

Tour # 7: Union Square

This tour is fairly short and all of the locales are within a two block walk of Union Square – the tour’s starting point. No public transportation is needed in this tour. The walking time for this tour (not including time spent shopping in any of the stores in this area) is less than an hour.

The Google map for this tour: [Tour #7: Union Square](#).

Tour starts just over a block away from Union Square near the corner of Geary and Mason Streets. Walk west on the south side of Geary to just past Mason.

American Conservatory Theater (ACT), 415 Geary



The musical, “Tales of the City”, played here from May 18 through July 31, 2011. The music and lyrics were by Jake Shears and John Garden; the libretto was by Jeff Whitty. The play was based upon Armistead Maupin’s *Tales of the City* and *More Tales of the City*.

City. “Tales of the City” was the capstone of the ACT’s 2010-2011 season.



Backtrack one block on Geary to...

333 Geary



This was the former location of Lefty O’Doul’s which closed in early 2017.

Three years before Burke Andrew met Mary Ann on the cruise along the Mexican coast (*More Tales of the City*), he worked at the San Francisco Associated Press (AP) office for four or five months (see *Tour #10: Civic Center, the Other Edge of the Tenderloin, and Polk*

Street). Trying to solve the mysterious cause of Burke’s amnesia, Mary Ann went to the AP office. At the AP, she met with Jack Lederer, who knew Burke.

Mary Ann learned that after leaving the AP, Burke freelanced. Jack Lederer told her that about five months prior to Mary’s visit, he had bumped into Burke at Lefty O’Doul’s. Burke bragged to Jack that he was onto a very big, bizarre story. When Jack asked Burke if he had any substantiation for his story, Burke responded it was more like *transubstantiation*.

Lefty O'Doul's was founded in 1958, by Francis "Lefty" O'Doul, a native San Franciscan who played for the New York Giants. He was considered one of the team's most colorful and popular players.

Continue to the intersection of Geary and Powell. Cross each street to reach the intersection's northeast corner of the intersection. Once there, face the intersection.

Northeast Corner of the Intersection of Geary and Powell

In the "Tales of the City" miniseries, Mary Ann took a Powell-Hyde cable car on her way to volunteer at the Crisis Switchboard. She sat next to an evangelical, fundamentalist Christian who asked Mary Ann if she had "found the Lord". The woman then handed Mary Ann what appeared to be a religious tract. Mary Ann exited the cable car, stood where you are now, and looked over the religious tract. It turned out to be a campaign brochure for Jimmy Carter. After Mary Ann stepped off the cable car, the cable car continued south on Powell toward Market.



In *Tales of the City*, the Crisis Switchboard is located in a Victorian house on 24th Street in Noe Valley (see Tour #8: *The Castro and Noe Valley*). Had she not needed to escape the proselytizing, Mary Ann would have continued riding the cable car down to Market and then transferred to a J Church MUNI Metro. In *Tales of the City*, Mary Ann took the J Church MUNI Metro to 24th Street and walked up 24th to the Crisis Switchboard.

Also in *Tales of the City*: while eating lunch at the Noble Frankfurter (see The Tower Restaurant in Tour #10: *The Civic Center, the Other Edge of the Tenderloin, and Polk Street*), Michael surprised Mona with his instant money scheme to help pay the bills. "Won't it get a little chilly working the corner of Powell and Geary?" quipped Mona. In the mini-series, this scene was shot on 24th Street at Sanchez in Noe Valley (see Tour #8: *The Castro and Noe Valley*).

Look at the northwest corner:

St Francis Hotel, 335 Powell

When Queen Elizabeth II visited San Francisco in 1983, she stayed at the St Francis Hotel (*Babycakes*). Mary Ann and her camera crew waited for almost an hour outside the St Francis before she learned that the Queen and her



entourage slipped into the hotel via the underground garage. You passed the entrance to the underground parking garage while you walked along Geary.

Now walk to the center of Union Square.

Union Square, the square formed by Powell, Post, Sacramento, and Geary streets

In the “More Tales of the City” mini-series, Mona is sitting in Union Square getting ready to light up a doobie when she is approached by Connie Bradshaw who has by this time become a Scientologist. Connie starts her Scientologist spiel when she realizes that she met Mona the previous Christmas at Mrs. Madrigal’s Christmas party. Mona leaves the Square and ends up at the Greyhound bus station where she bumps into Mother Mucca (see Tour #10: *Civic Center, the Other Edge of the Tenderloin, and Polk Street*).



In *More Tales of the City*, Mona first purchased her bus ticket to Reno and then came to Union Square until it was time for her to return to the bus terminal. She did not bump into Connie at Union Square.

In 2002, Union Square went through a nearly total redesign. With the exception of the 97 foot tall monument to Admiral Dewey’s victory in the Battle of Manila Bay in the center of the park, Union Square looks very little like it did either in the 1970s or in the miniseries.

Now walk to the southeast corner of the park (Sacramento and Geary)

Louis Vuitton, 233 Geary (southwest corner of Geary and Stockton)



The well heeled – and the wannabes – have an affinity for this store: DeDe Day’s check book cover was from Louis Vuitton. Prue Giroux named her peripatetic dog after this famous fashion designer.



Neiman Marcus, 150 Stockton (southeast corner of Geary and Stockton)

To read about this store’s “role” in the Tales, see the Grand Hyatt just below.

Walk north on Stockton along the side of Union Square and cross Post. Continue north on Stockton.

