

# INFINITE CITY

## A SAN FRANCISCO ATLAS

OF PRINCIPAL LANDMARKS AND TREASURES OF THE REGION, INCLUDING BUTTERFLY SPECIES, QUEER SITES, MURDERS, COFFEE, WATER, POWER, CONTINGENT IDENTITIES, SOCIAL TYPES, LIBRARIES, EARLY-MORNING BARS, THE LOST LABOR LANDSCAPE OF 1960, AND THE MONUMENTAL MONTEREY CYPRESSES OF SAN FRANCISCO; OF INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES, WOMEN ENVIRONMENTALISTS, TOXINS, FOOD SITES, RIGHT-WING ORGANIZATIONS, WORLD WAR II SHIPYARDS, ZEN BUDDHIST CENTERS, SALMON MIGRATION, AND MUSICAL HISTORIES OF THE BAY AREA; WITH DETAILS OF CULTURAL GEOGRAPHIES OF THE MISSION DISTRICT, THE FILLMORE'S CULTURE WARS AND METAMORPHOSES, THE RACIAL DISCOURSES OF UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, THE SOUTH OF MARKET WORLD THAT REDEVELOPMENT DEVoured, AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT PHENOMENA, VANISHED AND EXTANT.

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EVERY PLACE DESERVES AN ATLAS, an atlas is at least implicit in every place, and to say that is to ask first of all what a place is. Places are leaky containers. They always refer beyond themselves, whether island or mainland, and can be imagined in various scales, from the drama of a back alley to transcontinental geopolitical forces and global climate. What we call places are stable locations with unstable converging forces that cannot be delineated either by fences on the ground or by boundaries in the imagination—or by the perimeter of the map. Something is always coming from elsewhere, whether it's wind, water, immigrants, trade goods, or ideas. The local exists—an endemic species may evolve out of those circumstances, or the human equivalent—but it exists in relation, whether symbiotic with or sanctuary from the larger world. Pocatello, Idaho, has had its inventions and tragedies: a heartbreak that can be mapped out in six blocks, with bars and slammed doors and a bedroom; the tale of what happened to the lands of the Shoshone and Bannock; a gold rush; the larger forces of geology and climate and animal migration and watersheds. Petaluma, California, has its radical chicken farmers and Coast Miwok name and its atlas waiting to happen, as do Flint and Buffalo, Yellowstone and Chimayo. The cup of coffee in your hand has origins reaching across the region and the world.

A city is a particular kind of place, perhaps best described as many worlds in one place; it compounds many versions without quite reconciling them, though some cross over to live in multiple worlds—in Chinatown or queer space, in a drug underworld or a university community, in a church's sphere or a hospital's intersections. An atlas is a collection of versions of a place, a compendium of perspectives, a snatching out of the infinite ether of potential versions a few that will be made concrete and visible. Every place deserves an atlas, but San Francisco is my place, and therefore the subject of this atlas, which springs from my perspective, with all its limits. And the place that is San Francisco has both a literal geography as the tip of the peninsula that juts upward like a hitchhiking thumb and another, cultural, geography as the most left part of the left coast, the un-American place where America invents itself.

## INTRODUCTION

### ON THE INEXHAUSTIBILITY OF A CITY

I have travelled a good deal in Concord . . .

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

"You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours."

"Or the question it asks you, forcing you to answer, like Thebes through the mouth of the Sphinx."

—Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, in Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

In one of Jorge Luis Borges's most famous parables, cartographers make more and more exact maps until "the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the Map of a Single province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point." The map in this one-paragraph essay, "On Exactitude in Science," is meant to be a fool's triumph, a confusion of the thing with its representation, an extension of logic to preposterous lengths. Even so, the tale has been read as a serious allegory about representation overtaking its subject.

A map is in its essence and intent an arbitrary selection of information. What the College of Cartographers could have done in pursuit of thoroughness and even vastness, and what many mapmakers and teams like it have done over the past half millennium, is to produce an atlas. An atlas may represent many places in the same way or the same place in many ways, and it is in the myriad descriptions that the maps begin to approximate the rich complexity of the place, of a place, of any place. Scale matters: San Francisco map collector and scholar David Rumsey owns the first great atlas of France, in two huge volumes, produced over eighty years and three generations by the Cassini family of surveyors, cartographers, and engravers. The magnificent prints, page after page, show the country in such detail that this particular spring and its surrounding grove are visible, that hamlet, the back road between a mill and

a minor church. It's not Borges's map on a 1:1 scale, but it approaches it. Scale matters, but maps select. The big maps in those old books show terrain exquisitely, but they don't show ownership in much detail, or history, or economics, or air currents. They lack geology, biography, botany, and much else, despite the marvelous detail of their topography.

Another Borges essay, "Avatars of the Tortoise," an elaboration of a paradox by Zeno, has a better allegory for mapping. "Achilles runs ten times faster than the tortoise and gives the animal a headstart of ten metres." But the hero will never overtake the lumbering beast, according to Zeno's logic. "Movement is impossible (argues Zeno), for the moving object must cover half of the distance in order to reach its destination, and before reaching the half, half of the half, and before half of the half, half of the half of the half, and before . . ." Call the place to be mapped the distance, call mapping a race, and see that the cartographer in describing the territory must make another map, and another, and another, and that the description will never close the distance entirely between itself and its subject. Another writer, Italo Calvino, created another sense of vastness in his *Invisible Cities*, from which this atlas draws its title; his book contains descriptions of many magical and strange cities, often assumed to be the same beloved city, Venice, described many ways, with the implication that it could be described many more ways. Venice, like San Francisco, is small; they are vast not in territory but in imaginative possibility.

Every place is if not infinite then practically inexhaustible, and no quantity of maps will allow the distance to be completely traversed. Any single map can depict only an arbitrary selection of the facts on its two-dimensional surface (and today's computer-driven Geographic Information System [GIS] cartography, with its ability to layer information, is only an elegantly maneuverable electronic equivalent of the transparent pages that were, in the age of paper, more common in anatomy books). For *Infinite City*, this selection has been a pleasure, an invitation to map death and beauty, butterflies and queer histories together, with the intention not of comprehensively describing the city but rather of suggesting through these pairings the countless further ways it could be described. (I also chose pairs in order to use the space more effectively, to play up this arbitrariness, and because this city is, as all good cities are, a compilation of coexisting differences, of the Baptist church next to the dim sum dispensary, the homeless outside the Opera House.)

The Borges map may have been coextensive with its territory, but it could not have been an adequate description of that territory, could not have even approached charting its flora, its fauna, its topography, and its history. A static map cannot describe change, and every place is in constant change. I map your garden. A swarm of bees arrives, or a wind blows the petals off the flowers. You plant an apricot sapling or fell a shattered spruce; the season or even just the light changes. Now it is a different garden, and the map is out of date; another map is required; and another; yet another, to show where the marriage proposal, the later marital battle, the formative skinning of a knee or sting of a bee or first memory, and the hours of time lost to sheer pleasure and reverie took place. One of the key steps on the route to enlightenment for Siddhartha was the recollection of a childhood moment of serenity and completeness under a rose-apple tree in a garden. On the map of enlightenment, the garden has no

walls. It takes yet another map to show how the garden fits into the continental weather patterns, or the racial patterns of the neighborhood; another to indicate where the plants came from, including the Asian pomegranates and nasturtiums, the Middle Eastern damask rose and American sunflowers; and, if a bomb strikes the garden in the course of a war, still another map to fit that bomb into the geopolitics of war, bringing us to another scale.

San Francisco has eight hundred thousand inhabitants, more or less, and each of them possesses his or her own map of the place, a world of amities, amours, transit routes, resources, and perils, radiating out from home. But even to say this is to vastly underestimate. San Francisco contains many more than eight hundred thousand living maps, because each of these citizens contains multiple maps: areas of knowledge, rumors, fears, friendships, remembered histories and facts, alternate versions, desires, the map of everyday activity versus the map of occasional discovery, the past versus the present, the map of this place in relation to others that could be confined to a few neighborhoods or could include multiple continents of ancestral origin, immigration routes and lost homelands, social ties, or cultural work. Be wildly reductive: say that every San Franciscan possesses only ten maps and that this has been true for all those who preceded us, and we're already imagining tens of millions of maps. This leaves aside other maps that might reach comprehensiveness, maps of the daily—no, the hourly, for it changes—weather, of plantings, of the rise of buildings and the fall of some of them, of the journey of Oscar Wilde through the city on a day in 1882 or John Lee Hooker in 1989 or an Ohlone in 1688 (a path that cannot be mapped, though perhaps the wanderings of Wilde and Hooker could be), of every inhabitant's most adventurous day in the city, of butterfly migrations and extinctions and the return of raptors and coyotes to the city in the past decade or so. In his book *Wild Men*, writer Douglas Sackman has mapped a walk on which Ishi, the last surviving Yahi Indian, and Berkeley anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber took members of the Sierra Club in 1912, starting from the tip of the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park and traveling across the hilltops above the University of California, San Francisco, where Ishi then lived.

