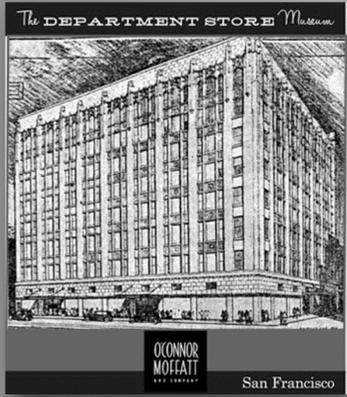




DID YOU KNOW?

# Macy's SAN-FRANCISCO & THE KERRY CONNECTION

History Comes Alive!



Macy's predecessor in San Francisco was the well established store of O'Connor, Moffatt & Co. that announced in 1927 that it would build a new, eight-story edifice at O'Farrell and Stockton streets. In 1945 R.H. Macy & Company, New York acquired O'Connor Moffatt & Co. San Francisco.



The beautiful store was clad in cream-colored terra-cotta that incorporated Neo-Gothic details, especially at the top of its facades. The new O'Connor, Moffatt & Co. store opened to the public in March of 1929.

NEW YORK TIMES - July 6, 1945



It was announced jointly yesterday by Jack I. Straus, president of Macy's, and Joseph V. Costello, president of O'Connor Moffatt & Co., the San Francisco department store, that R.H. Macy & Company, New York has acquired O'Connor Moffatt & Co. through an exchange of stock.....

October 16, 1947: the San Francisco store was renamed Macy's San Francisco. In 1948 Macy's followed up with a major expansion of the store at 170 O'Farrell Street using the original architect of the 1928 building, Louis Parson Hobart.



Immediately after finalizing the purchase of the O'Connor, Moffatt & Co. business - Macy's announced an expansion program that would double the size of its new store by expanding along O'Farrell Street to the east.



The I. Magnin building on Union Square under construction in late 1947. Photo: Barney Peterson / The Chronicle 1947

The new addition, opened in September of 1949, matching the façades of the older store except at the parapet, where the florid Gothic detail was not replicated.

Accreditations: For the Jig-saw pieces - THANK YOU to Brian 'Maurice-Bryan O'Connor Gortloss, Paddy Franklin NZ, Joanie Brosnan Cluin, Professor Peter O'Connor NZ & a very special thanks to Architect Bruce Allen Kopytek AIA NCARB, Michigan, USA. Bruce has kindly given permission to reproduce his fantastic research work here. Much more from Bruce at:

<http://www.thedepartmentstoremuseum.org/>

Fabulous Pictures here courtesy of Bruce Allen Kopytek.



A truly epic story about how Bryan O'CONNOR, born in 1838 in Farrandoctor Curran, established and ran the exceptionally prosperous business of O'CONNOR, MOFFATT & Co. San Francisco from 1860 until his sudden death on Aug 28<sup>th</sup> 1887, age 49. O'CONNOR, MOFFATT & Co. was the predecessor to MACYS West, Union Square, San Francisco. Newly arrived from New York via Australia, Bryan was so impressed with the city's prosperity that he immediately sent to Melbourne for his friend George MOFFATT to come to San Francisco.



One of seven children, Bryan was a son of John 'Sean-Bui' O'CONNOR (Curran and later Gortloss) and Margaret 'Peggy' Kenny Ballymacadam. By 1849 John 'Sean-Bui' was farming 101 acres at Gortloss. His son Patrick who married Johanna Roche inherited that farm. Bryan was ambitious. He immigrated to San Francisco via Australia & New York. He was the founder of O'CONNOR, MOFFATT KEAN &

Co. The store opened first in 1860 at 2nd & Market Sts. and then moved to South side of Post St. bet. Kearny & Grant Ave. The business Macy's West was well established in San Francisco, California in 1866 as O'CONNOR, MOFFATT KEAN & Co., later O'CONNOR, MOFFATT & Co. at Second & Market Streets and eventually moving into several buildings on south Post Street, between Grant Avenue and Kearny Street, where it rebuilt after surviving the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. On Aug 28th, 1887 Bryan died suddenly of Bright's Disease. The previous day, he had complained of feeling unwell and late that evening went home. His condition deteriorated. About twenty minutes before he died, he signed a will bequeathing all his property to his wife. The house of O'CONNOR, MOFFATT & Co. was the largest in the city of San-Francisco in the line of 'dry & fancy foods'. His wife Mary Josephine 'Jane' Costello O'CONNOR, who came from Rathkeale, died three years afterwards. Aged 52, she died on Memorial Day May 30<sup>th</sup> 1890 in a freak train accident that occurred on the Webster Street Bridge which led to the death of 13 passengers including her two lady friends, the Kerin sisters. The train hurtled through the open Webster Street draw and plunged into San Antonio Creek. Having no surviving children as both their daughters died as infants, his wife Mary Jane Costello's siblings continued



to run the business after Bryan's death. The valuation of the business was enormous. A protracted and very public Litigation began shortly after Bryan's death in 1887 in regard to the disposal of the vast fortune, estimated at \$800,000. This had the effect of making much of the private history of himself and his wife very public property.

