

# The Diary of George W. Farris

**G**eorge W. Farris was born in 1853 in Ohio. He arrived in San Francisco in 1882 and joined Carpenters Local 22 in 1884. He is the only known carpenter to have maintained a daily diary of his working life and times. The diary was recorded in a leather-bound pocket sized daily journal. He described the routine of looking for work and the scene that was San Francisco before, during and after the quake and fire of 1906.

It is truly remarkable that he was able to maintain this consistence of detail after so many years. He continued to work as a carpenter until 1920.

The diary is preserved at the UC Bancroft Library in Berkeley.

## **Tuesday, May 15, 1906**

Worked today on the shacks in the city. We made quite a show, the foundation was only up yesterday, and today we got the roof on and the whole thing done nearly, except the doors.

We had no water all day, so I bought a bucket this evening.

## **Thursday, May 17, 1906**

Worked at Market & 10th St SF, on the three stores the boss is putting up for Murry & Ready. It is an awful dirty job, as we were working in the ashes and the wind was blowing.

## **Monday, May 21, 1906**

Worked on the job at 560 9th St Oakland, we put in the concrete foundation for the gas engine & electric motor. Had a dirty job but it was not hard.

## **Monday, June 18, 1906**

Went over to the city this morning and have been working on the foundation of digging most of the time. We have a big job, but it will be a "hurry up" job. Carpenters are getting \$4.50 & \$5.00 a day. They seem to be scarce.

## **Monday, September 3, 1906**

Today was Labor Day and all business is suspended for the day.

I went over to the city in the morning to take part in the parade. It formed on Van Ness Ave near where we are putting up our building.

It was composed of only Unions of the building trades but it was a big parade.



## **Monday, September 17, 1906**

Went to work this morning as usual. In the afternoon about 4:00 PM, I ran a nail in my left foot and had to go to the doctor and have it dressed. It is a bad hurt and liable to lay me up for some time.

The doctor washed it with formaldehyde, and it gave me a chill. Feel sick yet.

## **Thursday, September 20, 1906**

My foot is getting better and I think I will be able to work next week.

## **Saturday, Oct 20, 1906**

Worked half a day as usual for Saturday and had quite a time of it laying the roof boards as the north wind blew a regular blizzard. Five men were killed by falling walls that went down in the high wind.

## **Monday, Dec 31, 1906**

The last day of the year and the last page in my book. There has been stirring events to record since I made my first entry in this book.

An upheaval of the earth and a devastating fire last April made change in the surroundings. I am at 473 7th St. Oakland, been on this side of the bay since April 20th. I don't know when I will get back in Frisco again to live.

I wound up the year at work, that is a good thing. I have been at home all evening though there is lots of excitement on the street.