THE MOVEMENT OF CULTURES

In the South of Market neighborhood, shops and businesses were scattered among the residential quarters. At 12 Minna Street a Chinese wash house, or laundry, was tucked in between two houses, as shown on this 1885 map. The 1880 census record (below) lists the names of seven men who both lived and worked at the laundry. While local residents utilized their services, there were those who objected to the presence of the Chinese laundry in their neighborhood. In San Francisco, Chinese residents were limited to living in just a handful of locations and could only hold certain jobs, like laundrymen, cooks, and servants. The newspaper clipping below illustrates the kind of obstacles they routinely faced.

San Francisco Chronicle
"Expelling a Chinese Laundry"

San Francisco was an international city and the recipient of goods shipped from across the world as well as across the continent. The people who lived during the 18th century within the footprint of the Transbay Transit Center project had access to items shipped from as far away as China, Germany, England, and Ireland, not to mention the major East Coast ports such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. The objects pictured here were excavated by archaeologists during the project, and are on display in this exhibit.

Archaeological excavations for the Transbay Transit Center revealed remnants of the Chinese laundry, including artifacts displayed in this exhibit.

Ink Bottle from Boston
Medicine Bottle from Baltimore
Apothecary Jar from Philadelphia

Teapot from China
Serving Dish from England
Mineral Water Jug from Germany
Soda Water Bottle from Ireland
Perfume Bottle from France