About fourteen thousand years ago, during the height of the last ice age, San Francisco was not what it is now, a seven-mile-square tip of a peninsula. It was part of a landmass that extended about ten miles farther west in that age of low oceans here and huge glaciers elsewhere; San Francisco Bay did not exist. The channel of the Golden Gate was still being carved by the great convergence of rivers that drain the Sierra Nevada's western slope into the sea. The bay is, in a haunting phrase, called a drowned river mouth. Once, its islands were only hilltops, for the river channel that still goes deep beneath the bridge was carved out when the sea was lower and the rivers stretched farther west. Every stage of the rise of the seas to their present level could be a distinct map, adding a few thousand more maps at a minimum to our endless atlas, which remains incomplete. Climate change will gradually render all atlases with coastlines out of date and create a sequence of new cartographies—of the Northwest Passage, the now feasible route that was impracticable for most of nautical history; of the glaciers, the polar ice, Greenland; of beaches, low islands, and coral reefs. (The last map in this book, "Once and Future Waters,"

suggests what the San Francisco coastline might look like after a meter and a half or so of ocean rise.)

Other coastlines existed farther west once upon a time—and east. In *The Natural World of San Francisco*, ecological historian Harold Gilliam writes of the extremely limited original habitat of the Monterey pine and Monterey cypress before they were cultivated all over the world:

The three coastal areas where the pines are native are all west of the fault. And these areas were evidently once part of Salinia, that ancient land mass that is believed to have once existed west of the present shoreline one hundred million years ago, a time when most of California was sea bottom and the waves broke on the foothills of the ancestral Sierra Nevada, one hundred and fifty miles to the east. Over the eons Salinia, presumably the original home of the Monterey pine, eroded away into a series of islands (of which the Farallones are a remnant). Some of these islands became part of the newly risen mainland, and these are today the three botanic “islands” of Monterey pine along the coast. The tree comes down to us as a botanic vestige of an earlier epoch and a vanished landscape. Unlike the popular stereotype of the pointed pine tree, the Monterey often is eccentric, with a flat or rounded crown and branches taking off into space at all angles, as if it were a remnant of an era of freedom before the pines were regimented by evolution into the conventional shape.

And the cypresses from that island exist still and have spread around the world, becoming the iconic tree of San Francisco. The tree is a majestic form, in groves and single examples all over San Francisco, from the Sunnysdale Housing Projects to Lands End, with a thick gray trunk and strong branches that sweep up and out to a jagged crown of dark green that is sometimes shaped by the wind, sometimes flat and a little jagged, trees standing alone like Old Testament prophets, in formation like Greek choruses, bearing witness to wind, to light, to weather, to endurance. Monterey cypresses stand for beauty on this atlas’s map “Death and Beauty.”

Imagine the age when the Sierra Nevada had a seacoast and Salinia was out there in the sea, and think of the myriad maps required to describe the geological shifts between that topography and ours, and then project forward a little into the era of ocean rise and a lot into the deep time of tectonic shift, and you see more maps floating, falling, drifting, an autumn storm of maps like leaves, off the trees of memory and history, a drift of maps, an escarpment of versions. Imagine these maps by the millions of this one place and know that if they could possibly exist and be placed next to each other, they would cover far more than the small cityscape of San Francisco. Borges’s map that covers up its territory is by comparison a modest achievement.

A book is an elegant technique for folding a lot of surface area into a compact, convenient volume; a library is likewise a compounding of such volumes, a temple of compression of many worlds. A city itself strikes me at times as a sort of library, folding many phenomena into one dense space—and San Francisco has the second densest concentration of people among American cities, trailing only New York, a folding together of cosmologies and riches and poverties and possibilities. After living in a much more homogenous rural place for several months in 1997, I came home to San Francisco and wrote,

in delight: “Every building, every storefront seemed to open onto a different world, compressing all the variety of human life into a jumble of conjunctions. Just as a bookshelf can jam together wildly different books, each book a small box opening onto a different world, so seemed the buildings of my city: every row of houses and shops brought near many kinds of abundance, opened onto many mysteries: crack houses, zen centers, gospel churches, tattoo parlors, produce stores, movie palaces, dim sum shops.” A friend visiting from Mexico and staying on Clement Street remarked on the fantastic jumble that this city in particular provides, the dim sum, Burmese food, Korean barbecue, sushi, Thai curries, and more just on the stretch where he was residing. Another friend who moved here from Salt Lake City pointed out that she could eat at a different restaurant every night of the year for the rest of her life—and even if she exhausted the thousands that currently exist, new restaurants would presumably keep opening so that she would never have to repeat. Her city is more inexhaustible than her appetite.

As a citizen of this city for some thirty years, I am constantly struck that no two people live in the same city. Your current surroundings exist in relation to your other places, your formative place and whatever place shaped your ethnic heritage and education, and in relation to your role in this current place—whether people look at you with suspicion, whether you’re fearful or confident, whether lots of people or few look like you, whether you run in the park or drink in the alleys, whether you swim in the bay or work in the towers by day as a broker or by night as a janitor. If you pay attention to the neighbors, you find other worlds within them, and other neighborhoods magnify this effect. Most of us settle into familiar routines in which we see the same places and people—people like ourselves, mostly—in the city, but it takes very little, just looking around on the bus or getting a bit lost on the way to some everyday place and sometimes not even that, to land in an unfamiliar city, to find that the place is inexhaustible. I share my neighborhood with undocumented immigrants who seem to trail behind them the paths they took from their homelands; San Francisco is to them a new place and something of a wilderness in which they are hunted by immigration authorities and must live by their wits. I share it too with inner-city teenagers, many of whom have hardly left the neighborhood and know little of what lies beyond it, but who know the neighborhood itself with a vividness that is also about survival, knowing where friends and enemies are situated, where rivals’ boundaries are drawn, and how to navigate a space that is for them far more dramatic than it is for most of us. (In one map for this atlas, Adriana Camarena has charted this dual relationship in the Mission.) A city is many worlds in the same place.

Or many maps of the same place. One of the pleasures of this project has been the encounters with people who are incarnate histories of this locality. The poet-artist Genine Lentine of the San Francisco Zen Center told me about her friends at the Academy of Sciences who had described the recent death of a biologist as the loss of a living bibliography no printed volume or online archive could replicate, and I thought of the living books in Angeleno Ray Bradbury’s novel *Fahrenheit 451*. Set in a book-burning future, the tale ends in a literal forest full of fugitives who have each memorized a book and thus become it: they are introduced not as individuals but as incarnate books, clas-

sics. Books in our time are made of paper from trees, but that forest is full of books made of memory, flesh, and passion. In the course of making this atlas, I have met people who have become living atlases, met the glorious library of my fellow citizens: Labor, Butterflies, Bars, Zen in America, Salmon in California, and Water, Toxics, Food, Trees, Weather, Movie Theaters, Lost Worlds, and—the list is long, the population is large. These are some of the unmapable treasures of the region, not the places and systems themselves but the people dedicated to knowing them. At the core of *Fahrenheit 451* is the belief that knowledge is a passionate pleasure, reflected in the pleasure of these local scholars and experts. The knowledge needs to be passed on to the extent that it can and built in part from scratch by each savant, as it was for each of these living books that have guided me.

I live among these trees, these books. I also live among ghosts. For better or worse, the familiar vanishes, so that the longer you live here, the more you live with a map that no longer matches the actual terrain. After the great 1972 earthquake, Managua, Nicaragua, lost many of its landmarks; people long after gave directions by saying things like, “Turn left where the tree used to be.” I remember when the bar Toronado was the flying wedge prying open the Lower Haight for white kids in the hitherto African American zone; I still miss the gigantic iron 17 Reasons Why rooftop sign at Seventeenth and Mission that Alison Pebworth installed on our title page (and after many years here found out from the now-deceased San Francisco filmmaker and artist Bruce Conner what it meant, and yet more recently where it’s gone); I vividly recall the Musée Mécanique when it was at the Cliff House; and I have faint memories of Playland at the Beach, the gritty amusement park at Lands End, destroyed in 1972, which sets me apart from all my friends who moved here after and groups me with some of the older locals I know.

More than that, I remember the worn old industrial city with its vacant lots and low pressure of the 1980s and how booms filled up all the empty space and squeezed everything in tight. I remember the ruined brewery where the fortress-like Costco now sits south of Market, and when the beer vats at 145 Florida Street in the armpit of the Central Freeway were a squat and a punk rehearsal space, not retail and offices adjoining the new big-box zone of Best Buy and Office Max. I remember the vacant lots that succeeded the old men’s neighborhood south of Market and the raucous resistance there to the 1984 Democratic Convention happening in the new Moscone Center, where another piece of that neighborhood had been, but I don’t remember the old neighborhood before redevelopment. That erasure became Yerba Buena Center, an amnesiac place with a memorious name (Yerba Buena, the little herb that adorns the cover of this book, is also the original name of the place that was rechristened San Francisco in 1847).

San Francisco is divided into those who remember a vanished or mutated landmark or institution and those who came later, from Zim’s and the Doggie Diners to the pre-1989 Embarcadero Freeway—to, if you reach much further back in time, the ninety-nine-year-old painter Add Bonn’s astonishing comment that she didn’t like the Golden Gate Bridge because the view had been so much more majestic beforehand. And then she told me of sitting on hilltops watching the ships come through an unshackled gate, the magnificent entry-

way to one of the great estuaries of the world, which John C. Fremont in 1846 named after the Golden Gate of Istanbul, which was then still Constantinople and had once been Byzantium, and after the Golden Horn, which was Constantinople’s great harbor. (Add Bonn’s life in San Francisco is charted in the “Four Hundred Years” map here.)

