1.00 Gold

Main Message:
The massive rush of people and capital lured by gold provided the spark that created Sacramento.

- In the center of the space is a single nugget of gold elegantly and enticingly displayed, indicating its beauty but also its relative scarcity. Visitors grasp the lure of this precious and sought-after metal, as well as how little of it there was compared to other "riches" in the form of land or business opportunities.

- A circular graphic around the gold includes facts pertaining to gold in this period, such as the different types found here; the many people who came from around the world in search of it and how different cultures mined for it in different ways, how much gold was mined and its total value, and how few people grew wealthy from the gold compared to the numbers who came in search of it.

- Illustrative materials can include printed notices about the discovery of gold, graphics of the gold fields and mining, and newspaper articles and headlines concerning gold.

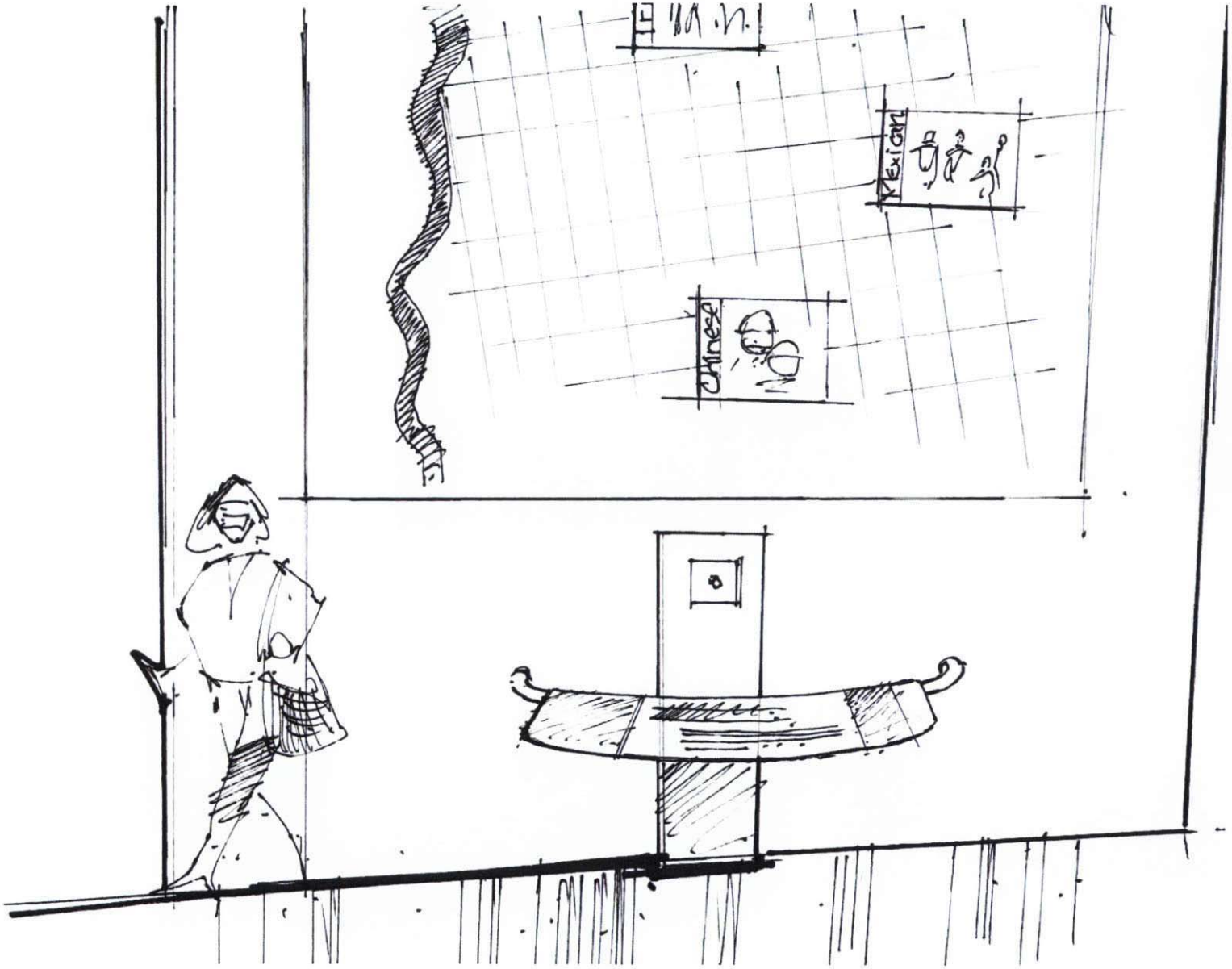
2.00 Back Wall

Main Message:
Sacramento was a thriving community by 1850.