When the litigation was finally settled in 1890, a contested share was repatriated to Ireland and shared among Bryan's siblings in Kerry. [www.fanciestry.com](http://www.fanciestry.com)

A young Mary Jane COSTELLO entered a millinery store in Dublin where Bryan O'CONNOR was a clerk in a dry goods establishment. An acquaintance began between the two, which speedily ripened into an affection. When Mary COSTELLO became engaged to him, Bryan O'CONNOR left Dublin to seek his fortune in newer fields. He went first to Australia, where he remained some years, but the measure of prosperity there was not sufficient to content him. He sailed to New York, and there engaged in the business in which he was destined to spend his life. For nine long years Bryan O'CONNOR worked earnestly to achieve a position which he could ask his wife to share, and during all this time Mary COSTELLO waited patiently at home for the message which she knew would someday reach her. It came at last, and she crossed the sea to New York to meet her lover, and the constant pair were immediately united. Shortly afterwards they came to San Francisco and Mr. O'CONNOR established the business for which he was ever afterward identified. Even though their two children died in infancy, their married life was, owing to their mutual affection, singularly happy.

Source: San Francisco Examiner, 31 May 1890, Front page. Transcribed by Susan Cherry-Boyer.



The Mausoleum of Bryan & Mary O'Connor in Holy Cross Cemetery San Francisco. Cost \$18,000 in 1892. (\$550,000 Today's Money)

**AT REST.**  
Removal of the Bodies of Bryan O'Connor and His Wife to Holy Cross.  
The remains of the late Bryan O'Connor and his wife, Mrs. Mary Josephine O'Connor, were removed on Tuesday morning from the family plot in Calvary Cemetery to their final resting-place in the new cemetery of the Holy Cross, San Mateo County. The latter consists of a massive and beautiful mausoleum, purely Gothic in style, and constructed of the finest California granite, with white marble interior and richly ornamental bronze door and windows. The erection of this monument to the memory of the distinguished merchant was provided for by the last will and testament of his wife, whose sad death in the Oakland drawbridge catastrophe, on Decoration day, 1884, prevented the carrying out by herself of the work of wifely affection which she had already undertaken. The plot in the new cemetery had been selected by Mrs. O'Connor, and after her death the duty of erecting the mausoleum was assumed by her ready-made heirs.  
According to the terms of Mrs. O'Connor's will the sum of \$10,000 was designated to defray the cost of the structure, but her surviving relatives increased the amount to over \$18,000, and the mausoleum, which was erected upon plans prepared by Architect T. J. Welsh of this city, is therefore rendered still more worthy of the popular and upright merchant and his devoted wife, whose will, recently executed in its entirety by her executors, will be long remembered for its numerous and liberal bequests to charitable and educational institutions in this community.

The San Francisco Call Aug 11<sup>th</sup> 1892



Today, Macy's Union Square is the second largest department store in the United States, second only to Macy's Herald Square in New York City



Concurrent with the acquisition of the older store, Macy's purchased the six-story Brickell Building on Geary Street facing Union Square. A corridor gave Macy's access to Union Square until the whole building was refurbished in 1955, when Macy's customers could enter the store through Blum's confectionery.



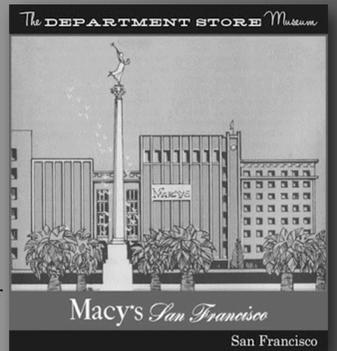
Macy's San Francisco San Francisco

In 1967, Macy's acquired the Union Square premises of the bankrupt Dohrmann's home furnishings store and used it to extend the Macy store and give it further presence on Union Square. The new front incorporated a clock tower worked into the facade design.



Macy's San Francisco San Francisco

Eventually the Brickell Building received a new storefront that matched the 1968 addition on Union Square.



Macy's San Francisco San Francisco

The floor elevation of the 1968 addition did not align with the store's O'Farrell Street building, so a series of escalators at the street floor connected down to the main floor and up to the second floor of the older portion of the store.



Macy's San Francisco San Francisco

On the interior, the 1949 remodelling kept the square fluted columns that were a feature of the 1929 O'Connor, Moffatt & Co. store, but a drop ceiling and "modern" lighting obscured the elaborate gothic tracery

1945 R.H. Macy & Co bought O'Connor, Moffatt & Co. It expanded in 1948, 50s & 60s.



Macy's San Francisco San Francisco

In 1986 it bought Bullock's & old I. Magnin store at Union Sq. Macys went bankrupt in 1992. In the late 1990s, the old I. Magnin department store was remodeled. The flagship store of Macys West, controlling some 258 stores and 43000 employees, the division was ended in 2009.

**LEVI STRAUSS:** Bryan & Mary Jane O'Connor established a close and lasting friendship with Strauss. Born in Bavaria, being Jewish and discriminated against, after his father died, Strauss came to New York in ship's steerage with his mother and three sisters at age 18, in 1847.

Two older brothers owned a dry goods business in New York City. Levi worked there. In 1853 he moved to San Francisco and opened his own dry goods business during the Gold Rush. Circa 1872 a customer, Jacob Davis, a Nevada tailor, asked for his help acquiring a patent for a method



of making stronger pants called "waist overalls". He opened his own factory in San Francisco to manufacture the jeans which helped make him a millionaire. Bryan O'Connor arrived in San Fran in 1863 and he also entered the Dry Goods merchandising fray. Levi & Bryan developed a close friendship. Levi was pallbearer at the funerals of both Bryan (RIP 1887) and his wife Mary Jane (RIP 1890). Levi died in 1902. Competitors in business, respect and friendship non the less.



Macy & Co. (Macys) (1866/1929/48)  
170 O'Farrell Street