I remember the African Orthodox Church of St. John Coltrane when it was at Divisadero just off Oak, before it was evicted by a greedy landlord during the dot-com boom, and remember further back when my old North-of-Panhandle neighborhood was so full of local churchgoers attending the many places of worship there that the Sunday morning streets were like a festival of dressed-up people heading in all directions and greeting each other on the way, back before the long stretch of shuttered storefronts between Divisadero’s black and white eras. I remember the revelation of Sunday hats. Over the years, most of the churchgoers moved and began driving to church, and then some of the churches dried up and went away, and then I moved a short stroll away to another world.

I spent my first several months as a San Franciscan in a residential hotel in Polk Gulch, coexisting with Vietnamese transvestites and disabled bikers and grumbling building managers and scurrying cockroaches. Later I resided for twenty-five years in that part of the Western Addition, seeing many of my African American neighbors navigate a neighborhood that was radically different from mine, more gregarious, maybe more limited, and much more dangerous for the young men. The older people I came to know were part of the great African American migration northward during the economic boom of the Second World War (the subject of the map “Shipyards and Sounds”). They remembered another San Francisco, one in which Fillmore Street was a thriving center—its wartime arches of lights were fondly remembered by Ernest Teal, my wonderful former neighbor, dapper and radiant, like a cross between Cab Calloway and Gandhi—not the redevelopment-gutted boulevard I found in the early 1980s. They lived in some ways as though they were in small southern towns; James V. Young and Veobie Moss, both gone long ago, spent a lot of time out in front of their buildings talking to passersby and keeping an eye on the street, improvising front porches out of the architecture at hand. When I found myself in the South in this decade, it felt oddly familiar at times, and I realized I’d been in a version of it all those years, or at least a faint overlay of it, not as explicit an ethnic atmosphere from elsewhere as a Little Saigon or a Manilatown—but something hovered in the air. As the neighborhood turned paler and more affluent, it became more suburban; the newcomers didn’t move around as much on foot, and a lot of them considered direct contact an affront or a threat, though that has softened and some have become good neighbors. Same place, different world.

I know where the last brown satyr butterfly on earth was found: on Lone Mountain, not far from my home, the mountain that stands out so starkly in Eadweard Muybridge’s magnificent 1878 photographic panoramas of the place, taken before the western half of the city was much developed. (It was the disappearance of the Xerxes blue butterfly in the Presidio, during wartime expansion of this military reservation on the city’s north coast, that became famous, though.) Only recently, on a walk with Deirdre Elmansouri and Liam

O'Brien to see the last local habitat of the green hairstreak butterfly, I found myself standing atop what Liam told us is the largest sand dune on the West Coast, more than a mile inland from the beach, on part of what were once the great sandy wastes of San Francisco, now largely covered up or converted to something lush. (Though indignant partisans have sometimes portrayed Golden Gate Park as a natural landscape trampled by its museums, it was little but sand before soil and then trees and landscaping were built up in the late nineteenth century.) That day I saw my first green hairstreak, a delightful tiny butterfly in the most exquisite chartreuse, but also saw portions of that dune, which constitutes a hilltop neighborhood around Fourteenth Avenue from Moraga to Rivera in the Sunset (the alphabetical streets of the west side of town are a litany of conquistadors and Spaniards: Noriega, Ortega, Pacheco, Quintara, Rivera, and so on).

Over the maps of any theater of war in 1945 can be inscribed the maps of bird migration, the flights of the swallows and cranes who sabotage borders and nationalism by demonstrating that such phenomena do not exist in their avian world. (East Bay beekeeper and artist Mark Thompson put a beehive next to the Berlin Wall in the summer of 1989 to gather honey indiscriminately from both sides of the city, for the bees did not acknowledge merely political boundaries; earlier, in San Francisco, he interpreted bee dances and followed his bees to draw up apicentric maps of the city.) While my story is mine, my map of San Francisco is also potentially yours; both can be charted on the same map, and where the past has been mapped the future may yet inscribe other adventures. The maps we get most of the time show conventional reality—freeways and not bird migration routes, shopping highlights and not subjective memories—but those other things can always be planted atop the usual versions.

Maps are always invitations in ways that texts and pictures are not; you can enter a map, alter it, add to it, plan with it. A map is a ticket to actual territory, while a novel is only a ticket to emotion and imagination. *Infinite City* is meant to be such an invitation to go beyond what is mapped within it. The amount of knowledge about a place is, in Borges's 1:1 scale map, coextensive with it, but that map is not nearly as informative as our imaginary archive of atlases. This mapping of San Francisco would beget something more akin to Borges's infinite libraries and endlessly expand to contain this atlas in hundreds of thousands of volumes, or perhaps not.

The library system at the University of California, Berkeley, added its ten millionth book in 2005, and the collection is housed in the spatial equivalent of not so many warehouses. If every page were unbound and stitched into a quilt of information, it would be, says my brother Steve, who runs the city of San Francisco's mental health database and is good at math, almost twenty miles square (if you assume that each book contains 250 pages, or 125 leaves, and that each leaf is about seven by nine inches; to say that actual dimensions vary would be to make an understatement far vaster than the quilt). San Francisco is a little over forty-seven square miles, a bit bigger than twenty million such books spread out. Reading that quilt or any book is another business altogether. Since every sentence is a line the eye travels over, I once measured my book *Savage Dreams* by line length and number of lines and concluded that

the narrative was literally about five miles long—but I digress. Or meander. Unmappably. Or perhaps into the territory of maps.

Such an atlas as I describe could never be produced, and it would not be useful. The quantity of potential information is inexhaustible; the ability of any human being to absorb information is not. We select, and a map is a selection of relevant data that arises from relevant desires and questions. The atlas you have in your hands is a small, modest, and deeply arbitrary rendering of one citizen's sense of her place in conversation and collaboration with others. In the course of making it, I have discovered how many more maps each of us contains, how much more knowledge of this place is out there in the minds of librarians and lepidopterists and artists and Norteños and everyday travelers of the streets, and how much of the region in which I have spent my life and often researched and sometimes written about remains terra incognita to me.

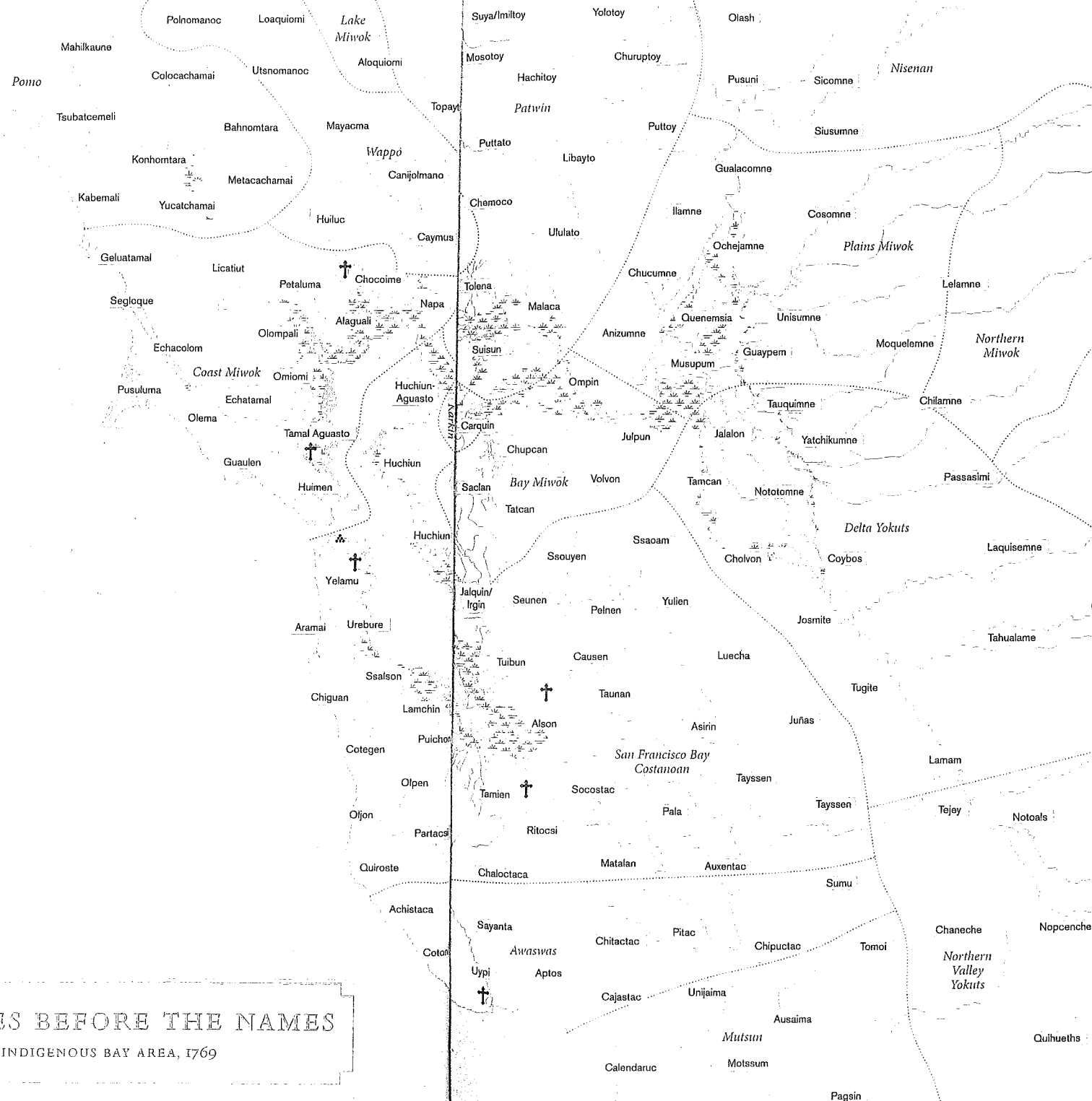
Still, I hope that the infinite atlas will remain an imagined companion and corrective for everyone looking at this particular atlas, which aspires to suggest something of the inexhaustibility of even a small city but is itself finite and even capricious in its mappings. My aspiration is that these limits will prompt viewers to go beyond it, to map their own lives and imagine other ways of mapping, to bring some of the density of mapping we've suggested to this place and to other places, perhaps to become themselves some of the living books of this city or their cities, or to recognize that they always have been. This atlas is a beginning, and not any kind of end, as a comprehensive representation might be. Such a representation is impossible anyway, for all cities are practically infinite ∞



