As part of the Transbay Transit Center project, archaeologists excavated below the modern-ground surface to reveal deposits that have survived since the neighborhood's settlement in the mid-1800s.

By the 1870s, the South of Market neighborhood was densely settled, mostly by Irish immigrants, many of whom worked in the nearby Flat Iron industries. The 1877 map below shows small houses crowded together on narrow lots along Natoma and Minna streets. Although daily life was likely consumed with work and family, there was plenty of excitement to talk about.

This photo from 1851 depicts the first "permanent" structures built on Natoma Street between First and Second streets. These prefabricated homes, moved in New England and shipped around Cape Horn by W.J.M. Howard, replaced the assemblage of tents and makeshift shacks that had formerly filled the low-lying area along the original shoreline, known as "Happy Valley." to gold prospectors drawn to San Francisco during the Gold Rush of 1849.