- A three-story-high map of the city serves as the backdrop for this lobby area and orients visitors to Sacramento in 1850, vividly showing the contrast between the man-made, artificial grid of the city and the rivers and other natural landforms.

- The map provides an opportunity to interpret the city's ethnic alcoves, from the Chinese thoroughfare from J to I Streets up Second and Fifth Streets, the black community and Mexican colonia on Third Street, and the Irish in the southern wards, among others.

- The map provides an invaluable resource for public programs, useful for orienting visitors to the time period, the configuration of the city in the 1850s, and the themes in this exhibit and throughout the museum.


Mexican
Chinese

3.00 Land and Location

Main Messages:
Many aspects of Sacramento's location contributed to its successes and setbacks.

Sacramento played an important role as a transportation hub of early California.

Description (front):

- Through graphics, text, and artifacts, visitors learn that long before gold, it was the fertile land, lush groves, and winding rivers that sustained the region's native people and later drew settlers from Mexico, Europe, and the United States to the region. Also addressed here are how the California Indians used the land, where their settlements were located and why, and how they were affected when the city took hold.

- For many people lured here by gold, it was the land that convinced them to stay. Visitors find out why Sacramento's strategic location enabled it to prosper.

- Agriculture and food processing grew in importance and sustained the city in the decades after the Gold Rush. Visitors discover what products were most important to this area and why.

- Visitors find out that Sacramento by 1850 was already a hub of interior California's transportation network.

- Illustrative materials for this theme can include the variety of products used by native people, tule baskets, and early land grants and maps of the area, plat maps, bird's-eye views, court records, surveying equipment, George Wallace's letter describing the layout of Sacramento, ads from Brannan and others for real estate in Sacramento, the view from the levee, the variety of agricultural products, newspaper ads and articles pertaining to the contrast between the perceptions of the area on the East Coast and what life was really like, government agent King's 1850 report about the attributes of the land, steamship tickets, ships' logs, stagecoach items, trunks, steamboat parts, and graphics of the abundant river traffic. Another exhibit element could include brief audio clips narrated by actors, such as someone speaking the Maidu language, the personal story of a farmer who prospered from working the land after the Gold Rush, or the story of a riverboat captain or other person who made a living from transportation.

3.00 Land and Location

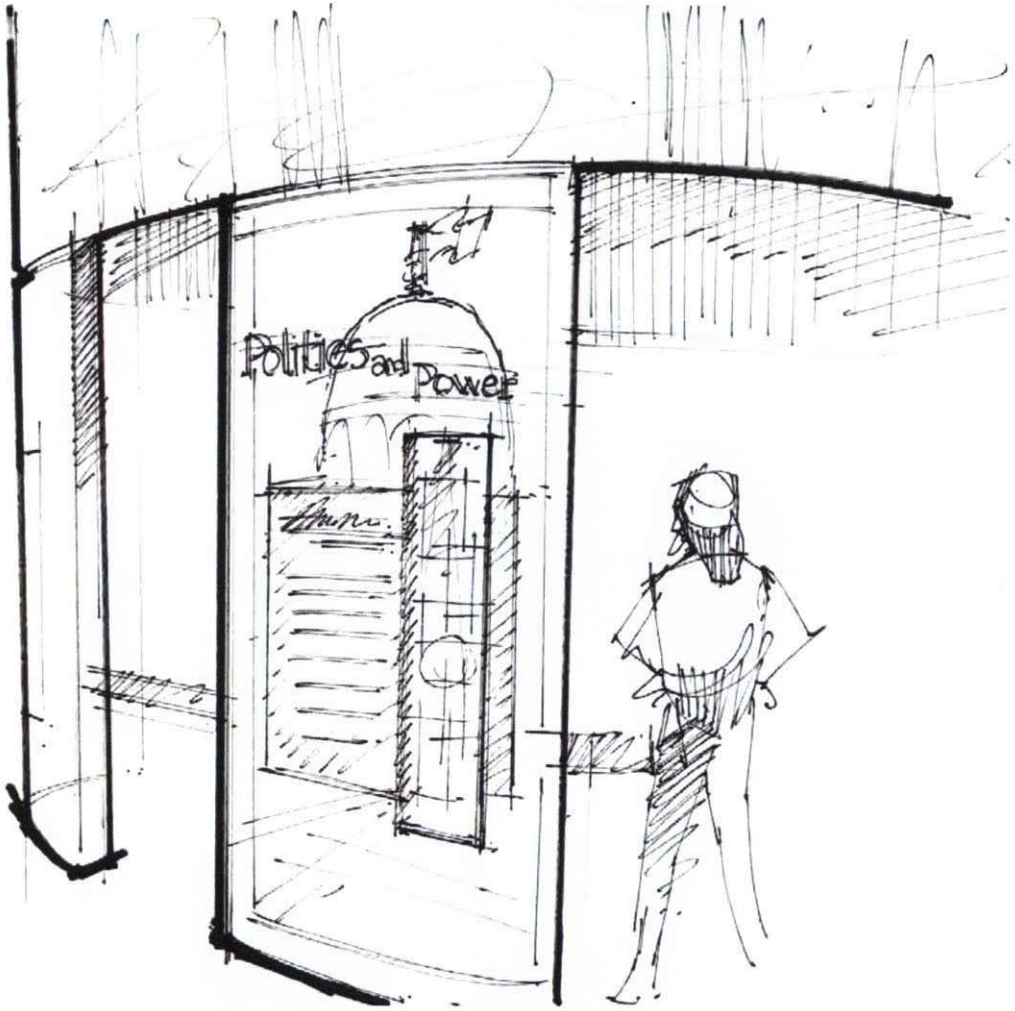
Description (back):