Grand Hyatt, 345 Stockton (southwest corner of Stockton and Sutter)



In 1983, the cable car system was down for a two year renovation. By this time (*Babycakes*), Mary Ann had moved up from hosting the afternoon movie to actually reporting for a local TV station. She had just completed taping a spot about saving the cable cars in front of the Grand Hyatt when she bumped into a noticeably pregnant Connie Bradshaw. They walked down the block to Neiman Marcus to have coffee (see above in this tour).

The TV station where Mary Ann worked is not identified in any of the Tales books; however, in the mini-series, “Further Tales of the City”, the TV station’s call letters are KNRS.

Continue north on Stockton then turn left (west) on Sutter. About half-way down the block and across the street is 450 Sutter.

450 Sutter (Medical Arts Building), 450 Sutter

Jon Fielding’s gynecological practice was located in this building. DeDe came here for her examination when she suspected she was pregnant (*Tales of the City*).



Backtrack on Sutter to Sacramento, cross it and continue east on Sutter to...

Wilkes Bashford, 375 Sutter



Beauchamp Day dropped big bucks for his wardrobe here at Wilkes Bashford. In *Tales of the City*, Beauchamp purchased a \$225 pair of Walter Newberger boots...and was fitted by Walter Newberger himself. In the “Tales of the City” mini-series, Dede wrote a check to Wilkes Bashford to cover Beauchamp’s recent purchases of eight Perry Ellis Sweaters, six pairs of alligator shoes, etc.

By the time he and Mary Anne were married and living at the Summit (see Tour #1: *In the Beginning...*), Brian owned a mink-lined bomber jacket he purchased at Wilkes which he wore only when he drove his \$20K jeep. (*Significant Others*)

In one scene in the “Tales of the City” musical, DeDe carried a large Wilkes Bashford shopping bag when she met her father.

Wilkes Bashford opened his store in 1966 when he was only 33 years old. He built his business on personal relationships with his customers. He offered them wine and sparkling water as they shopped. In the fall of 2009, Wilkes Bashford merged with Mitchells/Richards/Marsh.

Continue heading east on Sutter to Grant. Cross to the other side (southeast corner), turn right, and head south on Grant one block to Post. Turn right and walk ½ block.

North Face, 180 Post

This was the former location of Eddie Bauer (which is now located at 865 Market).

After losing Vuitton in Golden Gate Park (*Further Tales of the City*), Prue Giroux shopped at Eddie Bauer for just the right safari jacket to wear as she continued her search for her missing dog. While at Eddie Bauer, she bumped into Father Paddy who informed her that he was taking Frannie Halcyon to see the Shroud of Turin. Prue mistakenly assumed the Shroud of Turin was an opera or a play. After Prue left Eddie Bauer, her driver dropped her off in front of the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park.



In the *Further Tales of the City* miniseries, Prue is walking her dog along JFK Drive in front of the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park when Father Paddy drives up. There, they have the discussion about Frannie Halcyon and the Shroud of Turin. It is also at that time that Vuitton, Prue’s dog, suddenly bolts free of Prue and dashes into the shrubbery in the Park (see Tour #12, *Golden Gate Park*).

Continue east on Post to the end of the block, which is Kearny. Cross to the southeast corner of Post and Kearny. Walk south one-block on Kearny to where it ends at Market. You’re now standing in front of Lotta’s Fountain.

Lotta’s Fountain, corner of Kearny and Market

Lotta’s Fountain was not featured in any of the Tales books or movies.

The Fountain was given to the City in 1875 by the entertainer, Lotta Crabtree.



In the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, it served as a meeting point for survivors looking for friends and family members. People left messages for others saying where they went and/or could be found.

The fountain is still connected with the Earthquake and Fire.

Every year, on April 18, at 5:12 in the morning, the living survivors of the Earthquake and Fire along with members of the community gather at the fountain to commemorate the event.

Those who gather here for the annual event sing “San Francisco”, the City’s official song. (“I Left My Heart in San Francisco” is the City’s official *ballad*.) In the “Tales of the City” miniseries, the cast of *Beach Blanket Babylon* sing the shows finale, “San Francisco” (see Tour #2: *North Beach*). “San Francisco” is the title song from a 1936 MGM movie by the same name starring Clark Gable and Jeannette MacDonald. The movie is shown each year on April 18th at the Castro Theater (see Tour #8: *The Castro and Noe Valley*) to commemorate the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire.

On April 18, 2012, there were only four known living survivors of the Quake and Fire; two of them, George Quilici and Winne Hook – both 106 years old – joined the hundreds who gathered at the fountain to observe the Quake and Fire. One of the survivors who couldn’t make it, Bill Del Monte (also 106 years old), wasn’t well enough to attend in person...but he participated through Skype on a laptop!



Walk west on Market (away from the Ferry Building) to the intersection of Market, Grant, and O’Farrell. Across the street is the Four Seasons Hotel.

Four Seasons Hotel, 757 Market



When Mary Ann returned to San Francisco because of Anna Madrigal’s heart attack, she and her husband stayed at the Four Seasons (*Michael Tolliver Lives*).

Mary Ann returned to San Francisco again in 2008 (*Mary Ann in Autumn*) when she learned her husband was having an affair with her life coach and that she had cancer. She stayed at the Four Seasons before she moved into the cottage at Michael’s and Ben’s.

This is the end of the Tour.

Continue west on Market two blocks to Hallidie Plaza (Market and Powell) where you can pick up the Powell-Hyde/Powell-Mason cable cars, BART, the MUNI Metro, etc.

The San Francisco Shopping Center, anchored by Nordstrom's, is across the street from Hallidie Plaza on the south side of Market.

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