



A Short History of San Francisco: An Excerpt from Robert Cherny's New Book

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Robert Cherny recently published [A Short History of San Francisco](#). We are grateful that University of Nebraska Press has allowed Labor Online to have a really great illustrated excerpt of Cherny's account of the 1934 strikes. Cherny gives a brief introduction to that excerpt below. Take a look!

My [Short History of San Francisco](#) is very much as the title indicates: short. In addition to specifying the overall length, the press also specified that the book include a significant number of illustrations, which, of course, further reduces the potential amount of text. Writing a short book about a large topic has its challenges. I had to think carefully about what to leave out and what to include with enough detail to be meaningful. The 1934 strikes were, of course, important to include. Midway through the process. I decided to include one or more sidebars in each chapter to provide more depth or breadth or just human interest. There's an example in this excerpt dealing with the 1934 strikes. I tried to make every sidebar and every photograph work as part of the overall account. I also tried to find

sidebar accounts and photographs that had not been used in previous works.

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Robert Cherny is a Professor of History at San Francisco State University. He writes about Progressive-era politics, Populism, labor, and the Cold War. His recent works include *Harry Bridges: Labor Radical, Labor Legend* (2023) and *The Coit Tower Murals: New Deal Art and Political Controversy in San Francisco* (2024).