

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Armour & Co. Building
San Francisco County, CA

addition that significantly compromises its integrity. Of the two firms, Cudahy was also less influential than Armour.

The occupants of 1050 Battery Street between 1934 and 1944 are unknown, but the property remained in the Sesnon/Porter family until 1944, when Victor, Jr., John A., and William F. Traverso bought the property. In keeping with the history of the northeast waterfront and 1050 Battery Street, the Traverso brothers used the building as a wholesale grocery warehouse.¹⁸ V. Traverso Co. remained at 1050 Battery Street until the company dissolved in 1964. The dissolution of Traverso and Rainbow Stores coincides with the demise of the northeast waterfront as a light industrial warehouse district.

CONTEXT FOR CRITERION C

Henry Geilfuss & Son and Early-Twentieth-century Warehouse Architecture
Henry Geilfuss, one of San Francisco's most popular and influential architects of the late nineteenth-century, and his son designed 1050 Battery Street. This building marks a departure from their signature Victorian houses replete with decorative embellishments. Instead, it embodies modern trends in architecture

¹⁸ The Traverso family had first entered the food business in 1902, when Victor Traverso, Sr., opened a grocery store in North Beach, San Francisco's Italian neighborhood. Over the next twenty years, however, chain stores transformed the grocery business. In the chain store system, a central organization operated stores that offered the same products - usually national brands like Armour meats or Schilling spices - at standardized and significantly lower prices than independent grocers (usually around 10 percent lower). Chain stores also displayed those products in almost identical fashion at every store, so a consumer could enter any Safeway, for example, which was founded in southern California in 1914, and know exactly what s/he could find and where in the store it was located. A common defense against the incursion of chain stores can be found in the example of the Traverso brothers. Founded in 1922, V. Traverso Co. was the first communal grocer in San Francisco. It operated under the insignia Rainbow Stores (not related to the Rainbow Grocery now existing in San Francisco). Individual grocers remained independently owned, but membership in Rainbow Stores guaranteed access to national brands at discounted prices. Within six years, 150 Rainbow Stores operated in San Francisco alone. By 1928 V. Traverso Co.'s headquarters and warehouse had also relocated from a small storefront on Washington Street, just outside North Beach, to a larger space on Pacific Avenue that was strategically located next to Libby, McNeill & Libby and Swift & Co. facilities, and across the street from the Colombo vegetable market. In 1944, V. Traverso Co. upgraded again, this time to 1050 Battery Street and again marking the company's continued growth in the local grocery market. Elizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York, 1990), 106-120; "Wholesale Grocery Firm Establishes Buying Club," *The Examiner Retailer* (July 1928), at *Rainbow Food Stores: The First San Francisco Grocery Co-Op*, <http://papillonbusinesssolutions.com/RainbowFoodStores>, accessed January 8, 2009; Rainbow Stores to Gentleman, June 30, 1928, at *ibid.*; Rainbow Stores, "Bulletin No. 9," January 22, 1929, at *ibid.*; Traverso Family to Our Suppliers, October 1, 1964, at *ibid.*; San Francisco City Directory (1903); Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "San Francisco" (1913-1915), sheets 14 and 15; "Northeast Waterfront Historic District," 4.