- Huiluc Local tribes
- Wappo Languages
- ✠ Missions
- ▲ Presidio
- ▨ Tidal marshes
- ▨ Salt ponds
- ▨ Mudflats
- ▨ Beaches or dunes

# THE NAMES BEFORE THE NAMES

THE INDIGENOUS BAY AREA, 1769



## THE NAMES BEFORE THE NAMES

The juxtaposition of unfamiliar place names and the intensely familiar lay of the land on this map of the Bay Area are direct evidence that this was once someplace very different. It was the homeland of highly localized people who knew their terrain intimately and invested it with names, stories, memories, and associations that made the place incredibly rich in ways beyond the biotic richness that also existed then, when the Bay Area teemed with salmon, with antelope, with shellfish, with huge flocks of migratory birds that would later be decimated. It was also blessed with extensive marshes and wetlands, which would later be partly filled, and an abundance of pure water, which would be contaminated with mercury during the Gold Rush and with other effluents thereafter. Roadless and only subtly marked by humans, this place could be imagined as wild but is more aptly imagined as interfused with a light but intensely engaged human presence. This is a map of what was here first as well as who was here long before the later layers of history and culture depicted in most of the subsequent maps in this atlas began to accumulate.

But this is not entirely a map of the past: surviving place names remind us that not only the legacy of their cultures but also the people themselves are still here. Words in their languages are said countless times each day, though they are rarely recognized as survivors from these local cultures.

CARTOGRAPHY: BEN PEASE → MAP APPEARS ON PAGES 10-11

### A MAP THE SIZE OF THE LAND BY LISA CONRAD

A familiar place with unfamiliar names: for those of us who live in the Bay Area, everywhere we walk, others walked before us. Many of our present-day towns—Olema, Petaluma, Half Moon Bay, Nicasio—are sites where villages once stood and communities thrived. Underneath the grid of our streets, their stories go back fourteen thousand years, to when the shore began at the Farallon Islands and the great San Francisco Bay was a meadow. Descendants of those communities still live in the Bay Area, where they participate in cultural traditions and are experiencing a revitalization of their languages.

On a recent drive down the Northern California coast, from Humboldt County toward the Bay Area, I gazed out at the redwoods that reached nearer and farther to the sky and imagined the streams and tributaries that draw their way over the land, down its ridges and into the Eel River. Picture any historical, contemporary, or imagined map of a place as a diaphanous layer upon the

landscape, and you will find that the first layer, that of the indigenous people, is inextricably interlaced with the physical geography. Under, around, and within our beehive infrastructure, you will see the watersheds that were the geographic organizing principle behind the Hupa and Yurok lands, now Humboldt County, and that of the Miwok, Pomo, and Ohlone (Costanoan) speakers, now San Francisco and environs.

California has attracted migrating peoples to its shores for thousands of years, as it does even today. Ancient immigrants encountered a mild climate and an ecosystem ridiculously abundant with flora and fauna; perhaps because of this they gradually evolved from hunter-gatherers into members of a “complex collector pattern,” an evolutionary stage equivalent to but quite different from the early agriculture of other cultures. When the Spaniards arrived, local tribes practiced sustainable land management, which included the cyclical burning of meadows to promote the growth of desirable plants. As archaeologist Kent Lightfoot writes in *California Indians and Their Environment*, “Rather than simply exploiting the richness of California’s many habitats, it is now generally recognized that indigenous populations helped create and shape much of the ecosystem diversity by means of various kinds of cultural activities and indigenous management practices that can still be seen today.”

Unlike in the rest of the United States, where large groups of individuals operating as tribes or bands led by chiefs or heads were the norm, in California, small communities numbering from as few as fifty to as many as four hundred possessed regional identities, living together and managing a defined area. Within, say, a twenty- or forty-square-mile area, they generally maintained a primary village and multiple smaller villages. The social and political community took precedence over the village site. Their tribes were divided into craftspeople, religious experts, secret societies, elites, and commoners. Shells were used as a form of currency (the largest shell-processing site in California was in Sonoma County).

These self-governing groups traveled over their territory according to the season, collecting and managing their resources, moving among villages. The Spaniards referred to the local tribes and villages as *rancherías*. Alfred Louis Kroeber, the famous California anthropologist, called these communities “tribelets”; today they are often referred to as “local tribes” or “polities” (political communities). The varied, fertile environment of the San Francisco Bay Area may well have fostered the development of these highly differentiated groups and localized languages, enabling them to coexist in close proximity to one another.

The population of the region shown in this map was an estimated seventeen thousand in 1769 (today’s population, by contrast, is almost seven million). The density of population in a given area depended upon what the land could support. Watershed villages were often found where two creeks converged, and villages were located on the east side of hills, near fresh water and food, according to Nick Tipon, a descendant of Coast Miwok speakers. Property was communal in some groups, but in others, families or individuals sometimes possessed rights to certain resource areas and passed down those rights over generations—for example, individual oak trees were privately held by Coast Miwok speakers. Ethnogeographer Randall Milliken writes

in *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today*: "Throughout west-central California oral narratives about creation and the nature of the universe shared common over-arching themes. . . . The specific narratives of each group were linked to the local landscape, and served as a charter that established the group's origins and rights of ownership to a particular territory."

Interactions between neighboring local tribes varied—people intermarried, visited one another, and occasionally warred. Though their territories were clearly bounded, individuals and families were interconnected in an open network belied by the names on this map.

So how does one define a place-name? How does one signify both presence and history? In whose eyes? Counties, cities, mountains, valleys, or more singular spots—a rock along a path, a meadow's entrance—the places that we name identify us as a people. Not only that, but changing place-names provide a historical template of priorities, invasions, dreams, disasters. For Bay Area Indians, the very local was political, storied, alive; current geopolitical boundaries express a quite distinct understanding of space and narrative.

Tipon emphasizes the rich and intimate knowledge of the environment his ancestors possessed, their navigation of the landscape through stories as much as names. Milliken estimates an enormously detailed tapestry of thirty-five thousand place-names for every seven square miles. In *Ethnohistory and Ethnogeography of the Coast Miwok and Their Neighbors, 1783–1840*, he writes, "Each local Coast Miwok region may have had as many as two hundred named village locations (unused, seasonal, and permanent)." Add to that the two hundred or more languages and dialects spoken, and you may imagine a living map, impossibly covered in names and lore, perhaps the size of the land itself. Most of these names were never recorded and have been lost.

Maps are often a tool of those in power or, at the least, a projection of the cartographer. Maps are also a kind of classificatory system, which, if laid over a place from outside it, may reflect the maker's priorities more than those of the culture(s) they depict. "The practice of dividing sections of the North American continent into separate culture areas was developed in the late nineteenth century as a means of organizing museum collections" (Milliken, *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians*; my italics). Where does one begin in light of a labyrinthian observation of this sort? For the purposes of this map, we considered shellmounds, villages, archaeological dig sites, original indigenous place-names, local-tribe regions, and current Indian lands as possible representations of place. Portraying these social and political groupings, or local tribes, seemed to offer the most vibrant portrait of Bay Area Indians at the moment of contact with the Spaniards.

In 2002 Paul Scolari, of the National Park Service, commissioned detailed reports of the cultural associations of Bay Area indigenous peoples with regard to Golden Gate National Recreational Area lands. In maps drawn to illustrate the ensuing reports, the local-tribe names and their placement derive from Milliken's research on local tribes and his extensive review of mission registers.

Spanish Catholic missions were built from the late 1700s into the early 1800s. Missionaries enticed Indians to the missions, baptized them, and then did not allow them to leave, intermingling and dislocating people from different local

tribes. The Franciscan missionaries kept records of everyone they baptized, listing their ages and the Spanish names they had been given, as well as their marriages and deaths. The priests also often added the name of the community (and sometimes the village) a person was from, and the names of children or parents. Using this data and other historical clues, Milliken assembled a list of likely communities and assigned them to geographic regions. After the initial placement of a local tribe, he reviewed its estimated population and modified the estimate based on the habitability of the particular landscape.

