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HUMBUG + GRAY BEARDS
JOAQUIN MURIELLA CHAPTER 13
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ATTN: CARTER WILSON

5/26/92

MY GOOD MAN:

I TAKE PEN IN HAND TO PROTEST FORMALLY YOUR
ERECTION IN DOWNTOWN MARTINEZ — OF A PLAQUE
ALLEGEDLY PROCLAIMING SAID SETTLEMENT AS THE
BIRTHPLACE OF THE MARTINI! NOTHING COULD BE
FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!

THE PRESERVATION OF TRUTH, HONOR + THE AMERICAN
WAY DEMANDS THAT THIS MONUMENT + ITS UNFOUNDED,
INVENTED, FABRICATED CLAIM MUST BE DEMOLISHED
FORTHWITH, IF NOT SOONER.

THE FACTS ARE THAT THE NOBLE DRINCR WAS IN-
VENTED BY THAT FAMOUS BARKEEP PROFESSOR THOMAS
JERRY AT THE OCCIDENTAL HOTEL ON THE BARBERY
COAST OF SAN FRANCISCO.

MY GREAT GRANDFATHER, STEPHEN JAMES TICH-
ENOR, WAS THE PROPRIETOR OF THAT GRAND + GLORIOUS
HOSTELRY AT THE TIME. HE TOLD ME THE TALE ON
MANY OCCASIONS WHEN IT FELL TO MY LOT TO SERVE
HIM THAT HIGHLY ESTEEMED COCKTAIL ON OCCASIONS
TOO NUMEROUS TO RECOUNT HERE. IN FACT, THE OLD
GENTLEMAN REMEMBERED CLEARLY THE PERIODIC VISIT-
ATIONS OF MANY OF THE FEMALE ANCESTORS OF SOME
OF THE VERY GRAY BEARDS WHO ADORN THE ROLLS OF
YOUR GLORIOUS CHAPTER THIS VERY DAY. NEVER, OF COURSE,
DID THESE HONORED LADIES STAND FOR MORE THAN ONE
NIGHT.

I ENCLOSE PROOF POSITIVE IN THE FORM OF AN NEWSPAPER
ARTICLE. BESIDES, I HAVE PICTURE OF ^{THE} HOTEL. WOULD I LIE
TO YOU? Sincerely Peter Tiernan

The story is that Thomas made the first "Martini" at the Occidental Hotel Saloon in S.F. for a miner in a big hurry to catch the next ferry boat to Martinez? We have a picture of the Hotel in our scrap book.

Stephen Tichenor was proprietor of several early S.F. Saloons:

Old S. F. Drinks Among them The "Blue Wing Saloon",
The "Oriental," & The "Occidental" Hotels
A Master Barkeep

By Ruth Teiser
and Catherine Harroun

ON NOVEMBER 8, 1849, the barque Ann Smith arrived at San Francisco from New Haven, carrying among her 23 passengers young Jerry Thomas, later famed as Professor Jerry P. Thomas, dean of 19th century American barkeeps.

It had been raining here for days; there was a penetrating chill in the air and a layer of mud over the streets which drove the citizenry to seek the warmth and comparative aridity of the hospitable saloons. Jerry himself repaired to the El Dorado on Portsmouth Square. Picking his way among the gamb-

ing tables, he made for the bar and, after due negotiations, took his place behind it.

Therefore, it was no coincidence that by New Year's Eve, the Tom and Jerry was "in" in San Francisco. The matter apparently came to the attention of the editor of the Alta California on New Year's Day, for the January 2 edition of that daily newspaper carried the following musing:

"A certain compound, the ingredients of which are only known to those deep in the mysteries of the article, and who have dealings with spirits, has recently made its appearance in our market. Red placards bearing the cabalistic letters T-O-M & J-E-R-R-Y stares us in the face in almost every public house. If a man is knocked down in the streets, Tom and Jerry is said to be the cause; if a man falls down,

it is owing to the influence of Tom and Jerry; if a pane of glass is broken, it is still poor Tom and Jerry . . .

We do really think that Tom and Jerry should both be 'comprehended' under the 'vagrant' act."

