

OLD TOWN SACRAMENTO

Huntington-Hopkins Hardware Store

TEACHER'S AID

In 1855, Collis P. Huntington and Mark Hopkins formed a partnership and opened a hardware store. The original Huntington-Hopkins Hardware store was located at 54 K St., and later re-numbered in 1880 to 220-222 K Street. The store was demolished and reconstructed at this site in 1970 as a result of the construction of the Interstate 5 Freeway. The building has been remodeled after the 1861-1877 exterior appearance of the store.

The inside of the store is typical of a hardware store of the mid-19th century. The May 29, 1880 issue of the RECORD UNION describes the interior layout as follows:

"There are storage areas for nails, shovels, rubber hose, stocks of sad irons, straps and hinges. In the basement were packed in all nicety of business order, wooden ware, garden and railroad wheelbarrows and crates of heavy goods. In the midst of the main room is the stock clerk's office with glass sides which commands a full view of the room. On the floor and in stacks and racks are great quantities of heavy hardware, gas fittings, wire cloth, brass goods, tools of all grades and classes commonly used by builders, machinists, trimmers, carriage builders and in nearly or quite all other trades vocations. Here also are found stove polish, horse and mule shoes and fittings. In another room are found lighter tools and handles, traps, agricultural hand tools, kitchen appliances

and novel implements, light cordage, shears, house cutlery, etc. In all these departments, every inch of space is used. There is no waste room whatever. Even the ceiling space is brought into use and from it hang suspended goods capable of being thus stored."

Thus, the Huntington-Hopkins Hardware Store represents a typical hardware store of the 1880's and is basically not too different from the hardware stores of today. In this store are actual items replicas of items that you could expect to find in this Sacramento hardware store during the period 1855-1891.

You are also invited to visit the Museum of Hardware exhibit in the next room.

The Huntington, Hopkins & Co. Store originally consisted of two separate buildings, each built immediately after the fire of November 2, 1852--their addresses being 52 and 54 K Street under the old numbering system. In 1880 the system was changed, the addresses becoming 220 and 222 K Street.

Mark Hopkins was not originally associated with either of these buildings. The oldest and first of the "Big Four" of Central Pacific Railroad fame to arrive in California, Mark Hopkins was born in Henderson, New York on September 1, 1813. At 15 he was a clerk in a New York village store and he remained essentially a storekeeper until his death, at age 65, in 1878.

Hopkins arrived in San Francisco in 1849 with his brother, Moses, and a New York friend, Edwin H. Miller, Jr. In June of 1850 Hopkins and Miller opened a store at 160 J St. as wholesale merchants where they remained

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until burned out by the 1852 fire. Immediately after the fire the firm of Hopkins & Miller put up a 2-story brick building at 50 K Street as wholesale merchants, with brother Moses noted as clerking for the firm. In 1854 the firm was dissolved, Hopkins returning for a visit to New York, and Miller continuing business as E. H. Miller & co. at the 50 K Street address to which he retained ownership. During his New York visit Hopkins married his cousin, Mary Frances Sherwood; he then being 41, almost twice the age of his bride.

Returning to Sacramento in 1855, Hopkins did not resume his business connection with Miller but, instead, formed a partnership with another easterner, Collis P. Huntington, a hardware merchant then established at 54 K Street. (The Sacramento Directory for 1856 lists the partnership having been established on May 1, 1855, as the firm of Huntington & Hopkins. It is listed for the first time at 54 K Street in the 1855 Directory.)

C. P. Huntington has been born at Harwinton, CT on October 22, 1821. His first venture, at age 14, had been as part owner of a country store in partnership with an older brother, Solon, in Oneota, New York. In September of 1844 Huntington married Elizabeth Stoddard, who remained his faithful wife until her death in 1884. By 1849, at age 27, Huntington had already accumulated a modest estate through a variety of lucrative businesses. In March of that year he loaded the Crescent City with a stock of merchandise sailing from New York to the Isthmus of Panama. Delayed there three months awaiting transportation to San Francisco, he engaged in trading, realizing profits of over \$3,000 during the wait. He arrived in San Francisco in the Spring of 1850 and proceeded to Sacramento, opening his first store with Daniel Hammond under the

firm name of Huntington, Hammond & Co. at 54 K Street. The union for December 15, 1852 (a month after the Great Fire) states, "C. P. Huntington, having rebuilt his brick store, No. 54 K Street, now offers for sale a general assortment of hardware." His next door neighbors to the east being the Stanford Brothers and two doors to the west the firm of Hopkins & Miller.

On May 1, 1853 Huntington entered into partnership with Florian A. Massol under the firm name of Huntington, Massol & Co. This association lasted until May of 1855 when Massol pulled out to form a new partnership with Henry Merwin at 84-86 J Street.

Huntington was never the 'shopkeeping' member of any of his partnerships, being always the purchasing agent and spending more time in San Francisco arranging deals than he did in Sacramento. Thus it was the return of Hopkins to Sacramento providentially coincided with Huntington's need of a partner to mind the store and the association of the two was formed that lasted until the death of Hopkins in 1878. The firm of Huntington & Hopkins thrived and they established branch stores throughout the mining camps at Weaver Creek, Mud Springs and Marthelness Creek.

By 1860 the firm of Huntington & Hopkins needed room to expand and in that year bought the property at 52 K Street, and for the next three years used the combined address 52 and 54 K Street. In 1863 they dropped the 52 and, until the street address system was changed in 1880, the firm's address for the two buildings remained 54.

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Huntington used the second floor of his original building for living quarters until his activities as Vice President of the Central Pacific Railroad required most of his time being spent in New York, Washington and San Francisco. He later had residences in both San Francisco and New York.

The affairs of the Central Pacific Railroad also caused both Huntington and Hopkins to relinquish active participation in the hardware business. In 1868 the firm was reorganized with four new partners under the name of Huntington, Hopkins & Co., the names that remained until the firm was dissolved in 1891.

In 1878 the firm acquired the Stanford property and in 1880 combined all three buildings into one property. The four new partners were Albert Gallatin, W. R. S. Foye, Charles Miller and Horace H. Seaton. Gallatin, another native New Yorker, had worked as a salesman for the firm since 1861 and became one of Sacramento's leading businessmen. In 1878 he had Sacramento's leading architect, Nathaniel Dudley Goodell, design his residence at 16th and H Streets which in 1888 he sold to Joseph Steffens, the father of the journalist reformer, Lincoln Steffens. In 1903 Steffens sold the house to the State and it was used until 1967 as the Governor's Mansion.