The mission registers were not always consistent: in the first twenty years of the missions, priests tended to record village names; after that, newer priests enlarged the scope of detail to the more encompassing local-tribe names. Ambiguities cropped up in the registers: different names for the same communities, multiple spellings of similar terms, questions regarding the origins of names—for example, were they names that tribe members used to refer to themselves, or were they names by which adjacent communities identified them? Kroeber and others did not believe that local tribes named themselves, instead arguing that neighboring tribes named one another, often using directional terms, such as "Northerners" or "Westerners." Milliken, for one, disagrees; he believes that local tribes did, in fact, name themselves.

Chiguan, Ssaom, Tauquimne, Suisun, Olema—these are but representations of sounds that fell on foreign ears, recorded by Spanish priests or by Indian interpreters, who might not have spoken the language of the individual being recorded. The names on the map generally reflect the most common eighteenth-century Spanish spellings, but they aren't necessarily a guide to pronunciation; Milliken has observed that "some consonant sounds in the Ohlone . . . and Yokuts languages . . . baffled [the recorders], and caused them to use various spellings."

"Yelamu," the name Milliken settled on for the people who lived in San Francisco, is less definitive than other local-tribe names. The Spaniards gathered very little information about this group—none of their myths are known. Fathers Palóu and Cambón of Mission Dolores in San Francisco called them "Aguazios," which means "Northerners," but this was the term the neighboring Ssalsons used to label them. More often, the name "Yelamu" was recorded in the mission registers. But Yelamu was also a village name. Linguistic research reveals that "ela" is a directional term and that it may possibly mean "Westerners." This local tribe maintained villages in what are now the Presidio, Fort Mason, Fort Miley, Ocean Beach, and Fort Funston Beach, and perhaps on Alcatraz Island.

Another hazy area of the map is north of San Francisco, from Olema to Bodega Bay. No community names exist for this huge stretch of land other than "Tamal"—a Coast Miwok term meaning "where the water meets the land" (according to Angela Striplen, a Coast Miwok descendant). For this stretch of northern coast, Milliken retained the shape of the areas that are still populated today and used the village names, inferring population sizes of a few hundred, similar to those around the San Francisco Bay and down the peninsula.

The areas on the map with dotted outlines and gray italic labels (San Francisco Bay Costanoan, Nisenan, Coast Miwok, and so on) indicate core *language* groupings, not tribal affiliations. These are lineages defined by anthropolo-

gists and linguists during the past two hundred years or so of contact. Ohlone (Costanoan) and Miwok are branches of the same proto-language, Utian; six different Ohlone (Costanoan) languages were spoken along the coast, including Karkin, each as distinct as Spanish and Italian. Nowhere else in the United States could such a thicket of languages and dialects in such close quarters be found—local tribes within twenty miles of one another might have spoken languages that were, at least initially, mutually unintelligible.

What was the relationship between language families and local tribes? Delta Yokuts, Plains Miwok, Patwin—these language names were inventions/interventions after the fact: California's indigenous peoples would not have recognized them and would not have identified with them as any sort of cultural grouping. The Indians of the greater Bay Area experienced life on a local scale, knew themselves as Uypi, Tamcan, Atenomac. They distinguished between those who spoke related but dialectically different languages and those who spoke an altogether different tongue, but they would not have grouped people together accordingly. This conflating of language and culture by anthropologists and linguists, more appropriate in other parts of the country, has proved to be difficult to unravel.

Of the 128 local-tribe names on this map, a handful have persisted, imprecise symbols of indigeneity, sloughed into the shifting sea of English. One can trace these words as they passed through missions, land grants, ranches, newspapers, and state bureaucracies, until they became fixed within our current geography. The local-tribe names that have survived have not strayed far from their original regions.

The word "Ohlone," often used synonymously with Bay Area Indians, offers a case study of the complexity and capriciousness of translation, on multiple levels: that of a foreign sound transformed into a written word in a foreign language (with the expected variations); that of a culture and people who, in being forced to give up their language and ways of living, lost much of it or sent it underground. From Pedro Alcantara comes the first documentation of the word "Ol-hones" ("Costanos" in Spanish, "people of the coast"), which he stated was the name of one of five Bay Area local tribes. "Ol-hones" and "Costano" were subsequently plucked arbitrarily from a vocabulary list as labels for the language family of the entire Bay Area region.

The following is an etymological time line for the name "Ohlone":

1831 *Alchones* This term is used by Frederick Beechey.

1851 *Oljon* Alexander Taylor uses this name in the California Farmer newspaper.

1853 *Ol-hones* (*Costanos* in Spanish) "Ol-hones" appears in a vocabulary list of the language of the Indians of the San Francisco peninsula—the only such list ever recorded—published by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and compiled by Adam Johnson from Pedro Alcantara, a "native of the Romonan tribe." The term "Ol-hones" referred to a local tribe (called "Oljones" by Spanish missionaries), of the San Mateo County Coast at San Gregorio. Schoolcraft took the word "Costano" from Johnson's cover note and used it as the name for the family of languages that included Alcantara's. "Ol-hones" is the root for "Olhonian" and "Ohlone," alternative names for the Costanoan language.

1861 *Ohlone* This version appears in an article by Alexander Taylor, as a typographical error in the California Farmer newspaper.

1871 *Ol-hones* Frederick Hall employs this term in "History of San Jose and Surroundings" (an East Bay local history publication).

1883 *Ohlone* In the series *Wild Tribes, Native Races*, Hubert Howe Bancroft chooses to use this name.

1915 *Ohlone* This term appears on a bronze plaque at the Indian cemetery at Mission San Jose, dedicated to the Indian people buried there.

1930s *Ohlone* Mission San Jose Indian people identify themselves as "Ohlone" and "Olonian" on questionnaires sent to them by the Federal Office of Indian Affairs.

1930s *O'lo'no wit* Miwok elder John Porter suggests that "Ohlone" is a variant of the Sierra Miwok word meaning "west." Milliken suggests the possibility that "Oljon" and "O'lo'no wit" come from a "root term that signified a western area or a westerly direction."

1967 *Olhonian* Anthropologist C. Hart Merriam chooses "Olhonian" in place of "Costanoan," believing that Indian words should be used for indigenous people and languages.

1969 *Ohlonean* Anthropologist and Yuma Indian Jack Forbes uses this alternative spelling in *Native Americans of California and Nevada* to match the "Ohlone" used by Mission San Jose descendants.

1978 *Ohlone* Malcolm Margolin's *The Ohlone Way* is the first time the label "Ohlone" is applied to the Costanoan language family. Not all descendants favor this term.

TODAY *Amah, Muwekma* Some descendants of the San Francisco Bay Area prefer these terms: "Amah," used by the Mutsun, meaning "the people"; and "Muwekma" in the north, meaning "the people" in Tamien and Chochenyo Ohlone (Costanoan).

Whereas early maps aided foreign states in their quest for land and resources, in recent years, a practice referred to as counter-mapping has emerged in a number of indigenous communities in different parts of the world, including the United States. After the long silence of colonialism, stores of history are reappearing, pulled from their hiding places, their diasporas, and coalescing onto new maps. Counter-mapping involves the creation of maps using indigenous knowledge, often to advance land claims in court. Although this approach is powerful and creative, viewing this cache of wisdom and history solely through the lens of property and ownership keeps the unique perspectives that might be expressed trapped within contemporary cultural values; one looks forward to future uses that may further reveal its prismatic nature.

I hold this map of local names in my mind's eye as I bicycle down Telegraph Avenue in Oakland's Temescal (an indigenous word) neighborhood, as I trace the bay's edges, from the Port of Oakland to the Embarcadero, run the names over my tongue, experience a simultaneity of worlds, layer upon layer, the old world brightening under the new ~



## 2 GREEN WOMEN

That a vast portion of the nine-county Bay Area has been protected as some kind of green space—state park, national park, county park, wildlife refuge, watershed preserve, rural land trust—is well known and celebrated. But it's much less well known that much of the tireless work to protect these 3.5 million acres of land was done by women. This map, in the style of nineteenth-century commemorative maps, marks both the green space and the green women who defended it—and who defended not only the land but also the San Francisco Bay, which some of the more progress-drunk land-use planners wanted to fill in half a century ago.

Standard maps of the Bay Area bear witness to our green men and to others not so beneficent: places here are named after John Muir, after St. Francis and St. Joseph (San Francisco and San José, in Spanish), after John C. Fremont, after Irish Bishop George Berkeley, after landowners like the Stinsons or José de Jesús Noé, whose name lingers on a San Francisco neighborhood, as does that of Mexican-era Governor José Castro, or the Berryessa dynasty for whom Lake Berryessa was named. Even the streets of downtown San Francisco are a who's who of early wars and powers: Montgomery was a naval captain in the war on Mexico; Kearny was a military commander; Brannan was a Gold Rush millionaire. But other than some cities named after female saints—Santa Rosa, Santa Clara—the names on the land are not those of women. This map is compensatory commemoration.

CARTOGRAPHY: DARIN JENSEN; ARTWORK: HUGH

D'ANDRADE ∞ MAP APPEARS ON PAGES 18–19

### GREAT WOMEN AND GREEN SPACES BY RICHARD WALKER

The San Francisco Bay Area is more than houses, highways, and high-rises: it harbors the greatest urban greenbelt in the United States. Out of 4.5 million acres in the nine-county region, more than 3.5 million are open space. The Bay Area's open spaces are less a belt than a coat of many colors—blue, green, red, brown, and gold—quilted around the branches and limbs of the city. The centerpiece is the bay, the watery heart of the city's circulation; then there are the mountain ridges marking off the central bay region, wet and wooded to the west and north, gilded with grass to the east and south. Toward the outskirts, large tracts are actively agricultural, mostly vineyards and pastures. Deep within the city are hundreds of enclaves, from mammoth Golden Gate Park to creekside hideaways.

