an overall view of the Sutro Baths, famed San Francisco landmark. The plant, familiar to San Franciscans for the past fifty-six years, is to be wrecked and sold at auction. The site probably will be occupied by an apartment house.

est of all, there to frolic on slides and rafts and whirling wheels.

Despite its popularity, the natatorium seldom made money. The Sutros were content, though, that they were helping to contribute to the city's life—particularly for the children.

In 1937 the present Adolph Sutro, the grandson of the man who built the baths, filled in one leg of the large L-shaped pool and turned it into an ice rink.

Added Income—

Even with this added source of income, the enterprise has cost Sutro an average of \$15,000 a year to maintain.

Now he is retiring. He would like, he said yesterday, to have the baths kept open, leased by the city, since there are not enough plunges in the city to take care of the youthful demand.

The city cannot see it that way, so sometime in September professional auctioneers will move into the building and put its

equipment, and even its steel and lumber up for sale.

It will mean not only less swimming space for the city, but only one remaining ice rink—out at Ocean Beach—since Winterland now is iced only for the Ice Follies.

Dismantling Starts—

Yesterday dismantling of the baths already had started. Parts of balconies were shut off from the swimmers to store stuffed beasts and birds, plumbing, steel, toilets, benches, and a thousand other items.

It looked an old and weary building. Only here and there—in a few remaining colored panes of roof glass, in fading painted pots—did much color remain.

Even the palms and aspidistras looked forlorn, drooping in their scarred and initialed pots.

The animal cases and the Egyptian remains were mostly

gone—shipped to Sutro's San Diego ranch.

The walls were a mass of chipped paint, the girders were red with rust.

Only the laughter and the shouting in the pools remained the same; and that would die out with dark on Labor Day.

Yoshida May Call General Election

TOKIO, Aug. 28 (Thursday). (AP)—Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida cut short his holiday in the mountains and returned to Tokyo today amid rumors that he plans to dissolve the Diet (Parliament) and call a general election this fall.

Yoshida immediately huddled with leaders of his liberal party. Informed sources said he would call an extraordinary cabinet meeting later today and announce dissolution of the Diet following the session.

Feisal Leaves for San Diego In a Shiny, New Super-Bus

King Feisal of Iraq left San Francisco yesterday morning aboard the best and shiniest bus the Greyhound Company could provide.

The bus which took the 17-year-old ruler down the coast toward San Diego was air conditioned and equipped with two iced beverage containers, a liberal supply of soda pop, a portable loudspeaker with extension cord, air foam seats, and tinted windows which resist both glare and heat.

Its driver was investigated by the State Department and its chassis and workings were given a triple check by the bus company, which sent along a second, identical bus in case anything happened to the first.

King Feisal of Iraq left San Francisco yesterday morning chatting in his Fairmont suite with Val King, the mayor's confidential secretary.

King briefed the royal king on the workings of cable cars and elicited the fact that Feisal liked San Francisco's climate.

Then, at 10:30 a. m., Feisal boarded the super-bus and headed south. His itinerary called for lunch at the Del Monte Lodge, an overnight stop at Santa Barbara, and stops at Santa Monica and Laguna Beach today en route to San Diego.

Accompanying the bus were two State highway patrol cars and a car driven by a company superintendent.

AD AGENCIES TO AID UNITED FUND

Bay Area advertising executives yesterday pledged more than half a million dollars of time, work and space to the United Crusade.

The Crusade's advertising committee will launch a series of newspaper advertisements, TV and radio spots, outdoor billboard messages and other displays to carry the message of the seven combined United Crusade campaigns on behalf of eighty-five welfare agencies.

Some of the top executives working with the campaign include T. S. Petersen, president of Standard Oil and M. A. Mattes, advertising director; Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborne Advertising Agency; Ford Sibley, of Foote, Cone & Belding Advertising Agency; and John Wiley, president of the northern California chapter of the American Association of Advertising Agencies.

Lack of Stamp Costs \$250

Bookie Without Gaming Tax Sticker Fined

George A. Langshaw, former operator of a cigar stand at 90 Fourth Street, was fined \$250 in Federal district court yesterday for failure to purchase a gambling tax stamp. Previously he was fined \$1,000 and given a year's probation in superior court for bookmaking at the same establishment.

Chief District Judge Michael J. Roche in imposing sentence took into consideration the sentence imposed in State court and the fact that Langshaw had no prior record.

A criminal information was filed yesterday in Federal court against Philip J. Lewis, 34, of 583 Geary Street. He was charged in two counts with failure to purchase the gambling stamp and failure to register as a gambler.

Bishop Installed
RENO (Nev.), Aug. 27.—(AP)—Bishop Robert J. Dwyer of Salt Lake City was installed today as bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Reno.

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