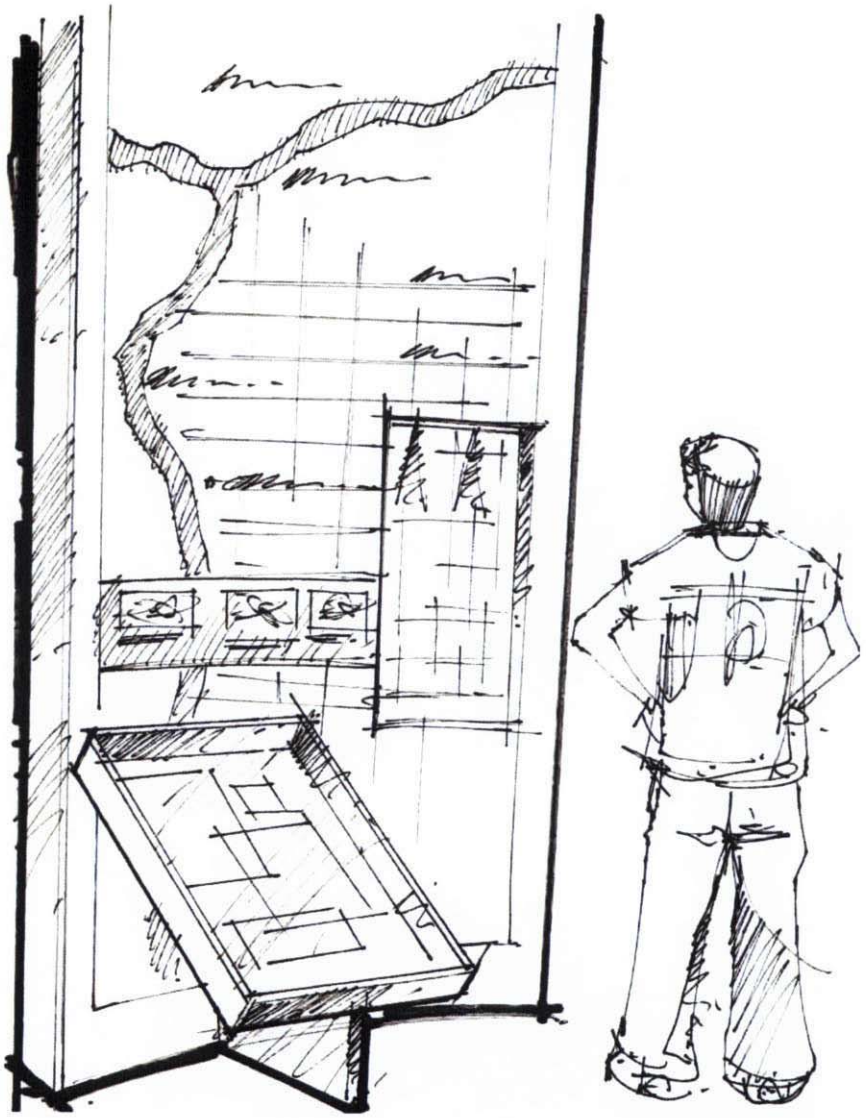
Squatters' Riot

Message:
The right to own land sparked a battle between the haves and have-nots that helped shape the future of Sacramento.

- Through graphics, text, and artifacts, visitors learn that in August of 1850, disputes arose between those who held title to the land in the new city and the squatters who questioned the moral and legal right to such titles. Violence erupted into what became known as the Squatters' Riot, killing or wounding several people, including the sheriff and the mayor.