Jerry Thomas' Tom and Jerry was much the same drink as that which has been dealt out to chilly San Franciscans and their compatriots ever since, although the formula he gave in his book, "How to Mix Drinks," calls for a good deal more sugar than contemporary palates accept. While universally acknowledged as the creator of this drink, the professor apparently thought it undignified to stake his claim, merely noting at the end of the recipe that it was sometimes called the "Jerry Thomas." When and where it was created are unknown, but the possibility exists that Thomas devised it on the spot to meet the exigencies of the wet and chilly winter of '49.

The blue blazer is, however, by inexorable tradition, a San Francisco invention. Herbert Asbury—Thomas' chief extoller—has it that a grizzly miner, in the city



Courtesy Ruth Teiser-Catherine Harroun
PROF. THOMAS MIXING THE BLUE BLAZER

after many months in the diggings, stomped up to the El Dorado bar and roared, "Bar-keep! Fix me some hell-fire that'll shake me right down to my gizzard!"

Professor Thomas, not one to be stampeded, suggested that he return in an hour, then repaired to the back room to cogitate. The result, as he described it in "How to Mix Drinks":

(Use two large silver-plated mugs, with handles.)

1 wine-glass of Scotch whiskey.

1 wine-glass of boiling water.

Put the whiskey and the boiling water in one mug, ignite the liquid with fire, and while blazing mix both ingredients by pouring them four or five times from one mug to the other, as represented in the cut . . . Sweeten with one teaspoonful of pulverized white sugar, and serve in a small bar tumbler, with a piece of lemon peel.

The deftness with which the professor threw the flame from cup to cup must have impressed the grizzly miner upon his return to the El Dorado. According to Asbury, when the drink was poured

bler" and drained it at or gulp. Some time later, when he could speak, he whispered admiringly, "He done it right down to my gizzard! Yes sir, right down to my gizzard! Yes, sir, right down to my gizzard!"

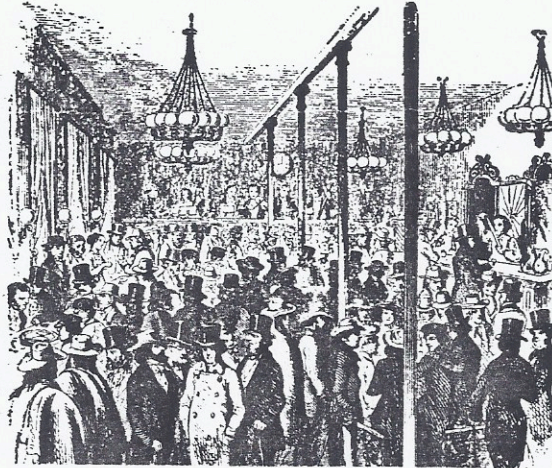
The martini must also be considered here. The literature of the martini is long the controversy about its origin apparently never-ending. Asbury, however, believes to have stemmed from another creation of Jerry Thomas', the martinez. An Robert O'Brien, in a Chronicle "Riptides" column of 19 years ago, stated his conviction that the martinez was specially concocted by Thomas for a chilly traveller en route to that distant Carquaine Straits community. Thomas' martinez cocktail does indeed call for gin and vermouth, although more of the latter than the former, and two dashes of maraschino in addition to one of bitters.

The martinez was, O'Brien believed, concocted by the professor when he was head bartender of the Occidental hotel here between 1860 and 1862. Thus San Francisco was

Tom, Jerry and the Martini

birthplace of his "How to Mix Drinks, or the Bon-Vivant's Companion," published in the first of its many editions in 1862. It is the ancestor of all bar manuals, and to this day most are cribbed from it or from others cribbed from it. It remains a sound guide, provided you temper the sweetening.

Should you go searching for a copy, keep an eye open also for another volume by Thomas titled, "The Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Bar-Keepers." It is one of the lost curiosities of American literature; no copy is now known to exist. Published in 1863 and reviewed at length in the Alta California, it contained the reminiscences of the most distinguished bar-keeper of them all, the author



A HAPPY CROWD IN THE OLD EL DORADO

himself, covering his peripatetic career—and his experience in San Francisco. Should a copy turn up, it could con-

tain positive proof that this city was indeed the true birthplace of both the Tom and Jerry and the martini.

Dear Peter:
My notes indicate I sent a copy of this to you some years ago. Your memory is sweet.

Thomas worked for Stephen James Tichenor at the Occidental.

A. K. Tichenor
20 May 1992