Over a million acres are held in public trust. Such public lands bear many labels, such as parks, preserves, playgrounds, reserves, watersheds, and trails; they are held by agencies of government, from the federal to the local. Non-profit land trusts watch over the rest, including conservation easements on private land. And there is the protective embrace of the bay and coastal commissions. The greenbelt is deeply embedded in law and institutions.

Behind this immense open space edifice is a living thing: the people and pursuits of a century-old environmental movement. Starting as a preoccupation of elite conservationists, it broadened out to a mass public long before the word "environmentalism" was coined, particularly through the efforts of Save the Bay and the Sierra Club in the 1960s. Scores of local organizations and thousands of activists spread the gospel of green to people around the bay, making this area the center of global conservation through most of the twentieth century.

The majority of these activists were women. The Bay Area has long been blessed with savvy, independent, and talented women. Some were pioneers in professions such as landscape architecture and botany; others were housewives looking beyond homemaking and child-raising. Some had to force themselves to take a public role, and others were natural-born politicians. They ran the gamut from grande dames to schoolteachers. It is no surprise that women would have an affinity for environmental protection, as part of the "public domestic sphere" and their traditional role in caring for children, family, and neighbors. What is surprising, however, is how little recognition such women have received in the annals of American environmentalism.

Bay Area women were present at the dawn of American conservation. Josephine McCrackin and Carrie Stevens Walter of San Jose were two of the founders of the Sempervirens Club, which saved the redwoods at Big Basin by creating the first state park in 1902. Laura Lyon White stepped in as president of the club, using her social connections to protect redwoods and the Calaveras Big Trees in the Sierra. Mary Katharine Layne Curran Brandegee and Alice Eastwood, curators at the California Academy of Sciences, were world-famous botanists at the turn of the century. Marjorie Bridge Farquhar was one of the first female mountaineers and served on the council of the Save-the-Redwoods League in the 1920s.

In the 1930s, Caroline Sealy Livermore and her friends Sepha Evers and Helen Van Pelt founded the Marin Conservation League, which became the center of environmental activism in the North Bay. They saved local parklands such as Angel Island (with its peak named after Livermore) and created the first county plan in the 1940s—the basis for the 1972 plan that would later set aside almost all of West Marin. As Marin turned into the greenest part of the Bay Area in the 1960s, Barbara Eastman led the fight to save Point Reyes National Seashore. In the following decade, Ellen Straus and Phyllis Faber salvaged northern Marin's dairy land by means of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust.

In the burst of building after the Second World War, San Francisco refused to build all the freeways drawn up by the state highway department. That freeway revolt, led by the likes of Jean Kortum and Sue Bierman, was repeated up and down the West Bay. At the high tide of mid-century conservation, San Francisco's Amy Meyer took it upon herself to organize the movement for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, established in 1972.

Down on the Peninsula, a band of stalwart women that included Lois Crozier-Hogle and Ruth Spangenberg established the Committee for Green Foothills in 1962 to combat the expansion of Stanford University. The battle soon spread, encompassing Nonette Hanko's fight to create the Palo Alto Foothills Park and Eleanor Boushey's efforts to keep highways out of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Committee for Green Foothills went on to be the guiding force in preserving open space and resisting suburbanization in the South Bay, led by such seasoned combatants as Mary Davey and Lennie Roberts. Meanwhile, Florence LaRiviere and her allies quietly reclaimed the whole of southern San Francisco Bay from salt ponds for a national wildlife refuge and restored marshland.

Over in the East Bay, botanist Mary Bowerman was the first to discover the immense biodiversity of Mount Diablo, in the 1930s. She founded Save Mount Diablo, and today open space covers almost the entire peak (a model later adopted by the Save Mount San Bruno Committee under Bette Higgins and her friends around South San Francisco). Meantime, Jean Siri, Barbara Vincent, and Kay Kerr were working to expand the East Bay Regional Parks into Contra Costa County and along the bay shore.

The Bay Area's most famous female advocates are undoubtedly the three Berkeley women who founded Save the Bay in 1961: Kay Kerr, Sylvia McLaughlin, and Esther Gulick. Against all odds, they turned the tide against unrestrained bay filling and in the process transformed the bay from a watery freight yard to the region's beloved centerpiece. Meanwhile, Dorothy Ward Erskine created People for Open Space (later the Greenbelt Alliance), the single most important force for regional thinking over the last fifty years. She was also responsible for the agricultural conservation district that saved the Napa Valley from the subdividers *before* it became world-famous. Two other key regionalists came out of the South Bay: Claire Dedrick and Janet Adams, cofounders of the Peninsula Conservation Center. Adams led the battle for the California Coastal Commission, which was established in 1972, while Dedrick went on to serve as secretary of resources for the state of California.

In the 1980s, Bay Area environmentalism grew a new branch that spoke to the concerns of inner-city residents and people of color. Street fighters such as Ahmadi Thomas, Peggy Saika, and Pam Tau Lee took up the struggle against toxic hazards from refineries, dumps, and other polluters along the East Bay industrial belt. Marie Harrison did the same in San Francisco's Bayview-Hunters Point. Meanwhile, activists such as Pam Pierce and Isabel Wade promoted community gardens and neighborhood parks as a way of reclaiming the urban brownfields.

The great achievements of the women conservationists of the Bay Area were not merely acts of enlightened public service. Preserving open space, saving the bay, and stopping development are always political acts. Nothing came easy for these women warriors. Every acre of land and water has been fought over, often in campaigns lasting years. To carry out these fights, activists created new organizations, saw laws enacted, and put in place the institutional structure that locks up the Bay Area greenbelt. More than this, they helped create a green public culture that runs deep among Bay Area residents. As a result, every generation brings forth new legions of environmentalists ready to take on the forces of profiteering and desecration

# 3

## CINEMA CITY

This is a map about two moments in the history of film and San Francisco: one in which photographer Eadweard Muybridge laid the foundation for a new technology of moving pictures that would evolve into cinema as we know it; and another, eighty years later, when his fellow Englishman Alfred Hitchcock filmed his dark valentine to San Francisco, *Vertigo*, here. Of course, there are countless other moving picture and media moments of note—movies such as *Bullitt*, with its lyrical car chases, breakthroughs such as Philo T. Farnsworth's invention of television on Green Street—but maps are always selective, and Muybridge and Hitchcock are a striking pair of imagemakers. The genesis and an apotheosis of cinema are charted on this map, whose last theme is decline—if not of the medium, at least of its dream palaces, the movie houses that once were the exclusive home of cinema. There were over seventy such theaters in San Francisco, many of them in the neighborhoods, when *Vertigo* debuted in 1958, but only a handful remain open. They were replaced first by television, then by video rentals, and by other digital ways of watching films on small screens, even more than they were by the downtown multiplexes. So there are three eras on this map, the 1870s–1880s, the 1950s, and the present, in which we are heirs to their wealth but makers of a curious imagistic poverty as well.

CARTOGRAPHY: SHIZUE SEIGEL ∞ MAP APPEARS ON PAGES 24–25

## THE EYES OF THE GODS BY REBECCA SOLNIT

The Cahuillas of the southeastern California desert tell a story in which the creators of the world argue about death. One of the gods is against it, because it is, after all, sad; and the other one points out that without death, the earth would get very crowded. For historians and people preoccupied with the past, the city as seen and imagined is crowded with ghosts, and the past walks through the present. We are ourselves ghosts of other times, not fully present in our own; and we see what is no longer here and feel the future as a wind through the streets, a wind that is for us who look backward always blowing away what we cherish, the storm of loss. But when solid time melts, the past can be recovered.