- Illustrative materials can include newspaper articles and headlines, graphics, land titles, Sutter's proclamation to the squatters, pieces of the La Grange prison ship, weapons, and handbills, as well as the personal stories of some of the principal characters in the dispute, such as Joseph McKinney, Hardin Bigelow, and Samuel Brannan.


Politics and Power



4.00 Politics and Power

Main Messages:
Sacramento played an important role as a political, economic, and social hub of early California.

Sacramento did not just happen; it was planned.

Description (front):

- Here, the graphics, artifacts, and text make clear that the quest for power, as with gold, has been a defining theme of Sacramento history. Before 1850, opportunities abounded, but first the official end of the war with Mexico and then the slavery question kept California from becoming a state.

- By 1850, Sacramento's population had reached 8,000. The people with the biggest stake in the city's future were the ones who devised and implemented stable civic institutions, laws, levees, proper sanitation, and more as a way to protect their investments. Merchants drafted laws and elected men to enact them, as well as a city council and mayor.

- Illustrative materials for this theme can include the 1848 treaty ending the war with Mexico, newspaper articles and headlines, maps, the laws (showing variety, type, and the issues, from the foreign miners' tax to restrictions on Indian rights), images of the elected officials, personal effects, gavel, and handcuffs.

4.00 Politics and Power

Main Messages:
Sacramento provided political opportunity for many who had been excluded from eastern politics.

Early Sacramento politicians were key to the city's continual growth and importance in state history.

Description (back):

City, County, Statehood

- Through the text, artifacts, and graphics here, visitors learn more about why the year 1850 was a pivotal one for Sacramento—and California. The city was incorporated (it's the oldest incorporated city in the state), the county established, and California became a state. Sacramento's location, surrounding agricultural land; purposeful human planning; and human perseverance helped it thrive despite the liabilities of its environment. Statehood provided the final blow to any Indian or Mexican claims to the land.

- Illustrative materials include newspapers articles and headlines, sheriff's badge, seals and flags, proclamations, first city charter, graphic of oak grove, 1850 city seal, weapons, portraits of leaders, pamphlets, 31-star U.S. flag, and first city council minutes.

5.00 Culture and Society

Main Messages:
People came overland and from around the world because of the Gold Rush, creating a city almost overnight.

Sacramento played an important role as a political, economic, and social hub of early California.

By 1850, Sacramento was transitioning from a transient Gold Rush society into a more orderly and established town.

Description (front):

- This exhibit helps visitors understand how and why, after the initial Gold Rush, more people moved to Sacramento to stay, where they created the institutions that would define the city's urban character and change its cultural makeup. Settlers included people from the eastern United States, Irish, African-Americans, Germans, Chinese, California Indians, Hispanic Californians—including increasing numbers of women. The 1900s saw another large influx of settlers, including Greek, Filipino, Arab, and Pakistani, which will be further explored in future exhibits in the museum. The push/pull factors for these groups will be compared to those presented in this exhibit.

- Fraternal organizations and churches served as political centers as well as catered to the societal and spiritual needs of their members. Individuals saw the need for organized schools to educate the children, while others began social service organizations to ministered to the welfare of the less fortunate.

- Theatrical performances, circuses, art, gambling, concerts, and bullfights entertained the city's growing population.

- Illustrative materials for this theme can include photographs, newspaper articles and headlines, ads promoting settlement, images of people, Bibles, hymnals, sermons, prayer books, letters, school records, booklets of proceedings (Freemasons), Masonic emblems, membership rosters, Eagle Theatre broadside, costumes, tickets, musical instruments, art, and images of theaters and other entertainment venues.

5.00 Culture and Society

Main Message:
Religious institutions and leaders played important roles in the city's various ethnic communities, influencing public opinion and maintaining spiritual traditions.

Description (back):

Religious Institutions

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

- Here visitors learn how Sacramento's African-American population coalesced around its church. The oldest African-American church on the West Coast, St. Andrew's AME Church, was founded here in 1850 and quickly became the social and political center for the black community. Its members helped slaves purchase their freedom and later hosted several California Colored Citizens Conventions.

- Visitors discover the variety and influence of the early city's religious institutions, from synagogues to Baptist churches, which established themselves in Sacramento around 1850. Here, and throughout history, the founding of religious institutions was an earmark of a permanent society. These include St. Rose of Lima Church, the First Presbyterian Church, Grace Protestant Episcopal Church, the First Baptist Church, and the Hebrew Benevolent Society that would later establish the B'nai Israel Synagogue.

- Illustrative materials for this theme can include newspaper articles, hymnals, sermons, prayer books, Bibles, photographs, accounts of kidnappings and slave ads from the *Sacramento Transcript*. Other exhibit elements can include audio recordings of period songs or hymns.