Imagine that time does not exist, and the photographer Eadweard Muybridge (in San Francisco intermittently from 1855 to 1881) moves through a wavering, foggy city that is also inhabited by another Englishman, Alfred Hitchcock, as he films *Vertigo*, his 1957 movie about fear, longing, remorse,



# CINEMA CITY

MUYBRIDGE INVENTING MOVIES,  
HITCHCOCK MAKING VERTIGO

## MUYBRIDGE AND THE BIRTH OF CINEMA

- 1 U.S. Mint, Fifth and Mission, photographed sequentially by Muybridge, May 1870
- 2 3 South Park, possible home address of Flora and Eadweard Muybridge, circa 1872-1873
- 3 550 Howard, Muybridge's home address, 1873
- 4 112 Fourth, Muybridge's home address, 1874
- 5 605 Montgomery, home of confidence man Harry Larkyns
- 6 South Park, where Flora Muybridge first met Larkyns, who became her lover
- 7 Cliff House, photographed by Muybridge in 1869, where Flora went into labor on April 15, 1874, in the company of Larkyns
- 8 Corner of Howard and Third, home where Flora gave birth to a son of uncertain paternity
- 9 Odd Fellows Cemetery, where Flora Muybridge was buried, 1875
- 10 Protestant Orphan Asylum, west side of Laguna between Haight and Waller, where that son was deposited, 1876
- 11 613 Pine, Muybridge's home address in 1876-1877
- 12 Southwest corner of California and Montgomery, Muybridge's address in 1878
- 13 999 California, Mark Hopkins Mansion (now the Mark Hopkins Hotel) where Muybridge made his 360-degree panoramas of San Francisco
- 14 Southwest corner of California at Powell, where Muybridge's motion-studies patron Leland Stanford lived (Muybridge photographed the mansion)
- 15 Northeast corner of Fourth and Townsend, Southern Pacific Railroad headquarters, where Muybridge got technical assistance with his high-speed camera shutters
- 16 Bay District Racing Track, between First and Fifth, Fulton and Point Lobos (now Geary), where Muybridge likely made the crucial breakthrough in high-speed motion photography (of horses) that would lead to the birth of motion pictures

## HITCHCOCK AND THE MAKING OF VERTIGO, 1957

- 1 417 Montgomery, G. D. Morse's gallery, from which Muybridge copyrighted his first motion studies
- 2 313 Pine, San Francisco Art Association, where Muybridge first showed projections of his animated motion studies, May-July 1878
- 3 Artist and confidante Midge's apartment, 296 Union at Montgomery
- 4 Madeleine's home, The Brocklebank, 1000 Mason at Sacramento
- 5 Ernie's Restaurant, 847 Montgomery, where ex-detective Scottie first catches sight of Madeleine
- 6 Mark Hopkins Hotel, California and Mason, where Scottie can no longer go, because of his vertigo
- 7 "McKittrick Hotel," 1007 Gough, where Madeleine resides as Carlotta Valdez, her tragic ancestor
- 8 Podesta Baldocchi, 224 Grant, where Madeleine buys flowers for Valdez's grave
- 9 Mission Dolores cemetery, Dolores and Sixteenth, where Madeleine places the flowers
- 10 Fort Point, where she jumps into the sea and is rescued by Scottie
- 11 900 Lombard, Scottie's apartment, where he takes Madeleine and puts her to bed
- 12 "Argosy Book Shop," 222 Powell, where local history is dispensed to Midge and Scottie
- 13 Portals of the Past, Lloyd Lake, Golden Gate Park, actual relic of the 1906 earthquake, another site for Madeleine's melancholy
- 14 Palace of the Legion of Honor, Lincoln Park, to which Scottie trails Madeleine
- 15 St. Joseph's Hospital, 351-355 Buena Vista East, where Scottie goes after his breakdown
- 16 Empire Hotel, 940 Sutter, where Madeleine's other self, Judy, rooms and Scottie accosts her
- 17 Ransohoff's Department Store, 259 Post, where Scottie forces Judy to dress up as Madeleine
- 18 Venetian Room, Fairmont Hotel, 950 Mason, where they go to dinner
- 19 Stage Door Theater, 420 Mason, where the film debuted May 9, 1958





Jim Herrington, *Motion Study, Lands End*, 2010

fantasy, and San Francisco. The fat director is working in the medium for which his lean compatriot laid the foundations during his own restless years in San Francisco and Palo Alto. In that period, Muybridge sped up photography, which hitherto could produce those images the film business calls "stills" but so far had been able to capture only the slow world and the world stopped for the camera. Muybridge made photography fast; he was the fastest camera in the West, the first photographer who could capture horses and men in motion. He shot them in series that could be projected onto a big screen, projected in quick sequences that simulated motion and thereby simulated life. Thus began the road to cinema. It was as though the ice of frozen photographic time had broken free into a river of images. Brought to life, we say, because motion is the essence of life. Muybridge's new medium of photographic motion, moving pictures, was itself ghostly, unearthly, though within the limits of the new medium before flexible celluloid films came along, he made only short looping segments of horses and men in motion, and then of women, children, and other animals.

He had made a medium that blurred past and present, and people in his time saw how haunted it was. As Thomas Edison tinkered to see if sound and image could be harnessed together into a yet more powerful verisimilitude, he proposed, wildly, "that grand opera can be given at the Metropolitan Opera House at New York . . . with artists and musicians long since dead." Which suggests what séances they were holding, what grave-robbing we do now, in the medium of movies. In film we see the dead all the time. Watch the movie *Vertigo* tomorrow and see that Jimmy Stewart (1908–1997) as Scottie is still a rangy man in his prime, pacing, scowling, pining, and chasing the phantasm of the young ice goddess Madeleine (Kim Novak, born 1933) through a San Francisco whose downtown is not yet spiky with skyscrapers but whose streets are oddly familiar.

Of course, *Vertigo* is a story within a story that is a movie that was filmed in reality, the reality of this city, the real that makes the illusion all the more compelling. For San Franciscans, the film features fictional characters but real actors loosed on a real and familiar city, an illusion that exists in the same space as our actualities. And maybe *Vertigo* is a perfect specimen of film, for it is about uncertain boundaries between reality and illusion, about a passion that can never be fulfilled, about haunting and losing. The fictitious Madeleine—a poor woman paid to impersonate a shipping tycoon's wife—is haunted by her

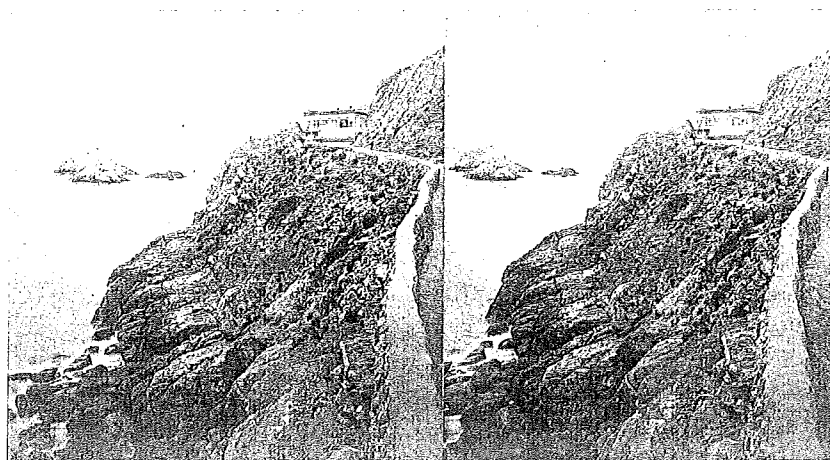
ancestress; the less fictitious Scottie is haunted by her, though she may not exist; and in the film she dies twice. Time does not quite exist, but death does, emphatically. And as in much film noir and several surrealists' books on the city, the beloved is really the eternally elusive, unpossessable city itself, forever slipping through fingers like water, but never entirely gone. Film haunts. And cities are haunted.

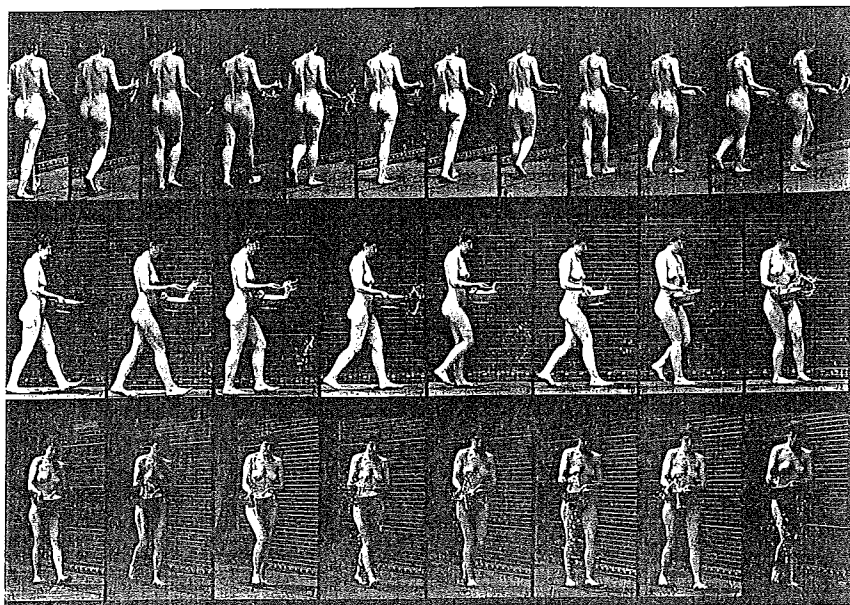
Muybridge's own story is a little like *Vertigo*, or his personal story is, a story of people who might not be who they were supposed to be, of deceptions, betrayals, uncertain identities, and a murder, all threaded through the decade in which he made his technical breakthrough that led to cinema. It is a story in the Hollywood sense, for much of Muybridge's life has no story—no personal drama that we know of, though it has a long arc of self-invention that began with his emigration and was furthered by his name changes (Edward Muggeridge became, in stages, Eadweard Muybridge) and his launch into the medium in which he would do such astounding things.

In 1871, he married a beautiful young blonde divorcée, Flora Stone, sometimes also known as Lily Shallcross, who deceived him with a man who called himself Harry Larkyns. While Muybridge was off chasing landscape images, Larkyns haunted theaters, reviewed shows, and took Flora with him. He was a fiction himself, a confidence man out of nowhere, whose short known past involved cheating a foolish young man out of considerable money, but who told glamorous stories about himself, stories of having fought with Italy's revolutionaries, of being a member of the Foreign Legion and a soldier in the British Army, then of being a rajah in Asia with a trunkful of diamonds, somehow lost, along with various other fortunes. Flora paid the ex-rajah's laundry bills.

They were quintessential San Franciscans, these people who were self-made men and women, and sometimes self-invented, or just made up. The possibility that his son, too, might have a shadowy identity—as Larkyns's

Eadweard Muybridge, *The Cliff House*, late 1860s or 1870s





Eadweard Muybridge, *Female Walking, Sprinkling Water from Basin, Turning Around*, 1880s

son—sent Muybridge on a furious expedition to the mercury mine east of Calistoga where Larkyns was holed up. There, one dark October night in 1874, the photographer shot the drama critic “an inch below the left nipple,” as the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported. The murderer Muybridge was held for trial but was exonerated by a Wild West jury of husbands who thought the punishment suited the crime, whereupon he exiled himself to Central America for several months. He had already begun his great project of turning photography into a faster medium that could apprehend the world in motion, but the murder disrupted the project for a few years.

Aboard a ship on his return from Central America, Muybridge solved, he said, the problem of high-speed photography, one of the technical challenges to be surmounted on the path to cinema. He also made breakthroughs in the chemistry of film, “speeding” it up so that exposures of a fraction of a second were possible. And then came his 360-degree panoramas of San Francisco, visions of space and place as seen by an impossible eye, one that surveys the whole horizon simultaneously, a divine or diabolical gaze. The motion studies, themselves appearing first in a trickle and then, after Muybridge had left the city and set in motion the route to cinema, a flood.

I have been both a ghost and haunted in the city I love, and have been possessed as well by the movies I’ve seen in its theaters. One of the signs of a good movie is how it lingers after you leave—and this aftertaste of enchant-

ment happens most effectively with films seen in the contemplative zone of a theater. Often, leaving a theater, I enter a night in which the mood, the characters, the spectacles, and the possibilities all seem to continue the movie’s sensibility, as though it were an incantation summoning up experiences far beyond the screen.

When *Vertigo* was released, there were about seventy movie theaters in the city, far more than now when films have moved, at best, to the less ceremonial space of multiplexes—and films are now even shown on airplanes and laptops and cell phones as well as televisions and monitors at home. But the old theaters were sometimes called dream palaces, and dreaming then was done collectively, in the dark, with rituals beforehand, with appointed times and places, and it had another kind of magic.

Anyone who grew up going to movies knows the steps: the arrival in the vicinity; the examination of film schedules or movie posters out front; the purchase of the ticket, often at one of those glassed-in booths facing the street; the ticket torn from a roll and made of a particular kind of soft, fibrous, colored cardboard, red most often, sometimes orange or lavender or gray, to be found later crumpled in pockets; then the taking of the ticket; the promenade past the refreshment stand; the aroma of popcorn; the worn carpet of lobbies; and then the filing down dark aisles to the rows of velvet folding chairs and maybe the argument about an ideal seat. I even love the trailers, which serve as advertisements but also as mad little movies, cramped up like a peony before bloom, a butterfly in chrysalis, everything smashed in together, a burst of what you didn’t choose before the launching of what you did.

For a long time, I lived across the street from a building that was for a decade or so an AIDS hospice. Called the House of Love, it was run by white-sari-wearing nuns in Mother Teresa’s order—she came by a few times herself. After her death, the nuns left, and the big Victorian building became just another San Francisco collective household, though the residents held onto the name House of Love, threw great rave parties, grew a Rousseau-like jungle in the old storefront downstairs, and showed movies. Or, rather, one of the roommates, whose bay window faced my kitchen window, screened movies for himself with a DVD projector that turned his back wall into a theater of flickering faces and acts. I’d get out of a taxi at midnight and stand mesmerized for ten minutes, key in hand, as huge figures loomed and jumped on that wall, or I’d watch those silent movies for a while from my window.

That little impromptu home theater with its giant faces and careening motion lurching inside the house reminded me how supernatural movies once were and still are, given an arena to exercise their full power of uncanniness. A whole dinner party in my kitchen halted once to try to identify the movie in the window during an episode featuring Nick Cage’s lugubrious face about nine feet high. You could picture a body filling up the house to go with that head, a giant folded up inside a wooden box, Alice after one of her Drink Me moments. On that happy strange evening of Nick Cage as apparition, the filmmakers and San Francisco aficionados Sam Green and Chip Lord were at my kitchen table puzzling out his looming, flickering face with me. That was long before Sam had begun his beautiful movie about the city’s fog, but Chip had already completed his video splicing the car chase scenes in *Vertigo* and *Bullitt*

into one dreamy Möbius strip of cars plunging at various speeds through an impossible geography of hills.

In my early teens, when my mother worked in San Francisco, I would take the bus into the city and join her in watching Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers movies at the Castro Theater. Its broad arcs of seats, its ornamental box-seat balconies, its oxidized gilt, and its great ceiling mural of the zodiac with a pendulum-like ornament dangling from its center are all still there in this theater where I've seen so many westerns, film festival offerings, silent movies, all the classics; seen *Milk*, the movie about the "Mayor of Castro Street," made doubly magical as the street outside and the theater itself keep showing up on the screen. The gay men in the dark with me educated me over the years about reading the sexual subtexts and preposterous elements of movies, about how to enjoy the homoeroticism of westerns, the spectacle of over-the-top femininity, the endless supply of unlikely plot twists and overwrought emotions. They taught me with sniggers and murmurs and sighs up and down the rows.

It's a big theater with a big screen, and the supernatural splendor I had found in my neighbor's dark room I found in the closeups at the Castro. In *Once Upon a Time in the West*, the camera comes closer and closer to Charles Bronson's squinting eyes, and you expect the camera, as conventional American cameras would have, to stop when his face fills the screen, a head as big and obdurate as one of those giant Toltec stone heads. But the camera travels inward and further in until the glare of his two staring, narrowed eyes fills the great sail of the screen. It's as though God were looking at you, for if there is one attribute of the medieval divinity that makes sense cinematically, it's that he's gigantic, looming, a force that fills the sky. There's a little twelfth-century church up in the Pyrenees mountains on the pilgrimage route from Paris to Santiago de Compostela, the church of Ste. Foy de Conques, and on its western façade the saint herself is shown, a tiny figure bent in prayer toward a huge hand coming out of the sky, wonderful and terrifying. Charles Bronson's fierce light eyes were that big. They haunt me still; they are what I see when I picture that screen.

In the creation myth of the Cahuilla, the creators argue about death. One of the gods is against it, because it is, after all, sad; and the other one points out that without it, the earth will get very crowded. Film has given us the ghosts who make it crowded and who make us ghosts wandering through time and place, dissolved the solidity of those categories, and set us all free to haunt and be haunted in the city of cinema, the city in which you dwell with Madeleine, with Muybridge, with strangers in the dark, with the ghosts among whom you yourself are a ghost, haunting, your own eyes like those of a god, for, thanks to cinema, you too see the dead now ∞

## 4 RIGHT WING OF THE DOVE

Though many of the maps in this atlas bring together complementary or conflicting versions and systems and species to generate dual subjects, this map is a response to the Bay Area that everyone thinks they know, the one all about left politics and peace movements. That version of this place is so well known that there was no reason to show it, but it lives in imagination everywhere. But the Bay Area is also a crucial part of the military machine. Its technocrats are forever imagining new devices for destruction, from thermonuclear bombs to robot soldiers, and the region hosts a powerful array of right-wing organizations and individuals, while the major universities remain major research centers for war and dominance. With the help of artist Sandow Birk's own beautifully dystopian imagination, we've tried to make this version of the place visible. CARTOGRAPHY: BEN PEASE; ARTWORK: SANDOW

BIRK, COURTESY OF CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO ∞ MAP APPEARS ON PAGES 32-33

### THE SINEWS OF WAR ARE BOUNDLESS MONEY AND THE BRAINS OF WAR ARE IN THE BAY AREA BY REBECCA SOLNIT

When Nancy Pelosi became Speaker of the House, Republicans muttered about "San Francisco values." It was meant to be a damning epithet, summing up a place that was antiwar and thus presumed to be anti-soldier, that was liberal to libertine, that was—well, everyone knows what the clichés are. But the term, whether you love or hate what it describes, overlooks a huge portion of the region's economic muscle and global impact: we are the brain of the war machine, or perhaps its imagination. If this place is a dove rather than a hawk, the right wing of that wealthy, powerful dove merits scrutiny.

And yet the hawk departed only recently. The Bay Area was for decades a military powerhouse, from Hamilton Air Force Base in the North Bay, closed in 1976, to the Blue Cube of Onizuka Air Force Station just outside Sunnyvale, in the South Bay, where military spy satellites were tracked and directed until 2007. In between were a host of naval bases—Mare Island, Treasure Island, Alameda, Oakland, Hunters Point—and San Francisco's Presidio, the military's western headquarters since the 1860s and a Spanish and Mexican military site before that. At the city's Fort Mason Center, more than a million soldiers boarded ships for the Pacific front during the Second World War; at inland Travis Air Force Base, hordes of soldiers still board aircraft bound for our foreign wars. In between, in the delta, vast quantities of munitions are loaded at Concord Naval Weapons Station. Concord and Travis aside, most of these places are gone now, except for the toxic waste they left behind and some ruins, notably the dramatic bunkers and fortifications around the Golden Gate from